



## **Meditation and Wisdom: The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch and Early Buddhism**

**Wimal Hewamanage**

Ph.D. (Wuhan), MPhil, MA, BA (Kelaniya)

wimal@bs.cmb.ac.lk

Senior Lecturer in Pali& Buddhist Studies, Department of Buddhist Studies,  
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

### **Introduction**

The Platform Sutra(LiùzǔTánjīng 六祖坛经)of the Sixth Patriarch exists in ten chapters; namely an account of the origins, prajñā, questions, meditation and wisdom, seated meditation, repentance, encounters, sudden and gradual, proclamations, and transmission. It is a fundamental text of Chinese Chán Buddhist fraternity. The fourth chapter of this Sutra is named ‘meditation and wisdom’. It is extremely important to study the resemblances between Chán and early Buddhist tradition regarding meditation and wisdom. Therefore, the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch is utilized as the base for this exploratory study and it is compared with the standpoint of early Buddhism. After the passing away of the Buddha, the Order bifurcated as Sthaviravāda and Mahāsāṅghika based on doctrinal and disciplinary matters. With time, these deviations got further divided and interpreted the teachings according to their own standpoint what they believed as the real teachings of the Buddha. However, during the 8th century AD, there were three major schools of Buddhism; Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna. From the past, there were resentments among Buddhist schools regarding culture and philosophy grounded on practice and theory. Therefore, this paper will be helpful in understanding, correspondences of the sixth great patriarch’s teachings of the above-mentioned chapter with the early Buddhist sources, written in Pāli. It demonstrates the relationship of Chán Buddhist standpoint depicted in the fourth chapter of the Platform Sutra to early Buddhist teachings.

## **Chán Buddhism and the Sixth Patriarch**

There were many Buddhist schools like Tien-Tai, Hua-Yen, Pure-Land but Chán Buddhism was the most prominent schools among Chinese Buddhists during the seventh century AD and it was popularized under Japanese term Zen. The term ‘Chán’ is the Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit word *dhyāna*, which refers to a mind absorbed in meditation. Bodhidharma, an Indian monk, who came to China during the fifth century AD, summed up his message as follows.

A special transmission outside the scriptures;

without depending on words and letters;

Pointing directly to the human mind;

seeing the innate nature, one becomes a Buddha. (Harvey 1990, 154).

According to venerable master Jing Hui, Chán is a special transmission, outside the scriptures, with no dependence on words and letters. It is a direct pointing at the human mind; seeing into one's own nature and the attainment of Buddha-hood. In other words, Chán is a special transmission, outside the scriptures, with no dependence on words and Letters (Jing Hui, 2004, 106). Accordingly, early Buddhism, the attainment of Buddha-hood is free from words and letters.

Now, it is better to become aware of the story of the sixth patriarch of Chinese Buddhism. There were six great patriarchs in Chinese Buddhism from the master Bodhidharma, who lived during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE and is credited as the transmitter of Chán to China. Venerable Huiko, who lived in 487-593 CE, was the second Patriarch in China. Venerable Seng Tsang was the third and he is the author of “Relying on Mind” (Hsinhsinming) and entered nirvāṇa while swinging on the branch of a tree. Venerable Dao Xin, (DayiDaoxin) who lived in 580-651 CE, was the fourth and he preached ‘East Mountain Teaching’ or the East Mountain Dharma Gate (東山法門) *dong shanfa men* in Chinese. Venerable Hong Ren who lived in 601-674 CE was the fifth patriarch.

The sixth patriarch, HuiNeng was born into the Lu family in 638 CE in Xinzhou, Guangdong province, Southern China. Since his father died, when he was young he had no opportunity for studies. Because of this, he sold firewood in the market place. Once he carried firewood out of one shop and on his way out of the gate he saw someone reciting a sutra, called ‘The Diamond Sutra’ and his mind opened forth in enlightenment. HuiNeng, then, asked where the reciter got the Diamond Sutra from. He then explained that he had come from DongChán Si (Eastern meditation monastery) in Huangmei,

Hubei province. The Fifth Patriarch, the Great Master Hongren, resides in and is in charge of instruction at that monastery and had over a thousand followers.

Luckily, someone then gave him ten Liang of silver to pay for his aged mother's food and clothing and told him to go to Huangmei to pay obeisance to the fifth patriarch. He then left his mother and in less than thirty odd-days arrived to Huangmei, where he did obeisance to the fifth patriarch. The patriarch asked that where you are from and what are you seeking. He replied that he is a commoner from Xinzhou in Lingnan, and he has come this far to pay reverence to master. He said that he wishes only to achieve Buddha-hood and does not seek anything else. The patriarch said that since you are from Lingnan, then you must be a hunter. How could you ever achieve Buddha-hood? HuiNeng answered that although people may be from north or south, there is fundamentally no north and south in the Buddha-nature. During this discussion, followers have gathered all around the fifth patriarch and he told HuiNeng to go with them to work. HuiNeng became a labourer in the monastery, doing chores in the rice mill, chopping wood and pounding rice at the monastery for the next eight months.

One day Hong Ren preached to his students the significance of awareness of life and death rather than a blessing and asked them to compose a stanza and show it to him. If you are enlightened by the great meaning, I will transmit the robe and Dharma to you and make you a patriarch of the sixth generation. Only ShenXiu, the elder monk among Hong Ren's students and the instructor, wrote a stanza on the wall in the middle of the night as follows.

The body is a Bodhi tree,  
The mind a standing mirror bright  
At all times polish it diligently,  
And let no dust alight.

But the fifth patriarch was not satisfied and asked them to compose one more verse after doing one or two days of meditation. Within this period HuiNeng asked one of the monks to write his stanza about his awareness and it is as follows.

Bodhi is fundamental without any tree;  
The bright mirror is also not a stand.  
Fundamentally there is not a single thing  
Where could any dust be attracted?

The next day, Hong Ren secretly went to the hulling room, where HuiNeng was and struck his staff on the pestle three times and left. Having understood the meaning,

HuiNeng entered patriarch's room at the third drum. The patriarch gave a robe hidden and advised to protect it. While the patriarch was preaching the Diamond Sutra HuiNeng experienced great enlightenment. (McRae2000, 23).

These two verses, mentioned above, are utilized to teach the gradual and sudden path for liberation. Later on, the gradual path was named northern Buddhism and the sudden path was named southern Buddhism. At the very beginning, the terms northern and southern Buddhism represented the two key groups in China. Then it was utilized to identify world Buddhism based on Asia, where Theravada Buddhism spread in South Asia and Mahāyāna Buddhism in North Asia. This paper will focus on the investigation of the southern Buddhist standpoint on meditation and wisdom based on the Platform Sutra comparing to the early Buddhist standpoint.

### **Meditation and wisdom**

'Meditation and Wisdom'; the fourth chapter of the Platform Sutra discusses; meditation, wisdom and samādhi and also whether achievement of wisdom is sudden or gradual. Attention should be focused on three sub-themes above and investigated the standpoint of early Buddhist discourses. Though these three valuable points cannot be separated easily the paper attempts to focus separately, for better awareness. The Platform Sutra explains that meditation is the essence of wisdom and wisdom is the function of meditation. At times of wisdom, meditation exists in that wisdom; at times of meditation, wisdom exists in that meditation. If you understand this doctrine, this is the equivalent of the study of meditation and wisdom. All those of you who study the way, do not say that they are different, with meditation being prior to and generating wisdom or with wisdom being prior to and generating meditation. It is like the light of a lamp, because the lamp is the essence of the light, and the light is the function of the lamp. Now, concerning this statement, there are two points which have to be discussed here as the position of meditation and wisdom, what is prior in meditation and wisdom.

Meditation is the foremost exercise for emancipation in the early Buddhist discourses. Once, the Buddha lived in the Park of the GosingaSāla-tree together with a number of elder disciples; venerable Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāyana, Mahākassapa, Anuruddha, Revata, Ānanda, and other well-known disciples. One evening the monks went to the venerable Sāriputta's cottage to listen to the Dhamma. Then venerable Sāriputta asked what kind of Bhikkhu could illuminate the park of the GosingaSāla-tree. Ānanda replied that a bhikkhu who has learnt much, remembers what he has learnt, and consolidates what he has learnt could illuminate the park. In the same manner, the above question was

raised to other bhikkhus too. The venerable Revata answered that a bhikkhu who delights in solitary meditation and takes delight in solitary meditation; devotes to the internal serenity of the mind, does not neglect meditation, possesses insight, and dwells in empty huts could illuminate the park of the GosingaSāla-tree. According to the venerable Anuruddha, the GosingaSāla-tree is illuminated by a bhikkhu who has the divine eye and the venerable Mahākassapa points out it is illuminated by the bhikkhu who practices virtue, concentration, and wisdom and guides others in this. The venerable Moggallāyana pointed out that it is illuminated by a bhikkhu who talks on the higher dhamma; in a question and answer manner. Finally, they reported to the Buddha the above discussion and then Buddha answered that they have all spoken well according to his own way. The Buddha's point was that a whom bhikkhu has returned from his alms-round, after the meal, he sits down, folds his legs crosswise, sets his body erect, and establishing mindfulness in front of him, resolves: 'I shall not break this sitting position until through not my clinging mind is liberated from taints' such abhikkhu could illuminate this park.(Ñānamoli& Bodhi 2009, 307-312). Buddha's notion was same as venerable Revata's notion and it shows that meditation is the foremost behavior of life of bhikkhus. Types of meditation are also a significant fact to gain awareness of the interrelationship between meditation and wisdom. There are two types of meditation or mind culture (*bhāvanā*) namely development of tranquility (*samatha-bhāvanā*), that is concentration (*samādhi*) and development of insight (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*), that is wisdom (*paññā*). The additional name for the development of insight, '*paññābhāvanā*' in Pāli, emphasizes the association between meditation and wisdom, and also the development of tranquility is called *samādhībhāvanā* in Pāli. It is clear that concentration and wisdom are the results of meditation. The simile, in the Milindapañha, post-canonical Pāli text is similar to the simile of the Platform Sutra. It says that when the lighted lamp is brought into a dark chamber, the light of the lamp can destroy the darkness and light it up. In a self-same manner, if insight arises it can destroy the darkness of ignorance and produce the light of knowledge.

*(Yathā, mahārāja, purisoandhakāregehepadīpampaveseyya,  
paviṭṭhopadīpoandhakāraṃvidhameti, obhāsaṃjaneti, ālokaṃvidamseti,  
rūpānipākaṭānikaroti. Evamevakho, mahārāja,  
paññāuppajjamānāvijjandhakāraṃvidhameti, vijjohāsaṃjaneti, ñāṇālokaṃvidamseti,  
ariyasaccānipākaṭānikaroti. Tatoyogāvacarō ‘anicca’ntivā ‘dukkha’ntivā  
‘anattā’tivāsammappaññāyapassati. Evaṃkho, mahārāja,  
obhāsanalakkhaṇāpaññā”ti (Trenckner 1986, 39).*

Wisdom indicates right view (*sammādiṭṭi*) and right intention (*sammāsaṃkappa*), and knowledge of suffering, knowledge of the origin of suffering, knowledge of the cessation of suffering, and the knowledge of the way leading to the cessation of suffering which is called right view. The intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, and intention of non-cruelty is called right intention (Ñānamoli & Bodhi 2009, 307-312, 1100).

All these attainments are achieved as a result of practicing highly the dhamma. This lamp of meditation lights up the light of wisdom. The prominent path of liberation among Buddhists is the way which is recommended in the Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*) as a virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*). But there are many ways recommended in early Buddhist discourses to achieve wisdom and liberation.

For instance, the four foundations of mindfulness based on meditation is a path to achieve one of two results; either Arahantship in this life or the state of the non-returner. The Greater Discourse on the Foundation of Mindfulness expresses; this is direct way to the purification of beings, for overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the disappearance of pain and sadness, for gaining the right path, for the realization of nibbāna: that is to say the four foundations of mindfulness; mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feeling, mindfulness of mind and mindfulness of mind objects. The result can be obtained by practicing them during this very life. It can be attained after attempting during six years to half a month (Walshe 2012, 335-350).

The Mahācattārīsakasutta in the Majjhimanikāya indicates that one subject to higher training possesses eight factors (*sekhapāṭipadā*) and that an arahant possesses ten factors (*asekhapāṭipadā*) including both right knowledge (*sammāñāṇa*) and right deliverance (*sammāvimutti*). Though the way of liberation is expressed through the threefold training (*tisikkhā*); virtue, concentrating and wisdom the order of the noble eightfold path is to go

through right view, right intention and it can be grouped as wisdom, virtue, concentration, and wisdom. The above-mentioned discourse indicates how right view comes first and right view is bifurcated as *sāsavā*; affected by taints, partaking merit, ripening in the acquisitions and *anāsavā*; noble, taintless, supra-mundane factors of the path. The above quotations explain two types of right view (Ñānamoli& Bodhi 2012, 934-940).

The Buddhist wisdom is not only a process of the final stage and it helps one from the beginning to the end. Therefore, right view and right concentration represent basic wisdom which helps in virtue and concentration stages in right knowledge and right deliverance represent its highest stage. Awareness of five stages; right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood whether good or bad is realized through right view. Practice above five stages correctly by avoiding the wrong side and abiding by the right side is right effort. Avoiding wrong view and abiding right view mindfully practicing the first five stages is right mindfulness. Through this right view, right effort and right mindfulness the first five stages of the noble path are developed. Contemplation of the mind in all seven stages from right view to right mindfulness is called right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*). After fulfilling this higher training, including eight factors (*sekhaṭṭipadā*) the disciple fulfills right knowledge and right deliverance and, then, he is an arahant (Ñānamoli& Bodhi2012, 307-312, 934-940).

The higher knowledge, achieved supported by meditation, is bifurcated as mundane (*lokiya*) and supramundane(*lokuttara*); the former is attainable through tranquility (*samatha*) and the latter is achieved through penetrating insight (*vipassanā*). In this path, all the way through concentration, disciples, attain four form-jhānas and four formless jhānas. This concentrated mind is thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, steady, and attain imperturbability, disciples are directed to the threefold knowledge (*tissovijjā*), namely knowledge of the recollection of past lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings (*cutūpapātāñāṇa*), and knowledge of the destruction of the taints. (*āsavakkyāñāṇa*). Most of the poems in the Thera-Therīgāthā end with the statement “The threefold knowledge have I attained and I have achieved bidding of the Buddha”(Oldenberg&Pischel 1966, 5, 9)

There are five kinds of direct knowledge, *abhiññā* in Pāli, falls naturally into the mundane division (*lokiya*) that is attainable through perfection in mental concentration (*samādhi*). They are i) magical powers (*iddhividha*)ii) divine ear (*dibbasota*);iii)

penetration of the minds of others (*ceto-pariya-ñāṇa*);iv) divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) and v) remembrance of former existences (*pubbenivāsānussati*).

### **Concentration**

The standpoint of *samādhi* in the Platform Sutra is to always practice the single direct mind in all one's actions whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down. The straightforward mind is the place of enlightenment and the Pure Land. This practice should be actually done by mind, not by mouth (McRae 2000, 42).

According to Pāli sources concentration makes the environment for insight or wisdom by purifying the mind from the five mental defilements or hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*) through practicing forty meditation subjects. *Samādhi* is not really acquired through wisdom automatically. As we know, When Prince Siddhattha stayed with his first teacher he practiced concentration with nothingness that it was almost the highest possible of the first teacher's teachings. Siddhattha realized that was not the way to enlightenment because adequate wisdom had not developed from this high level of concentration. Therefore, he left Ālārakālāma and went to the second teacher who taught him the highest possible level of concentration but it did not produce wisdom. Consequently, he left his second teacher too.

In the noble eightfold path, while meditation represents concentration, wisdom represents *nibbāna*. These two indicate how spiritual cultivation progresses. Concentration includes right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Right effort is that which a bhikkhu awakens for the non-arising of unarisen evil unwholesome states, abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states, arising of unarisen wholesome states and development of arisen wholesome states. Right mindfulness is that which a monk lives in practicing body contemplation on the body, practicing feeling-contemplation on the feelings, practicing mind-contemplation on the mind, and practicing mind-object contemplation on the mind objects. Right concentration is the concentration of four meditative absorptions (*jhāna*) (Ñānamoli & Bodhi 307-312, 1100-1101).

Concentration is not just musing but it is called right concentration, *sammāsamādhi* in Pāli, based on right view includes the understanding of the four noble truths and the law of Kamma; results of wholesome and unwholesome actions. Therefore, there is no essential gradual order called as virtue, concentration and wisdom because right view needs to come first, and it is the most important condition for the development of



wisdom. It is a mutual process that virtue helps to develop concentration and wisdom helps to develop virtue and concentration.

As a young prince Siddhattha, unenlightened Bodhisattva, concentrated his mind based on right concentration to attain Buddha-hood dividing his thoughts into two classes. Then he set on one side thoughts of sensual desire, thoughts of ill will, and thoughts of cruelty, and sets on one side thoughts of renunciation, thoughts of non-ill will, and thoughts of non-cruelty. The unenlightened Bodhisattva concentrated his mind in the following manner. When a thought of sensual desire or a thought of ill will or a thought of cruelty arose in him, he understood thus: This thought has arisen in him. This leads to his affliction, to others' affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from *nibbāna*. Therefore, he abandoned those. In the same way, when a thought of renunciation or thoughts of non-ill will or thoughts of non-cruelty arose in him he understood thus: This thought has arisen in him. This does not lead to his affliction, or to others' affliction, or to the affliction of both; it aids wisdom, does not cause difficulties, and leads to *nibbāna*. Whenever a thought of renunciation or thoughts of non-ill will or thoughts of non-cruelty arose in him, he steadied his mind internally, quieted it, brought it to singleness, and concentrated on it (Ibid207-209).

There is a good relationship between meditation and concentration. The Platform Sutra explains, meditation is the external transcending characteristic and concentration is internal undisturbed possession. This external meditation and internal concentration is called meditative concentration.

With regard to the mind it's called wisdom

With regard to the Buddha it's called meditation

When meditation and wisdom are maintained equally,

All is pure within the consciousness.

If you are enlightened to this teaching

It is through your cultivation of the nature

Its function is fundamentally brightness

The dual cultivation is correct (McRae2000, 46- 55).

Early Buddhism indicates, how four concentrative meditations support progress mundane and supra mundane goals. When four concentrative meditations (*Samādhi-bhāvanā*) developed and expanded they lead to (a) happiness here and now (*diṭṭhadhammasuka*) by practicing the four jhānas, (b) gaining knowledge and vision (*ñānadassanapaṭipadā*) by attending to the perception of light

(*ālokaśasinammanasikaorti*), (c) mindfulness and clear awareness (*sati-sampajañña*) by knowing feelings, perceptions, and thoughts as they arise, remain and vanish, and (d) the destructions of the corruptions (*āsavānaṅkhaya*), by abiding in the contemplation of the rise and fall of the five aggregates of grasping such as this is material form, this is its arising, this is ceasing. The rest of the four aggregates are also of the same manner (Walshe 2012, 488).

In this chapter, the sixth patriarch has discussed the way for enlightenment. It explains that when the mind does not grasp the dharmas, one's enlightenment flows freely. If one thinks of the previous thought, the present thought, and the later thought, one's thoughts will be continuous without ceasing. This is called 'fettered'. If one's thoughts do not abide in the dharmas, this is to be 'unfettered'. Thus it is that non-abiding is taken as the fundamental (McRae 2000, 43)

The awareness of Three Characteristics of existence is nothing but attains *nibbāna* or leads to true insight and enlightenment, according to early Buddhism. These three *anicca*(impermanency), *dukkha* (un-satisfactoriness, suffering), and *anatta* (no-self, the absence of a permanent ego) are universal properties of all existing things of the phenomenal world. In brief, all formations are impermanent, all formations are subject to suffering and all things (*dhamma*) are non-self (Hinuber& Norman1995, 85).  
sabbedhammānattā

The Aṅguttaranikāya states;

Whether Perfect Ones appear in the world, or whether Perfect Ones do not appear in the world, it still remains a firm condition, an immutable fact, and fixed law: that all formations are impermanent, that all formations are subject to suffering, that everything is without a self (Hare, 2001, 134).

The subject of this teaching is that all three points are inter-connected. For example, when Buddhism talks about the concept of suffering or un-satisfactoriness, some scholars think that the teachings of the Buddha are optimistic because it emphasizes that all formations are subject to suffering. The Buddhist notion depends upon the Three Characteristics. If something is un-satisfactory, that is called impermanent. If something is impermanent, that is called non-self. Therefore, the Buddhist notion of un-satisfactoriness is not based on satisfactoriness, it is based on impermanence. What is impermanent that is suffering or un-satisfactory; what is suffering that is non-self.

The raft-parable in the AlagaddūpamaSutta makes one of the most paradoxical and philosophically significant statements in the entire teaching of the discourse. Teachings

of the Buddha have a utilitarian significance to see the truth in Buddhism. Buddha preached the dhamma comparable to a raft for the sake of crossing over and not for the sake of clinging to it. (*kullupamamvo...dhammamdesissaminittaranatthaya no gahanatthaya...Trenckner1979, 134*).

The early Buddhist notion of concentration is a mutual process of both mind and body. It states that with excessive thinking and pondering with good thoughts, the body is tired, and when the body is tired, the mind becomes strained, and when the mind is strained, it is far from concentration (Ñānamoli & Bodhi 2009, 208).

### **Sudden and gradual**

The next question is whether the achievement of emancipation or ultimate wisdom is gradual or sudden. According to Platform Sutra the correct teaching of meditation does not basically depend on the time frame, because the ability of the understanding of people is different; deluded people develop gradually and enlightened people develop speedily. If one who can see his fundamental mind and nature there will be no such distinctions and it means that sudden and gradual are posited as provisional names. In general, though Chan Buddhism highlights sudden realization this expression shows that the Platform Sutra accepts both sudden and gradual realization. If we accepted as it is, the standpoint is similar to early Buddhist standpoint.

Once the venerable Sāriputta met the venerable Puṇṇa Mantāniputta at the Blind Men's Grove and asked Venerable Puṇṇa, 'is the holy life lived under the Blessed One'? Then the venerable Puṇṇa answered 'yes'. Again Sāriputta asked, 'is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of virtue'? The reply was no. In the same manner Sāriputta questioned, is the holy life lived under the Blessed One for the sake of purity in terms of mind concentration, or for the sake of purity in terms of view, or for the sake of purity in terms of the overcoming of perplexity, or for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge and vision of what is and is not the path, or for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge and vision of the way, or for the sake of purity in terms of knowledge and vision. Since the answer for all the questions was no, Sāriputta again asked. 'If it is so, for what purpose do you live the holy life under the Buddha?' Puṇṇa replied that it is for the sake of final *nibbāna* without clinging to that holy life lived under the Blessed One. For example, suppose that while King Pasenadi Kosala was staying at Sāvatti, some urgent business was to arise at Sāketa; and that between Sāvatti and Sāketa seven relay chariots were made ready for him. Coming out the door of the inner palace in Sāvatti, he would get in the first relay chariot. By means of the first relay chariot, he would reach

the second relay chariot. Getting out of the first relay chariot he would get in the second relay chariot. In this manner, he used seven relay chariots to reach the city of Sāketa. In the same way, purity in terms of virtue is simply for the sake of purity in terms of mind. Seven purifications are gradually supported to attain its ultimate goal nibbāna. ((Ñānamoli& Bodhi 2009, 242-245)

Concentration is one proximate stage of the gradual process. There are three objects of meditation; unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the dhamma and the saṅgha. When a defiled cloth is a dyer dipped it would look poorly dyed and impure in colour but when a pure cloth is a dyer dipped it would look well dyed and pure in colour. So too, when the mind is defiled, an unhappy destination may be expected and when the mind is pure, a happy destination may be expected. When the defilements are identified and abandoned the mind acquires unwavering confidence in the triple gems. Then he gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the dhamma, gains gladness connected with the dhamma, when he is glad, rapture is born in him; in one who is rapturous, the body becomes tranquil; one whose body is tranquil feels pleasure; in one who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. Then he abides pervading with loving kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity. When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it is liberated the knowledge comes that it is liberated ((Ñānamoli& Bodhi 2009, 118-120).

The venerable Ānanda's story about attaining arahant-hood in the Cullavaggapāli and its commentary is one of the good instances for sudden realization. When the venerable Mahākassapa was selecting arahants for the first Buddhist council, held after three months of the passing away of the Buddha, he had selected 500 hundred participants including the venerable Ānanda who was the one and only non-arahant (sekha). Though the venerable Ānanda was not an arahant, the venerable Mahākassapa knew the necessity of Ānanda for the council and advised him to attempt to become an arahant. In the last night for the council, the venerable Ānanda made a great attempt to attain arahant-hood and at midnight he lay down in the bed to sleep because he was tired. His head barely on the pillow, his feet barely off the ground the, venerable Ānanda won the sixfold *abhiññā* and he is therefore described as having become an arahant in none of the four postures. Four hundred and ninety-nine arahants were gathered for the council and there was an empty seat for Ānanda. At once the venerable Ānanda appeared on his seat as an

arahant(*sekha*) and the venerable Mahākassapa welcomed him warmly (Oldenberg1977, 286).

After the death of her husband, two children, brother, and parents, Paṭācārā, the daughter of a banker of Sāvatti, was distressed and went to Sāvatti. She attained *sotāpanna* at the end of the Buddha's first preaching and received ordination. One day when she was washing her feet she noticed how washed water trickled and reflecting in the following manner: sometimes water can go a short distance, sometimes further, and sometimes furthermore. Likewise, mortals die in childhood (*paṭhamavaye*), in middle age (*majjhimavaye*) or in old-age (*pacchimavaye*)(Pruitt 1998,109).

The story of the venerable nun Uppalavaṇṇā, the daughter of a banker of Sāvatti, is also a very interesting instance of sudden realization in Theravada Buddhism. Uppalavaṇṇā, whose skin was the colour of the heart of the blue lotus, refused many proposals of marriage and became a nun. When she was performing a certain duty in the uposathasāla, where the Buddhist monks and nuns recite the Vinaya and take feedback, having lightened the lamp, she swept the floor. She took the flame of the lamp as her visible object and developed the *tejokasina* and attained *jhāna* and also attained arahant-hood with the four special attainments. According to this story, venerable Uppalavaṇṇā realized the truth within a few seconds. Although there are many stories in the Pāli Buddhist tradition to prove that the sudden realization is related to the śrāvakayānaMahāyāna and Chinese Chán Buddhism accepted only one vehicle, Buddhayāna.If we consider the basic statement depicted in the fourth chapter of the Platform Sutra there are many arahants who attained sudden realization without intermediate and gradual realization who attained four paths and fruits gradually.

### **Summary and conclusion:**

This paper has discussedChán Buddhist standpoints on meditation, wisdom, concentration, and sudden and gradual realization depicted in the fourth chapter of the Platform Sutra comparing to early Buddhism. The Platform Sutra explains that meditation is the essence of wisdom and wisdom is the function of meditation. Early Buddhism also emphasized the significance of meditation for the process of wisdom. Both early Buddhism and Chán indicate that it is not beneficial to raise arguments as to what is first and second between wisdom and meditation. These are essential within the threefold training like virtue purifies wisdom and wisdom purifies virtue. Samādhi must be directed mind in all one's actions whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down. The Chán notion is that spiritual cultivation does not exist in argumentation. Early

Buddhism indicates that the teachings of the Buddha cannot be realized through logic and it is attainable through practice (*bhāvetabbam*) of the Middle Path. In this sense, the notion of attainment of *nibbāna* is also the same in both early Buddhist discourses and the Platform Sutra.

On the surface, though the Theravada followers think that Mahāyāna Buddhism is away from early Buddhism the chapter ‘Meditation and Wisdom’ of the Platform Sutra, shows its similarity to early Buddhist discourses written in Pāli. Sometimes, it seems that Chán is re-visiting the early Buddhist discourses with a great understanding of their meaning regardless of words and letters. Furthermore, it will be useful to build a bridge of serenity between current Buddhist Schools, by eschewing misunderstandings, to serve the world and to motivate intellectual discussions of comparative studies among Buddhist Schools.

## References

- Feer, Leon M. Ed. 1975-1991. *Samyuttanikāya, Part I- Part V*, London: Pali Text Society
- Hare, E. M. Tr. 2001. *The Book of Gradual Sayings, Vol. III*, Oxford: The Pāli Text Society.
- Harvey, Peter 1990. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hinuber, V. O. & Norman, K. R. Ed. 1995. *Dhammapada*, Oxford: Pali Text Society.
- Jayawickrama, N.A. Tr. 1962. *The Inception of Discipline, Translation published together with the text. [SamantapāsādikāBāhiraṇidāna]* London: Pāli Text Society.
- Jing Hui, venerable 2004. *The Gates of Chán Buddhism*, Buddhadharama Education Association Inc.
- McRae, John Tr. 2000. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, BDK English Tripitaka Series, California: Numata Centre for Buddhist Translation and Research.
- Ñānamoli, Bhikkhu & Bodhi, Bhikkhu Tr. 1995. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha A new Translation of the Majjhimanikāya*, Sri Lanka, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Trenckner, V. Ed. 1986. *The Milindapañha*, London: The Pāli Text Society.
- Oldenberg, Hermann Ed. 1977. *The Vinayapiṭaka, Vol. II, The Cullavagga*, London: The Pāli Text Society.
- Oldenberg, H. & Pischel, R. Ed. 1966. *Thera-Theṛgāthā*, London: The Pāli Text Society.
- Pruitt, William Ed. 1998. *Therīgāthā Aṭṭhakathā*, Oxford: The Pali Texts Society.
- Trenckner, V. Ed. 1979. *Majjhimanikāya Vol. I*, Oxford: The Pali text society.
- Walshe, Maurice 2012. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha A Translation of the Dīghanikāya*, Boston: Wisdom Publications.