



The Concept of *Vipaśyanā* Meditation in the *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*

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提要：

在本論文中，筆者試圖重構《永嘉禪宗集·毘婆舍那頌》所呈現出針對「毘婆舍那」該修行理路的主要思想內涵。儘管《永嘉禪宗集》一般被認為是永嘉玄覺禪師（665-713 年）親自撰寫的一部作品，但參照該文的流傳史以及在宋代禪宗《傳燈錄》與相關文獻當中的出處，此書應該放入五代宋初的思辯脈絡下來探討；它極可能並非永嘉玄覺所撰述的，而是集各家流派之大成。因此，從宋朝「頓漸之諍」此場論辯的思想脈絡上，本論文更深入去探究〈毘婆舍那頌〉之次第性修道工夫論，並且進一步分析作者如何將此種「漸修」之方針，套用到禪宗「頓悟」之框架上。與其他與南宗禪相關的文獻相比，《永嘉禪宗集》極為特殊之處在於，作者借用天臺·智者大師（538-597 年）「一心三觀」的詮釋觀點，以便開展出新穎的禪宗「頓教」思想。順著此思維方式，筆者藉由《永嘉禪宗集》之文脈與宗教內涵，透徹地鑽研宋初天臺宗與禪宗之間的交涉史。但到目前為止，這一漢傳佛教教理思想史的脈絡，卻為學術界常忽略的重要課題。因此，筆者企圖更加驗證禪宗思想框架與其它流派的融合。



Introduction

The conception of Buddhist meditation as a “path” (*mārga* 道) would seem to imply a model of religious praxis that is progressive and sequential. All paths comprise certain graduated “steps” that provide direction, coherence, and continuity. However, one distinctive aspect of the intellectual development of Chinese Chán Buddhism is this tradition’s substitution of existing diachronic designs, for a synchronic notion of religious practice as a means to access “Sudden Enlightenment” 「頓悟」. In accordance with the doctrines of the Southern School of Chán, the timescale for potential spiritual progress is radically truncated, as the Chán adept focuses his/her aspirations on the spontaneous moment of emancipatory insight.

As Professor John R. McRae has shown, the movement to dismantle the well-worn “stepladder” model of Buddhist meditation in the name of the immediate realization of Buddhist enlightenment, reached an apex of “rhetorical purity” in works by the Southern-school figure Hézá Shénhuì 荷澤神會 (684-758).¹ Yet, however potent, even revolutionary, the message of “immanent” awakening may have seemed to Chinese Buddhists at the time, given the practical necessities of monastic education and self-cultivation, within the context of later Chán Buddhist institutions, a commitment to the “subitist” ethos was counterbalanced with a renewed focus upon formal meditative training.² For as Guifēng Zōngmì 圭峰宗密 (780-841) – traditionally heralded as the “Fifth Patriarch” in the Hézá line 荷澤宗 of Southern Chán – argued during the early 9th century, a regimen of “gradual practice” 「漸修」 follows from the initial experience of “sudden enlightenment.”³

¹ John R. McRae, “Shén-huì and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment in Early Ch’an Buddhism,” *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), p. 258.

² As Professor Luis O. Gomez argues in a seminal article on the sudden-gradual *problematik*: over a period of time, movements that originate in opposition to the religious establishment tend to moderate “antinomian” rhetoric in order to “integrate the radical dialectic and the iconoclasm of these doctrines into accepted systems of path theory.” – “Purifying Gold: The Metaphor of Effort and Intuition in Buddhist Thought and Practice,” *Sudden and Gradual*, p. 70.

³ Professor Peter N. Gregory thus characterizes Zōngmì’s account of Shénhuì’s “Sudden Teaching” 「頓教」: “Yet, while he maintained that Shénhuì’s teaching was ‘sudden,’ he held that it contained a gradual component as well. In fact, he described Shénhuì’s teaching in regard to practice and enlightenment as advocating the necessity of a sudden experience of enlightenment to be followed by a gradual process



In this paper, through analysis of a 10th-century text that emerged from a religious milieu shaped by these two seemingly antipodal designs, I hope to address certain theoretical implications of this sudden-gradual problematic as it pertains to the doctrinal history of Chán Buddhism. How did thinkers informed by the “subitist” conception of meditative praxis rework existing “gradualist” models, such as that set in place by the Tiāntái School Patriarch Zhìyì 智顛 (538-597) during the 6th century? How did Buddhists exegetes during the early Sòng Dynasty reconceive of the scholastic systems of gradual practice vis-à-vis the doctrinal innovations of the Táng-period Chán lineages?

As something of a “case study” to facilitate the understanding of these issues, I focus on the concept of *vipaśyanā* meditation in the “Ode on *Vipaśyanā*” 〈毗婆舍那頌〉, a text preserved within the *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí* 《永嘉禪宗集》 collection.⁴ The contents of this work reveal a remarkable attempt to integrate sudden and gradual terminology in the service of conjoining Chán and Tiāntái modes of contemplative practice. Indeed, there is much evidence to suggest that Buddhist exegetes of the Sòng Dynasty did not perceive of “sudden” and “gradual” as intrinsically exclusive frameworks, but rather as dynamic elements operating harmoniously within the context of an integrated practice.

In light of the ecumenical ethos that he came to embody, it seems fitting that the *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí* has been traditionally credited to the Táng-Dynasty Chán Master Xuánjué 永嘉玄覺禪師 (665-713), a religious figure commanding respect across Chán and Tiāntái lineages. Although Xuánjué is canonized within both Chán and Tiantái hagiographical traditions, he is perhaps most well-known for his repartee with the Sixth Patriarch Huìnéng, during which he impressed the Sixth Patriarch enough to gain his “Seal of Enlightenment” 「印證」. Following his brief one-night encounter with this Chán luminary, Xuánjué was known by the moniker “One Night Enlightenment” 一宿覺. With these *bona fide* credentials in hand, Xuánjué returned to his native Wēnzhōu 溫州 (Modern-day Zhèjāng Province) to propagate the Southern-school teachings. According to this conventional account, the *Song of Enlightenment* 《證道歌》, an authoritative work whose verses are still chanted daily by

of cultivation, in which the practitioner’s initial insight into his true nature is systematically deepened until it becomes integrated into every aspect of his life.” -- “Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation: Tsung-mi’s Analysis of Mind,” *Sudden and Gradual*, p. 280.

⁴ For Xuánjué’s biography, see fascicle 8 of the *Sòng-dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks* 《宋高僧傳·第八卷·玄覺禪師傳》, compiled by Zànníng 贊寧 (919-1001); also fascicle 5 of the *Jǐngdé chuándēng lù* 《景德傳燈錄·卷五》 (completed in 1004).



Chán monks in Táiwān, stands as testament to the culmination of Xuánjué’s spiritual attainment.

Throughout the Sòng dynasty, Buddhist historians such as Dàojuán 道原 and Zhìpán 志磐, bolstered the intellectual link between the *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí* and the Tiāntái tradition by characterizing Xuánjué as a practitioner of the Tiāntái meditation of calming (*śamatha* 止) and contemplation (*vipāśyanā* 觀).⁵ Widespread discussion of the contents of the *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí* within Sòng-period Chán collections, as well as the existence of a long commentary by the Míng-dynasty Tiāntái author Chuándēng 傳燈,⁶ are testament to the broad reception of Xuánjué’s ideas within both Tiāntái and Chán circles.

Given Chán Master Xuánjué’s intimate association with both meditative and scholastic lineages,⁷ an examination of the structure and contents of the “Ode on *Vipāśyanā*” promises to shed light upon the nature of intellectual interactions between Chán and Tiāntái Buddhists in Sòng-dynasty China. Scholars of Chinese Buddhism within the Anglophone academe have long noted the variegated interactions between the Southern School of Chán Buddhism and what has become known as the “Dìlùn Tradition” (Dìlùn-zōng 地論宗) and the “Huáyán Tradition” (Huáyán-zōng 華嚴宗) – especially as regards the coalescence of these diverse intellectual currents in the seminal works of Zōngmì.⁸ And yet, the vigorous and fruitful dialogues between

⁵ Dàojuán writes: “[Xuánjué] brilliantly penetrated the perfect and subtle dharma teaching of Tiāntái calming and contemplation” 『精天台止觀圓妙法門』 -- *Jīngdé chuándēng lù*, 《景德傳燈錄》, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 《大正新脩大藏經》, Vol. 51, No. 2076, p. 241, a27. As Zhìpán records in fascicle ten of his *Fózǔ tóngjì* (*Record of the Lineage of the Buddhas and Patriarchs*) 《佛祖統紀·卷十》, dated to 1269: “The *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí* entirely employs the import of exclusion and illumination vis-à-vis *śamatha* and *vipāśyanā*” 『《永嘉集》中全用止觀遮照之旨。』 -- *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 《大正新脩大藏經》, Vol. 49, No. 2035, p. 202, c04.

⁶ *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jízhù* 《永嘉禪宗集注》, compiled by Yōuxī Śramaṇa Chuándēng of Mt. Tiāntái 天台山幽溪沙門傳燈, completed in August, 1622 -- *Shinsan zokuzōkyō* 《卍新纂續藏經》, Vol. 36, No. 1242, p.282, b02.

⁷ From the usage of a certain phrase appearing in Xuánjué’s “Ode on *Śamatha*” 〈奢摩他頌〉 in the dialogue between Ox-head Master Fāróng 牛頭法融 and King Bólíng 博陵王 in fascicle 4 of the *Jīngdé chuándēng lù* (*Jīngdé Era Records of the Transmission of the Lamp*), SEKIGUCHI Shindai 関口真大 adduces the argument that Xuánjué’s dharma teachings must have drawn influence from this Ox-head Chán Master, a figure “wholly unrelated” 「全く無關係」 to the “orthodox” Southern-Chán lineage – see Sekiguchi’s *Tendai shikan no kenkyū* 《天台止觀の研究》(Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店, 1969), pp. 230-1; for the passage in discussion, see *Jīngdé chuándēng lù*, (T51, no. 2076, p. 227, c6-9).

⁸ See Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 224-244; Jeffrey L. Broughton, *Zōngmì on Chán*, (New York: Columbia



Chán- and Tiāntái-school thinkers that unfolded during the following centuries remain an understudied contour of Chinese religious history.⁹ The large body of literature that emerged from these cultural developments yields a variety of perspectives from which to explore the radical changes in religion and philosophy during the Sòng. As Professor Robert E. Buswell has written: “no one after all, not even the cloistered monk, is hermetically sealed off from his age.”¹⁰ Although it is difficult to ignore the broad social ramifications of these intellectual transformations, in this paper I shall focus on issues germane to the reinvisioning of modes of Buddhist contemplation. In light of the intimate connection between doctrine and meditative praxis within the Chán and Tiāntái traditions, an accurate understanding of the concept of *vipaśyanā* in the *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí* is important to our understanding of the development of Chinese Buddhist thought.

But first off, it is critical to reexamine the textual history of the *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí* – hereafter YCJ – in order to accurately situate this work within the dynamic religious and cultural contexts of the Five Dynasties and early Sòng period. Previous Japanese scholarship has tended to take for granted that the received version of the YCJ represents a definitive collection of Master Xuánjué’s letters, collated by Wèi Jìng 魏靖¹¹ after Xuánjué’s death in 713.¹² However, an examination of the actual textual record casts doubt upon this attribution. Firstly, there is no mention of the YCJ until the emergence of the *Zōngjìng lù* 《宗鏡錄》 (*Records of the Source*

University Press, 2009).

⁹ In his 1994 article, Brook Ziporyn focuses on sectarian Tiāntái critiques of Chán doctrine, although he devotes less attention to more ecumenical tendencies within the two traditions. Nevertheless, Professor Ziporyn notes the 11th-century Tiāntái thinker Zhǐlǐ’s 知禮 (960-1028) great reverence for Xuánjué -- see “Anti-Chán Polemics in Post-Táng Tiāntái,” *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies*, 17.1, Summer 1994, p. 37.

¹⁰ Robert E. Buswell, Jr., “The ‘Short-cut’ Approach of *K’an-hua* meditation: The Evolution of a Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch’an Buddhism,” *Sudden and Gradual*, p. 323.

¹¹ See the prologue to ascribed to Wèi Jìng 〈禪宗永嘉集序〉 in the *Zōjō-ji* text from the *Shinsan zokuzōkyō* 《卍新纂續藏經》 (Hereafter abbreviated as X).

¹² In his foundational three-volume history of Zen Buddhism, Ui Hakuju 宇井伯壽 (1882-1963) describes the *Song of Enlightenment* (*Zhèngdào gē*) 《證道歌》 as likely an apocryphal text, although he views the YCJ as an authentic work attributable to the Táng-dynasty Master Xuánjué -- *Zenshūshi kenkyū* 《禪宗史研究》, vol.2, (Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店, 1943), pp. 273-277. More recent Japanese scholarship on the YCJ has followed Professor Ui’s attribution. See, for instance, KAZAMA Toshio 風間敏夫, “*Zenshū Yōgashū no kōzō to shisō*” 〈《禪宗永嘉集》の構造と思想〉, *Shūkyō kenkyū* 《宗教研究》, (Tōkyō: Shūkyō kenkyūkai 宗教研究会), Vol. 133.3, No. 282 (Dec. 1989), pp. 1-31; SENGOKU Keishō 仙石景章, “*Zenshū Yōga saikō*” 〈《禪宗永嘉》再考〉, *Indo tetsugaku Bukkyōgaku* 《印度哲学仏教学》, (Sapporo: Hokkaidō Daigaku Bunkakubu Indo Tetsugaku kenkyūshitsu 北海道大学文学部印度哲学研究室, 1991), pp. 273-287.



Mirror) in 961.¹³ Further troubling to this traditional account are the scattered contents of Chuándēng’s commentary,¹⁴ the organization of which bear little resemblance to the ten-chapter structure presented in fascicle 5 of the *Jīngdé chuándēng lù* (*Jīngdé Era Records of the Transmission of the Lamp*),¹⁵ or to the Zōjō-ji Temple 增上寺¹⁶ manuscript from which the Taishō Canon text was redacted.¹⁷ Clearly, if any complete collection of letters was available to Sòng-dynasty bibliographers such as Dàoyuán, this was not transmitted through to the Míng period without incident.

For the purposes of this study, it shall be assumed that the redaction of the YCJ did not take place any earlier than the middle decades of the 10th century (the period of time that witnessed the compilation of the *Source Mirror*). With this presumption in mind, I shall use the Zōjō-ji manuscript as the basis for this analysis, for this version preserves the same chapter layout as that of the earliest detailed record in the *Transmission of the Lamp*.

To briefly set aside these slippery issues surrounding textual transmission, I will argue that from the standpoint of 10th-century Buddhist theory, the “Ode on

¹³ A large portion of the “Ode on *Vipāśyanā*” appears in this monumental 10th-century work by Yōngmíng Yánshòu 永明延壽 (904-975), (T48, no.2016, p.9, a11-27).

¹⁴ From a structural standpoint, the chapter organization of Chuándēng’s text bears little resemblance to the Zōjō-ji manuscript. In fact, within Chuándēng’s commentary there is no separate chapter heading for the “Ode on *Vipāśyanā*,” rather this text is orientated within “Chapter Nine on the Correct Practice of Calming and Concentration” 〈正修止觀第九〉, (X36, No. 1242, pp. 310-313).

¹⁵ Fascicle 5 of the *Transmission of the Lamp* 《景德傳燈錄·卷五》 contains a seemingly abridged version of the opening exposition of the Yōngjiā Chánzōng jí 《禪宗永嘉集》, although a large portion of the section on “Ten Contemplations of the Mind” 〈觀心十門〉 is rendered intact. Excerpts from the “Ode on *Śamatha*” 〈奢摩他頌〉 appear in the *Línjiān lù* 《林間錄》 (*Records from Amidst the Forest*), compiled by Shì Huìhóng of the Sòng 宋·釋惠洪 (1071-1128) – see the *Shinsan zokuzōkyō* 《卍新纂續藏經》, Vol. 87, No. 87, p. 268, b17-c2. MIYACHI Kiyohiko 宮地清彦 has examined the depiction of Master Xuánjué’s teachings in this 12th-century record, see his “*Denkōroku to Ringenroku no kankeisei ni tsuite: Yōgagenkaku to Ōbakukisen no shihō ni matsuwaru kijutsu yori*,” 〈《伝光録》と《林間録》の関係性について：永嘉玄覺・黄檗希遷の嗣法にまつわる記述より〉, *Indo Bukkyō kenkyū* 《印度仏教研究》, Vol. 58, No. 1, (Feb., 2009), pp. 236-240. Fascicle 2 of the 13th-century *Wūdēng huìyuán* 《五燈會元》 (*Compendium of the Five Lamps*) contains excerpts from the “Ode on *Vipāśyanā*” and a large portion of the “Ten Contemplations of the Mind” -- *Shinsan zokuzōkyō* 《卍新纂續藏經》, Vol. 80, No. 1565, pp. 58-9.

¹⁶ The Míng-dynasty manuscript from the Hō-on Canon of the Zōjō-ji Temple, printed in 1634 and currently held at Ōtani University. 「增上寺報恩藏明本，寛永十一年刊，大谷大學藏」-- see Lán Jífù 藍吉富, ed., *Chánzōng quánshū* 《禪宗全書》, (Táipèi: Wénshūwénhuà yǒuxiàngōngsī 文殊文化有限公司, 2008), p. 653.

¹⁷ *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, (hereafter abbreviated as T), Vol. 48, No. 2013.



Vipaśyanā” stands out as unique for its imposition of *vipaśyanā* into the Tiāntái framework of “Three Cognitions qua One Mind” 「三智一心」. Building upon the tripartite structure of the original Tiāntái teaching, this text represents the transcendence of the cognition-object 「智境」 dichotomy, as the convergence of the Three Contemplations of *vipaśyanā* 「毗婆舍那」, *śamatha* 「奢摩他」, and *upekṣā* 「優畢叉」, into the non-differentiated ground of the One Mind.

Drawing heavily from Tiāntái Patriarch Zhìyǐ’s complex system of meditative praxis, the contents of this text present a graduated series of steps leading towards the goal of emancipatory realization. However, this stepladder framework is useful only insofar as it expedites the path towards the synchronic catharsis of sudden enlightenment. Although the YCJ employs abstract philosophical concepts to construct an intricate phenomenology for the Threefold Contemplation -- leading the practitioner from delusory cognition through rarified states of meditative awareness -- this terminology is ultimately subordinated to the broader soteriological project. As the culmination of this progressive evolution, the text emphasizes a final and “sudden” 「頓」 relinquishment of all expedient means (*upāya* 方便), a move that owes much to Huìnéng and Shénhuì.

Before I delve into the heart of the YCJ’s *mārga* teachings, I briefly sketch the general structure of this tract, whose eight sections are as follows:

1. “The Reverence for and Observance of the *Mārga*” 〈慕道志儀〉
2. “The Proud Intention to Uphold the Precepts” 〈戒橋奢意〉
3. “The Pure Cultivation of the Three Karmic Activities” 〈淨修三業〉
4. “The Ode on *Śamatha*” 〈奢摩他頌〉
5. “The Ode on *Vipaśyanā*” 〈毗婆舍那頌〉
6. “The Ode on *Upekṣā*” 〈優畢叉頌〉
7. “The Gradual Practice of the Three Vehicles” 〈三乘漸次〉
8. “The Non-duality of Principle and Phenomenon” 〈事理不二〉

In the following discussion, I shall set out by examining the gradual practice of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* throughout the fourth and fifth sections, and will conclude with an analysis of the “Ode on *Upekṣā*,” which comprises the kernel of the YCJ’s sudden teaching.



Śamatha and Vipāśyanā

To examine the epistemological as well as soteriological features of the YCJ's reinvisioning of the Threefold Contemplation, we first turn to the “Ode on *Śamatha*” 〈奢摩他頌〉. In its manner of presentation, the YCJ draws upon the ancient Buddhist rubric of *śamatha-vipāśyanā*. However, as we shall see, this text's depiction ventures far beyond a passive model of *śamatha* as a initial stage of “calming” the mind that precedes the more fundamental “insights” of *vipāśyanā* :

『修心漸次者：夫以「知」知「物」，「物」在、「知」亦在。若以「知」知「知」，知「知」，則離「物」。「物」離，猶「知」在。起「知知」於知，「後知」若生時，「前知」早已滅。二知既不並，但得前知滅，滅處為知境，能所俱非真；前則滅滅引知，後則知知續滅；生滅相續，自是輪迴之道。今言「知」者，不須「知知」；但知而已，則前不接滅，後不引起。前後斷續，中間自孤，當體不顧，應時消滅。「知體」既已滅，豁然如托空。寂爾少時間，唯覺無所得。』¹⁸

The gradual practice of cultivating the mind: if one employs perception to perceive mundane things, both mundane things and perception remain. If one employs reflective perception [“the perception of perception”] to perceive perception [itself], then in perceiving perception, one abandons mundane things. [However,] having abandoned mundane things, perception yet remains. After having directed the perception of perception itself to that perception, at the time when the subsequent perception is generated, the previous perception has long already extinguished. As the two [periods of] perception [previous and subsequent perception] cannot function concurrently, the only thing it (i.e. the subsequent perception) grasps is that the former perception ceases, thus the locus of extinguishment [of the previous perception] serves as the object of perception [for the subsequent moment of perception], and so this cognitive function [*noesis*] and its object [*noema*] are not that of the Ultimate Truth. What comes before induces subsequent perceptions by its cessation again and again, what comes after succeeds what has ceased by its perception again and again; generation and extinction continuously vacillate (*saṃtāna*), this in itself is the path of rebirth. What at this moment I name as “perception,” does not await for the emergence of reflective perception, but merely perceives, and does not link with the previous moment of extinguishing, while not leading to subsequent arisings [of perception]. The link with previous and subsequent moments having been cut off, the middle is alone; this present essence of perception does not look backwards nor forwards, and at that very moment is extinguished. The essence of [current] perception having extinguished, it is as if opening toward a wide expanse that holds nothingness. It is still within that short moment of time, and one is only awakened to [the fact that] one is not grasping anything.

¹⁸ *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No. 2013, p. 389, c09-c15).



Far from indicating a sort of quiescent acceptance of fluctuating external phenomena, the “Ode on *Śamatha*” describes the meditator’s active engagement in this realm. The tripartite progression that this movement initiates traces the stages of *śamatha* cultivation. According to the depiction of the first stage, *śamatha* affords the practitioner with the ability to move beyond his/her attachments to “mundane things” 「物」, in order to undertake a systematic examination of the source of “perception” itself 「知知」. For it is only through the self-reflexive application of perception towards one’s own perceptive faculties that one may mediate the incessant vacillations of mental phenomena. There is no way to halt the ineluctable flow of consciousness, but by “cutting off the link between previous and subsequent moments” 「前後斷續」, the meditator locates a place of stability within the current moment of perception. This represents the movement from the first to second stages of *śamatha* development.

However, from the perspective of constant temporal flux (*samtāna* 相續), this point of stasis proves untenable, “and at that very moment is extinguished.” Thus having relinquished attachments to even this most refined “essence of perception” 「知體」, the meditator achieves a moment of repose amidst the incessant mental fluctuations. Following this third stage of development, the meditator becomes cognizant of his attachments to subjective perceptions and entrusts in the “emptiness which is non-grasping” (*aprāptavya-śūnyatā* 無所得空). This instantaneous realization facilitates the comprehension of the provisional nature of *śamatha* contemplation and its object 「能所俱非真」.

However, the text clarifies that such insights stem from a chimerical form of meditative awareness known as “semblance awakening” 「相似覺」. The substance of this “single thought moment” 「一念」 still partakes of the wholly defiled nature of the five *skandha-s* 「舉體全是五陰」.¹⁹ At this juncture, the YCJ expands upon the notion of “semblance awakening,” a concept that owes much to the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* 《大乘起信論》: “cognition and object are suddenly forgotten, and the minute aspects of the percept (*ālambana*) are completely purified. The non-perception that appears as awakening is silent and of the stillness of the void. The nature of non-perception is different from that of wood and stone.” 『能所頓忘，纖緣盡淨。闐

¹⁹ *Yōngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No. 2013, p. 390, c14).



爾虛寂，似覺無知。無知之性，異乎木石。」²⁰

As described in the “Ode on *Śamatha*,” the occurrence of “semblance awakening” does indicate an initial insight into the unreliability of ordinary cognition. The steady movement away from this defiled state traces a “returning towards the source of Marvelous Nature” 「還源之妙性」. Here the adverb *dùn* indicates an momentary awareness of the “emptiness” of the percept (*ālambana* 所緣). This fleeting vision born of the “beginner’s mind” 「初心」 is rapidly washed away by the onslaught of vacillating thoughts.

The YCJ insists that the essence of the perspicacious cognition fostered by *śamatha* meditation is of the “nature of non-perception,” a heightened form of awareness that has nothing in common with the nescience of insentient objects. However, despite these constructive developments, given the ephemeral nature of *śamatha* “semblance awakening,” the meditator must move onwards to the more potent insights offered by *vipāśyanā* practice.

Much like the preceding “Ode on *Śamatha*,” the “Ode on *Vipāśyanā*” evinces a coherent tripartite structure. The dyad “object-cognition” 「境智」 serves to frame the progressive evolution of *vipāśyanā* practice. In his commentary, Chuándēng 傳燈 restates the “canonical” expression of the relationship between *zhì* and *jìng*: “cognition is the ability of contemplation, and the object is that which is contemplated” 「智為能觀，境為所觀」.²¹ In the YCJ, *zhì* stands for the cognition that the meditator relies upon to “comprehend” 「了達」 the object. Throughout its depictions of the following stages of religious growth, the “Ode” draws heavily upon visual metaphors to express *zhì* as a type of “illuminating vision.”

The opening exposition of the “Ode” describes the interdependence of cognition and object, revealed during the course of ordinary cognition:

『夫境非智而不了；智非境而不生。智生，則了境而生。境了，則智生而了。』²²
If not for cognition, the object would not be comprehended; if not for the object, cognition would not be generated. In the generation of cognition, it is generated through comprehending

²⁰ *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No. 2013, p. 389, b21).

²¹ Chuándēng 傳燈, *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jízhù* 《永嘉禪宗集注》, (X36, No. 1242, p.290, b05).

²² *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No. 2013, p. 390, c20-21).



the object. In the comprehension of the object, comprehension [accompanies] the generation of cognition.

As we observe from the above passage, the opening section of the “Ode” concerns the “mutual generation of cognition and object” 「智境相生」. The generation of cognition, involves the preliminary comprehension of a cognitive object. Likewise, the comprehension of the object first entails the generation of a transitive cognitive function. According to Xuánjué’s conception of the Tiāntái Threefold Contemplation, the meditator may only break through this impasse of interdependent phenomena by engaging the *noetic* capabilities of *vipásyanā*.

In the following section, the “Ode” presents a sequential framework for the *vipásyanā* meditation. The first stage is described as such: “if cognition comprehends the object, then this is the ‘cognition that comprehends the emptiness of the object.’ [In this case,] cognition is like the eye that that illuminates the emptiness of the flower; this is the ‘vision that illuminates the emptiness of the flower.’” 『若智了於境，即是「境空智」。如眼了花空，是「了花空眼」。』 In other words, the first stage of *vipásyanā* involves the transitive movement of the cognitive “function” (*néng* 能) towards the object (*suǒ* 所). Correct application of this *noesis* (*jñāna*), results in “cognition that comprehends the emptiness of the object” 「境空智」.

What if the meditator substitutes the external object, for the internal functioning of “cognition” 「智」 itself? This reflexive movement focuses cognition inwards, towards the process of vision. The text states: “If cognition comprehends cognition itself, then this is the ‘cognition that comprehends the emptiness of cognition.’ If the eye illuminates the emptiness of vision itself, then this is the ‘vision that illuminates the emptiness of vision.’” 『若智了於智，即是「智空智」。如眼了眼空，是「了眼空眼」。』²³ Here the relationship between the “eye” as means of perception and “flower” as visual object may be again best understood as indicating the dynamic movement between *noetic* and *noematic* aspects. For instance, someone with an eye disease sees space obscured by a network of illusory hairs and flowers. But when his vision is clarified by means of medicine, these vitreous “floaters” and other entopic phenomena blocking the visual field dissipate into unreality.

²³ *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, no. 2013, p. 390, c29-a04).



To illustrate this analogy, Chuándēng draws forth a passage from the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*《楞嚴經》: “the Buddha instructed Mañjuśrī: ‘the mental characteristics generated by vision and the visual referent (*ālambana*) are like flowers amid the void, originally never existing.’” 『佛告文殊：「見、與見緣、并所想相，如虛空花，本無所有。」』²⁴ Relinquishing his attachment to the unreal image as “empty,” the meditator turns his vision inward to reveal the fundamental interdependence between perception and percept. In Husserl’s words, “reflection makes an object out of what was previously a subjective process.”²⁵

However, the text notes that during this second stage there is a tendency to remain fixated on the conception of the external object as illusory. As demonstrated through Xuánjué’s description of the third stage of *vipāśyanā* meditation, it is only through the concurrent realization into the universal emptiness of the visual referent *and* of visual perception that one attains the “the vision that illuminates the emptiness of both the flower and the eyes” 「了花眼空眼」.

Observing the tripartite structure set out in the “Ode on *Vipāśyanā*,” we see that Xuánjué emphasizes *vipāśyanā* as a means of self-reflection that reveals the meditator’s subjective perceptions as rooted in a delusory frame of reference. However, even during the third stage of progression, it is also clear that there is still a source of cognition that serves as the epistemic basis for the contemplation 「能觀之智」.²⁶ The underlying “emptiness” revealed by *vipāśyanā* is not a pernicious vacuum that obliterates the “subject” of cognition, but rather indicates a clarifying of the cognitive faculties through the elimination of *muscae volitantes* and other perceptual aberrancies.

The above account of *vipāśyanā* practice clearly derives from what Professor Carl Bielefeldt has identified as the emphasis on “discursive activity” within the “scholastic *vipāśyanā* systems” of Zhìyǐ and the luminaries of the early Tiāntái tradition.²⁷ According to the meditative schemata of the YCJ, while *śamatha* initiates an active engagement of the external object, through the sustained “counter-illumination” 「返照」

²⁴ *Lèngyán jīng*, fascicle 2 《楞嚴經·卷第二》, (T19, No. 945, p. 111, b18).

²⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers), p. 35.

²⁶ Chuándēng, *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jízhù* 《永嘉禪宗集注》, (X36, No. 1242, p.311, c04).

²⁷ Carl Bielefeldt, *Dōgen’s Manuals of Zen Meditation*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 81.



of the mind itself as object, *vipaśyanā* results in a profound transformation in the way that the meditator views the world.

Three Contemplations *qua* One Mind

In order to further examine the heartening spiritual prospect offered by the YCJ, we now turn back to the opening exposition of the text:

『定慧既均，則寂而常照：三觀一心。何疑不遣？何照不圓？』²⁸

Since concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) are balanced, there is quiescence yet constant illumination: Three Contemplations qua One Mind. Where are there doubts that are not cast off? What illumination is not rendered full?

Here the author of the YCJ voices an explicit commitment to the Tīāntái conception of Threefold Contemplation.²⁹ In light of this passage, it is worth noting that a notion of “matching” concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) represents a radically different doctrinal understanding from that associated with the Chán monk Shénhuì, who posits an “essence/function” 「體用」 relationship between *samādhi* and *prajñā*.³⁰ Rather, the author of the YCJ assumes no fundamental linkage between the two, and clarifies that it is only through the cultivation of *samatha* that the meditator might establish a temporary parity between *samādhi* and *prajñā*.

In light of the centrality of *samatha* and *vipaśyanā* within the YCJ, it would be difficult to assert, as Neal Donner has suggested, that in the wake of the radical subitist movements of the 8th century, the *samatha-vipaśyanā* terminology was replaced by a concern for the *samādhi-prajñā* 「定慧」 rubric within Chán literary circles.³¹ Rather, the YCJ stands out as a remarkable attempt to refashion the *samādhi-prajñā* formula within the formal soteriology of the Three Contemplations qua One Mind. In light of the broad reception of the YCJ following its first appearance in the mid-10th century, it is clear

²⁸ *Yōngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No. 2013, p. 388, a08).

²⁹ In the *Yōngjiā Chánzōng jí*, this structure is variously iterated as: “Three Contemplations qua One Mind” 「三觀一心」, “Three Cognitions qua One Mind” 「三智一心」, and “Three Truths (*satya*) qua Unitary Object” 「三諦一境」.

³⁰ See *Nányáng Héshàng wèndá zázhēngyì* 〈南陽和尚問答雜徵義〉, in *Shénhuì Héshàng Chán yǔlù* 《神會和尚禪語錄》, ed. Yáng Zēngwén 楊曾文, (Běijīng: Zhōnghuá shūjú, 1996), p. 79.

³¹ Neal Donner, “Sudden and Gradual Intimately Conjoined: Chih-I’s T’ien-t’ai View,” *Sudden and Gradual*, p. 212-13.



that at least some groups of Sòng-dynasty Chán monks still viewed the stepladder framework of the “Threefold Contemplation” as a useful pedagogical device within the context of the meditation hall.

The Ode on *Upekṣā*

“The Ode on *Upekṣā*” 〈優畢叉頌〉 expands upon the tripartite framework of the Contemplation, by means of a threefold variation on the characters “illuminating” 「照」 and “still” 「寂」. Here Xuánjué expresses the three modes of contemplation: *vipāśyanā* 「毘婆舍那」, *śamatha* 「奢摩他」, and *upekṣā* 「優畢叉」, in terms of their *noetic* function (“illumination”) and *eidetic* essence (“stillness”):

『定慧則寂而常照。寂而常照，則雙與。無緣之慈，則雙奪。雙奪，故「優畢叉」。雙與，故「毘婆」、「奢摩」。以「奢摩他」故，雖寂而常照。以「毘婆舍那」故，雖照而常寂。以「優畢叉」故，非照而非寂。照而常寂故，說「俗而即真」。寂而常照，故說「真而即俗」。非寂、非照，故杜口於毘耶。』³²

Samādhi and *prajñā* are still yet constantly illuminating; with “stillness and constantly illumination” there is two-fold providing.³³ With the great compassion towards those with whom one is not related,³⁴ there is two-fold effacement. With two-fold effacement there is *upekṣā*. With two-fold providing there is *vipāśyanā* and *śamatha*. Due to *śamatha*, there is stillness, although this accompanied by constant illumination. Due to *upekṣā*, there is neither illumination nor stillness. Because of [the state of] “illuminating though constantly still,” one says that “even in the mundane realm there is the ultimate truth.” Because of [the state of] “still though constantly illuminating,” one says that “even in the ultimate realm there is the mundane truth.” Because of [the state of] “neither still nor illuminating,” [Vimalakīrti] shut his mouth at Vaiśālī.³⁵

³² *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, no. 2013, p. 391, b06-9).

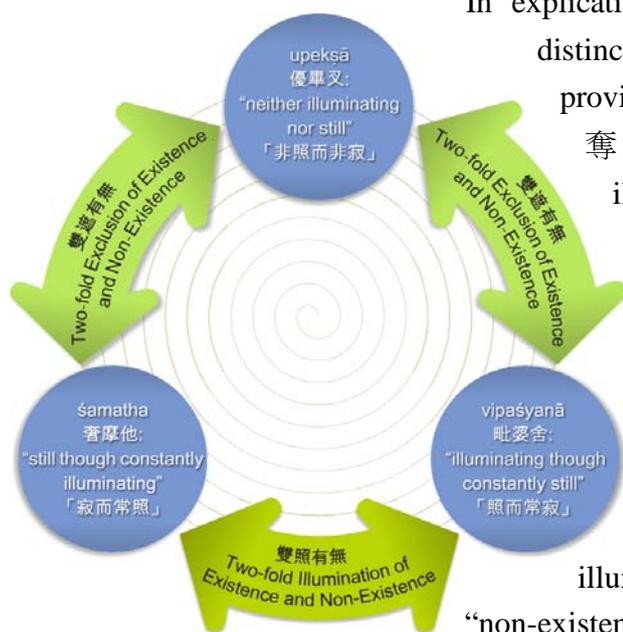
³³ Three-Treatise School Master Jízàng’s 吉藏 (549-623) *Commentary on the Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra (Fāhuá yìshū)* 《法華義疏》 reads: “‘Illuminating though constantly still’ is called *samādhi*, ‘still though constantly illuminating’ is called *jñāna*.” 『照而常寂名「定」，寂而常照名「慧」。』-- (T34, No. 1721, p. 469, a28).

³⁴ In fascicle 6 of the *Great Calming and Contemplation (Móhě zhǐguān)* 《摩訶止觀·卷六》，Zhìyì describes “the compassion towards those with whom one is not related,” as a sort of magnet-like non-volitional force: “like a magnet absorbing iron, [this compassion] grasps [the object] without mental volition.” 『如慈石吸鐵，無心而取。』-- (T46, No. 1911, .81, a04). For further analysis of this passage see Kazama (1989), p. 17.

³⁵ This description of Vimalakīrti’s “thunderous silence” employs a *topos* from the “Nirvāṇa is Nameless” chapter of *Sēngzhào’s Treatise* 《肇論·涅槃無名》: “Thus at Magadha, Śākyamuni shut himself up in a room [to meditate]. Vimalakīrti shut his mouth at Vaiśālī.” 『所以釋迦掩室於摩竭。淨名杜口於毘耶。』 This *topos* was taken up by the later Three-Treatise School Master Jízàng in his various philosophical treatises and commentaries -- see Itō Takatoshi 伊藤隆寿, “Sōchō to Kichizō – Chūgoku ni okeru chūkan shisō juyō no ichimen” 〈僧肇と吉藏—中国における中觀思想受容の一面〉, *Kamata*



In explicating the above passage, *Chuang* draws a distinction between the methods of “two-fold providing” 「雙與」 and “two-fold effacement” 「雙奪」: “‘Two-fold providing’ is the two-fold illumination by the Middle Way. ‘Two-fold effacement’ is the two-fold exclusion by the Middle Way.” 『雙與，即「中道」之雙照也。雙奪，即「中道」之雙遮也。』³⁶



From the standpoint of the preliminary stages of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, the Middle Way serves to illuminate the states of “existence” and

“non-existence” 「雙照有無」. Advancing beyond these initial insights, the practitioner engages the function of *upekṣā* to cast off his/her attachments to shifting phenomena 「雙遮有無」. As a multidirectional structure, the Middle Way exhibits both constructive (*kataphatic*) and deconstructive (*apophatic*) features. Thus, with “conventional truth” as the point of reference, the practitioner relies upon *śamatha* to comprehend the Ultimate Truth 「真諦」. Likewise, from the standpoint of the Ultimate Truth, the practitioner cultivates *vipaśyanā* to reveal the Conventional Truth 「俗諦」.

As we observe from the above graph, by means a series of permutations on the characters “illuminating” and “still,” the tripartite Tiāntái conception of the “Unity of the Three Essences” 「三體即一」³⁷ is brought to fruition.³⁸ For, to the author(s) of the YCJ, these Three Essences are not separate from each other, but integral components of a unified reality. Although this religious goal is arrived at through the “exclusion” 「遮」 of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, the “One Mind” does by no means occupy a sterile state of “emptiness,” for it retains the dynamic capabilities of “illumination.”

Shigeo hakushi kanreki kinen ronshū – Chūgoku no Bukkyō to bunka 《鎌田茂雄博士還曆記念論集—中國の仏教と文化》, (Tōkyō: Daizō shuppansha 大蔵出版社, 1988) , pp. 125-126.

³⁶ *Yōngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No., 2013, p. 313, b22).

³⁷ *Yōngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No., 2013, p. 390, a13).

³⁸ For a fuller discussion of the usage of the Tiāntái dialectic, see SENGOKU Keishō 仙石景章, “Yōgashū ni mirareru Tendai kyōgaku no eikyō” 〈永嘉集に見られる天台教学の影響〉, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 《印度学仏教学研究》, Vol. 28 (1980), No.1, p. 176.



The Sudden/Gradual *Problematik*

Does the Threefold Contemplation represent a graduated sequence, or does the synchronic aspect of the final gnosis assume ultimate priority? At this point I believe that it may be useful to draw upon recent scholarship on the doctrine of the Threefold Contemplation as it developed within the context of early Tiāntái thought. In his 1993 study on the works of Tiāntái Patriarch Zhìyǐ, Professor NG Yu-kwan (a.k.a. Wú Rùjūn 吳汝鈞) describes the final stage of the Threefold Contemplation as a synchronous vision of the Three Truths 三諦: “there is One Contemplation only, in which Emptiness 空, the Provisional 假, and the Middle Way 中道 are realized simultaneously.”³⁹ Here Professor Ng draws from a passage from the *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Móhě zhǐguān*) 《摩訶止觀》 that describes the revelation of the Three Truths within a single moment 「一剎那」.⁴⁰

Taking into consideration Zhìyǐ’s conception of the Threefold Contemplation, one is struck by the strong parallels with the tripartite structure of *vipāśyanā*, *śamatha*, and *upekṣā* presented in the YCJ. Indeed, Chuándēng’s commentary draws a direct correspondence between *śamatha*, *vipāśyanā*, and *upekṣā* and the three components of Emptiness 空, Provisional 假 and the Middle Way 中道 that comprise Zhìyǐ’s Three Truths.⁴¹ The alignment of *śamatha*, *vipāśyanā*, and *upekṣā* with the Three Truths of Tiāntái represents an innovation upon the earlier doctrinal framework, for this is not a correlation that is drawn in Zhìyǐ’s writings.⁴² Yet this bold imposition does not

³⁹ Ng Yu-kwan (1993), p. 143.

⁴⁰ Ng Yu-kwan (1993), p. 215. See *Móhě zhǐguān*, fascicle 6, (T46, p. 131, 83c-85a).

⁴¹ Chuándēng comments: “Thus although *śamatha* is equivalent to calming, it also goes by the name ‘Contemplation of *Śūnyatā*.’ Although *vipāśyanā* is equivalent to contemplation, it also goes by the name ‘Contemplation of the Provisional.’ Thus although *upekṣā* is equivalent to the combination of calming and contemplation, it also goes by the name ‘Contemplation of the Middle.’” 『故「奢摩他」雖當於「止」，亦名為「空觀」。「毗婆舍那」雖當於「觀」，亦名為「假觀」。「優畢叉」雖於「止觀」等，亦名為「中觀」。』 *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jízhù*, (X36, No. 1242, p. 313, c11-12).

⁴² In the *Móhě zhǐguān*, Zhìyǐ mentions the triad *śamatha*, *vipāśyanā*, and *upekṣā* exactly once, and there is no internal evidence to support that these three terms are at all related to the “Three Truths” of Emptiness, the Provisional, and the Middle Way. In this single passage Zhìyǐ directly equates the Chinese term *guān* with *vipāśyanā*, although the connection between *vipāśyanā* and the Threefold Contemplation remains obscure: “Calming (*zhǐ*) is *śamatha*. Contemplation (*guān*) is *vipāśyanā*. The locus (*sthāna*) and other [karmic] matters are *upekṣā*.” 『止，即「奢摩他」。觀，即「毘婆舍那」。他那一等故，即「憂畢叉」。』 -- (T46, No. 1911, p. 22, c05). In Zhìyǐ’s exegesis on the concepts of the “Three Cognitions qua One Mind” 「三智一心」 and the “Three Contemplations qua One Mind” 「三觀一心」 in fascicle 3 of the *Móhě zhǐguān*, he establishes no clear correlation between the triad *śamatha*, *vipāśyanā*, and *upekṣā* and either the “Three Cognitions” or the “Three Contemplations.” Indeed, the specific



substantively alter the progressivist cast of the YCJ's depictions of *samatha* and *vipasyanā*.

In his monumental *Móhě zhǐguān*, Zhìyǐ attempts to resolve the dilemma presented by the graduated model of *samatha-vipasyanā* by positing a “Sudden and Perfect Contemplation” 「圓頓觀」 that functions as the climactic stage for the most advanced adepts.⁴³ In commentaries by the Sixth Patriarch Jīngxī Zhànrán 荆溪湛然 (711-782), this notion of a “sudden teaching” was transposed into a subitism reminiscent of developments within the Southern School of Chán.⁴⁴

In an attempt to reconcile these two hermeneutics, the author of YCJ incorporates both diachronic and synchronic components into the Threefold Contemplation, each of which performs pivotal roles within a “gradual” progression towards a climax of “sudden” revelation. It is this dynamic interplay that imbues the well-worn scholastic framework of the Threefold Contemplation with the potent message of Chán subitism.

The Sudden Teaching of the YCJ

A reading of the final “Ode on *Upekṣā*” reveals that the “One Mind” 「一心」 may only emerge from the sublation of *samatha* and *vipasyanā*. Without the mutual convergence of these preliminary modalities, the “principle” 「理」 of the “One Mind” remains obscured by hard and false discriminations which prevent the mind from maintaining immutable focus. This spiritual prospect is only implicitly represented, however, for according to *Sēngzhào's Treatise* 《肇論》, the gate of the One Mind transcends all verbal designations: “when this ultimate principle is illuminated the path of language is cut off, so how can one discuss it with words?” 「理明，則言語道斷，

provenance of the doctrine of the Threefold Contemplation remains a point of ambiguity in Zhìyǐ's writings. As for any causal link between the Threefold Contemplation and the famous *Mūlamadhyamikakārikā* 《中論》 (24.18) “Verse of the Three Affirmatives” 〈三是偈〉 (a.k.a. “Verse of the Threefold Truth”) that serves as an important textual basis for Zhìyǐ's notion of the Three Truths, Professor Ng writes: “A relationship between the Threefold Contemplation and the Verse of the Threefold Truth can hardly be endorsed.” – Ng Yu-kwan (1993), p. 150.

⁴³ See the *Móhě zhǐguān*, (T46, No. 1911, p. 25, a13-23).

⁴⁴ Through analysis of works by Zhīlǐ and his critics, Professor Daniel Stevenson has shown that the “sudden”/“gradual” problematic continued to generate openly conflicting interpretations of the Threefold Contemplation amidst Sòng-dynasty Tiānǎi circles. See Daniel Stevenson, “The Problematic of the *Mo-he chih-kuan* and T'ien-t'ai History,” *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 87-96.



何言之能議？」⁴⁵

Along these lines, the denouement to the “Ode on *Upekṣā*” includes such enigmatic phrases as: “How could the gentleman who awakens to the [nature of the] mind remain attached to the Contemplation but confused as to the ultimate purport? Is it not that the man who comprehends the [verbal] teaching, remains attached to language yet deluded as to the principle?” 「夫悟心之士，寧執觀而迷旨？達教之人，豈滯言而惑理？」⁴⁶

From such passages the reader gains a sense that the Contemplation itself serves as a meditative tool, and must be transcended in order to facilitate final liberation. Although there is a danger of reifying the “principle” of the One Mind at every turn, the text insists that it only through the relinquishing of all expedient means that the meditator manifests Suchness as the ultimate object of this unified awareness.

In presenting *upekṣā* as the culminating phase of the Contemplation, the author of the YCJ takes precaution to demonstrate that *upekṣā* is by no means an apophatic denial of phenomenal existence. The gnosis of the “One Mind” is both a “relinquishment” 「捨離」 of mundane cares and a “realization” 「證」 of “marvelous actuality” 「妙有」。 Thus, the YCJ lends priority to the kataphasis of *upekṣā* as an affirmation of the Suchness (*tathatā* 真如) that validates and enhances the realm of ordinary activity.⁴⁷ Along with these developments, “non-duality between principle and phenomenon” 「理事不二」 is no longer an abstract locution, but an instantiation of this ultimate truth within the arena of the meditator’s own practice. As the YCJ states, “marvels tally within the realm” 「妙契寰中」.⁴⁸ It would be inaccurate to describe this spiritual transformation as unfolding within an “instantaneous” moment of awareness, for this “ineffable” 「不可思議」 revelation transcends all ordinary temporal boundaries.

⁴⁵ *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No. 2013, p. 391, c28-29).

⁴⁶ *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, No. 2013, p. 391, c27).

⁴⁷ My reading of the One Mind in the YCJ is consonant with Professor Wú Rǔjūn’s interpretation of this concept in the *Móhě zhīguān* as a “constructive functionality” 「正面的功能」 -- *Tiāntái Zhìyǐ de xīnlíng zhéxué*, 《天臺智顓的心靈哲學》，(Táipèi: Táiwān shāngwù yìnsūguǎn, 1999), pp. 64-68.

⁴⁸ *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí*, (T48, no. 2013, p. 392, a01).



Conclusions

In the “Ode on *Vipaśyanā*,” the movement towards gnosis is represented as the overcoming of the cognition-object dichotomy. The meditator achieves this rarified state of meditative absorption, by substituting the external object of contemplation for the subjective process of cognition itself. Throughout the YCJ, the cultivation of self-knowledge is a necessary condition to advance through each stage of the meditation. During each discrete phase, the specific cognitive function of the meditation must ultimately be overcome in order to enable deeper liberative insights. However, if any one of the three components were missing, this final gnosis would lose its efficacy.

Although the Threefold Contemplation is couched in the language of phenomenology, this system of meditative reflection is framed within the broader context of *Tiāntái* soteriology. The YCJ thus furnishes the Chán tradition with a constructive phenomenology of mind that serves to fuse abstract theories of *mārga* with a systematic model of meditative praxis.

At the level of progressive religious growth, it is notable that this tract emphasizes *vipaśyanā* as an “intentional” process, a conception of Buddhist practice far removed from the effortless spontaneity of the “sudden awakening and sudden cultivation” 「頓悟頓修」 ethos of the more radical Chán schools, such as the Hóngzhōu line 洪州宗. Indeed, the YCJ is unique among texts associated with Huìnéng’s Southern lineage for its focus on the discursive aspects of Buddhist contemplation, and its attempt to understand the sequential development of meditative awareness from mundane states of conceptual thought. Of course, this epistemological project would have been seen as largely irrelevant by Sòng-period monks such as Dàhuì 大慧宗杲 (1089-1163), who would view any such speculative endeavor as a futile attempt to capture a spiritual experience that is beyond conceptualization.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, in the YCJ we have a concerted effort to integrate concerns for the epistemic functionality of cognition 「智」 with the overarching aspiration for deliverance via the “One Mind” 「一心」. The YCJ is not wholly successful in its attempt to reconcile

⁴⁹ Professor Robert E. Buswell, Jr., “The Short-cut Approach of *K’an-hua* Meditation,” pp. 350-51; Professor Chün-fang Yü, “Ta-hui Tsung-kao and *Kung-an* Chan,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, Vol. 6 (1979), p. 221.



what Professor Bernard Faure has characterized as the Chán conception of “transcendental immanence”⁵⁰ with its embrace of the multifarious “expedient means” that expedite the path towards emancipation. A more doctrinaire Chán thinker such as Shénhuì would opine in that a commitment – even at the provisional level – to a “Threefold Contemplation” implies a graduation that is at odds with the “immanentist” ethos. Perhaps as a response to these underlying concerns for subitist awakening, the author(s) of the YCJ place great emphasis on a climactic “abandonment” of all expedient devices.

Still, one might ask: what is the point of constructing such an intricate, architectonic apparatus for the Contemplation if this ultimately has to be discarded in the name of higher spiritual attainment? I believe that this commitment towards non-attachment to purely theoretical models resonates with Western thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas, who seek a return to radical self-reflection in order to liberate the human sciences from the delusions of pure theory. In accordance with this mode of self-understanding, the “emancipatory power of reflection” endows the humanist with the capacity to dismantle the illusions of objectivity stemming from his ever more elaborate *technē*.⁵¹ The notion of radical reflection as a therapy used to uproot self-centered delusions would be familiar to the author(s) of the YCJ. To 10th-century Chinese Buddhists, the limitations of strictly theoretical models were all too clear vis-à-vis the daunting task of spiritual progress. As Zhuāngzǐ 莊子 famously put it: “having caught the fish, one forgets the trap” 『得魚忘筌』.⁵²

⁵⁰ Professor Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chán /Zen Buddhism*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 69.

⁵¹ Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989), p. 310

⁵² *Yǒngjiā Chánzōng jí zhù*, (X63, No. 1242, p. 317, a17).



Abbreviations

- T** *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 《大正新修大藏經》. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, et al. 100 vols. Tōkyō: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊刻會, 1924-1932. (CBETA version). Citations are indicated by the text number, followed by the volume, page, register (a, b, or c), and line number(s).
- X** *Shinsan Dainihon zokuzōkyō* 《卅新纂大日本續藏經》. Edited by Kawamura Kōshō 河村考照 between 1975 and 1989, printed by Kokusho kangyōkai 國書刊行會. Originally compiled by Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧. Kyōtō: Zōkyō shoin 藏經書院, 1905-1912. (CBETA version).



From *Yǒngjiādàshī Zhèngdào gē quánshì*, 《永嘉大師證道歌詮釋》, edited by Chán Master Xuānhuà 宣化禪師 (Talmage, CA: Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, 2000), p. 7.