



Postgraduate/Distance Learning

Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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For completion by the student:		
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Module code: SICH7007 Module title: Engaging with the Chinese Buddhist Eight Schools (Diamond sutra is selected)	Student ID number: 1704161	Educational support needs: No
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1 st ☐ 2 nd ☐ ✓ 3 rd ☐ 4 th ☐ 5 th ☐ 6 th ☐		
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Assignment Mark

1 st Marker's Provisional mark	
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Agreed Internal Mark:	
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Final Mark	

NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the Final Examination Board.

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External Examiner's comments (if relevant)

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Date:

The outline:

Buddha teaches Bodhisattvas how to generate Bodhi Mind and non-attachment to form so as to subdue afflictions

It is principal for a Buddhist practitioner to arise Bodhi Mind before he/she begins the path to the attainment to enlightenment. Because our actions should be guided by the Bodhi mind. When our enlightenment and practice are complete, we will achieve Buddhahood. In the *Diamond-cutting Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*, Subhuti asked Shakyamuni Buddha, when virtuous men or women have generated the supreme-enlightenment mind, where should their minds abide and how should their afflictions be subdued. These questions will be discussed as follows:

I . Buddisattva's Supreme Mind of Bodhi

The supreme Bodhi Mind generated by all Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas is that:

All living beings born from eggs, wombs, humidity or by transformation, with or without form, either thoughtful or thoughtless, and neither thoughtful nor thoughtless are all led by me to the final nirvana for the extinction of reincarnation. Although immeasurable, uncountable and unlimitable numbers of living beings are thus led to the final nirvana for the extinction of reincarnation, it is true that not a living being is led there.¹

Why should The Buddha teach Bodhisattvas to help all sentient beings achieve Buddhahood? Firstly, all sentient beings have the capacity to become Buddhas. When Shakyamuni Buddha became enlightened, he saw the Truth that all sentient beings have Buddha-nature and they can realise their Buddha-nature after dismissing their wondering thoughts, differentiation, and attachments. Although they have the Buddha-nature, they still need the catalytic conditions to help them restore the Buddha-nature. The catalytic conditions

¹ THE DIAMOND SUTRA(The Vajracchedika-prajna-paramita Sutra) http://www.lingyinsi.org/detail_24_7318.html

are the teaching of Buddha or Bodhisattvas. So it is very important that Bodhisattvas can make vows and take actions to help all sentient beings .

Another reason is that to deliver others from torment is to deliver Bodhisattva himself from differentiation and attachments. All sentient beings and Buddha are of the same innate nature, although they are different in many aspects by form. If Bodhisattva wants to see the same Buddha-nature, he/she should not differentiate and cling to forms. Therefore, helping all sentient beings equally will help Bodhisattva eliminate differentiation and attachments.

II . Non-attachment to false notions

After having generated the Supreme Bodhi Mind, Buddha taught Bodhisattvas to not cling to the false notion(laksana.相) of an ego, a personality ,a being and a life. What are the notions of self, a personality, a being, a life? Generally, all beings regard the five aggregates of form, feeling, perception, impulse, and consciousness as themselves. This is called the notion of self. The opposite of self is the notion of a personality, including human and non-human. The notion of a being is all phenomena arising from a ‘synergy of multi-conditions’. The notion of a life refers to the false perception of their life spans and time. If a Bodhisattva attaches to that false notion, he is not a true Bodhisattva. Therefore, even when Bodhisattva leads immeasurable, uncountable and unlimitable number of sentient beings to the final nirvana, he would not think that he had led one single being to the final nirvana. If he had thought he had led or helped one single being. He would have attached to the false conception of self, a personality, a being, a life.

Why can an enlightened being like a Bodhisattva should not cling to forms? According to the *Diamond-cutting Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*, Buddha repeatedly explained the truth that forms are not forms and sentient beings are not sentient beings. Because all matters and forms arise from multi-conditions. When causes meet conditions, forms arise; when causes and conditions end, the forms disappear. So the form itself has no self-nature and self-identity.

What's more, all matters arise from the inner true nature and change with consciousness. And in one snap of the fingers, there are 3,200 trillion different thoughts which arise and cease rapidly. Every thought creates matter and forms which also arise and cease moment to moment. Therefore, all phenomena are similar forms of continuity arising and ceasing quickly, which is mentioned by Buddha, all phenomena are illusory, like dreams, bubbles, and shadows, are unattainable. If Bodhisattvas attach to forms, he will lose self-nature, suffer from afflictions and create Karmas(業), so he will sink into Six Directions of Reincarnation as non-awakened sentient beings. As an awakened person, Bodhisattva needs to drop the attachments and discrimination to all forms.

III. Generating the Bodhi Mind without attaching to false notion is the beginning of eliminating afflictions

The best way for Bodhisattvas to subdue their afflictions is through the practice of non-attachment to forms and generating the Bodhi mind to lead all sentient beings to nirvana. There are four reasons.

Firstly, Bodhisattva dedicates himself completely to help all sentient beings. This great vow and action is a good way to broaden Bodhisattva's mind and gradually eliminate the false notion of ego.

Secondly, Bodhisattva vows to equally help all sentient beings to become Buddhas, this means, he has no mind of differentiation. By doing this is eliminating the false notion of personality.

Thirdly, although it is not easy to help all sentient beings to become Buddhas, Bodhisattva will not have the thoughts on when and how difficult he will lead all beings to nirvana. Then he will not arise the false notion of having a lifespan.

Fourthly, although Bodhisattvas lead immeasurable, uncountable and unlimitable number of sentient beings to nirvana for the extinction of reincarnation, in their mind, they did not lead a single sentient being there. This kind of thought and action will help Bodhisattvas stay away from the false notion of beings.

Conclusion

If a Bodhisattva who have generated the supreme Bodhi Mind wants to subdue his afflictions, he should be free from clinging to forms and should keep their mind pure. Their mind should abide at purity because self-nature is innately pure. This wisdom can lead Bodhisattva to realise his self-nature.

Non-attachment to forms does not mean that Bodhisattva could do nothing every day. If he thinks all matters are empty and does nothing, he has already attached to the form of emptiness. Attachment to any form will bring afflictions, not wisdom. So Bodhisattva always holds great compassion to help transform the deluded into the awakened and to help all beings to escape suffering and attain happiness. Although he assists sentient beings actively every day, but he does not attach to the forms of what he does. This way of practice can lead Bodhisattva to cultivate both wisdom and compassion, to accumulate merits and virtues, eventually to become Buddha. Thus, Buddha answered Subhuti's question: non-attachment to forms and helping all sentient beings to reach final nirvana is the way to abide your mind and subdue afflictions.