

Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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SUBMITTING (DO NOT SEND AS A SEPARATE FILE)**

For completion by the student:		
Student Name: Shou Sin Chen		
Module code: SICH7007 Module title: Engaging with the Chinese Buddhist Eight Schools(Diamond sutra is selected)	Student ID number: 1705388	Educational support needs: No
Module tutor: Professor Shi Chin Kung Assignment due date: 21 Nov 2017		
If your module has multiple submissions please indicate which piece of work this is. 1 st ☐ 2 nd ☐ ☒ 3 rd ☐ 4 th ☐ 5 th ☐ 6 th ☐		
I confirm that this is my original work and that I have adhered to the University policy on plagiarism. Signed Shou Sin Chen..... Email submission: if you are submitting this form via email, please tick this box ✓ (as a substitute for your signature) to confirm that you agree to the above declaration.		

Assignment Mark

1 st Marker's Provisional mark	
2 nd Marker's/Moderator's provisional mark	
Agreed Internal Mark:	
External Examiner's mark (if relevant)	
Final Mark	

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

For completion by Marker 1 :

Comments:

Marker's signature:

Date:

For completion by Marker 2/Moderator:

Comments:

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Date:

AGREED INTERNAL MARK (where necessary):

Comment on process on arriving at agreed mark:

External Examiner's comments (if relevant)

External Examiner's Signature:

Date:

Outline of Oral Presentation

“Seeing all phenomena as unreal and comprehend the true nature (*“Tathagata”*)

I would like to discuss this presentation in two parts. In the first part, I will explain the related words used in the scripture text, followed by detailed explanation of the whole text.

In the second part, I will explain the various stages of Contemplation. Finally, I would like to reinforce the importance of applying the teachings of the Sutra text, “Seeing all phenomena as unreal and comprehend the true nature” in the Buddha Name Recitation method.

“All phenomena” refers to everything in the universe, including sentient and non-sentient beings. As all these phenomena arise from causes and conditions, they constantly arise and cease in an instant, therefore, these phenomena are not real. Since they are illusory, we should not be attached to all forms. Only then, will we be able to see the true nature.

“Contemplation” refers to the meditative wisdom of seeing the truth of all phenomena.

As the Sutra stated, “all living beings born from eggs, wombs, humidity or by transformation with or without form, either thoughtful or thoughtless, and neither thoughtful nor thoughtless” refers to all sentient beings in the six realms of reincarnation. Other than the lower six realms, there are

higher four realms where the saints and sages dwell together. All sentient beings dwell in these ten realms of existence.

‘Sentient beings’ constitutes the five aggregates of form, feeling, conception, impulse, and consciousness. These five aggregates can be further classified as “material or form” and “mind”. ‘Material or form’ refers to the four great elements of earth, water, fire and wind. According to the *Great Vehicle of Hundred Dharmas*, ‘material’ consist of the five roots and six dusts. On the other hand, ‘Mind’ refers to ‘sensation (*vedana*), conception (*saṃjñā*), perception and cognition(*viññāna*).

‘Non-sentient beings’ refer to the natural environment, including mountains, rivers, plants and minerals. They comprise the four great elements of earth, water, fire and wind.

Having explained the above, I would move on to explaining the meaning of the notions of an ego, a personality, a being and a life. Sentient beings consist of the five aggregates and the four elements, while non-sentient beings only consist of the four elements. Sentient beings regard the five aggregates as concrete existence, this misconception leads to the false notion of ego. When the notion of ego emerges, the remaining three false notions surface to take effect at the same. Living beings hold strongly onto the attachment of all these illusory phenomena, not knowing this is the root cause of their suffering in the six realms. As mentioned earlier, all these phenomena arise from causes and conditions and do not really exist. If we can contemplate the truth of emptiness with the Prajna wisdom, we will

eventually put an end to delusions and achieve awakening. This clearly explains the text, “Seeing all phenomena as unreal and comprehend the true nature(“*Tathagata*”)

‘Contemplation’ means comprehending the meaning of the above text and applying them in our daily life. In this regards, there are three stages of contemplation. The first stage of contemplation is being fully aware of all phenomena, while the respective second and third stage of contemplation are ‘meditative concentration’ and ‘perfect enlightenment’. In other words, when we reach a first stage of achievement, our mind will be pure and remain unaffected by external influences. As we progressed to the second stage of achievement, we begin to uncover the Prajna wisdom and no longer have delusional views. The highest stage of achievement is awakening to our self-nature, or ‘seeing the Tathagatha’.

For example, in our everyday life, we tend to be affected by external influences of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste, and give rise to afflictions. When we constantly contemplate such noises and forms as illusions, we would eventually awaken to our innate nature. Through such cultivation, ordinary people will eventually attain Buddhahood too. As stated in *The Diamond Sutra*, “Seeing all phenomena as unreal and comprehend the true nature (“*Tathagata*”)

However, living beings in the Dharma ending age would find such methods of cultivation is difficult to achieve enlightenment. This is the reason why the Buddha manifested in the Saha world to proclaim the Pure Land

Dharma. As long as living beings have deep faith and vow, and sincerely chant Amitbha Buddha Name, they will attain rebirth in the Pure Land and achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime. The great advantage of this Dharma door is living beings can bring along their retributive karma to the Pure Land without severing their afflictions. In fact, the three stages of achievement in Buddha Name recitation is similar to the three stages of achievement in the 'Contemplation' method.