

A Discourse on The Sūtra of Queen Śrīmālā of the Lion's Roar

Preface

The so-called original Buddha Dharma¹ must encompass the entire Buddha Dharma of the complete Path to Buddhahood taught during the initial and final phases of the three turnings of the Dharma Wheel. Only after the Three-Vehicle Bodhi is fully expounded can Buddha Śākyamuni perfectly accomplish the edification of sentient beings. The four *Āgama sūtras*, however, do not expound the Path to Buddhahood and merely explain the principles of attaining arhatship and liberation from delimited existence. The complete teachings of the three turnings of the Dharma Wheel were, in fact, all spoken by Buddha Śākyamuni, hence fully encompassing the Path to Buddhahood rather than severely missing its principles and practices, as in the four *Āgama sūtras*. Unfortunately, Master Yinshun² did not understand the connotation of the scriptures preached during the initial and final phases of the three turnings of the Dharma Wheel. He even severely misunderstood the contents of the four *Āgama sūtras* compiled by the *śrāvaka* arhats. As expected, it was impossible for him to correctly understand the implications of the *Mahāyāna* scriptures. Furthermore, Yinshun believed in the heretical theory of the six consciousnesses³ proposed by the *śrāvaka* and ordinary treatise commentators⁴ during the period of sectarian Buddhism. He completely denied the *Mahāyāna* teachings and regarded them as not teachings of the Buddha⁵. Misinterpreting the principles of the *Mahāyāna* scriptures and equating them with the Path to Liberation of the Two Vehicles, he further applied the heretical theory of the six consciousnesses of the *śrāvaka* ordinary treatise masters to the teachings of the Path to Liberation, which were originally the eight-consciousness theory. As a result, he severely misconstrued the essence of the Path to Liberation of the Two Vehicles and its principles taught in the four *Āgama sūtras*, and the Path to Buddhahood. Based on such misunderstanding as the premise, in particular, he recognized only the teachings of the Path to Liberation as described in the four *Āgama sūtras* as the original Buddha Dharma. Thereby, he considered all the *Mahāyāna* scriptures not the Buddha's teachings, and thus defined only the four *Āgama sūtras* as the original Buddha Dharma (a.k.a. early Buddhism), excluding the *Mahāyāna* scriptures of the second and third turnings of the Dharma Wheel. He thus

¹ 原始佛法

² 印順

³ 六識論觀點

⁴ 聲聞凡夫論師們

⁵ 大乘非佛說

implied that the *Mahāyāna* scriptures were not truly spoken by Buddha Śākyamuni. This is a serious distortion of Buddhist history and was followed by an incorrect definition of actual Buddhist historical events. If people initially accept Yinshun's distorted views when embarking on the path of learning Buddhism, they will inevitably be trapped in the heretical six-consciousness theory. Even successfully eliminating the self-view becomes empty talk, not to mention personally realizing the *prajñā* of ultimate reality in *Mahāyāna*⁶.

Moreover, the *Mahāyāna* enlightenment cannot go beyond the scriptural teachings⁷. If it is beyond the sacred scriptural teachings yet claims that “enlightenment different from the Buddhist scriptural teachings is still the Chan realization,” then such enlightenment is a false awakening. The so-called “enlightenment” must have already deviated from the essence of Buddhist Chan enlightenment. Given that the meanings of the Buddha's sacred teachings precisely clarify the content of the Chan School's awakening, based on this principle, one will understand that the Chan School's enlightenment⁸ must always not go beyond the scriptural teachings. On the other hand, for those who have already sought verification from the *Mahāyāna* scriptures and have formally validated their own realization, if they wish to understand the cultivational path of post-awakening by relying on the realized *tathāgatagarbha* to generate the profound and wondrous *prajñā* wisdom, and swiftly enter the First Ground, they should deeply delve into the true meaning of the *Sūtra of Queen Śrīmālā of the Lion's Roar*⁹. Henceforward, they will understand the differences and connections between the *Mahāyāna* path and the Two Vehicles, and then determine how to genuinely attain the awakening of *Mahāyāna prajñā* and how to integrate the teachings of the Two Vehicles together after their realization. Hence, the practitioners will swiftly progress in the cultivation of the knowledge-of-specific-aspects and embody the necessary resources for entering the First Ground, thereby attaining self-knowledge without any doubt!

The wisdom realized by Two-Vehicle practitioners is the wisdom of eradicating “determinative birth and death” within the three realms, which is only the liberating wisdom of the sound-hearer Dharma. The eliminated aspects pertain only to attachment to self-belongings, self-view, and self-attachment, without encompassing the awareness and personal realization of the sign of reality¹⁰ of the dharma realms.

⁶ 實證大乘實相般若

⁷ 教門; C. *Jiàomén*

⁸ 宗門; C. *Zōngmén*

⁹ 勝鬘經; (S: *Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra*)

¹⁰ 實相 (C. *Shi xiang*)

Therefore, all fixed-disposition arhats who would not convert to the Great Vehicle¹¹, regardless of whether they were liberated through insight, twofold liberation, or the great liberation of the three insights and six supernatural powers, would not be able to generate the *prajñā* of the ultimate reality. Although these so-called fixed-disposition arhats know that all dharma realms arise solely from the *tathāgatagarbha*, they have only heard of the sacred teachings in person from the Buddha and have not personally realized them. Thus, when they encounter bodhisattvas who have attained personal realization, they are unable to engage in discussions with them regarding *prajñā*. Even when bodhisattvas converse about the reality of the remainderless *nirvāṇa*, fixed-disposition arhats are also bewildered and at a loss, unable to respond and evading saying anything. The reason that fixed-disposition arhats behave as aforementioned is that they have not realized the *tathāgatagarbha* mind, which is the origination of name-and-form, the cause of name-and-form, and the source of name-and-form. For example, in the *Āgama sūtras*, the Buddha's sacred teachings clearly state, "By understanding the origination of name-and-form, one attains its reality."¹² This means that the fundamental root of name-and-form is the *tathāgatagarbha* mind. All the names-and-forms of sentient beings in the ten directions and three realms arise from the *tathāgatagarbha* mind and depend on it as their basis. Therefore, whether one realizes or fails to attain the cause/origin of name-and-form, *tathāgatagarbha* is the criterion of the *Mahāyāna* distinct teachings¹³ for determining whether one has become a true bodhisattva or not. Unfortunately, people who understand this distinction are extremely rare these days. Owing to the heretical theory of six consciousnesses propagated by the proponents of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, contemporary influential Buddhist masters have blindly followed the heretical theory of six consciousnesses advocated by Shi Yinshun¹⁴ and have denied the correct principle of the theory of eight consciousnesses advocated in the *Mahāyāna* and the *Āgama sūtras*. These influential Buddhist masters and their followers have inevitably missed the causes and conditions for attaining the Path of Vision in *Mahāyāna*. They have also committed the grievous sin of slandering the bodhisattva repository and have become "incorrigibles."¹⁵

However, can the truly enlightened bodhisattvas¹⁶ understand the content of the Path to Buddhahood? Not at all! Although bodhisattvas possess the wisdom related to

¹¹ 不迴心大乘之阿羅漢

¹² 「解名色本，即得應真。」

¹³ 大乘別教

¹⁴ 釋印順

¹⁵ 一闍提, C. *Yichanti*

¹⁶ 實義菩薩, C. *Shi yi pusa*; bodhisattvas who have already realized the ultimate truth of the *tathāgatagarbha* (viz. attained the Seventh Abiding non-regressive stage.)

the sign of reality of *prajñā* at this stage, they have only the knowledge-of-general-aspects and are yet to attain the full knowledge-of-specific-aspects. The content of the knowledge-of-specific-aspects derived from the wisdom related to the sign of reality of *prajñā* is expansive and profound, unlike the teachings on the Path to Liberation of the Two Vehicles consisting of the affliction associated with unwholesome views¹⁷ and the affliction associated with mentation¹⁸, which are easily understood due to their narrow implications. Therefore, practitioners who have personally realized the *tathāgatagarbha* and obtained wisdom related to the sign of reality of *prajñā* still need to closely follow a truly enlightened mentor in their cultivations to gain an effective and in-depth understanding of the similarities and differences of the Three Vehicles and hence swiftly witness the interconnectedness of the Three Vehicles and see the limitations of the Two-Vehicle Bodhi. As such, one can understand the Two-Vehicle Bodhi subsumed under the context of *Mahāyāna* Bodhi and its stance; thereby, one can comprehend the true meaning that the nescience in a single thought¹⁹ (*S. moha*) eliminated in the Two-Vehicle Bodhi is encompassed in the scope of the beginningless ignorance²⁰ (*S. avidyā*). Through this understanding, one can grasp the interconnection and complete picture of the Three-Vehicle Bodhi. If one aspires to pursue the penetrative knowledge-of-specific-aspects derived from the sign of reality of *prajñā*, there is hope of achieving this goal. Buddhist practitioners can thus shorten their cultivation time from long eons to shorter eons. That is, they can perfectly accomplish the factual practice of the three stages of worthiness in a few lifetimes, which belongs to the first term of the great *asaṃkhyā-kalpa*, by eliminating the vast non-exalted nature²¹ that should be extinguished during the realization of the Path of Vision in *Mahāyāna* and joyfully cultivating the great meritorious quality that should be accumulated before entering the First Ground: performing actions that ordinary individuals cannot do, speaking words that ordinary individuals cannot speak, walking the path that ordinary individuals are unwilling to tread, and even sacrificing their own life, which is not considered a loss. By aiming to protect the True Dharma, save sentient beings (including the ostensibly Buddhist masters), and so forth, and generating superior intent and making the true ten inexhaustible vows, one will eventually enter the Tathāgata's family and become a true son of the Buddha. As such, it is crucial for Buddhist practitioners to first attain personal realization of the *tathāgatagarbha* and then thoroughly and correctly understand the beginningless ignorance. After cultivating and accumulating

¹⁷ 見惑; C. *Jiàn huò*

¹⁸ 思惑; C. *Sīhuò*

¹⁹ 一念無明; C. *Yīniàn wúmíng*

²⁰ 無始無明; C. *Wú shǐ wúmíng*

²¹ 異生性; C. *Yì shēngxìng*

immense meritorious quality by actually saving the masses misguided Buddhist learners from going astray in their cultivations, only then Buddhist practitioners may be able to enter the First Ground and further engage in the cultivation practice for the second term of the great *asaṃkhyā-kalpa*. All those who seek to genuinely realize the Buddha Dharma should understand the foregoing.

Those who wish to have an in-depth understanding of the true principle must delve deeply into the *Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra* and validate its teachings through personal observations to realize the doctrines taught by Queen Śrīmālā. Practitioners will be able to verify whether what they have realized indeed conforms to the sign of reality of the dharma realms. Through this, practitioners can also build up the required penetrative wisdom to attain the three stages of worthiness and subsequently embark swiftly on the path to perfecting the cultivational prerequisites of the first great term of *asaṃkhyā kalpas*. For practitioners who have not yet realized the existence of the *tathāgatagarbha* and have not brought forth the realization of the sign of reality of *prajñā*, regardless of whether they have eliminated the three fetters or not, they can still rely on this discourse to understand the differences and similarities of the Three Vehicles and to make choices regarding their paths of entry. Alternatively, practitioners can choose to delve into these insights by engaging in practical observation based on the books *The Correct Meaning of Vijñāna -Aggregate*²² and *The Correct Meaning of the Āgamas*²³ to attain the realization of the Two-Vehicle Bodhi. Alternatively, other books, such as *The True Versus False Enlightenment*²⁴, *The Secrets of the Heart Sutra*²⁵, *The Correct Eye of the Chan School*²⁶, *The Secret Meanings of the Chan School*²⁷, *The Undeniable Existence of the Tathāgatagarbha*²⁸, *An Exposition on the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*²⁹, *Chan: Before and After Enlightenment*³⁰, and *Mastering and Skillfully Articulating the Essence of Buddhist Enlightenment*³¹, can all be relied on by practitioners to extensively learn and the correct principles of *Mahāyāna*, including their actual practice. After realizing the *tathāgatagarbha*, practitioners enter the rank of bodhisattvas and become true bodhisattvas, known as *bodhisattvasaṃgha*³², who abide in the non-regressive stage of bodhisattva. As such, they can prevent their efforts

²² 《識蘊真義》

²³ 《阿含正義》

²⁴ 《真假開悟》

²⁵ 《心經密意》

²⁶ 《宗門正眼》

²⁷ 《宗門密意》

²⁸ 《真實如來藏》

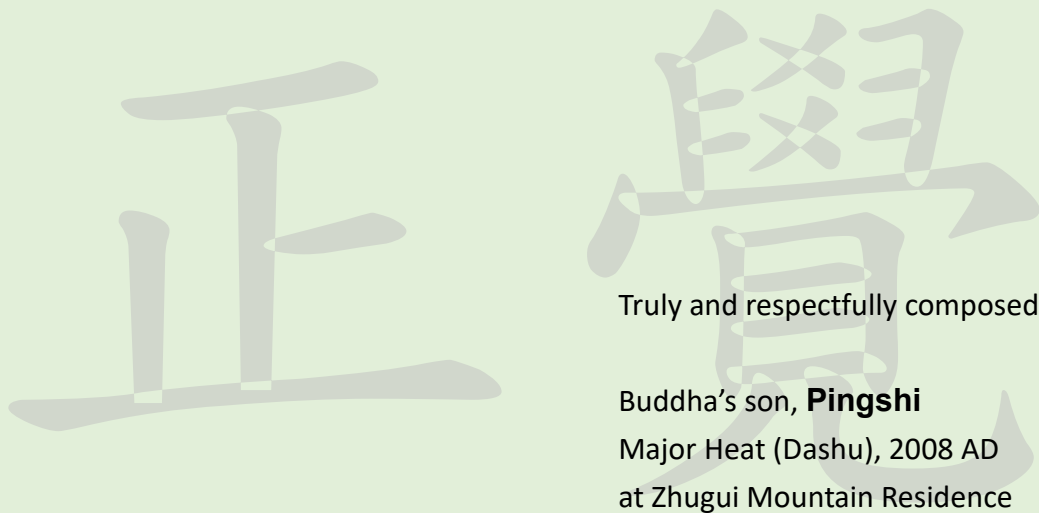
²⁹ 《楞伽經詳解》

³⁰ 《禪-悟前與悟後》

³¹ 《宗通與說通》

³² 菩薩僧

to practice the Buddha Dharma in this life from going down the drain. Although the meaning of the content of *Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra* is profound and difficult to comprehend, I have already come up with in-depth exegetical explanations of its tenets and organized them into a written discourse for publication and circulation to benefit *Mahāyāna* practitioners and masters alike. Those who are willing to read this book series carefully and repeatedly and contemplate and understand its content will undoubtedly benefit from it. As the publication date of this book draws near, this preface summarizes why I wrote this book series.



Truly and respectfully composed,
Buddha's son, **Pingshi**
Major Heat (Dashu), 2008 AD
at Zhugui Mountain Residence