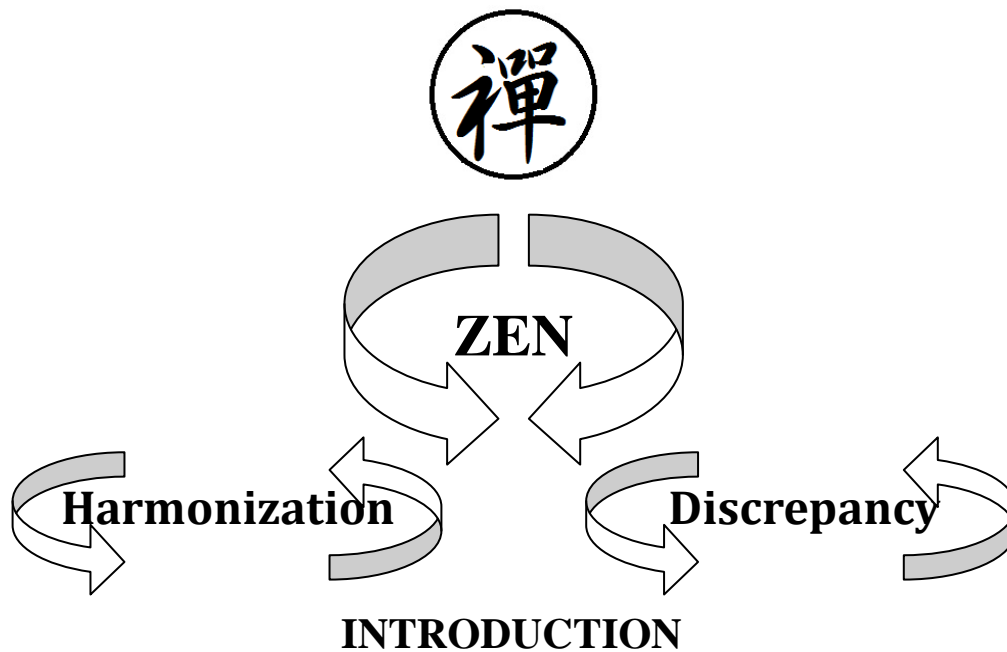


# Patriarch/Matriarch→CHAN←Tathagata (Buddha)



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Recently, a seasoned practitioner asked about the relationship between Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan and Tathagata Chan, their “harmonization” (interdependence) and “discrepancy” (independence).

In response, Guohan takes “Patriarch/Matriarch Chan and Tathagata Chan: Sameness in Source and Sameness in Path / Sameness in Source and Difference in Path” as the subject, and gives a commentary on it according to the following information:

- (1) Related sutras and sastras such as *The Diamond Sutra*, *The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment*, *The Mahaprajnaparamita Sastra*, etc.
- (2) Patriarchs' discourses such as *The Platform Sutra*, *The Transmission of the Lamp*, *The Compendium of Five Lamps*, etc.
- (3) Gongans and anecdotes such as *The Blue Cliff Record*, *The Gateless Gate*, etc.

Guohan is compelled to share with all Chan practitioners by way of “pointing a finger at the moon”, helping them walk the path of “returning directly home to their true nature”. Ultimately, what is the “moon”? What is the “finger”? All fellow-practitioners please go ahead with direct and immediate investigation !

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## **【FIRST CASE】**

### **Patriarch Chan and Tathagata Chan: Sameness in Source and Sameness in Path**

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#### **Guohan's Explication**

Chan has one flavor and is ineffable. The realization of “One-flavor Chan” is that “none but the taster knows the flavor of the water.” There is no way to disclose any relevant message of Chan, as Chan stands apart from any words or languages. “Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan” of the [Chinese] Chan sect and the ultimate “Tathagata Chan” of Shakyamuni Buddha together belong to One-flavor Chan. Both are exactly of “sameness in source and sameness in path.” They are intrinsic completion and accomplishment without cultivation. They are intrinsic sufficiency without gradual steps. They are the Dharma gate of the mind ground with direct application of the true mind and direct realization of the supreme Buddhahood.

Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu once preached in the *Blue Cliff Record*: “In discoursing the Dharma, there is no discourse and no demonstration; in listening to the Dharma, there is no hearing and no attainment. Since discourse neither discourses nor demonstrates, how can it compare to not discoursing? Since listening neither hears nor attains, how can it compare to not listening? Therefore, no discoursing and no listening still amount to something. As for all of you right here and right now, listening to my discourse, how will you avoid this mistake?”

It is evident that Chan Master Yuanwu not only directly described the essence of One-flavor Chan as “the ultimate emptiness,” but also clearly pointed out the subtle function of One-flavor Chan, that is, “all things are in perfect harmony and unhindered “interconnectedness” (interbeing and interpenetration).” Although “the secret of the spirit immortals is not transmitted from father to son (from master to practitioner),” those Patriarchs with “great capacity and great function” are adept at the pure awareness of and appropriate responsiveness to the conditions and spiritual needs of the practitioners. Sometimes in one statement there is killing and capturing, and sometimes in a dynamic device there is giving life and releasing. Therefore, while investigating the One-flavor Chan, how can you ultimately penetrate it under the impact of a dynamic device or one statement? As for Chan practitioners, who have an eye on the forehead, please say something! Otherwise, for the rest, still please be attentive to the gongan below.

## **Main Case**

One day Chan Master Hongzhi Zhengjue preached to the assembly :  
The teaching of Buddha in The Diamond Sutra was, “If you see that all forms are of no form, you exactly see into the Thus-Come One (Tathagata or Buddha).” However, Fayen [Wenyi] said, “If you see that all forms are of no form, you have no seeing into the Thus-Come One.” Hongzhi gave a commentary on it as follows:  
“The World-Honored One spoke about ‘Tathagata Chan’, while Fayen spoke about ‘Patriarch/Matriarch Chan.’ Their discourses are in extraordinary harmony with each other. Even if they hadn’t met before, nevertheless, they had already been together with mind-to-mind confirmation.”

*(The Discourse Record of Chan Master Hongzhi Zhengjue; Volume 3)*

## **Guohan’s Commentary**

Shakyamuni Buddha expounded in the first and second chapters of *The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment*:

“In their Chan training of the causal ground, which is of original-arising purity, all Buddhas rely on the complete awareness of purely illuminated forms to permanently dissolve all ignorance. So that do they attain the supreme Buddhahood. .... Being ‘purely aware of all illusions’ is departing from them; there is no need to contrive skillful means. Being ‘departing from all illusions’ is ultimate enlightenment; there are no gradual steps. All bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Dharma Ending Age who train their mind accordingly will be permanently departing from all illusions.”

During forty-nine years of discourses, the World-Honored One directly pointed out in this Sutra that the ultimate “Tathagata [Pure] Chan” is actually free from any skillful levels and gradual steps. It is the direct application of “ultimate pure awareness” (no self-referential awareness) to the complete and simultaneous mind-training of “pure awareness [of all illusions] is departing [from them] and also is ultimate enlightenment.” It is the “complete awareness of purely illuminated forms” to completely actualize the supreme enlightenment and perfectly attain the supreme Buddhahood.

The Sixth Patriarch Huineng of the Chinese Chan sect also stated at the beginning of his *Platform Sutra*:

“The self-nature of bodhi is intrinsically pure. Just apply this pure mind for direct realization and attaining supreme Buddhahood.”

It is evident that Huineng has already clearly given the essential principle of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan as follows: All sentient beings have intrinsically and completely sufficient and enlightened essence of mind of pure wisdom. It is only necessary for them to make use of this awakened pure mind (mind of non-abiding

awareness) to directly realize that this self-nature is Buddha. They are able to completely actualize the wisdom and virtue of the Tathagata, and to perfectly accomplish the supreme Buddhahood without clinging to skillful means and gradual steps.

Therefore, from the discourses of the Buddha and the Patriarchs, we are able to understand that the ultimate “Tathagata Pure Chan” of Shakyamuni Buddha is exactly the “Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan” of the Chinese Chan sect.

Two “gongans” (Japanese koans) of ancient India are cited for reference:

- (1) One day the World-Honored One ascended his seat and paused with silence. Then Manjushri struck the gavel and said, “Clearly and attentively behold the Dharma of the Dharma King; the Dharma of the Dharma King is thus.” The World-Honored One then got down off the seat.

*(The Blue Cliff Record; Ninety-second Case — Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu)*

- (2) Once in ancient times, when the World-Honored One was at Mount Gridhrakuta, he held up a flower and showed it to the assemblage. At this moment, they all remained silent. Only the venerable Kashyapa broke into a smile. The World-Honored One said, “I have the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye, the profound mind of nirvana, the true reality of no form, and the subtle gate of the Dharma. This Mind Dharma does not depend on words and languages, and is specially transmitted outside all Dharma of Teachings. Now I entrust Mahakashyapa with this.”

*(The Gateless Gate; Sixth Case — Chan Master Wumen Huikai)*

One fact is evident from the above two cases of gongan: The World-Honored One used the dynamic device or wise strategy, which is as powerful as the precious sword of the Diamond King, to test the realization level of his disciples. This was surely the Buddha that had already initiated a precedent for the Patriarchs/Matriarchs’ sectarian style in the golden age of Chan ! Although it is said that “One statement prior to sound has not been transmitted by a thousand saints”, nevertheless, if at that time there had been in the assembly a bright-eyed Chan Master with “the mind-eye having not closed”, who had already directly shared the same breath together with all the Buddhas of the three times, and who had straightly walked hand-in-hand with all Patriarchs/Matriarchs of the successive generations before the World-Honored One had even ascended the seat, he would have been able to immediately see all the way through Shakyamuni’s maneuver of “a thief who steals in broad daylight”. What need would there still be for Manjushri to strike the gavel once and give one statement ? Furthermore, there would be no need to trouble “the golden-faced old man”, who was on the verge of entering nirvana, to once more perform that messy scene of “in holding the flower up, the tail of the “thief ( Shakyamuni)” manifested itself” which bears analogy with “selling dog’s flesh under the label of sheep’s head”.

Shakyamuni Buddha was certainly the genuine founder of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan (Tathagata Pure Chan). He set forth the Chan Dharma of “being no depending on words and languages, and specially transmitted outside all Dharma of Teachings” two thousand five hundred years ago. Meanwhile, he used a single word “rest” from the expression

“resting is bodhi” for the sake of “direct pointing at the Mind”. He did this in order to let sentient beings suddenly liberate themselves from deluded thoughts in the right moment and “see into the self-nature and thus attain Buddhahood”.

Furthermore, Chan Master Caoxi (Tsaoxi) Dajian Huineng, the pioneer of Chinese “Patriarch/Matriarch Chan”, addressed the Dharma concerning the true teaching of the Dharma gate of “One-Vehicle Complete and Sudden Awakening”, and transmitted the great meaning of Caoxi Dharma, which all is affiliated with the “finger” of “direct pointing” (i.e. direct realization). All Chan practitioners, the posterity of Chinese Chan Dharma, fully rely on this “finger” for “having an insight into the true mind, seeing into self-nature, and suddenly awakening to attain Buddhahood”.

In his chapter on Dharma Protection in the *Platform Sutra*, the Sixth Patriarch Huineng discoursed, “The Way is realized through the mind. How could it rest with sitting Chan ? ..... Neither coming nor going as well as neither arising nor perishing is the Tathagata Pure Chan, while the emptiness of all dharmas/Dharmas is the Tathagata Pure Seat.”

Moreover, Chan Master Mazu Daoyi also discoursed, “The Way does not need cultivation, but only not to defile it. .... If the Chan practitioner wants to directly realize the Way, the ordinary mind is the Way. .... So long as being always with the ordinary mind, then at present no matter whether we are walking, standing, sitting, reclining, or responding to the potentiality and associating with all beings, all is the Way. .... Upon ultimately and completely realizing the mind and the realm, the deluded thoughts immediately cease to arise. Since the deluded thoughts no longer arise, it is just the “patient rest in non-arising”. It is intrinsically embodied and presently manifested, and is free from the cultivation of the Way and the sitting Chan. No cultivation and no sitting is just the Tathagata Pure Chan.”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 28)*

Comprehensively utilizing the above-mentioned discourses, it is evident that the Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan of the Chinese Chan sect is precisely just the ultimate Tathagata Pure Chan of Shakyamuni Buddha. Indeed, “Patriarch/Matriarch Chan” and “Tathagata Pure Chan” are neither two nor separate from each other.

Shakyamuni, the World-Honored One, talked about the ultimate Tathagata Pure Chan in the teaching of *The Diamond Sutra*. It is said if Chan practitioners can ultimately and completely see that “the forms of all dharmas are ‘ultimately empty’ (of no form)”, they are able to see the “Buddha” (Tathagata). That is to say, the above teaching corresponds with this insight imparted by Chan Master Sheng-Yen in a Chan retreat: “Seeing into conditional arising is seeing into Dharma, seeing into Dharma is seeing into emptiness, and seeing into emptiness is seeing into the Buddha”.

In the *Mahaprajnaparamita Sastra*, the fourteenth Chan Patriarch Nagarjuna of the Indian lineage discussed the “bodhi of insight into the mind”, the core principle of the *Diamond Sutra*, and interpreted it as follows, “At the very moment prajna wisdom has an insight into ultimate emptiness, all the juggleries of the mind simultaneously rest. At that

very moment, the skillful wisdom manifests from the self-nature of ultimate emptiness, and is simultaneously applied to all sentient beings for accomplishing liberation and establishing pure land.” Hence we know that the ultimate emptiness of all dharmas does not obstruct all subtle functions of their skillful means, and the subtle functions of all dharmas are intrinsically and ultimately empty.

The World-Honored One, who preached the ultimate Tathagata Pure Chan, held that if a Chan practitioner ultimately and completely sees “all forms are of no form”, the Buddha Wisdom of All Aspects spontaneously manifests, and he or she is able to apply innumerable skillful subtle-functions to benefit all sentient beings for accomplishing liberation and establishing the pure land, therefore, presented the Tathagata Chan as “seeing the Thus-Come One”. Nevertheless, Chan Master Fayen pointed at the ultimate emptiness of all dharmas realized when a Chan practitioner has seen that “all forms are of no form”, and presented the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan as “no seeing the Thus-Come One”. Therefore, the ultimate Tathagata Pure Chan of Shakyamuni Buddha is truly Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan of the Chinese Chan sect, and there is a clear “sameness in source and sameness in path” in both of them. In fact, this is the exact truth of the commentary given by Chan Master Hongzhi Zhengjue in this gong’an which says, “The World-Honored One spoke about Tathagata Chan, while Chan Master Fayen spoke about Patriarch/Matriarch Chan. Their discourses are in extraordinary harmony with each other. Although they had not met before, they had already been together with mind-to-mind confirmation.”

Today, the “water of the Cao Creek” (Caoxi Chan Dharma) has flowed to the western world. Therefore, if a Chan practitioner comes to call on Guohan and asks, “What is the meaning of: ‘If you see that all forms are of no form, you see the Thus-Come One.’ ?” Guohan immediately draws a circle in the sky with a finger, writes a Chinese character of “Buddha” in the middle of the circle (佛), then picks it up and throws it away.

Alternatively, if the practitioner asks, “What is the meaning of: ‘If you see that all forms are of no form, you do not see the Thus-Come One.’ ?” Guohan just picks up a stick to draw a circle on the ground, and wipes it off forthwith. If you are a Chan practitioner with eyes, please clearly discern this. Then, Guohan effortlessly sets the stick upright and says, “Is there anyone who realizes this ?”

**The green mountain is crystal-clear, the  
White cloud drifts above.  
The stream water is deep-blue, the  
Bright moon floats along it.**



## **【SECOND CASE】**

### **Patriarch Chan and Tathagata Chan: Sameness in Source and Difference in Path**

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#### **Guohan's Explication**

First and foremost, a “gongan” (Japanese koan) regarding Chan Master Guizong Zhichang and his Dharma heir Gaoan Dayu is cited for reference :

One day, monk Dayu was leaving the Gaoan monastery. Guizong asked, “Where are you going?” Dayu replied, “I’m going everywhere to practice five-flavor Chan.” Guizong said, “There is five-flavor Chan everywhere else. But here I only have One-flavor Chan.” Dayu asked, “What is One-flavor Chan?” Guizong hit him. Dayu was greatly enlightened at this right moment and said, “I realize! I realize!” Guizong said, “Speak! Speak!” As Dayu began to speak, Guizong hit him again. Later Dayu went to see Huangbo [Xiyun] and told him about the previous exchange with Guizong. Huangbo entered the Chan hall and addressed to the public, “Great Master Ma (Mazu) brought forth eighty-four completely enlightened Masters. But if some worthy asks them a question, everyone of them just wets his pants. Only Guizong is up to snuff !”

*(The Compendium of Five Lamps; Volume 3) & (The Essentials of Successive Lamp Records; Volume 4)*

Five-flavor Chan, which is elucidated by Chan Master Dayu, includes Chan of non-Buddhist, Ordinary People, Hinayana, Mahayana, and the Supreme Vehicle as classified by the Fifth Patriarch Guifeng Zongmi of the Huayan sect. Yet One-flavor Chan, actualized by Chan Master Guizong, is the Dharma gate of sudden enlightenment to the “Treasury of the True Dharma Eyes”, that is the “Buddha’s Mind-Seal” specially transmitted outside Dharma of Teachings. It also is the Dharma ship of sudden teaching for the “true reality of no form”, that is the myriad things spontaneously manifested through “non-abiding awareness”. Therefore, the Chinese “Mahayana Tathagata Chan” (the expedient Tathagata [Pure] Chan of Shakyamuni Buddha) belongs to the Five-flavor Chan, while “Patriarch/Matriarch Chan” of the Chinese Chan sect pertains to the One-flavor Chan. Both of them exactly have the sameness in source and difference in path.

All seasoned practitioners, what is “One-flavor Chan” after all ? If you are able to “depart from the four statements and put their hundred negations to rest forever”, at that very moment, everything manifests its true reality. For the Chan practitioner with eyes, have you already realized it? For all Chan practitioners, see the following case.

## Main Case

Yangshan [Huiji] asked Xiangyan [Zhixian], “What is your recent realization ?”  
Xiangyan replied, “I really cannot say anything. Here is a verse that said:

“Last year’s poverty was not real poverty, and  
This year’s poverty is finally genuine poverty.  
In last year’s poverty there was no place for the awl, and  
In this year’s poverty there is even no awl.”

Yangshan said, “You have only realized the Tathagata Chan, but have not seen into the Patriarch Chan yet.” Xiangyan then composed another verse that said:

“I have a dynamic device,  
It penetrates practitioner's mind in the twinkling of an eye.  
If he still has not realized it,  
Do not call him a novice.”

Upon hearing this verse, Yangshan reported to Guishan, “It is wonderful! Xiangyan has realized the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan !”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 11) & (The Compendium of Five Lamps; Volume 9)*

## Guohan’s Commentary

After having attained Buddhahood, Shakyamuni Buddha gave three hundred sixty discourses in forty-nine years. In preaching the chapter on *Bodhisattva at Ease in Majestic Virtue* of *The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment*, he stated:  
“The Supreme Complete Enlightenment pervades all the ten directions. From it arise the Tathagatas and all dharmas, which are of the same essence and equal to one another. Thus, as far as the various practices are concerned, there is in reality, no duality. Nevertheless, there are countless expedient means which conform to Supreme Complete Enlightenment. If one categorizes them according to their inclusion in the Supreme Complete Enlightenment and the karmic potentiality of all sentient beings, certainly there are three general types. ....

- (1) Samatha is emptiness and quiescence, like a mirror reflecting myriad images.
- (2) Samapatti, wherein all is seen as an illusion, is like a sprout growing gradually.
- (3) Dhyana is perfect rest and cessation, like the ringing sound of a musical instrument traveling beyond its body.

These three profound Dharma gates are all in accordance with the Supreme Complete Enlightenment.”

Afterwards, in preaching the chapter on *Bodhisattva of Sound Discernment*, Shakyamuni further elucidated :

“The Supreme Complete Enlightenment of all Tathagatas is pure, and is originally without cultivation and cultivator. All bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Dharma Ending Age rely on unenlightened illusory effort in their practice. Thus, there are twenty-



five approaches of pure samadhi and wisdom [including three approaches in sole practice, twenty-one approaches in multiple practices, and one approach in complete practice of three Dharma gates]. ..... All Tathagatas in the ten directions and the practitioners in the three times attain bodhi through [the gradual or sudden approach of] this [threefold] Dharma. With the only exceptions being those of sudden Ultimate Enlightenment and those who do not rely on the Dharma of Teachings and/or the gradual steps for realizing the Mind Dharma, all bodhisattvas and sentient beings in the Dharma Ending Age should always practice diligently in accordance with these approaches. Relying on the Buddha's power of great compassion, they will before long actualize nirvana.”

Mahayana Samatha, Samapatti, and Dhyana, the threefold Dharma gates interpreted in *The Sutra of Complete Enlightenment*, respectively correspond to Contemplation of Emptiness, Contemplation of “Falsehood” (Provisionality) and Contemplation of the Middle [Way] which belong to Shurangama's Threefold Contemplations or Threefold Contemplations of Tiantai sect; also respectively correspond to Contemplation on the True Emptiness and Formlessness, Contemplation on the Non-obstruction of Noumena and Phenomena, and Contemplation on the “Universality and Inclusiveness” (Non-obstruction among Phenomena) which pertain to the Threefold Contemplations of the “Dharma Realm” (Indian Dharmadhatu) in the Huayan sect.

Concerning the approaches of the Threefold Contemplations, the Great Master Zhiyi of Tiantai sect addressed the following three combinations:

- “(1) ‘Threefold Contemplation in Individual Truth’ — is to individually and successively contemplate the Triple Truth of Emptiness, Falsehood (Existence) and the Middle [Way].
- (2) ‘Threefold Contemplation in Integrated Truth’ — is to completely and simultaneously contemplate the Triple Truth in one contemplation.
- (3) ‘Threefold Contemplation in One Mind’ — is to completely and simultaneously contemplate the Triple Truth in a single instant of thought.

The ‘Threefold Contemplation in Individual Truth’ is the Gradually Successive Threefold Contemplation, while the ‘Threefold Contemplation in Integrated Truth’ and ‘Threefold Contemplation in One Mind’ are the Perfectly Integrated Threefold Contemplation.”

*(The Profound Commentary on the Vimalakirti-nirdesa Sutra; Volume 2)*

The Chinese Mahayana “Tathagata Chan” ( the expedient Tathagata Pure Chan of Shakyamuni Buddha) belongs to the “Threefold Contemplation in Individual Truth”, which is the “Gradualness Chan” of multiple practice relying on the Dharma of Teachings, the skillful means and gradual steps for actualizing the Mind Dharma. Its approach must pass in sequence through the orderly Threefold Contemplations of Emptiness, Falsehood (Provisional Existence of All Phenomena) and the Middle [Way]. Nonetheless, “Patriarch/Matriarch Chan” of the Chinese Chan sect (the ultimate Tathagata Pure Chan of Shakyamuni Buddha) pertains to the “Threefold Contemplation in Integrated Truth”, which is the “Suddenness Chan” of no practice or of complete practice. It especially transmits Buddha's Mind-Seal outside formalized Dharma of Teachings, and directly points to the True Mind for actualizing the self-nature and

attaining Buddhahood without abiding in gradualness. This Complete and Sudden Dharma gate is that One Contemplation sufficiently encompasses the Threefold Contemplations. It is the pure awareness of “Falsehood (Provisionality) is Emptiness, and also is the Middle [Way]; one is false (provisional existence), all is false; one is empty, all is empty; one is of the Middle, all is of the Middle”. In other words, it is the “perfect pure-awareness of the Triple Truth in one Truth”, which corresponds to “seeing into onefold truth is seeing into threefold truth”.

This is the principal cause behind Chan Master Huikong Shengyan categorizing Tathagata Chan and Patriarch/Matriarch Chan respectively into Mahayana Chan and Supreme Vehicle Chan of the Mundane-Supramundane Chan in his comparatively perfect “Three Classifications of Chan” (Mundane Chan, Supramundane Chan and Mundane-Supramundane Chan), which is referred to the “Five Classifications” of Fifth Patriarch Guifeng Zongmi of the Huayan sect.

In the article *The Essence of Chan*, Master Shengyan explained as follows :

“Mahayana Chan (Tathagata Chan) : It can only be actualized by the Buddha and those bodhisattvas of functionlessness above the eighth “ground” (Indian bhumis) of the Separate Teachings, which is one of Tiantai’s “Fourfold Teachings in Dharma of Conversion” (The Tripitaka Teaching, The Common Teaching, The Separate Teaching, and The Perfect Teaching in Four Categories of Buddhist Teachings). Those such as the subtle function of Shurangama Samadhi and the great samadhi of Huayan Ocean-Seal Samadhi are unattainable for ordinary beings, and are solely able to be ultimately realized by the Buddha of the Separate Teaching, who is to attain great emancipation and great freedom after ultimately seeing into the Tathagata Chan. Thus, the above-mentioned fact is the characteristic of the Tathagata Chan.

Supreme Vehicle Chan (Patriarch/Matriarch Chan) : It is applicable to general ordinary people, sages and saints. Although in the practice [of no practice] of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan there has once been glowing the brilliancy of wisdom, which is still unlike the ultimate realization of Tathagata Chan that requires a thorough cutting off the twelve species of ignorance in the Separate Teaching. Therefore, common ordinary beings, sages and saints are able to attain the profound function of prajna wisdom by way of the practice of no practice. This is one of the factors that allow the prevalence of Chinese Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, and also the characteristic of the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan.”  
(*Chan and Science; Chan Master Sheng-Yen*)

In the chapter on *Suddenness and Gradualness of The Platform Sutra*, Sixth Patriarch Huineng asked Zhicheng (disciple of Shenxiu), “I’ve heard your teacher gives his disciples instructions on “discipline” (Indian shila), “samadhi” (Indian dhyana) and “wisdom” (Indian praja). However, what is the form of cultivation in them that your Master indicated ? Please tell me how they are practiced.”

Zhicheng replied, “Great Master Shenxiu says that “refraining from all evils is discipline, practicing all goods is wisdom, and purifying one’s own mind is samadhi. This is the way he teaches. May I know the teaching of Your Holiness ?” .....

Huineng said, “Your teacher’s discipline, samadhi and wisdom are for practitioners of the Mahayana Vehicle, while mine is for those of the Supreme Vehicle. Their enlightenments are not the same, and realizations may be slower or swifter. .... In expounding the Dharma, I do not deviate from the self-nature. Expounding apart from the essence of mind is the discourse with abiding in forms, and the self-nature is always confused. We should realize that the functions of all things manifest from the self-nature, and this is the true Dharma of discipline, samadhi and wisdom. Listen to my stanza:

No impurity of the mind-ground is the discipline of the self-nature.  
No ignorance of the mind-ground is the wisdom of the self-nature.  
No disturbance of the mind-ground is the samadhi of the self-nature.  
Neither increasing nor decreasing is vajra essence of the Mind;  
Coming and going freely of the body are inherent functions of the Samadhi.”

From the above dialogues between Huineng and Zhicheng, it is further evident that Chinese Mahayana “Tathagata Chan” (e.g. Chan Dharma of Lankavatara Gradual School, Tiantai’s Separate Teaching, etc.) certainly regards the process of practice and realization as an invariable standard procedure of gradation in good order. Every practitioner should follow step-by-step and exactly practice with reference to the verse of Shenxiu in order that the practitioners are able to actualize one-part bodhi by means of eliminating one-part ignorance :

“The body is the bodhi tree,  
And the mind a mirror bright;  
Constantly polish it with diligence,  
And allow no dust to gather on it.”

Indeed, this is the “Gradualness Chan” which bears relation to its teaching :  
“If we want to realize the Way, it is necessary to practice sitting Chan and to cultivate samadhi. No one has ever attained emancipation but for meditative concentration.”  
(*The Platform Sutra; Chapter on Dharma Protection*)

However, “Patriarch/Matriarch Chan” of the Chinese Chan sect actually advocates “intrinsic completion and accomplishment without skillful levels, and at the very moment everything manifesting its true reality without gradual steps”; also precisely is the “Suddenness Chan” which places emphasis on “directly having an insight into true mind, straightly seeing into true nature, straightforwardly realizing true suchness, and immediately attaining true Buddhahood; one is real, all is real; and one is of the Middle [Way], all is of the Middle [Way].” Moreover, the approach to this “Suddenness Chan” can be referred to the verse of Huineng :

“There is no bodhi tree,  
Nor stand of a mirror bright.  
Originally there’s not a single thing,  
Where can the dust alight ?”

Meanwhile, the Sixth Patriarch further addressed in the chapter on *Suddenness and Gradualness* :

“If Chan practitioners ultimately realize the self-nature, they do not set up bodhi, nirvana or wisdom of emancipation (sequential wisdom); and only those who do not attain even a single dharma/Dharma, are able to set up all dharmas/Dharmas. If they actualize this meaning, then it is called the Buddha body, and [it is] also called bodhi, nirvana and wisdom of emancipation. Those who see into the self-nature can set these up or not set them up. .... For those who ultimately realize no impurity, no ignorance and no disturbance in their self-nature, they are able to be purely aware of all dharmas/Dharmas thought-after-thought with praja wisdom, and are always apart from all forms so as to be completely free and liberated. While the most profound “pure awareness” can be fully attainable in the ten directions and the three times, what is there to set up ? Since both “the self-nature is ultimately self-realized” and “sudden ultimate-realization and sudden manifestation of spontaneousness & effortlessnes” are approached instantaneously without any gradual process, there is no setting up all dharmas/Dharmas. As all dharmas/Dharmas are intrinsically in “perfect rest and cessation”, what gradation is there?”

The above discourse clarifies that Patriarch/Matriarch Chan of the Chinese Chan sect (the ultimate Tathagata Pure Chan of Shakyamuni Buddha) is truly the non-dualistic “Suddenness Chan” of “sudden no-practice / complete-practice with sudden ultimate-enlightenment” and “sudden ultimate-enlightenment with sudden spontaneousness & effortlessnes”; is to have a straightforward insight into the self-nature and the true mind, and to attain the ultimate complete-enlightenment of “vexation is bodhi”. However, the Chinese Mahayana Tathagata Chan (the expedient Tathagata Pure Chan of Shakyamuni Buddha) is the “Gradualness Chan” of “gradual multiple-practice with sudden enlightenment” and “sudden enlightenment with gradual multiple-practice”, which contemplates on the delusion of the mind and purity; is the gradual resting of deluded mind and sudden realization of true mind through the diligent cutting off vexations by way of skillful multiple-practice. In a word, there is indeed “sameness in source and difference in path” for both of them.

According to the record of *The Transmission of the Lamp*, both Chan Master Yangshan Huiji and Xiangyan Zhixian were Dharma heirs of Chan Master Guishan Lingyou, who founded the Guiyang school of Chan along with his disciple Yangshan. One day, Yangshan tested Xiangyan by asking about his recent realization. Xiangyan responded with a verse and it said,  
“Last year’s poverty was not real poverty, and this year’s one is finally the genuine one. In last year there was no place for the awl, and in this year there is even no awl.”

Yangshan commented that Xiangyan has only realized the Tathagata Chan without having seen into the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan. The main reason is that although Xiangyan’s verse has already expressed the actualization of “no attainment”, it still falls into skillful levels and gradual steps; therefore, he has not yet truly realized the great meaning of Patriarch/Matriarch’s Suddenness Chan. Nonetheless, based on the statement of *The Compendium of Five Lamps*, his realization can be further commented as follows:

Xiangyan then presented Yangshan another verse and it said,  
“I have a dynamic device,  
It penetrates practitioner's mind in the twinkling of an eye.  
If he still has not realized it,  
Do not call him a novice.”

At this moment, Yangshan directly granted Xiangyan's realization of the Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan. What is the difference in actualization for the second verse ? As a matter of fact, Xiangyan's last verse has already indicated his insight into the Patriarch/Matriarch's mind ground, which includes straightforward realization of “intrinsic perfection and achievement, and at the right moment all things manifesting their true reality” and direct pointing at “original possession and sufficiency, and being of no deficiency and no surplusage”.

If Guohan was on the spot and heard the verse, “In last year there was no place for the awl, and in this year there is even no awl”, he would then pick and hold the whisk upright at the very moment and ask Xiangyan,  
“The whisk takes a swallow of the heaven, the earth, and the universe. Have you realized it ?”

If supposing Xiangyan would have hesitated, Guohan would hit him. On the other hand, if Xiangyan immediately presented with the mind ground of “I have a dynamic device; It penetrates practitioner's mind in the twinkling of an eye.”, Guohan would throw the whisk away forthwith and then rest.

All Chan practitioners in the modern world! If some of you are able to discern this, Guohan grants that you have an [vajra] eye on your forehead. Otherwise, only further diligent mind-training with genuine investigation will enable you to directly see into your self-nature and have an insight into the Mind.

**People ask about the Way of Cold Mountain,  
There is “no Way” to penetrate through.  
Even in summer, the icy snow is still frozen;  
While bright sun shines, the hazy fog still exists.  
How could one like me be able to reach there?  
Simply is the dissimilarity in our mind.  
If your mind was the same as mine,  
You would have awakened to the very source.**

— *The Poem of Han-Shan (Cold Mountain)* —

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