

A STUDY ON ZHI-YI'S PHILOSOPHY OF *YANG SHENG* (養生) ON THE *CONDENSED CHAPTER OF CESSATION* *AND CONTEMPLATION* (小止觀)

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Introduction of *Yang Sheng*

In the English Language, *Yang Sheng* means nourishing life. The Chinese word *Yang* (養) means to nourish, to take care of and to nurture. *Sheng* (生) means life, vitality and birth. As Dr. Chen wrote:

Together “*Yang Sheng*” means to nurture or nourish life — fostering health and well-being by nurturing body, mind and spirit in harmony with the natural rhythms, and with universal laws. Sometimes *Yang Sheng* is also translated as health preservation, life cultivation, or life nourishment.¹

As stated above in the quotation, *Yang Sheng* was not only to nurture body but also for the mind and spirit as well. In other words, *Yang Sheng* besides treating disease was also necessary to maintain a balance through an awareness of our connection to nature and to the spirit. Unlike Daniel Reid who proposed that the goal of Chinese *Yang Sheng* therapy was to prevent diseases from occurring by keeping all of the body's organs healthy.² Based on his article, he was mainly focusing on Chinese tradition herbal medicine (TCM of *Yang Sheng*) to nurture our bodies so as to nourish our lives. In the

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¹ Kevin W. Chen, *Nourishing Life*. See the article on www.yang-sheng.com

² Daniel Reid, *Chinese Herbal Medicine (TCM of Yang Sheng)*. See the article on <http://www.danreid.org/daniel-reid-articles-chinese-herbal-medicine.asp>

past, the concept of *Yang Sheng* emphasized mainly on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for health and longevity such as those suggested in the manuscript entitled “*The Yellow Emperor’s Internal Classic* (黄帝内经)”³. That was to say, in the early days, attention was mainly placed on TCM rather than engaged in exercises to maintain a healthy body. It was interesting to note that there was a difference from the current generation’s interpretation. In the present-day world, the idea of *Yang Sheng* was entirely different from the past generations.

With regard to the young people in the modern-day era, the idea of *Yang Sheng* to them was consuming health supplements, eating the right food and engaging in various forms of exercises. Exercises could be in the form of dancing and practicing yoga, qigong, meditation and etc. Needless to say, their notions of maintaining good health were through consuming the right food and engaging in some forms of exercises. Exercises, as perceived, not only could reduce their stress level but also improve bodily health. In the present society, people are subjected to tremendous amount of pressure and stress both from family and work. The drastic change in climates and air pollution were among the other contributing factors. Hence, people now were more aware of the concept of *Yang Sheng*. If practice properly and diligently, it could certainly improve the way of life for everyone.

With regard to the silver population, the emphasis was on the usage of Chinese Herbal Medicine (TCM of *Yang Sheng*) than engaging in regular exercises. Probably it was due to their advanced age and plagued with various form of ageing illness. Especially for Chinese people who were highly influenced by their predecessors and thought that the sole purpose of *Yang Sheng* was to maintain health

³ *The Yellow Emperor’s Internal Classic*, often known simply as the ‘*Nei Jing* (内经)’, was considered as the most important book in the early history of acupuncture. Attributed to the legendary Yellow Emperor (*Huang Di*, 黄帝), who reportedly lived around 2500 B.C.E., this book was probably first written about 200 B.C.E.. Its main focus was on the theoretical basis for acupuncture and Chinese medicine

and achieved longevity. As Dr. Chen wrote: “*Yang Sheng* is the root of Chinese medicine and the foundation of human health.”⁴ Of course, there may be some of the more motivated and well-informed elderly who not only used Chinese herbal medication daily but also performed exercises such as taiji, qigong or meditation.

Thus it was obvious to most people that the main aim for practicing *Yang Sheng* was for health and longevity.

Besides taiji, qigong, yoga and dance, there were various different schools of health philosophy, such as Daoism, Confucianism and Martial Arts traditions. Among these schools, Daoism had also advocated that health was about the mind and spirit and not just the physical body.

***Yang Sheng* in Buddhism**

Buddhist meditation techniques had increasingly gain popularity globally with many non-Buddhists taking up the practice for their physical health (*Yang Sheng*). In the western world, there were a high proportion of those who had turned to practicing Buddhist meditation. Apparently, the practice was harboring the hope of improving their physical health. Buddhist meditation encompassed a wide variety of meditation techniques that aimed to develop concentration, mindfulness, super natural powers, tranquility and insight. According to Buddhism, ‘meditation’ (Pali: *samatha*) was an important practice to produce a state of perfect mental health and tranquility. In Buddhism, the final goal could be achieved by cultivating wisdom (Pali *paññā*, Skt *Prajñā*), which one could interpret happenings ‘as they really are’. The wisdom needs nourishing by meditative development of the path.⁵ In Buddhism, ‘meditation’ therefore could be considered as a significant quality

⁴ Kevin W. Chen, *What is Yang Sheng*. See the article on http://yang-sheng.com/?page_id=55

⁵ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism — Teachings, history and practices*, p.244.

and skillful means in developing wisdom. In other words, wisdom could not be generated without meditation. In the *Long Discourse of Agama Sutra* (长阿含经), it was written:

After calming down the body and mind, one could achieve concentration. After accomplishing concentration, one could then realize true view and it was considered as entering the initial liberation.⁶

According to the quotation above, it seemed that ‘calming down the body and mind’ referred to ‘meditation’. In other words, one could attain concentration after meditation. Kōgen Mizuno wrote: “The Chinese Ch’an teaching classifies five types of meditation according to increasing degrees of wisdom: non-Buddhist meditation, meditation practiced for physical and mental health,”⁷ Clearly, it was legitimate to say that meditation produced physical and mental health.

According to Buddhism, the formation of human being was the combination of body and mind. As expected, when we spoke of healthy person, the individual should be referred to as being healthy in both the body and mind and not just the physical body by itself. As Walpola Rahula wrote:

The Buddha said: “O bhikkhus, there are two kinds of illness. What are those two? Physical illness and mental illness. There seem to be people who enjoy freedom from physical illness even for a year or two even for a hundred years or more. But, O bhikkhus, rare in this world are those who enjoy freedom from mental illness even for one moment, except those who are free from mental defilements”.⁸

⁶ See Chinese Canon, T1.51c8-10.

⁷ Kōgen Mizuno, *Basic Buddhist Concepts*, pp.156-137.

⁸ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha taught* p.67.

As stated above, the Buddha had acknowledged that there were two forms of illness existing in a human being — physical and mental. Unfortunately, most people had merely focused on their physical health and had neglected their mental health. In other words, physical and mental health was necessary before an individual could cultivate and move on to the next higher level in order to develop the wisdom and could then be liberated from afflictions. From Buddhist perspective, the concept of *Yang Sheng* encompassed physical and mental health. Thus to reemphasized — cultivating wisdom required both physical and mental health.

In Buddhism, ‘meditation’ could be regarded as the contributing factor to wonderful joy and longevity. Although the main focus of Buddhist meditation was not to cling on to joy and longevity, but ‘meditation’ could develop these two effects in our body. When we practiced ‘meditation’, it will affect our biological senses so as to improve the body health which in turn we would find joy and longevity in our present life. As Professor Chen Bing (陈兵) quoted the *Agama Sutra* which wrote:

Buddha who was addressing the bhikkhus and bhikkhis had said: “If one who practice meditation, one will achieve desire (欲), concentration (定), diligence (精进), contemplation of four spiritual powers (观四神足) and could freely live for one or more Kalpa.⁹

He also quoted the *Chapter of Ten Grounds of Hua-Yan-Jing* (华严经, 十地品) and said that the first ground of Bodhisattva could live to hundred kalpa. It would doubly increase the life of first ground of Bodhisattva onward.¹⁰ Obviously, these two citations mentioned that the advantage of practicing meditation was to have longevity. With regard to wonderful joy achieved in meditation, Professor Chen-

⁹ Chen-Bing, *Chan-Ding-De-Shen-Xin-Xiao-Ying* (禅定的身心效应). See the article on <http://gujinglawyer.fyfz.cn/b/477734>

¹⁰ Ibid.

Bing (陈兵) quoted the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* (维摩经, 卷一) and wrote:

Based on the joy in meditation as consumption of food means that all the wonderful joys achieved in meditation could provide nurturing of human's food and enable health in body and mind. This was the high class product of nutrition.¹¹

As stated above, this was the clear evidence that 'meditation could engender wonderful joy. Hence, 'meditation' could be regarded as philosophy of *Yang Sheng* in Buddhism.

Meditation in the *T'ien-T'ai* School

Zhi-yi (538-597) was the founder of *T'ien-T'ai* school.¹² In China, it had been traditionally held that the meditation practices developed by the *T'ien-T'ai* School were the most systematic and comprehensive of all the available teachings. In addition to the doctrinal basis in Indian Buddhist texts, Zhi-yi also emphasized the use of his own meditation texts which highlighted the theory of cessation (Sanskrit: śamatha) and contemplation (Sanskrit: vipaśyanā). As Peter Harvey wrote:

In Eastern Buddhism, it received its most systematic working out by Chi-I, founder of *T'ien-T'ai* school, in his *Mo-ho Chih-kuan* 'The Great Calm (*Chih*) and Insight (*kuan*)'.¹³

Of these texts, Zhi-yi's *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* (小止观) and *Great Cessation and Contemplation*

¹¹ Ibid. Also see the *Samyuktāgama sūtra* (杂阿含经), T2.117b15 and T2.23c

¹² As for the legend of Zhi-yi, see Ren Ji-yu (任继愈), *Zong-Jiao-Da-Ci-Dian* (宗教大辞典), p.1060. Also see Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China — A Historical Survey*, pp.303-304.

¹³ Peter Harvey, *An introduction to Buddhism — Teachings, history and practices*, p.257. As we could see, Peter Harvey translated 'calm' for the Chinese word 止 (*Chih*) and 'insight' for 观 (*kuan*).

(摩诃止观) were the most widely read in China. In fact, the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* was the concise of the *Great Cessation and Contemplation*. In this paper, I would therefore attempt to elaborate on the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* as there was an existence of a chapter which mentioned about 'healing illness' and the initiative be attributed to the philosophy of *Yang Sheng*. According to Venerable Shi Yuan Zhao (释元照), in his preface he had mentioned that Zhi-yi's brother was seriously ill and he only could live for another month. Hence, he sought the help from Zhi-yi. Zhi-yi had recently produced the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation*. He had persuaded his brother to practice it. He heeded Zhi-yi's advice and practiced it diligently and subsequently his illness was fully recovered and had enjoyed longevity in his later life.¹⁴ Basing on these two reasons, this particular text had been selected for my study.

Cessation (止) and Contemplation (观)

With regard to cessation and contemplation, Paul Williams wrote:

Calming the mind is called 'calming (meditation)' (Sanskrit: *śamatha*; Pāli: *samatha*). Discovering with a calm mind how things are really is called 'insight (meditation)' (Sanskrit: *vipaśyanā*; Pāli: *vipassanā*). At least some degree of calming is considered necessary to insight.¹⁵

As stated above, it appeared that 'calming' (or cessation) meant to focus the mind on one point and consequently calming meditation

¹⁴ In 1095, Venerable Shi Yuan Zhao had written the prelude when he proofread the work of *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* by Zhi-yi. As for the article on *Tien-Tai-Xiao-Zhi-Guan* (天台小止观) where the commentary was written by Venerable Jing Lian (净莲法师), see http://read.goodweb.cn/news/news_view.asp?newsid=37049

¹⁵ Paul Williams with Anthony tribe, *Buddhist Thought*, p.81.

was to still the mind.¹⁶ ‘Insight’ (or contemplation) was the notion of reflection on how conditions were really understood such as impermanence with a calm and clear mind.¹⁷ Evidently, cessation and contemplation referred to concentration (定) and wisdom (慧) which were the common practice in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. According to Zhi-yi, he wrote:

Although there were many approaches for one to attain *nirvāṇa*, but it could be summarized within the main approach of cessation and contemplation. Why was that so? [For example,] cessation was the initial stage to subdue mental defilements and contemplation was truly to abandon confusion. Cessation was skillfully nurturing mind consciousness and contemplation had a fascinating technique to provide clear understanding. Cessation was the superior cause of concentration and contemplation was the original source of wisdom. If an individual could cultivate both concentration and wisdom, the person could then be regarded as one who possessed both the merit of self-benefiting and benefiting others.¹⁸

In this quotation, Zhi-yi was clearly stating that it was essential for an individual to cultivate concentration and wisdom as a pre-requisite to attain *nirvāṇa* (liberation). Here, Zhi-yi was trying to imply that ‘cessation’ (止) required a dedicated determination of practice and that was the only way to internalize unwavering concentration. In view of ‘contemplation’, which was related to the contact with external objects, provided the way of practicing the contemplation of wisdom. It appeared that Zhi-yi’s explanation on cessation and contemplation was comparable with modern scholars such as Paul Williams despite the difference in the expressions. Although Zhi-yi had given three different definitions, it seemed that they could all

¹⁶ Ibid., p.82. Also see Rupert Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, pp.174-176.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.84.

¹⁸ See Chinese Canon, T46.462b7-12.

be thought of as concentration and wisdom. Zhi-yi also mentioned that both the concentration and wisdom could be considered as self-benefiting and benefiting others. Clearly, cessation and contemplation encompassed two benefits which were pertaining to Mahāyāna teaching. It was legitimate to say that Zhi-yi's proposition of cessation and contemplation not only focused on self-beneficence of the body and mental health, but also to be able to benefit other sentient beings as well. Practicing cessation and contemplation as part of Mahāyāna spirit could be considered as taking the Bodhisattva path. One need to resolve the Bodhi mind (enlightened mind, 菩提心) in order to practice Bodhisattva path. Thus the reason for Zhi-yi to establish the system of 'cessation and contemplation' (止观) could be for the enlightenment. In view of this, 'cessation and contemplation' could be regarded as Bodhi (enlightenment) or vice versa. Clearly, we could conclude that 'cessation and contemplation' encompassed the beginning and ending of cultivating the Buddha's teaching.

What was the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* (小止观)?

The *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* (小止观) was the elementary book for beginners. It had another common name in the Chinese Canon entitled *The essential method to practice Cessation and Contemplation of Zen meditation* (修习止观坐禅法要).¹⁹ As we know, T'ien-T'ai School was very much focused on theories and practice which was based on the *Lotus Sutra* (法华经) for their theoretical thought. With regard to the method of cultivation, this school had four manners of 'cessation and contemplation' and the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* was one of them. As it was mentioned earlier, the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* was devised due to illness of Zhi-yi's brother. It also could be considered as the shadow of the *Great Cessation and Contemplation* (摩诃止观). The purpose of

¹⁹ See Chinese Canon, volume 46, T46.462.

Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation was to let an individual who had practiced ‘cessation and contemplation’ to comprehend the correct method of cultivation. One could then truly cultivate and enter into the stage of enlightenment in the principle of ‘cessation and contemplation’. Besides attaining enlightenment, it could also assist the individual to have good health in body and mind as part of the present benefit. In other words, Zhi-yi realized that bodily health was important for the practicing of the ‘cessation and contemplation’.

The Structure of *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* (小止观)

Basically, the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* consisted of ten chapters namely: 1. Obtaining causes and conditions (具缘); 2. Condemning desire (呵欲); 3. Abandoning hindrances (弃盖); 4. Regulation (调和); 5. Skillful means (方便); 6. Real practicing (正修); 7. Sprouting of good root (善发); 8. Realizing evil (觉魔); 9. Healing illness (治病); 10. Result of enlightenment (证果).²⁰ The brief main content of these ten chapters were listed as follows:

1. Obtaining causes and conditions: To explain the basic requirements for practicing meditation.
2. Condemning desire: To eliminate the external five classes of obstacles when practicing meditation.
3. Abandoning hindrances: To abandon the five hindrances²¹ which were engendered from our mind when practicing meditation.
4. Regulation: To expound on how to regulate the basic posture, breathing, and abiding our disturbed mind when practicing meditation.

²⁰ Ibid., T46.462c3-6.

²¹ The five hindrances were desire, anger, stupor and sleep, restlessness and worry, and doubt. See Master Yin-shun, *The Way to Buddhahood*, p.160.

5. Skillful means: To bring out the five requirements in order to attain the stage of concentration when practicing meditation.
6. Real practicing: To explore the different methods and remedy for practicing 'cessation and contemplation'.
7. Sprouting of good root: To bring out some good conditions which occurred when entering to the stage of concentration.
8. Realizing evil: To expel from our mind the thoughts that clung on to those mental defilements and facing squarely some of the evil issues during meditation.
9. Healing illness: During meditation, if there was improper regulation of the four great elements (四大, ground, water, fire and wind)²² in our bodies and minds, it would cause some discomfort or sickness. Hence, Zhi-yi had highlighted this particular method for healing.
10. Result of enlightenment: To elucidate the theory of resultant stage of the complete teaching of *T'ien-T'ai* School.

Besides all these ten chapters, the main focus of my study will be on the Chapter Four (Regulation) and the Chapter Nine (Healing illness) so as to reflect in details of Zhi-yi's philosophy of *Yang Sheng*.

Zhi-yi's philosophy of *Yang Sheng*

According to Zhi-yi, 'cessation and contemplation' could be used for healing illness. Before one started the practice of meditation, regulating of the five matters (五事) namely food consumption, sleeping, body, breath and mind were necessary for the right practice of 'cessation and contemplation'. In the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* (小止观), Zhi-yi wrote:

²² The four great elements of ground, water, fire and wind referred to bone, blood, body temperature and breath.

What was ‘Regulation’ (调和) ? Now, I am using modern analogies to explain on [the meaning of ‘Regulation’] For example, when making pottery, the potters had to skillfully balance the amount of water in the clay to ensure that it would not be too hard or too soft. Likewise, the musician who played the zither had to adjust the cord and ensure that it would not be too tight or too loose so that it could produce melodious tunes. It was similar to one who was cultivating the mind. One had to skillfully regulate the five elements, then *samādhi* (三昧) could be easily achieved 1. Regulating food (调食): The reason for consuming food was to nurture our body. If we ate too much, we would be breathless, the flow of blood in our vessels would not be smooth, blockage of our heart would occur and we would not attain calmness in our physical body and mind. However, if we consumed too little, our body would be weak and our mind would be floating and could not have a firm and steady mind. Concentration could never be achieved under such conditions. If we happened to intake contaminated food, it would cause unconscious of our mind. If we took improper food, it would cause illnesses then our four great elements could not be well regulated. We had to be aware of all the pitfalls during the initial stage. Hence, a Buddhist scripture wrote: “When one’s body was healthy, then one would be good in cultivation. Knowing how to regulate food consumption and always feel the joy at quiet place. Calm the mind and feel pleasure to cultivate [Dharma] diligently. This was known as Buddhism”²³.

According to the above quotation, Zhi-yi utilized the two modern analogies of clay and cord to illustrate ‘Regulation’. Zhi-yi had applied the theory of ‘Middle Path’ (中道)²⁴ and stated that concentration of mind could not be achieved if one fell into the

²³ T46.465b14-27.

²⁴ In Buddhism, the ‘Middle-Path’ referred to neither existence nor non-existence (emptiness).

two extremes. It seemed that Zhi-yi implied that 'Regulation' had to be incorporated with the theory of 'Middle Path'. With regard to 'Regulating food', Zhi-yi proposed that consumption of food could not be too little or too much which would then again fall into the two extremes. Otherwise, it would prompt negative effects on the body and mind. Subsequently, Zhi-yi quoted a Buddhist scripture to reflect the significance of regulating of the body and mind. Obviously, Zhi-yi realized that the body and mind were closely related to each other and therefore both had to be healthy in order to achieve concentration.

With regard to the second matter of 'Sleeping' (睡眠), Zhi-yi wrote:

2. 'Sleeping' was concealed by confusion and ignorance and we therefore should not indulge it. If we slept too much, it would affect the cultivation of Buddha's teaching and our effort would be wasted. This would make us feel stupor and the good roots would wither. [Hence,] we should comprehend impermanence in order to regulate 'Sleeping' so that there would be the presence of fresh energy to clear the mind. With this, our mind could be immersed in the stage of sages and *Samādhi* could be achieved. A Buddhist scripture once described: "We simply could not overlook the initial period of the night and the last part of the night²⁵ and not because of the condition of sleeping, we would waste our life and nothing could be accomplished. We should always be mindful of the fire of impermanence burning the mundane world and hope that we could have self-realization earlier and did not [attach] to 'Sleeping'."²⁶

²⁵ Master Yin-shun wrote: "According to the Buddhist system the initial period of the night (dusk begin at 6 P.M. and the night is divided into twelve hours) is from 6 to 10 P.M., and the last part of the night is from 2 to 6 A.M. During these two periods, the monastic disciples should participate in walking and sitting meditation. In the middle of the night (from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M.), they should sleep but should also diligently practice wakeful yoga. In other words, one practices well even while asleep." See Master Yin-shun, *The Way to Buddhahood*, p.155.

²⁶ T46.465b27-c5.

Here, Zhi-yi mentioned that we should not sleep too much and indulge ourselves or otherwise, it would obstruct our cultivation and our body health would deteriorate. Therefore, Zhi-yi suggested that we should regulate ‘Sleeping’ and be mindful of impermanence and achieved liberation at the earliest possible time. He therefore quoted a Buddhist scripture and said that regulating on ‘Sleeping’ was significant; otherwise, one would not be successful in present life. Again, Zhi-yi was using the theory of ‘Middle Path’ for ‘Regulation’ and emphasized that sleep too much or too little was considered as two extremes.

With regard to the third matter of ‘Body’ (身), the fourth matter of ‘Breath’ (息), and the fifth matter of ‘Mind’ (心), Zhi-yi wrote:

Elaborate on these three matters had to be together and could not be separated. One had to regulate the body before practicing concentration. It was important for one to regulate the body if one wished to attain *samādhi*. If physical bodily action was uncivilized, the breath would also be uneven. If the breath was coarse, then the mind would be affected and became scattered. Also, when there was uncomfortable and uneasy feeling during meditation, the mind could not calm down. On the other hand, if one could properly regulate the body when practicing meditation, then the body would not be in pain and it would feel comfortable and relaxed. [Some preparations were thus required to be made before meditation could take place. The preparations were:]

1. We need to place the mat at the clear and quite place.
2. Placed the legs properly in the right position. If one applied the half-lotus posture meditation, the left leg had to be on top of the right leg and then brought legs closer to the body. Ensured that toes of the left leg were in line with the right thigh and likewise for the right leg and left thigh. If one wished to practice full-lotus posture meditation, then the right leg had to put on top of the left leg.

3. Ensured that the clothing was loose fitting but would not drop off from the body. Put the left hand on top of the right hand with both palms facing each other. Then placed it on top of the left leg and brought the hands closed to the body. The mind could then be calmed down.
4. To exercise the various parts of our body for seven or eight times including massages. Keep the body straight and to ensure that the spine was not slanted at an angle.
5. To ensure that head, neck were in line with nose, navel and not tilted at an angle. Then moved the head in an up and down motion.
6. Opened the mouth and blew out the contaminated breath. [When blowing out,] it should not be fast and coarse; rather, it had to be slow and refined. Try to imagine that the contaminants were stuck in the vessels of our body and it would follow the breath and expelled from our body. Then closed the mouth and inhaled pure air for three times. However if the body had already been regulated, then one inhalation would be good sufficient.
7. Closed the mouth with the tongue pressing against the upper jaw of the teeth.
8. Closed our eyes to prevent the light from coming in contact with our line of sight. Sat straight and ensured that the body did not fidget. This was regarded as 'Regulating Body' (调身).

In short, the method for 'Regulating Body' was not to be too relax or too rigid 4. One had to regulate the breath too before practicing concentration. There were four kinds of breath namely wind (风), gasping (喘), energy (气) and breath (息). Among the four different categories of breath, the first three could not be considered as 'Regulation'. What was wind? When practicing meditation, the nostril could feel or hear the sound of inhalations and exhalations of

the breath. This is called wind. What was gasping? When practicing meditation, there were no audible breathing but blockage occurred on inhalation and exhalation. This is called gasping. What was energy? When practicing meditation, although no sound could be heard and there was no occurrence of blockage but inhalation and exhalation were unrefined. This was known as energy. Lastly, what was breath? There would be no sound, or occurrence of blockage or coarse breathing. Instead the breath would be continuous, even, smooth and a gentle sensation of inhalation and exhalation. One would feel settled and calm in their mind and a joyous mood in the heart. This is termed as breath. If one was conscious of the wind, the mind would be distracted. If one observed the gasping, the mind would be blocked. If one noticed the energy, the mind would be exhausted. However if one recognized the value of breath, the mind would stay focused. When practicing meditation, one who had these three categories of breathing namely wind, gasping and energy, the breathing was not being regulated [the breath]. These three different categories would cause the mind to suffer and it would lead to the loss of concentration. There were the three methods for one who would like to regulate [the breath]. Firstly, calm down the mind. Secondly, loosen and relax the body. Thirdly, be aware of the energy and spread the energy through the pores of the whole body, ensuring there was no blockage in inhalation and exhalation. If the mind was in a sound state, it would enable gentle, even and smooth breathing. When the breath was regulated, then all the mentioned obstacles would not occur and the mind could focus easily. This is called the method of ‘Regulating breath’ (调息). In short, ‘Regulating breath’ must not fall into the two extremes — neither too coarse nor too smooth. 5. One had to regulate the mind before practicing meditation. There were three significances namely: ‘entrance’ (入), ‘abiding’ (住) and ‘emerging’ (出). 1. There were two interpretations of ‘entrance’. Firstly, to regulate and subdue distracted thoughts and to ensure that it would not cross over [to our mind]. Secondly, to enable that ‘sinking’ (沉), ‘floating’ (浮), ‘loose’ (宽), and ‘tightness’ (急) feeling to be expelled from the body. What was ‘sinking’? During meditation, ‘sinking’ referred to when one felt emptiness

in the mind, stupor and head facing downward. To counteract the sinking, one had to be mindful of the nose and enabled the mind not to be distracted and abided by it. What was 'floating'? When practicing meditation, 'floating' referred to when one could feel the body hovering, not in tranquility and the mind was occupied with different external objects. If such sensation occurred, one had to bring the mind downward and be mindful of the object at the navel in order to remedy the discursive thought. If the mind could be directed [on the particular object], then the mind could be calmed down easily. In short, there should be no sensation of either 'sinking' or 'floating'. This was regarded as regulating the mind. Focusing of mind would also be met with two obstacles which were 'loose' and 'tightness'. With regard to the presence of 'tightness', it was because one had embraced the mind by using mindfulness during meditation. Therefore, the mind would have an upward feeling when one entered into concentration. The chest would experience pain and one had to loosen the thought and energy could then flow down. If the mind felt the presence of 'loose', one would feel that the mind was scattered with the body bending or the mouth was drooling or the feeling of darkness. When it happened, one had to be mindful of the body and enabled the mind to be positioned on a particular object. The body had to realize their presence in order to remedy the mind. One could therefore infer the consciousness of 'blockage' and 'smooth'. This was known as the method of regulating the mind for the initial entrance into concentration. To regulate the three elements of 'abiding' in practicing meditation. Practitioner who practiced meditation could follow different time intervals which could range from one hour to twelve hours. Using the mind to collect [discursive] thoughts, one would be able to realize whether the body, breath and mind were being regulated. To regulate the three elements of 'emerging' from meditation. (1) When one completed the meditation routine and desired to emerge from the session, the mind ought to be liberated from the different object. Opened the mouth and then blew the air out. Spread out the vessels of body and then slightly moved the body. (2) Moved the shoulder, hand, head and neck. (3) Ensured that [all the parts of the body] were relax and not tense. (4)

Using the hand then gently massaged the whole body. (5) Rubbing both hands together to generate heat. Using the warm hands rubbed the eyes and then opened the eyes slowly. Rest for a while and wait for the body to warm up before moving around. If one did not follow these steps, although one could still obtain an abiding mind, but all those [energy and breath] could not spread out in the body. This would cause headache and stiffness in joints of the bone such as ‘wind labor’ (风劳). All these symptoms would leave one feeling frustrated and it would be rather impossible to calm down. Hence, one ought to be careful when emerging from a meditation session. The above spelled out the method of regulating body, breath and mind and emerging from a meditation session.²⁷

According to the above quotation, Zhi-yi expounded three elements consist of body, breath and mind and proclaimed that these three elements had to exist together for illustration. With regard to regulating the body, Zhi-yi listed eight steps of regulation. Zhi-yi said that breath and mind would be affected if we did not regulate our body properly. Not only would it harm the body but also the mind as well. Needless to say, it would cause our body to be unhealthy. On the other hand, if we would follow these steps and regulate the body correctly, then it could improve the health of our body and mind. According to Zhi-yi, regulating the body could not be either too ‘tight’ or too ‘loose’. It appeared that Zhi-yi was adopting the crucial theory of the Middle-Path (中道).

With regard to the breath, Zhi-yi listed out four categories of breath and only the fourth category of ‘breath’ could calm the mind and would enhance the body health if we regulated the breath properly. In other words, the correct method of breathing was significant. Likewise, Zhi-yi emphasized that regulating the breath could not be too coarse or too smooth. Zhi-yi had again adopted the theory of the ‘Middle-Path’.

²⁷ T46.465c5-466b26.

Unlike the first two elements of 'body' and 'breath', Zhi-yi developed a more detailed account to illustrate the regulation of the 'mind'. As we could see, Zhi-yi highlighted the three explanations of regulating the 'mind'. Among them, it appeared that 'entrance' was important for calming the mind. In view of the 'entrance', Zhi-yi proposed that bodily sensation should not be either 'sinking' or 'floating' and 'loose' or 'tightness' which were the right methods of regulating the mind. Likewise, the interval for meditation should be moderate — not too 'long' (長) or 'short' (短) of the 'abiding'. Again, Zhi-yi had demonstrated the utilization of the 'Middle-Path' theory to explain how to regulate the mind. The main focus was on the mind rather than on the body and breath.²⁸ Nevertheless, besides the ultimate goal of concentration, body health could be achieved if we regulate the body, breath and mind appropriately.

Besides the 'regulation', another philosophy of *Yang Sheng* by Zhi-yi was on the chapter ninth concerning 'healing illness'. At the beginning of this chapter, Zhi-yi highlighted some attributing factors to illness such as one who did not regulate the body, breath and mind properly. Subsequently, he stated that if one who could regulate the mind properly then all the varieties of illness would be cured. On the other hand, if one did not regulate the mind correctly, then all different aspects of illness would be engendered. These illnesses not only obstruct cultivation, but also subject our life to danger and risk.²⁹ According to Zhi-yi, using the right method of regulating the mind was crucial in order to practice cessation and contemplation and also for body health. Clearly, Zhi-yi emphasized that all illnesses were due to the mind and therefore had proposed that regulating the mind was not only for spiritual growth but also for body health as well.

²⁸ In *T'ien-T'ai* doctrine, Zhi-yi emphasized more on absolute mind. He said that this absolute mind embraced all things in the universe and all things depend on this mind for their existence. According to Zhi-yi, the absolute mind was very important in *T'ien-T'ai* School. See Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China — A Historical Survey*, p.312.

²⁹ T46.471b3-9.

According to Zhi-yi, there were two explanations of healing illness namely: development of illness and the method of healing illness. Although there were many reasons for illness, but it could be classified into two main reasons namely: i) the illness of harming and strengthening of the four great elements³⁰ and ii) the illness of five organs.³¹ As for these two illnesses, Zhi-yi wrote:

First, the illness of harming and strengthening of the four great elements. If the ground (地) was overly strengthened, then it would swell and spine of the body would also felt heavier. This would harm the body and engendered the illness. If the water (水) was overly strengthened, then it would cause bloating in the stomach, foods could not be digested and diarrhea would occur. This would harm the body and engendered the illness. Hence, a Buddhist scripture said: “If one of the four great elements did not regulate properly, then it would cause the illness of this element.” Secondly, the illness of five organs. When the mind became ill, the body would feel cold, hot, headache, dry mouth and etc. This was because the mind controlled the mouth. For the lung to develop illness, the body would swell, pain in both of hands and legs, mind would feel bored, blockage in nose and etc. This was because the mind controlled the nose There was many kinds of illness of the five organs and each had their own manifestation and one ought to realize these problems when practicing meditation. There would not be merely one source for the development of illness in the four great elements and five organs.³²

In this quotation, Zhi-yi highlighted that the sources of illnesses could be classified into the strengthening of four great elements and

³⁰ As for the four great elements, pls. refer to footnote 22.

³¹ T46.471b9-12 and T46.471b20-21. The five organs referred to heart, lung, kidney, spleen and liver.

³² T46.471b12-c1.

the five organs. Illnesses would engender if the four great elements and five organs did not regulate properly. According to Zhi-yi, all these illnesses of the internal organs could harm the external organs of mouth, nose, eye, ear and tongue. Therefore knowing those symptoms was essential in order to prevent the illness. Otherwise, it would hinder the cultivation of cessation and contemplation. Zhi-yi realized the importance of knowing the cause and effect of illness before offering the healing methods.

With regard to the healing method of illness, Zhi-yi wrote:

By skillful means, there were two forms of cessation (止) and contemplation (观) among the many methods of healing illness. How does one use cessation to heal illness? Maybe others were curious and queried that how could it be that by merely calming the mind by cessation and illness could be cured. How could that be? The mind was the main controlling factor in a person's life span. The mind if could dispel unhealthy thoughts would liken to when a king made his appearance, all the thieves would disappear It had been said that by understanding [the nature of] emptiness of all things, one would not attach to illness. Therefore most of the illness could be cured when abiding on cessation There was more than one method to use cessation to heal the illness. In view of using contemplation for healing illness, we used the contemplation of conventional thinking to cure many illnesses. For example, if one caught a cold and by training his mind to think of warm in the body, the cold could be cured. It was possible to use cessation and contemplation to analyze the illness of four great elements in body. If the illness refused to be accepted by our mind then we would not affect by the illnesses. Based on these suggestions, by using contemplation appropriately then the illness could be cured. If we could truly know the two methods of cessation and contemplation, it could treat any kind of illnesses.³³

³³ T46.471c11-472b13.

In this quotation, Zhi-yi proposed that there were two methods of ‘cessation’ and ‘contemplation’ which could remedy all kinds of illnesses. According to Zhi-yi, it was important to know the true meaning of ‘cessation’ and ‘contemplation’. There was more than one way to heal illnesses. The healing would solely depend on the symptom of different illnesses regardless when using either method of ‘cessation’ or ‘contemplation’. However, it seemed that these two methods of ‘cessation’ and ‘contemplation’ were associated with the mind. As far as Zhi-yi was concerned, he strongly emphasized on the mind and it was very crucial in the doctrine of *T’ien-T’ai* School and also for ‘cessation’ and ‘contemplation’ as well.

Conclusion

As was mentioned in this paper, *Yang Sheng* in Buddhism referred to Buddhist meditation techniques. Although the phrase of *Yang Sheng* (nourishing life) did not appear in Buddhist scriptures, but its concept did reflect Buddhist meditation. After studying Zhi-yi’s the *Condensed Chapter of Cessation and Contemplation* (小止观), it was realized that chapter four of ‘Regulation’ (调和), and chapter nine of ‘Healing illness’ (治病) were the philosophy of *Yang Sheng* by Zhi-yi. In these two chapters, although Zhi-yi mentioned on body, breath, mind, cessation and contemplation, but he was very much emphasizing on the mind. In Zhi-yi’s explanation, body, breath, cessation and contemplation were in connection with the mind. Hence, the mind played a very significant role and was a vital role in Zhi-yi’s philosophy of *Yang Sheng* besides the body. Zhi-yi also realized that body and mind would affect each other if one of them was not in the best of health. Nevertheless, Zhi-yi proposed that the mind was vital not only for *Yang Sheng* (body health) but also for enlightenment (mental health) as well. Although Zhi-yi gave a detailed account on body and mind in these two chapters, but the mind was the most important than the body. It was legitimate to say that Zhi-yi’s philosophy of *Yang Sheng* was a healthy body and mind but in particular a healthy mind. Besides the mind, Zhi-yi also

harnessed on the theory of 'Middle-Path' (中道) which was a very crucial aspect in Buddhism. Particularly, the concept of this theory was emphasized in the chapter of 'Regulation'. Needless to say, the uniqueness in Zhi-yi's philosophy of *Yang Sheng* was the mind besides the body and together with the theory of the 'Middle-Path'.

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