

Who are the Parasites in the Lion's Body?

Preface

Bodhisattva Asanga was born in the 4th century CE. At that time, in ancient India (C. *Tianzhu*), the influence of the *śrāvaka* monks, or the sound-hearer *saṃghas* of Sectarian Buddhism, was at its peak. Nevertheless, these *śrāvaka* monks were reluctant to recognize themselves as sound-hearer *saṃghas*, often considering themselves *Mahāyāna saṃghas* and studying the *Mahāyāna sūtras*. However, they had been misguided by the ordinary *śrāvaka* commentators of Sectarian Buddhism from the 1st century BC. Most of these *śrāvaka saṃghas* of Sectarian Buddhism were also studying the *Mahāyāna sūtras*. However, the dharmas expounded in the *Mahāyāna sūtras* and their true meanings were profoundly difficult to understand, let alone realize. For this reason, many of the ordinary *śrāvaka saṃghas* of Sectarian Buddhism firmly believed that the teachings of the *Mahāyāna sūtras* were merely ideological and impossible to empirically realize. They even claimed that these *sūtras* were long-term creations of the latter generations of Buddhist disciples, which were compiled into *sūtras* only in the final period. Consequently, they proposed that “*Mahāyāna* is not the Buddha’s teaching” to boycott *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. However, sound-hearer doctrines were introduced only after the World-Honored One, Śākyamuni, attained Buddhahood. They were taught to disciples with the aim of enabling them to become arhats and pratyekabuddhas. Upon attaining realization through the doctrines of the Two Vehicles, disciples were limited to becoming either arhats or pratyekabuddhas. Ultimately, Buddhahood remained unattainable for them.

After the initial turning of the Dharma Wheel of the sound-hearer and solitary-realizer Bodhi, the World-Honored One, Śākyamuni, further guided arhats and pratyekabuddhas by employing the method of a “separate transmission apart from the scriptures” to enable them to become bodhisattvas through awakening to the wisdom associated with *prajñā*. Only then did the World-Honored One begin teaching about the *prajñā* of the sign of reality of the *Mahāyāna* Bodhi, thus establishing both the

name and the reality of *Mahāyāna*. This marked the *prajñā* period in the second turning of the Dharma Wheel. The teachings enabled disciples who had converted to the Great Vehicle to attain the First Ground (*bhūmi*). Thus, the dissemination of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras* was accomplished with assistance from the disciples of the various Grounds (stages) who had been guided and were undergoing training over many *kalpas* in the past. Subsequently, the third turning of the Dharma Wheel expounds on the training in higher wisdom in the Consciousness-Only (*Vijñaptimātra*) teachings, which is more profound and abstruse as practiced by various Ground bodhisattvas. This enables disciples who have entered the Grounds to rely upon them for the progressive cultivation of the practices pertaining to these stages, advancing sequentially through the various Grounds. Thereupon, as the Path to Buddhahood nears completion, it is consummated by the Perfect Teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*. The aforementioned periods are thus designated as the three turnings of the Dharma Wheel.

Upon examination of the sacred teachings of the Two-Vehicle Bodhi, it is evident that they originated from and began to be propagated with Śākyamuni Buddha's attainment of Buddhahood. However, these doctrines are solely capable of enabling individuals to realize the sacred fruitions of the Two Vehicles, and have never encompassed the sign of reality of *prajñā* in *Mahāyāna*, let alone the knowledge-of-all-aspects. Unexpectedly, monk Shi Yinshun, the successor to the legacy of ordinary *śrāvaka* monks of Sectarian Buddhism, and numerous scholars in academia propound doctrines entirely inherited from the six-consciousnesses theory of Sectarian Buddhism's ordinary *śrāvaka* monks. They are evidently unaware that the Two-Vehicle Bodhi originates entirely from *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. They also disregard the fact that the Two-Vehicle Bodhi was transmitted only after Śākyamuni Buddha's attainment of Buddhahood. Instead, they assert that "*Mahāyāna* is not the Buddha's teaching," thereby negating the supremely wondrous and unparalleled Dharma of *Mahāyāna*. This can be considered a demonstration of ignorance. It is asserted that without the *Mahāyāna* doctrines, there would be no means for Tathāgata Śākyamuni to attain Buddhahood, and consequently, the teachings of the Two Vehicles would have no basis for manifestation in the world. This demonstrates that the Two-Vehicle Bodhi originated from *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. How, then, can one falsely claim that *Mahāyāna*

is not the Buddha's teaching?

However, the notion that "*Mahāyāna* is not the Buddha's teaching" is not an invention of Shi Yinshun and the academic community. It has been inherited from the unenlightened *śrāvaka* commentators of Sectarian Buddhism who adhered to the six-consciousnesses theory. This view has existed since ancient times and is not a novel proposition. It can be corroborated by the exposition in the *Verses on the Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras* composed by Bodhisattva Asaṅga. It also clearly demonstrates that the "parasites within the lion's body" mentioned by the Buddha precisely refer to the proponents of the six-consciousnesses theory, such as the unenlightened *śrāvaka* monks of Sectarian Buddhism. In *Cheng Weishi Lun*, the great master Xuanzang repeatedly refutes the erroneous views of the sound-hearers and ordinary commentators who adhere to the six-consciousnesses theory of Sectarian Buddhism. He does this to counteract those who are "parasites in the lion's body." Xuanzang emphatically declares, **"If false views are not repudiated, the True Dharma cannot be revealed."**

Since the inception of Buddhism, those who have undermined the propagation of the True Dharma have invariably been the "parasites in the lion's body." The Buddha had long predicted this, and it remains true to this day. Non-Buddhists who seek to destroy the Dharma are few and lack the capability to do so because they do not have an in-depth understanding of the Buddha's teachings and do not study them. This situation has persisted from ancient times to the present. However, in the current Dharma-ending age, all Buddhist practitioners within the Buddhist community are continuously misled by the legacy of the "parasites within the lion's body." These practitioners have never been aware that these "masters" are themselves the "parasites in the lion's body" and thus continue to tolerate their destruction of the True Dharma. This situation has persistently existed within Buddhist circles, remaining unchanged throughout history. To revitalize the orthodox lineage of the Buddha Dharma in contemporary Buddhism, it is imperative to disclose this reality to the entire Buddhist community. Only when everyone in the Buddhist community understands this matter can they reject and change it, thus ensuring the long-lasting preservation of the results of reviving the True Dharma. This will benefit practitioners who have a

deep affinity with Buddhism in the human world. Subsequently, the Asura path will gradually diminish, leading to an increase in celestial beings and truly benefiting sentient beings in the heavenly realms.

The aforementioned phenomena began during the age of the Semblance Dharma in the impure world of five turbidities and are not unique to the Dharma-ending age. Hence, it is called the age of the Semblance Dharma. This pseudo-Dharma, which bears a resemblance to the True Dharma, will become even more pernicious to learners of the True Dharma during the Dharma-ending age. Consequently, during this period, all Dharma masters fall for non-Buddhist doctrines, such as eternalism or nihilism, but call it the Middle Way. As seekers of the True Dharma worldwide cannot find genuine teachings, this period is thus called the Dharma-ending age. Why is this so? In the impure world of the five turbidities, most sentient beings possess the features of the Five Turbidities, which refer to five impure conditions of existence: the turbidity of lifespan, the turbidity of afflictions, the turbidity of the eon, the turbidity of sentient beings, and the turbidity of views. This leads to a situation where the correct views of the True Dharma are often not accepted by ordinary people. On the contrary, the ancient “parasites in the lion’s body,” whose Semblance Dharma has been widely accepted and propagated by many contemporary masters and scholars in this Dharma-ending age. This widespread acceptance has led to the diminished propagation of the definitive True Dharma, hindering its flourishing and expansion. In the absence of a great wholesome mentor emerging in the world to propagate and elucidate the True Dharma, it will eventually be submerged by the Semblance Dharma. Following the widespread propagation of the Semblance Dharma, the non-Buddhist views of eternalism and nihilism have proliferated within the Buddhist community. This has led to a situation in which neither the definitive True Dharma nor even the Semblance Dharma remains within the Buddhist tradition. Consequently, the True Dharma becomes obscured and fails to be transmitted, while heterodox teachings become prevalent within Buddhist communities. This state is thus called the Dharma-ending age.

Upon examining the underlying cause of the aforementioned phenomenon, it has become apparent that the current Dharma-ending age, there is a progressive

diminution in the wholesome roots of sentient beings. It is for this reason that the Tathāgata elucidates the *Samyuktāgama Sūtra* Vol. 32:

Thus, Kāśyapa! Due to the [five] degenerations—the degeneration of lifespan, afflictions, the *kalpa*, sentient beings, and views—and because of the decline of wholesome dharmas among sentient beings, the Great Teacher has established numerous precepts (*Vinaya*) for the *śrāvakas*, although few delight in learning and practicing them. Kāśyapa! It is like when a *kalpa* is about to end; before the true jewels disappear, counterfeit jewels emerge in the world. Once these counterfeits appear, the true jewels vanish. Likewise, Kāśyapa, when the Tathāgata’s True Dharma is about to perish, the Semblance Dharma arises. Once this Semblance Dharma emerges in the world, the True Dharma evanesces. It is like a ship loaded with many precious jewels that suddenly sinks into the great ocean. However, the Tathāgata’s True Dharma does not perish in this manner; rather, it gradually diminishes. The Tathāgata’s True Dharma is not destroyed by earth, water, fire, or wind. It is eventually destroyed when evil beings emerge in the world—those who delight in, desire, and accomplish various evils; those who declare non-Dharma as Dharma and Dharma as non-Dharma; and those who declare non-*Vinaya* as *Vinaya* and *Vinaya* as non-*Vinaya*. It is thus through the Semblance Dharma, with its captivating phrases and flavors, that the Tathāgata’s True Dharma disappears.¹

The Buddha’s teachings on the aforementioned matters have remained constant throughout ancient and modern times. Since the era when Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, the master and disciple, respectively, lived in India, the Semblance Dharma has emerged in the world, confounding practitioners and making it difficult for them to attain enlightenment. Thus, Nāgārjuna composed the *Madhyamaka-śāstra* (*Middle Way Treatise*) to elucidate the true meaning of *prajñā* in the Buddha Dharma. However, the treatise did not explicitly state that the deed-contemplation practices on the sign of reality of the Middle Way should take the eighth consciousness (*tathāgatagarbha*) as their goal. Consequently, Buddhist practitioners have come to employ and blend

¹ *Taishō Tripitaka*, Volume 2, page 226, lower section lines 2–13.

the concepts derived from the conscious mind, thereby enabling continued propagation to the present day, within Buddhist circles, of a pseudo-Middle Way view based on eternalist non-Buddhist doctrines. Then, Bodhisattva Āryadeva, drawing upon the knowledge-of-aspects of Consciousness-Only, composed *The Hundred Verses Treatise*, *The Extensive Hundred Verses Treatise*, and *The Hundred Syllables Treatise*, which received both criticism and acclaim at the time. Nevertheless, the debate on the knowledge-of-aspects of Consciousness-Only rendered it difficult for non-Buddhists and ordinary members of the Buddhist fourfold assembly to offer rebuttals. Consequently, Āryadeva did not survive to the natural end of his life. While his death was traditionally attributed to assassination by non-Buddhists, he was actually killed in a planned assassination by ordinary *śrāvaka* monks. This was because Aryadeva's treatises and teachings, grounded in the knowledge-of-aspects of the eight-consciousnesses theory, posed the most severe threat to the ordinary *śrāvaka* monks of the burgeoning schools of Sectarian Buddhism. This insider information remains unknown to scholars of Buddhist history, and the contemporary Buddhist community remains largely unaware of it.

The schism within Sectarian Buddhism commenced approximately a century or more after the Buddha's passing. The process of fragmentation was largely completed some 400 years or so after the Buddha's passing, and the Semblance Dharma began to be disseminated but had not yet become ubiquitous. Commencing full 500 years after the Buddha's passing, Sectarian Buddhism emerged as the most influential propagator of the Dharma within the Buddhist community. Consequently, the era beginning in the 500th year following the Buddha's passing was already dominated by the widespread propagation of the Semblance Dharma. However, due to the extreme difficulty of actual realization in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, unlike the relatively easier realization of the wisdom of the Path to Liberation and the fruits of liberation in the Two-Vehicle Bodhi, the propagation of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is often obscured by the Semblance Dharma of the Two-Vehicle Bodhi, causing its influence to wane. The flourishing of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism thus relies entirely on the emergence of great bodhisattvas who become eminent wholesome mentors, capable not only of propagating *Mahāyāna* teachings but also of reviving the already declining Two-Vehicle Bodhi. This true historical pattern in Buddhism has repeatedly manifested

throughout the 2,500 years following the 500 years² after the Buddha's passing and continues to hold true in the Dharma-ending age.

However, why does the Semblance Dharma transmitted from Sectarian Buddhism continue to circulate uninterruptedly? There is a reason for this. In vol. 32 of the *Samyukta Āgama*, the Buddha states:

Kāśyapa! There are five causes and conditions that can lead to the sinking of the Tathāgata's True Dharma. What are these five? If a *bhikṣu* does not respect, revere, or humbly serve the great master; if a *bhikṣu* has not respected, revered, or humbly served the great master but still relies upon and abides with joy; regarding the Dharma, the training, the conformity to instructions, the various pure practices, and that the great master praises, [the *bhikṣu*] does not respect, revere, or humbly serve them but still relies upon and abides with joy, these, Kāśyapa, are called the five causes and conditions for the sinking of the Tathāgata's True Dharma in this world.³

The term "joy" in the above quote refers to the myriad pleasurable phenomena of the world. Due to the propagators of the Dharma within Buddhist circles and practitioners becoming enamored with these various pleasurable worldly phenomena, they consequently "rely upon and abide with joy." As a result, they regard the True Dharma of detachment and purity as an adversary, a force that undermines the Dharma. This phenomenon is analogous to the period when I initially disseminated the Dharma. It was only after the Zhengjue Dharma Crisis in 2003, when the most exalted Dharma of Ultimate Truth was extensively elucidated and pervasively propagated through literature, that perceptions began to evolve gradually.

The origin of the *Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka* and *Svātantrika Mādhyamaka* in Tantric Buddhism can be traced back to the two major commentators Buddhapaṇita and Bhāvaviveka during the period of Sectarian Buddhism. However, both

² This is according to the *Mahāyāna* Buddhist calendar system. The *Mahāyāna* Buddhist (birth) calendar year is calculated by adding 1,027 to the Gregorian year, while the Southern Buddhist (*nirvāṇa*) calendar year is calculated by adding 543 to the Gregorian year.

³ *Taishō Tripitaka*, Volume 2, page 226, lower section lines 13–20.

commentators were ordinary *śrāvaka* monks who promoted the contemplation of the Middle Way using the wrong view of the six-consciousnesses theory, which is referred to as *Mādhyamaka*, implying that what they called *Mādhyamaka* is the practice of the Middle Way's sign of reality. However, the objective of the Middle Way deed-contemplation, as expounded in Buddhist doctrine, is the relationship between the intrinsic nature of the eighth consciousness (*tathāgatagarbha*) and the phenomena it engenders—the aggregates, sense fields, and elements as well as all Buddhist teachings that arise and manifest from it. Consequently, one aspect of this doctrine states that the eighth consciousness itself is characterized by being neither arising nor ceasing, neither coming nor going, neither defiled nor immaculate, neither increasing nor decreasing, and so forth. The second aspect elucidates the relationship between the eighth consciousness as the reality-suchness mind and its manifested phenomena—the aggregates, sense fields, elements, and entrances—as well as all dharmas pertaining to the Three-Vehicle Bodhi. This relationship is characterized as being neither identical nor different, neither together nor separate, neither cultivated nor uncultivated, and neither wisdom nor non-wisdom. Through these insights, the significance of the Middle Way is established. However, the founders of these two *Mādhyamaka* schools within Tantric Buddhism and their successors adhere to the tenet of six-consciousnesses theory. They posit that the worldly knowledge obtained through conceptual differentiation constitutes the factual realization of *Mādhyamaka*. Furthermore, they propagate this view as the ultimate Buddha Dharma. In essence, their view merely represents the speculative differentiation derived from consciousness regarding the wisdom related to the sign of reality of *prajñā*. As such, it does not embody true *Mādhyamaka* but rather amounts to mere sophistry.

However, the most ultimate aspect of the Buddha Dharma is, in fact, the knowledge-of-all-aspects within the training in the higher wisdom of Consciousness-Only. Even if one's realization of *Mādhyamaka* within *prajñā* is perfectly complete, it merely constitutes the realization of *prajñā* within the Three Worthy Stages. It still does not reach the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths attained after entering the Grounds. This raises the question of how one could attain Buddhahood as propounded by the two major *Mādhyamaka* schools, *Prāsaṅgika* and *Svātantrika*. Upon examination, it becomes evident that both of these *Mādhyamaka* schools were

founded by ordinary *śrāvaka* monks of Sectarian Buddhism. Subsequently, these schools were appropriated by non-Buddhist Tantric traditions that claimed to be Buddhist. This appropriation serves to demonstrate that these non-Buddhist Tantric traditions also possess Buddhist teachings, thereby deceiving the Buddhist community, both past and present, by claiming to be Buddhist monastic practitioners. Nevertheless, the founders of these schools, such as the commentators Buddhapālita and Bhāvaviveka, were in fact covert practitioners of the non-Buddhist tantric sexual yoga (engaging in yab-yum practice). Although they outwardly adhered to Buddhist teachings to gain fame and benefits, they secretly engaged in practices that were not aligned with the tenets of Buddhism. They surreptitiously propagated a false *Mādhyamaka* espoused by ordinary *śrāvaka* monks from Sectarian Buddhism, while simultaneously disseminating Tantric yab-yum practices. This resulted in the gradual infiltration of the Buddhist community, ultimately leading to a situation of comprehensive penetration. Consequently, to revive the True Dharma of Buddhism, it is necessary to expel the Semblance Dharma from the Buddhist community. Only through this radical reform can the True Dharma continue to flourish and spread.

For these reasons, it is imperative to expose to the Buddhist community the erroneous interpretations of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism commonly espoused by ordinary *śrāvaka* monks of Sectarian Buddhism. This revelation should enable all Buddhist practitioners and propagators—the fourfold assembly—to gain a comprehensive understanding of the correct principles and origins of the Buddha Dharma. Furthermore, it is necessary to compare and critically evaluate the teachings of numerous masters with heterodox views over the past two millennia against the orthodox expositions of the bodhisattvas. Only through this process can one discern the true historical facts and derive genuinely correct conclusions, such as that the prevalent teachings of eminent Buddhist masters over the past 400 years of the Dharma-ending age—as accepted by major monasteries, various Buddhist factions, adherents of Shi Yinshun’s interpretations, and the academic community in the present time—align with the heterodox doctrines of Sectarian Buddhism. These doctrines have been propagated by ordinary *śrāvaka* monks since full 500 years after the Buddha’s passing. These teachings entirely contradict the True Dharma as expounded by the great bodhisattvas, such as Aśvaghoṣa, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva,

Maitreya, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Bodhidharma, and Xuanzang. Consequently, it is asserted that the ordinary *śrāvaka* commentators of Sectarian Buddhism, such as Buddhapālita and Bhāvaviveka, and their successors are akin to “parasites in the lion’s body,” having vigorously undermined the True Dharma of Buddhism. Therefore, within just a few years of my emergence to propagate the Dharma, I began expounding on the *Cheng Weishi Lun*. Now, I have also composed the *Commentary on Cheng Weishi Lun*. In 2022, I started giving another series of lectures on the *Commentary on Cheng Weishi Lun*, publishing each volume as it was finished. The entire work, comprising 10 volumes in total, will be published upon completion of the full lecture series. In this *Commentary on Cheng Weishi Lun*, it is comprehensively explained that the doctrines refuted in both the original treatise and this commentary are the erroneous teachings of such-and-such a sect within Sectarian Buddhism. This serves to demonstrate that the so-called Buddhist teachings currently prevalent among various Buddhist factions and in the academic circles led by Shi Yinshun are, in fact, not authentic Buddhist doctrines. They are pseudo-Buddhist teachings originating from the ordinary *śrāvaka* monks of Sectarian Buddhism, which have been inherited by various Buddhist factions, Shi Yinshun, and Tantric Buddhism. Upon such clear discernment, Buddhist practitioners may thereby make judicious selections, distancing themselves from the Semblance Dharma, and enter into the authentic Buddhist teachings for empirical practice and personal realization. In this way, practitioners will not squander their present human incarnation in futile efforts to accumulate merit and engage in rigorous cultivation.

In light of the foregoing, I have consistently elucidated these doctrinal principles in the association members’ annual meetings over many years, since the inception of planning for the True Enlightenment Temple. I have expounded that **the contemporary interpretations of the Middle Way as propounded by Shi Yinshun, the academic circles under his influence, and Tantric Buddhism all originate from the Semblance Dharma espoused by the ordinary *śrāvaka* monks of various sects within Sectarian Buddhism, who were considered unenlightened ones. Their interpretations are not the True Dharma of Buddhism.** Thus, it is my hope that within my lifetime, I may witness the eradication of all erroneous views stemming from Sectarian Buddhism within the Buddhist community, thereby allowing the influence of the True Dharma to

flourish and extensively benefit both humans and celestial beings. The speeches given at the True Enlightenment Practitioners Association members' annual general meetings from 2020 to 2024 have now been put together in a book. This preface was composed to help discerning individuals within the Buddhist community critically examine and distance themselves from the erroneous view of six-consciousnesses theory propounded by the ordinary *śrāvaka* monks of Sectarian Buddhism, and instead return to the True Dharma of the eight-consciousnesses theory. Thus, it is anticipated that the correct Dharma of Buddhism will be revitalized and gradually propagated westward, permeating the Buddhist circles of mainland China. This is expected to lead to a gradual return to the correct doctrine of the eight-consciousnesses theory, facilitating a comprehensive resurgence of Chinese Buddhism and benefiting an increased number of adherents within the Chinese cultural sphere. This is our fervent aspiration.

正覺

Truly and respectfully composed by
the Buddha's son, Pingshi,
in the Pine Mountain Lodge, summer of 2024.