Cultural and Religious Studies, December 2025, Vol. 13, No. 12, 740-757
doi: 10.17265/2328-2177/2025.12.007

Bridging Traditions: A Study of Practical Aspects of Confucian-Buddhist Integration and Its Example of *Zhou Yi Chan Jie*

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When it comes to the integration of Confucianism and Buddhism, it generally refers to the fusion of ideas or thoughts between the two. In fact, Confucianism and Buddhism each possess distinct practical traditions which generally referred to as cultivation (修行). With the spread of Buddhism in China, the two practical traditions gradually influenced and integrated with each other. A notable example is *Zhou Yi Chan Jie* (周易禪解, *A Chan Interpretation of Zhou Yi*), written by Ouyi Zhixu (藕益智旭, 1599-1655) which aimed to introduce Tiantai School's cessation-and-contemplation meditation to Confucian intellectuals. By interpreting the hexagrams and statements of *Zhou Yi*, the text elucidates the practice of Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation (圓頓止觀). This work offers valuable insights for the modern transformation of ancient practical traditions.

Keywords: Buddhist-Confucian Integration, cultivation, meditation, *Zhou Yi Chan Jie*

Introduction

Following its introduction into China during the Han Dynasty, Buddhism engaged in an interchange, conflict, and synthesis with native cultures, primarily Confucianism and Daoism. This process culminated in the trend of "the Integration of Three Teachings" (三教合一) by the Song Dynasty. Throughout this historical interaction, beyond the mutual absorption of ideas and thoughts, a particularly significant aspect was the integration of practical cultivation.

"Cultivation" refers to the practical activities undertaken by individuals through specific methods to achieve certain improvements in their spirit or body. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism all possess such activities: For instance, "self-cultivation" (修身) in Confucianism, "practice and refinement" (修煉) in Daoism, and "Chan" (禪) or "cessation-and-contemplation" (止觀) in Buddhism all fall into this category. Although these traditions differ significantly in the goals and methods of their practices, it is undeniable that the activities share some commonalities, such as physical regulation and spiritual enlightenment. It is precisely due to these commonalities that the exchange and integration of practical cultivation among Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism could proceed in a logical and natural manner.

Historically, there are numerous examples of mutual absorption and influence in the realm of practical cultivation among the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist traditions. A comprehensive and detailed examination of

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these interactions is a task beyond this paper. Therefore, I will focus to a specific discussion of the practical traditions of Confucianism and Buddhism and the mutual influence between them. Against this backdrop, I will examine *Zhou Yi Chan Jie* (*A Chan Interpretation of Zhou Yi*) as a representative work that expounds Buddhist practice through a Confucian classic, thereby outlining a rough sketch of the practical aspects of Confucian-Buddhist integration.

The Practical Traditions of Confucianism and Buddhism

When it comes to practical cultivation, we often associate it with the specific religious practices of Buddhism, Taoism, and other faiths. In fact, Confucianism also has a long-standing tradition of cultivation. However, Confucianism rarely uses the term "*xiuxing*" (修行, literally cultivation through practice), which is commonly used in Chinese Buddhist and Daoist contexts. Instead, it frequently uses expressions like "*xiushen*" (修身, literally body-cultivation) and "*xiuji*" (修己, literally self-cultivation) and "*gongfu*" (功夫, literally time and effort in cultivation).

According to the Confucian narrative, its tradition of self-cultivation can be traced back to the era preceding the Three Dynasties (三代, denotes the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties, which are idealized as a golden age of sage-kings and virtuous rule in Chinese ancient history). The 16-character admonition from the *Counsels of Great Yu* of *Book of Documents* (尚書・大禹謨), "The mind of man is restless,—prone to err; its affinity to what is right way is small. Be discriminating, be undivided, that you may sincerely hold fast the Mean" (人心惟危，道心惟微。惟精惟一，允執厥中) (Legge, 1865, p. 61), was later revered by Confucians as the essential formula for self-cultivation.

By the time the Duke of Zhou (周公) formulated the ritual and musical institutions, concrete behavioral norms were institutionally provided for individuals of different status within the patriarchal clan system. Confucius, in turn, elevated these institutionalized rites into the substance of self-cultivation. As recorded in *The Confucius Analects* (*Yan Yuan* §1):

> The Master said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?" Yan Yuan said, "I beg to ask the steps of that process." The Master replied, "Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety." (Legge, 1960a, p. 250)

Confucius believed that to attain the state of "perfect virtue" (仁), one must "subdue oneself and return to propriety". The concrete method for this was encapsulated in his teachings that do not look at, listen to, speak of, or do anything that is contrary to propriety. This can be regarded as the most straightforward and direct exposition of Confucian self-cultivation.

The Confucius Analects further states, "in the usages of propriety, harmony is the most valuable thing" (禮之用，和為貴) (Legge, 1960a, p. 143). This means that while ritual serves as the standard guiding human conduct and affairs, its fundamental spirit lies in harmony. Thereby, it establishes the fundamental principle of Confucian self-cultivation: "Equilibrium and Harmony" (中和). As *The Doctrine of the Mean* explains:

> While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of Equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of Harmony. This Equilibrium is the great root from which grow all the human actings in the world, and this Harmony is the universal path which they all should pursue. (Legge, 1960a, p. 384)

The Doctrine of the Mean posits that the state of "Equilibrium" (中), which exists before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused, and the state of "Harmony" (和), which is realized when these feelings are expressed in due degree, together constitute the "great root" of the world and the "universal path" to be pursued. These states represent the ultimate spiritual realm that a practitioner of self-cultivation must strive to attain. The text further asserts that the realization of this ideal state brings order and ceaseless vitality to Heaven, Earth, and all things, which is none other than the realm of the sage.

In the Confucian view, a sage is not only able to know the Mandate of Heaven (天命) and fully develop his inborn nature to the greatest extent, but can also assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth, enabling all things to realize their inherent nature. *The Doctrine of the Mean* describes this as "accomplishes the self-completion of himself and completes other men and things" (成己、成物) while *The Great Learning* (大學) summarizes it as the state of "rest in the highest excellence" (止於至善) internally and "illustrate illustrious virtue" (明明德) externally. To realize this ideal state, one must begin with self-cultivation. Hence, it is said: "From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides" (自天子以至于庶人，壹是皆以修身为本) (Legge, 1960a, p. 359).

Regarding self-cultivation, *The Great Learning* describes it as a process comprising four stages: "investigation of things", "extension of knowledge", "making the thoughts sincere", and "rectifying the mind". It provides relatively concrete explanations for "making the thoughts sincere" and "rectifying the mind". The text states:

> What is meant by "making the thoughts sincere" is the allowing no self-deception, as when we hate a bad smell, and as when we love what is beautiful. This is called self-enjoyment. Therefore, the superior man must be watchful over himself when he is alone. (Legge, 1960a, p. 366)
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> What is meant by, the cultivation of the person depends on rectifying the mind may be thus illustrated:—If a man be under the influence of passion he will be incorrect in his conduct. He will be the same, if he is under the influence of terror, or under the influence of fond regard, or under that of sorrow and distress. When the mind is not present, we look and do not see; we hear and do not understand; we eat and do not know the taste of what we eat. This is what is meant by saying that the cultivation of the person depends on the rectifying of the mind. (Legge, 1960a, p. 368)

In *The Great Learning*, the concept of "making the thoughts sincere" (誠意) is explained as "allowing no self-deception", that is, one must not deceive oneself under any circumstances, even when alone. The explanation for "rectifying the mind" (正心), on the other hand, essentially provides a criterion for verification: If a person's mind is occupied by states such as anger, fear, fondness, or anxiety, it indicates that the mind is not rectified.

Beyond *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Mencius also contributed seminal ideas to Confucian self-cultivation, such as "skillfully nurturing our vast, flowing vital-energy" (善養吾浩然之氣) and "seeking for the lost mind" (求其放心). Furthermore, he outlined a process of cultivation encapsulated in the sequence: By "fulfilling the mind" (盡心) to its utmost, one comes to "know our inherent nature" (知性) and through knowing our nature, one ultimately arrives at "knowing Heaven" (知天). It is said in *The Works of Mencius*:

> He who has exhausted all his mental constitution knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven. To preserve one's mental constitution, and nourish one's nature, is the way to serve Heaven. When neither a premature death nor long life causes a man any double-mindedness, but he waits in the cultivation of his personal character for whatever issue; this is the way in which he establishes his Heaven-ordained being. (Legge, 1960b, pp. 448-449)

In summary, Confucius inherited and developed the ritual and musical institutions of the Zhou Dynasty, establishing ritual propriety as the essential standard for achieving the state of perfect virtue. Subsequently, texts such as *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Great Learning*, and *The Works of Mencius* further expounded upon the goals, principles, and methods of Confucian self-cultivation.

Confucian self-cultivation exhibits the following distinctive characteristics:

Firstly, it is primarily oriented toward the establishment of moral character. The sagehood ideal, encapsulated in the phrase "accomplishes the self-completion of himself and completes other men and things", carries a definitive ethical and moral connotation, which is perfectly aligned with the fundamental spirit of Confucianism.

Secondly, while Confucianism offers relatively clear elaborations on the objectives and principles of self-cultivation, its exposition of concrete methodologies remains comparatively brief. Concepts such as "making the thoughts sincere", "skillfully nurturing our vast, flowing vital-energy", and "seeking for the lost mind" function more as principles than techniques.

Thirdly, the context for Confucian self-cultivation is everyday life. It does not advocate renunciation or retreat from the world but instead emphasizes the refinement of one's character and the advancement of one's moral enterprise within the sphere of ordinary affairs and interactions. The dictum from *The Doctrine of the Mean*—"to raise it to its greatest height and brilliancy, so as to pursue the course of the Mean" (極高明而道中庸)—epitomizes this spirit perfectly.

These three characteristics may not be readily apparent when Confucianism is viewed in isolation; however, they become strikingly evident when contrasted with Buddhist cultivation.

Buddhism, which takes the awakening to the true reality of all phenomena and the complete liberation from afflictions as its aim, possesses a rich and meticulous system of cultivation. This system is fundamentally structured into the Threefold Training (三學): precepts (śīla, 戒), meditative concentration (samādhi, 定), and wisdom (prajñā, 慧).

The term "precepts" refers to the vinaya, which denotes the behavioral standards established by the Buddha according to circumstances for both monastics and lay followers. These include the most fundamental Five Precepts, the Complete Precepts for Bhikṣus, and the Bodhisattva Precepts in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The related content is extremely detailed, providing comprehensive explanations regarding specific precept characteristics, scenarios of upholding or violating them, the procedures for addressing violations, and methods of repentance. It is generally acknowledged that "precepts give rise to meditative concentration" (戒能生定). Therefore, the observance of precepts is often categorized within the "preparatory steps" (前方便) for the practice of meditation.

The term "meditative concentration" refers to samādhi. Generally speaking, it is a technique of cultivation aimed at calming the mind through methods such as sitting in stillness and meditation. This practice existed in ancient India even before the rise of Buddhism. Buddhism assimilated and refined such techniques, developing a variety of methods designed to prevent the mind from scattering and to guide it toward tranquility.

The term "wisdom" refers to prajñā—the profound, enlightened awareness of the true reality of all phenomena as revealed by the Buddha, or in other words, a thorough and penetrating understanding of Buddhist doctrine. As a specific component of cultivation, "wisdom" entails the practice of observing and contemplating the Buddhist teachings within the state of meditative concentration. Through this process, one ultimately penetrates the true reality of all phenomena and achieves complete liberation from afflictions.

From the perspective of cultivation, meditative concentration and wisdom are highly interdependent. Broadly speaking, the term "dhyāna" (禪, Chan) inherently encompasses both concentration and wisdom. This means that through specific techniques—such as counting breaths or visualizing a Buddha-image—one focuses the mind on a single point, preventing it from scattering. Once the mind is clear and serene, one contemplates Buddhist doctrines—such as the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (十二因緣), Impermanence (無常), or Emptiness (空性). This process leads to the realization of the true reality of all phenomena and the liberation from afflictions. The former aspect is known as "cessation" or "calming" (śamatha, 止), while the latter is called "contemplation" or "insight" (vipaśyan, 觀). Together, they form the practice of "cessation-and-contemplation" (止觀), which constitutes the original meaning of Chan. Within the framework of the Threefold Training it is often said that "concentration gives rise to wisdom" (定能生慧). That is to say, a stable foundation in meditative concentration naturally facilitates the emergence of wisdom.

The Threefold Training constitutes a system of cultivation. If we subsume concentration and wisdom under the broader concept of Chan, while regarding precepts as the preparatory steps for practicing Chan, then the entire system of Buddhist cultivation can be succinctly summarized as Chan (or cessation-and-contemplation).

In India, both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism developed numerous distinct methods of meditation (dhyāna, Chan). These included, for example, the "contemplation of breathing" (ānāpānasmṛti) which focuses on observing the breath, and the "contemplation of dependent origination" which involves reflecting on the chain of causation. Each method generally consisted of concrete, actionable steps for practice. Furthermore, the specific states or attainments corresponding to each stage or sequence of the cultivation process were described in considerable detail.

Buddhist cultivation can be characterized by the following key features:

Firstly, the goal of Buddhist cultivation is liberation from afflictions. While in Mahāyāna Buddhism, this objective is subsumed within the greater goal of attaining Buddhahood through awakening, both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna share liberation as their core concern, rather than ethics. Although the Buddhist doctrinal system includes elements such as the "Ten Wholesome Deeds" and the theory of "karmic retribution", and does not oppose conventional ethical norms—even demonstrating moral standards in its precepts that far exceed worldly ethics—its foundation remains soteriological, not a form of moral philosophy.

Secondly, in contrast to Confucianism, Buddhist cultivation methods are notably diverse and highly specific. It can be said that what Buddhism refers to as Chan (or cessation-and-contemplation) constitutes a structured and systematic technique. This approach incorporates meticulous psychological analysis and is consistently guided by wisdom, thereby safeguarding the practitioner from deviating into extremes.

Thirdly, to some extent, Buddhist cultivation exhibits a tendency of world-transcendence. This is particularly evident in Hīnayāna Buddhism, where practitioners are first required to generate "the mind of renunciation" (出離心)—a sense of disillusionment with the world of incessant afflictions. They then engage in specific meditative practices through forms such as ordination and seeking secluded environments. Mahāyāna Buddhism, while emphasizing the generation of bodhicitta (the mind of awakening) and cultivating within the mundane world with the spirit of non-duality between the worldly and the transcendent, still demonstrates a comparatively lower degree of social engagement than Confucianism.

The descriptions of Confucianism and Buddhism outlined above pertain primarily to their prototypical forms before their historical encounter. More precisely, the "Confucianism" referred to here is essentially that of the pre-Qin era, while the "Buddhism" described is largely the Indian tradition. However, following Buddhism's

introduction into China during the Han Dynasty, a prolonged period of interaction and exchange between the two traditions commenced. This led to a gradual convergence, characterized by mutual influence and synthesis. Consequently, the distinctive features of both Confucian self-cultivation and Buddhist spiritual practice underwent corresponding shifts and adaptations.

The Mutual Influence Between Confucian and Buddhist Traditions of Cultivation

Along with Buddhism, its comprehensive system of s cultivation, particularly various methods of meditation, was also introduced to China during the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties. After centuries of scriptural translation, practical application, and systematization, Chan practices had begun to take shape on a modest scale in China by the Northern and Southern Dynasties period. It was during this time that the two distinct cultivation traditions, Confucianism and Buddhism, started to exert mutual influence. This manifested in two primary ways: On one hand, Chan practices gradually embarked on a process of Sinicization, moving beyond their direct inheritance from India; on the other hand, with the spread of Buddhism, Confucian scholar-officials gained a certain understanding of, and even began to practice Chan. As this influence deepened, a trend toward Confucian-Buddhist synthesis gradually emerged. The continued Sinicization of Chan practices eventually gave birth to the distinctively Chan School (禪宗); in turn, the philosophical concepts and cultivation methods of Chan profoundly influenced the cultivation theories of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism. This outlines the fundamental dynamics of the synthesis between Confucian and Buddhist cultivation. The following sections will elaborate on this from two specific perspectives.

The Influence of Confucianism on Buddhist Practice

The influence of Confucianism on Buddhist practice can be broadly categorized into three aspects:

Firstly, the simplification of Chan. As previously mentioned, both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism developed various types of Chan methods, most of which featured relatively concrete, operable procedures, and detailed psychological analysis. In contrast, Confucianism emphasized the states and principles of cultivation, while its discussion of specific methods was comparatively brief. This reflects the difference between Indian culture's propensity for elaboration and Chinese culture's preference for conciseness. It is conceivable that when ancient Chinese practitioners encountered the intricate and meticulous Chan methods transmitted from India, they would inevitably develop a need to streamline and simplify them. Indeed, this was the case. A major trend in the propagation and evolution of Chan methods in China was simplification. This trend, however, did not happen overnight. It underwent a process from the initial flourishing of Indian Chan methods in China, to their comprehensive summarization and innovation, and finally to the formation of fully Sinicized Chan methods. Two pivotal figures in this process were Master Zhiyi (智顗, 538-597), the founder of the Tiantai school (天台宗) who systematized the practice of cessation-and-contemplation , and Master Huineng (慧能, 638-713), the Sixth Patriarch of Chan school who profoundly advocated for the direct apprehension of one's innate nature over complex meditative techniques.

Master Zhiyi comprehensively synthesized the diverse Chan methods circulating during the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Building upon this foundation, he innovated by proposing three types of cessation-and-contemplation (三種止觀): gradual-and-successive, variable, and perfect-and-sudden. Among these, the perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation employs the teachings of the Perfect Doctrine (圓教) as its guide, utilizes the 25 means (二十五法) as its preparations, and takes 10 modes of contemplation (十乘觀法) to observe

and discern within 10 objects of contemplation (止觀十境) as its concrete practice. It must be said that this is an extremely comprehensive and vast cultivation system. However, within these 10 objects, Master Zhiyi placed the greatest emphasis on the first one—"aggregates (skandhas) , sense entrances (āyatanas) , and sense realms (dhātus)" (陰入界境)—which he further condensed into the consciousness aggregate within the five aggregates, namely, "one momentary thought in the mind" (一念心) or "a single thought" (一心). Consequently, the point of engagement in perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation is the ever-arising "single momentary thought" within the practitioner. By contemplating the relationship between this "one single momentary thought" and the "three thousand realms" (三千諸法，means every worldly phenomena)—a relationship that is neither sequential nor simultaneous, neither identical nor different—one realizes the inconceivable realm of true reality. This method is therefore also called "contemplating the mind" (觀心). It can be said that perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation was no longer a mere verbatim replication of Indian Chan methods, but rather, as Master Guanding (灌頂, 561-632) stated, "in this cessation-and-contemplation Tiantai Zhizhe (Zhi Yi) explains the teachings (or, approach to Dharma) that his has practiced in his own heart and mind" (Swanson, 2018, p. 88). Particularly, the method of "contemplating the mind" greatly simplified the content of cessation-and-contemplation practice.

Master Huineng made his greatest contribution to the simplification of Chan practice by deconstructing its procedural nature. He transformed "Chan" from a specific meditative technique into a rich and profound Buddhist tradition—the Chan School. This school championed the principles of "not established upon words and letters" (不立文字) and "directly pointing to the human mind for realizing one's nature and attaining Buddhahood" (明心見性) emphasizing the realization of an unperturbed mind within the context of daily life. As *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (六祖壇經) states:

> Good friends, what is it that is called meditative concentration (chanding; samādhi)? Externally, to transcend characteristics is "meditation" (chan). Internally, to be undisturbed is "concentration" (ding). If one concentrates on characteristics externally, internally the mind is disturbed. If one transcends characteristics externally, the mind will not be disturbed. The fundamental nature is naturally pure and naturally concentrated; it is only by seeing the realms and thinking of the realms that one is disturbed. If one can see the various realms without the mind being disturbed, this is true concentration. (McRae, 2000, pp. 45-46)

Thus, for Master Huineng, the essence of Chan lays not in external forms such as seated meditation, but in the state of shattering attachments and attaining an unperturbed, single-minded concentration. To realize this state did not necessarily require following a set of procedural steps; rather, it could be achieved within the context of daily activities by refraining from attaching to any phenomena, whether good or evil, and thereby clearly perceiving one's inherently pure original mind. This represents a fundamental departure from the Indian Buddhist approach to Chan, which emphasized fixed procedures. Instead, it aligns remarkably well with the Confucian characteristic of prioritizing the goals and principles of self-cultivation while remaining relatively concise regarding specific methods of practice.

In summary, through the systematic synthesis and innovative contributions of Chinese Buddhist practitioners like Master Zhiyi and Master Huineng, Buddhist cultivation methods gradually completed their process of Sinicization. If the perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation of the Tiantai school, with its retained degree of procedural formality and technicality, not entirely free from the basic framework of Indian meditation methods which represents an early creative achievement in the Sinicization of Buddhist practice, then the Chan School's dynamic and lively approach, devoid of fixed procedures, signifies the full and complete

realization of this Sinicization. Throughout this process, the simplification of Chan methods stands as a distinctive hallmark. From a certain perspective, this trend toward simplification appears as an inevitable outcome influenced by the Confucian tradition of cultivation.

Secondly, the integration of cultivation into daily life. Buddhist practice originally exhibited a tendency toward world-transcendence. However, after its introduction to China, there emerged a distinct trend toward grounding spiritual practice in everyday, mundane activities. This eventually evolved into the Chan School's fundamental principle that "fetching water and chopping wood are themselves the Dao" (挑水劈柴是道). This tendency toward life-oriented practice was already present within the Tiantai School. For instance, among the "Four Samādhi" (四種三昧), the "neither-walking-nor-sitting samādhi" (非行非坐三昧) also known as the "samādhi of following one's own thoughts" (隨自意三昧) or the "samādhi of awakened thoughts" (覺意三昧) involves maintaining moment-to-moment awareness in all activities and situations. Its method is to clearly discern whenever a thought arises—be it wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral—in every moment and amidst all circumstances. This approach not only further simplified Chan methods but also fully integrated practice into ordinary life. By using the very arising of thoughts in daily life as the object of contemplation, and by maintaining clear awareness everywhere and at all times, it shares a similar purpose with the Confucian practice of "making the thoughts sincere and rectifying the mind". In a certain sense, it can also be viewed as a precursor to the Chan School's methods of cultivation.

The Chan School broke through the constraints of Indian meditation methods and developed a uniquely Chinese form of Chan deeply integrated with daily life. In the view of Master Huineng, cultivation was not confined to specific environments or techniques, but rather involved realizing the pure original mind in all circumstances. As *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* states: "To always practice wisdom in all places, at all times, and in all moments of thought, without stupidity—this is the practice of prajñā" (McRae, 2000, pp. 29-30). This approach is fundamentally consistent with the Tiantai school's "samādhi of awakened thoughts". However, while the "samādhi of awakened thoughts" takes "thoughts" as the object of contemplation, Master Huineng placed greater emphasis on maintaining clear awareness in the midst of everyday activities, without explicitly employing "contemplating the mind" as an auxiliary technique. Master Huineng further proposed that practice should "take nonthought as its basis". It is crucial to understand that "nonthought" does not mean "the cessation of all thinking". *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* states:

> What is nonthought? If in seeing all the dharmas, the mind is not defiled or attached, this is nonthought. [The mind's] functioning pervades all locations, yet it is not attached to all the locations. Just purify the fundamental mind, causing the six consciousnesses to emerge from the six [sensory] gates, [causing one to be] without defilement or heterogeneity within the six types of sensory data (literally, the "six dusts"), autonomous in the coming and going [of mental phenomena], one's penetrating function without stagnation. This is the samādhi of prajñā, the autonomous emancipation. This is called the practice of nonthought.
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> 何名無念？若見一切法，心不染著，是為無念。用即遍一切處，亦不著一切處。但淨本心，使六識出六門，於六塵中無染無雜，來去自由，通用無滯，即是般若三昧、自在解脫，名無念行。 (McRae, 2000, pp. 33-34)

This perspective opened the way widely for the integration of Buddhist practice into daily life. Successive patriarchs of the Chan School carried forward this spirit, ultimately articulating the approach to practice that "fetching water and chopping wood are themselves the Dao". Within the Chan context, cultivation is thus embodied in every aspect of one's daily activities and functions; there is no need to establish a separate, specific procedure outside of life.

The integration of Buddhist practice into daily life in Chinese Buddhism has its foundation within Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*'s teaching that "the straightforward mind is the place of enlightenment" and the *Lotus Sūtra*'s declaration that "all secular occupations are in accord with ultimate reality". However, the Confucian spirit of "to raise it to its greatest height and brilliancy, so as to pursue the course of the Mean" was also an extremely significant influencing factor. In other words, the fact that Chinese practitioners more readily accepted the ideas found in scriptures like the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra*, and progressively advanced the lifestyle-oriented trend in Buddhist practice, was a natural inclination for Chinese Buddhists nurtured within a Confucian cultural context.

Thirdly, the ethicalization of cultivation. As mentioned earlier, the core concern of Buddhism is liberation from afflictions. While it contains certain ethical and moral elements, these factors remain relatively peripheral within its doctrinal system, that is, ethical conduct is not the decisive factor for liberation. However, China, under the dominant influence of Confucianism, was an ethically-oriented society. One of the initial criticisms Buddhism faced upon its introduction to China revolved precisely around ethical issues. As the process of its Sinicization deepened, the ethical dimensions within Buddhist doctrine received increasing emphasis. Concurrently, the integration of ethics into Buddhist practice grew steadily stronger. Particularly after the rise of the Chan School, Confucian ethics and Buddhist cultivation became seamlessly integrated. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* states:

> With the mind universally [the same], why labor to maintain the precepts?
> With practice direct, what use is it to cultivate dhyāna?
> Gratitude is to be filial in supporting one's parents.
> Righteousness is to have sympathy for those above and below.
> Self-subordination is to honor the lowly and the familiar.
> Forbearance is not to approve of the various evils.
> If one is able to rub sticks to create a fire,
> the red lotus blossom will certainly grow from the mud.
> 心平何勞持戒，行直何用修禪！恩則孝養父母，義則上下相憐，
> 讓則尊卑和睦，忍則眾惡無諠，若能鑽木出火，淤泥定生紅蓮。 (McRae, 2000, pp. 40-41)

Here, Master Huineng proposed that cultivation does not necessarily require monastic ordination; it can also be pursued within lay life. How, then, should one practice as a layperson? The answer lies in adhering to Confucian ethical principles such as gratitude, righteousness, self-subordination, and forbearance. By maintaining an impartial mind and upright conduct in daily matters like filially caring for one's parents, one engages in genuine practice. This perspective, articulated from a Buddhist standpoint, thoroughly bridged the gap between Buddhist cultivation and Confucian cultivation. In other words, Confucian ethics do not hinder the pursuit of Buddhist liberation; on the contrary, the very process of upholding these ethical norms constitutes Buddhist practice.

After the Song Dynasty, Chinese culture exhibited a trend of "the unity of the Three Teachings", and the ethical dimension within Buddhist practice became increasingly pronounced. As the Ming Dynasty Master Zibo Zhenke (紫柏真可，1543-1603) stated:

> You travel everywhere, alone to distant places, only accompanied by a lonely shadow, all this is ultimately because you have parents, wife and children to take care of. The cost of their food and clothing cannot be delayed for a moment. Directing your entire spirit, undeterred by a wandering life, to earn some material support to provide them with sustenance. This is also a crucial aspect of being a good son. Do not be indolent! Avoid squandering your youth and wasting your days, thereby

causing your parents anxiety and your family worry. This very concern is the samādhi of your own mind's compassion. It is the Tathāgata's radiance illuminating the world.

汝奔走四方，孤縱萬里，弔影旅邸，不過以父母在堂，妻屬在下，衣食之費，大不可緩者。將一片精神，不辭飄泊，博些供給，以充甘旨，亦是為人子大關頭處。切勿懶惰，負青春，辜白日，使父母生憂，妻屬擔慮，此點念頭，便是自心慈悲三昧，如來放光照世也。 (X73, n1452, p. 0189, b08-13)

Here, the master is exhorting his disciple to diligently provide for his parents, wife, and children which is a fundamental requirement of Confucian ethics. However, Master Zibo Zhenke interprets this very concern for one's family as the "samādhi of compassion" and identifies it with "the Tathāgata's radiance illuminating the world", thereby framing it as an expression of Mahāyāna Buddhism's spirit of compassion. In other words, fulfilling familial duties such as filial piety and caring for one's wife and children are a form of cultivation.

The Influence of Buddhism on Confucian Practice

The discussion above has outlined the influence of Confucianism on Buddhist practice. As can be seen, this influence is manifested primarily in the methods of cultivation. Whether through its simplification, integration into daily life, or ethicalization, the changes have mainly pertained to the approach to practice, without fundamentally altering the core spiritual pursuit of Buddhism. In contrast, the influence of Buddhism on Confucian cultivation is evident at two aspects: both in the methods of practice and, significantly, in the ideal or state of cultivation, as we shall see.

Firstly, the influence on cultivation methods. As previously mentioned, compared to Buddhism, Confucianism excelled in articulating the goals and principles of self-cultivation, while its construction of specific methods remained relatively underdeveloped. The introduction of Buddhist meditative methods greatly broadened the horizons of Confucian intellectuals. Through their engagement with—and even practice of—Buddhist methods, they assimilated and adapted these approaches to cultivation into the Confucian tradition, thereby transforming it. This process occurred on two levels: First, Confucian scholars studied and practiced Buddhist meditative techniques; second, they systematically transplanted the patterns and models of Buddhist practice into the Confucian framework of cultivation.

When Confucianism evolved into Neo-Confucianism during the Song Dynasty, influential figures like Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤, 1017-1073), the Cheng brothers (程顥, 1032-1085; 程頤, 1033-1107), and even later masters like Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130-1200) and Lu Jiuyuan (陸九淵, 1139-1193) had all engaged deeply with Buddhism and Daoism in their youth. While formulating a new Confucian paradigm, they simultaneously incorporated Buddhist cultivation methods into Confucian self-cultivation practices. For instance, the Cheng brothers often instructed people to practice "sitting in meditation" (靜坐). *The Reflections on Things at Hand* records:

Hsieh Hsien-tao was with Master Ming-tao [Cheng Hao] in Fu-kou. One day Ming-tao told him, "You people accompany me here and only learn the way to talk. Therefore in your learning your minds and words do not correspond. Why not practice?" When he was asked what to practice, he said, "Suppose you sit in meditation." Whenever I-ch'uan [Cheng Yi] saw people sit in meditation, he praised them as skillful in learning.

謝顯道從明道先生於扶溝，明道一日謂之曰："爾輩在此相從，只是學顯言語，故其學心口不相應，盍若行之？"請問焉。曰："且靜坐。"伊川每見人靜坐，便歎其善學。 (Zhu & Lü, 1967, p. 151)

This method of quiet-sitting was clearly not part of the original Confucian tradition of cultivation; in all likelihood, it was influenced by the Buddhist practice of Chan.

For another example, Zhou Dunyi once instructed the Cheng brothers to "find out wherein Confucius and Yen Tzu found their happiness" (Zhu & Lü, 1967, p. 50). This became a renowned and enduring topic in Neo-Confucianism, and in its form, it bears a striking resemblance to the Chan practice of Huatou introspection (話頭禪).

In summary, while Buddhist cultivation methods underwent certain transformations under the influence of Confucian culture, the emergence and flourishing of the Chan School, in turn, profoundly influenced the Confucian tradition of self-cultivation. By assimilating Buddhist practices and rediscovering and reinterpreting pre-Qin Confucian methods, Neo-Confucianism significantly elevated the status of *gongfu* theory (theories of self-cultivation) within the Confucian framework.

Secondly, the influence on the ideal or state of cultivation. While pre-Qin Confucian thought also addressed concepts like the "Mandate of Heaven" (天命) and the "Supreme Ultimate" (太極), its focus in terms of cultivation was more squarely on the establishment of moral value. In other words, Confucian self-cultivation was primarily concerned with concrete human conduct, evaluating its appropriateness based on its conformity to ritual norms and even to the principle of Equilibrium and Harmony. However, following the introduction of Buddhism, Confucianism began to incorporate certain Buddhist ideas, expanding its scope beyond ethical implications to include metaphysical dimensions. Correspondingly, the Confucian ideal of cultivation also acquired an added layer of contemplation regarding the cosmos and human life, going beyond the elevation of ethical values alone.

For instance, as previously mentioned, the Neo-Confucian community frequently employed the topic of "finding out the joy of Confucius and Yan Hui" as a critical phrase for introspection. Although "joy" (乐) is a central theme in the very first passage of *The Analects of Confucius*, prior to the emergence of Neo-Confucianism, Confucian practitioners did not seem to emphasize this spiritual dimension particularly strongly in their self-cultivation. However, with the introduction of Buddhism, the theme of liberation from afflictions gradually became known to Confucian scholars. Influenced by this, Confucianism began to shed its consistently stern demeanor and started to pursue a form of peace and joy imbued with moral significance. In other words, self-cultivation was no longer solely about conforming to ethical norms but also about attaining a state of mental stability and happiness within this framework. This undoubtedly represented a significant expansion of the Confucian ideal of cultivation.

Furthermore, pre-Qin Confucianism seldom discussed the universe as such, generally using "Heaven and Earth" or "the Dao" as the ultimate source of ethical values. However, "Heaven and Earth" or "the Dao" primarily connoted a foundational, ontological meaning, rather than a concept encompassing all time and space. In contrast, Neo-Confucianism exhaustively discussed the universe. For instance, Lu Jiuyuan, a key figure of the School of Mind (心學), inseparably linked the universe with the human original mind (本心). He said:

> The universe is my mind, and my mind is the universe… Therefore, the affairs of the universe are my own affairs, and my own affairs are the affairs of the universe. The human mind is supremely intelligent; this principle is perfectly clear. All people possess this mind, and every mind contains this principle.
>
> 宇宙便是吾心，吾心即是宇宙。……宇宙內事，是己分內事，己分內事，是宇宙內事。人心至靈，此理至明，人皆有是心，心皆有是理。 (Lu, 1980, p. 483)

In other words, the mind inherently possessed by every individual is itself the universe. Therefore, cultivation requires expanding the capacity of one's mind until the affairs of the universe are seen as one's own

personal responsibility. Only thus can one realize the state of the sage. This ideal resonates profoundly with the Chan School's description of an "all-embracing mind that pervades the entire Dharma-realm".

In summary, Buddhism exerted a discernible influence on both the ideal and the methods of Confucian cultivation. While this influence did not bring about a qualitative transformation of the Confucian tradition—which continued to prioritize the elevation of ethical values and maintained a far greater emphasis on expounding the principles of cultivation than on detailing its specific techniques—it must nevertheless be acknowledged as a significant presence.

It is worth mentioning that when examining Buddhism's influence on Confucian cultivation, the focus generally falls on the Chan School, given its well-documented interaction with Neo-Confucianism. The contribution of the Tiantai School, however, is often overlooked. In fact, Tiantai School also exerted a notable influence on Confucian practice, primarily manifested in two aspects:

First, successive patriarchs of the Tiantai School placed significant emphasis on engaging with scholar-officials. Consequently, some Confucian intellectuals became active practitioners of Tiantai cessation-and-contemplation. A notable example is Liang Su (梁肅, 753-793), a Hanlin Academician (翰林學士) and a renowned literary scholar who was one of the pioneers of the Ancient Prose Movement (古文運動) during the Dali (大曆) and Zhenyuan (貞元) eras of the Tang Dynasty. He studied the Tiantai cessation-and-contemplation under Master Zhanran (湛然, 711-782), and "deeply grasped its essential purport" (T49, n2035, p. 0203c17-18). He produced an abridged version of *The Great Cessation-and-Contemplation* (摩訶止觀, *Mohe Zhiguan*) and authored *The Systematic Guidelines of Cessation-and-Contemplation* (止觀統例, *Zhiguan Tongli*), demonstrating his profound familiarity with Tiantai practice.

Second, some Tiantai works explaining cultivation methods were specifically composed for Confucian intellectuals. For example: *The Six Subtle Dharma Gates* (六妙法門, *Liu Miao Fa Men*) was composed by Master Zhiyi for Minister Mao Xi (毛喜, 516-587); *The General Meaning of Cessation-and-Contemplation* (止觀大意, *Zhiguan Dayi*) was written by Master Zhanran for Courtier Li Hua (李华, 715-766); *Essentials of Repentance Practice* (修懺要旨, *Xiu Chan Yaozhi*) was authored by Master Zhili (知禮, 960-1028) for Palace Attendant Yu Yuanqing (俞源清).

The most prominent example, which we will now introduce, is *Zhou Yi Chan Jie* (周易禪解, *A Chan Interpretation of Zhou Yi*). This work was specifically composed by Master Ouyi to introduce Confucian intellectuals to the Tiantai practice of cessation-and-contemplation. It stands as a particularly representative case of the influence of Buddhist, especially Tiantai, cultivation methods upon Confucianism. In the following section, I will use this text as a case to examine the integration of Tiantai cessation-and-contemplation with Confucian classics.

Guiding Confucians to Chan: The Mission Behind *Zhou Yi Chan Jie*

Zhou Yi Chan Jie was authored by Ouyi Zhixu, one of the "Four Great Monks" of the late Ming Dynasty. Regarding the purpose of this work, Master Ouyi explicitly stated in his preface: "The reason I explicate *Zhou Yi* is for no other purpose than to infuse Chan into Confucianism, thereby guiding Confucian scholars to an understanding of Chan" (Ouyi, 2013, p. 2). It can be said that Master Ouyi, commenting on *Zhou Yi* from his standpoint as a Buddhist monk, did not aim to construct a new systematic interpretation of *Zhou Yi* nor to elucidate its original meaning. Rather, his goal was to integrate the discourse and framework of Chan practice into the system of hexagrams and statements of *Zhou Yi*, thereby facilitating Confucian intellectuals who were already

familiar with *Zhou Yi* in understanding and even practicing Chan. It is important to note that the term "Chan" (禪) in the title does not refer specifically to the Chan School, but to the broader concept of meditation (dhyāna). More precisely, it denotes the Tiantai School's practice of cessation-and-contemplation.

The following section will analyze and elucidate the exposition of the Tiantai School's Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation in the *Zhou Yi Chan Jie* from three perspectives.

Complete Penetration of the Perfect Teaching (大開圓解)

The Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation emphasizes "Complete Penetration of the Perfect Teaching" at the very outset of practice. This means the practitioner must first achieve a deep intellectual understanding and insight into the Tiantai Perfect Teaching. In *Zhou Yi Chan Jie*, Master Ouyi dedicates significant space to expounding the doctrines of the Tiantai School. This content forms the theoretical foundation for the practice of cessation-and-contemplation. Specifically, by interpreting the text of the *Zhou Yi*, the work integrates Tiantai doctrine into the framework of *Zhou Yi*. So that, practitioners can utilize the discourse and conceptual framework of the *Zhou Yi* to comprehend Tiantai philosophy, thereby achieving the essential "Complete Penetration of the Perfect Teaching".

For instance, while commenting on the phrase "God [Di (Sovereign)] comes forth in Kǎn [☳ Zhen, Thunder] (to His producing work)" (帝出乎震) (Legge, 1899, p. 425) in the *Shuo Gua Zhuan* (說卦傳, *Treatise of Remarks on the Trigrams*), Master Ouyi states:

> When the first thought of bodhi (enlightenment mind) arises, it is the "Sovereign." All other mental activities and mental factors arise accordingly. Thus, even the Three Thousand Natures and Characteristics, and the Hundred Realms with their Thousand Suchnesses, all without exception emerge from and subside back into the present single thought of the mind.
>
> 一念發心為帝，一切諸心心所隨之，乃至三千性相，百界千如，無不隨現前一念之心而出入也。 (Ouyi, 2013, p. 195)

Here, the term "Di" (Sovereign) is interpreted as the "mind", and the phrase "Di comes forth in Zhen" is explained as describing the relationship between "a single thought of the mind" and the "Three Thousand Natures and Characteristics" as well as the "Hundred Realms and Thousand Suchnesses". In this way, readers can utilize the conceptual framework of the *ZhouYi* to contemplate and comprehend the Tiantai doctrine of "Three Thousand Realms in a Single Thought" (一念三千).

Furthermore, Master Ouyi integrated the Tiantai doctrine of "immutable yet accommodating to conditions, accommodating to conditions yet immutable" (不變隨緣，隨緣不變) with the *Zhou Yi*'s concepts of "transformative change" (變易), "interpenetrative change" (交易), and "the unchanging principle" (不易), stating:

> Moreover, all things are identical to one thing; one thing is identical to all things. All hexagrams and lines are identical to one hexagram and one line; one hexagram and one line are identical to all hexagrams and lines. Therefore, they are named "interpenetrative change" and "transformative change," but in reality, they represent the dharmadhātu (realm of reality) that is "immutable yet accommodating to conditions, accommodating to conditions yet immutable"—a state of being mutually inclusive, mutually creative, mutually penetrating, and mutually harmonious.
>
> 又一切事物即一事一物，一事一物即一切事物，一切卦爻即一卦一爻，一卦一爻即一切卦爻，故名"交易""變易"，實即不變隨緣，隨緣不變，互具互造，互入互融之法界耳。 (Ouyi, 2013, p. 3)

Similar examples abound throughout the text. It can be said that nearly all of the "Buddhist interpretations" in the *Zhou Yi Chan Jie* elucidate Tiantai doctrine. From the perspective of spiritual practice, this doctrinal exposition serves to prepare the practitioner for achieving "Complete Penetration of the Perfect Teaching".

Ten Objects of Cessation-and-Contemplation (止觀十境)

The Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation employs 10 objects of contemplation, known as the "Ten Objects of Cessation-and-Contemplation". They are: (1) the object of the aggregates, sense-bases, and elements (陰界入境); (2) the object of afflictions (煩惱境); (3) the object of illness (病患境); (4) the object of karmic obstructions (業相境); (5) the object of demonic activities (魔事境); (6) the object of meditative absorption (禪定境); (7) the object of erroneous views (諸見境); (8) the object of arrogance (增上慢境); (9) the object of the Two Vehicles (二乘境); and (10) the object of the Bodhisattva Path (菩薩境).

In *The Great Cessation-and-Contemplation*, Master Zhiyi primarily elaborated on the object of the consciousness aggregate within the first object, the "single thought-mind". If contemplating the "single thought-mind" proves ineffective, or if any of the other nine objects arise during this contemplation, one should then apply contemplation to that specific object. Master Ouyi elucidated this very process by drawing upon the framework of the *Zhou Yi*.

For example, in his commentary on the *Tuan Zhuan* (彖傳, *"Treatise on the Tuan", "King Wen's Explanations of the entire Hexagrams*) of the Mingyi hexagram (明夷, ䷣), which states,

> (The symbol of) the Earth and that of Brightness entering into the midst of it give the idea of Ming I [Mingyi] (Brightness wounded or obscured). The inner (trigram) denotes being accomplished and bright; the outer, being pliant and submissive. The case of King Wăn [Wen Wang, 文王] was that of one who with these qualities was yet involved in great difficulties. "It will be advantageous to realise the difficulty (of the position), and maintain firm correctness:"—that is, (the individual concerned) should obscure his brightness. The case of the count of Ki [Jizi, 箕子] was that of one who, amidst the difficulties of his House, was able (thus) to maintain his aim and mind correct.
>
> 明入地中，明夷。內文明而外柔順，以蒙大難，文王以之。利艱貞，晦其明也，內難而能正其志，箕子以之。 (Legge, 1899, pp. 241-242)

Master Ouyi explains:

> Afflictions, unwholesome karma, illness, demonic activities, arrogance, and erroneous views—none of these are anything other than the sublime objects of practice for the Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation.
>
> 煩惱、惡業、病患、魔事、上慢、邪見，無非圓頓止觀所行妙境。 (Ouyi, 2013, pp. 101-102)

Here, Master Ouyi skillfully uses the example of Wen Wang and Jizi maintaining "steadfastness in adversity" (艱貞) to illustrate that when practitioners of Cessation-and-Contemplation encounter challenging states such as "afflictions" or "unwholesome karma", they should not reject them. Instead, they should apply contemplation precisely to these very states. Once enlightenment is attained, these challenging states are transformed into "sublime objects of practice".

Furthermore, in his commentary on the hexagram Shihe (噬嗑, ䷔), which "indicates successful progress (in the condition of things which it supposes). It will be advantageous to use legal constraints" (亨，利用獄) (Legge, 1899, p. 101), he explains:

> When the marvelous contemplation is vividly present, whatever state arises—be it afflictions, karmic obstructions, illness, demonic activities, meditative absorption, arrogance, or erroneous views—one applies this very contemplation to address them. This is precisely what is meant by "achieving success through the advantageous use of legal constraints."
>
> 妙觀現前，隨其所發煩惱、業、病、魔、禪、慢、見等境，即以妙觀治之，皆所謂亨而利用獄也。 (Ouyi, 2013, p. 70)

In other words, when practicing Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation, once the "Marvelous Contemplation" is activated, one can immediately apply it to any state that arises, be it afflictions, karmic obstructions, or any other condition. That is to say, one uses the insight of contemplation to constraint these states. This aligns with the meaning of "advantageous to use legal constraints" as described in *Zhou Yi*. Here, Master Ouyi not only conveys the counteractive function of "contemplation" but also implicitly references the ten objects of contemplation in Cessation-and-Contemplation, thereby fulfilling a dual purpose of explanation.

Tenfold Contemplation Vehicle of Cessation-and-Contemplation (十乘觀法)

In the practice of the Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation, one applies contemplation to a specific object among the Ten Objects. Simply put, this involves observing and discerning that specific object. The concrete method for doing so is the "contemplative method" (觀法). Master Zhiyi systematized these methods into 10 aspects, known as the "Ten Methods" or the "Tenfold Contemplation Vehicle" (十乘觀法). They are:

(1) Contemplating the Inconceivable Realm (觀不可思議境);
(2) Arousing the Genuine Bodhi-mind (真正發菩提心);
(3) Skillfully Settling the Mind (善巧安心);
(4) Thoroughly Penetrating and Eradicating Dharmas (破法遍);
(5) Discerning the Accessible and the Obstructed (識通塞);
(6) Harmonizing and Adapting the Factors of Enlightenment (道品調適);
(7) Employing Counteractive Remedies as Aids (對治助開);
(8) Knowing the Stages and Their Sequence (知位次);
(9) Being Able to Endure and Persevere (能安忍);
(10) Eradicating Attachment to Dharmas (無法愛).

If the object of contemplation is likened to the iron that needs to be forged, then the Ten Methods are like the hammers used in the forging process. They constitute the most essential part of the practice of Cessation-and-Contemplation.

In *Zhou Yi Chan Ji*, Master Ouyi comprehensively expounded the Tenfold Contemplation Vehicle by interpreting the 10 hexagrams from Zhun (屯, ䷂) to Pi (否, ䷋). A table is provided below for a concise illustration.

Table 1

Corresponding Relationships between the Hexagrams and Tenfold Contemplation Vehicle in Zhou Yi Chan Jie

Hexagrams	Tenfold Contemplation Vehicle
䷂ 屯 Zhun	Contemplating the Inconceivable Realm
䷃ 蒙 Meng	Arousing the Genuine Bodhi Mind
䷄ 需 Xu	Skillfully Settling the Mind
䷅ 訟 Song	Thoroughly Penetrating and Eradicating Dharmas
䷆ 師 Shi	Discerning the Accessible and the Obstructed
䷇ 比 Bi	Harmonizing and Adapting the Factors of Enlightenment
䷈ 小畜 Xiao Xu	Employing Counteractive Remedies as Aids
䷉ 履 Lü	Knowing the Stages and Their Sequence
䷊ 泰 Tai	Being Able to Endure and Persevere
䷋ 否 Pi	Eradicating Attachment to Dharmas

Master Ouyi's correlation of the hexagrams with the Tenfold Contemplation Vehicle was not an arbitrary elaboration, but was achieved through his creative interpretation of the *Xiang Zhuan* (象傳, *Treatise on the Symbolism of the Hexagrams, and of the Duke of Zhou's Explanations of the Several Lines*). For instance, the *Xiang Zhuan* for the Zhun hexagram states:

> (The trigram representing) clouds and (that representing) thunder form Kun [Zhun]. The superior man, in accordance with this, (adjusts his measures of government) as in sorting the threads of the warp and woof. (雲雷，屯。君子以經綸。) (Legge, 1899, p. 270)

Master Ouyi explained:

> When deluded about the wondrously luminous and luminously wondrous true nature, a single moment of ignorance and movement manifests as "thunder," while the dim and obscure states that appear manifest as "clouds." From this arise the threefold continuities, which are collectively named "Zhun" (The Beginning). However, those who skillfully cultivate the Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation need only return home by the very path they came. Understand that the moving aspect of the single thought is itself the nature of fundamental wisdom (了因), while its manifest phenomenal aspect is the nature of conditioned merit (緣因). Regarding these two causes—the fundamental (了) and the conditioned (緣): Vertically considered, the Threefold Cessation and Threefold Contemplation pertaining to them are called the "warp" (經 *jīng*). Horizontally considered, the Ten Realms, Hundred Realms, and Thousand Suchnesses are called the "woof" (綸 *lún*). This constitutes the First Contemplation: The Inconceivable Realm.
>
> 迷于妙明明妙真性，一念無明動相即為雷，所現晦昧境界之相即為雲。從此便有三種相續。名之為屯。然善修圓頓止觀者，只須就路還家。當知一念動相即了因智慧性，其境界相即緣因福德性。於此緣了二因，豎論三止三觀名經，橫論十界百界千如名綸也。此是第一觀不思議境。 (Ouyi, 2013, p. 25)

The Zhun hexagram (䷂) comprises the upper trigram Kan (☵ 坎, Water or Clouds) and the lower trigram Zhen (☳ 震, Thunder). According to the *Shuo Gua Zhuan*, Zhen represents movement, and Kan represents danger. Thus, the Zhun hexagram symbolizes a situation of movement amid danger, akin to the initial sprouting of all things or the pioneering stage of an enterprise. Regarding the *Xiang Zhuan*'s statement, "The superior man, in accordance with this, (adjusts his measures of government) as in sorting the threads of the warp and woof", Cheng Yi comments: "The superior man observing the image of the Zhun hexagram, brings order to the affairs of the world to navigate through the difficulty of Zhun" (Cheng, 2010, p. 16). That is to say, when facing such circumstances, the superior man must strive to manage the world's affairs to overcome the hardship.

Master Ouyi skillfully transposed this imagery onto the practice of the Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation. First, he interpreted the "stirring of a single moment of ignorance" as Zhen (Thunder) and the "manifest dim and obscure states" as Kan (Clouds), thereby linking the hexagram's imagery with spiritual cultivation. Then, he interpreted "sorting the threads of the warp and woof" (經綸) as "Contemplating the Inconceivable Realm". He pointed out that when practitioners experience the "stirring of a single thought", they should not reject it. Instead, they should apply contemplation precisely to this "single thought", realizing that the "single thought" itself is the nature of fundamental wisdom (了因) and that the manifested states are the nature of conditioned merit (緣因). The mutual reflection between the "Threefold Cessation and Threefold Contemplation" (vertically) and the "Hundred Realms and Thousand Suchnesses" (horizontally) constitutes the "warp and woof". This is the Tiantai School's "Three Thousand Realms in a Single Thought"—the inconceivable realm of true reality. Here, Master Ouyi ingeniously used the hexagram's imagery to explain the method of "contemplating the mind", which is the first of the Tenfold Contemplation Vehicle: "Contemplating the Inconceivable Realm". The other nine methods will not be detailed here due to space constraints.

Beyond the three main aspects analyzed above, *Zhou Yi Chan Jie* also touches upon topics such as the meaning and concept of Cessation-and-Contemplation, its preparatory stages, the "meditation sickness" that can arise from improper practice, and the doctrine of the "Six Identities and Their Stages", which will not be elaborated here. It can be said that the work covers nearly all facets of Cessation-and-Contemplation practice. On the surface, it appears to be a commentary interpreting the *Zhou Yi* and its appendices through a Buddhist lens. However, a closer examination reveals that it is, in essence, a treatise that utilizes the framework of the *Zhou Yi'*s hexagrams and statements to systematically expound the Tiantai School's methods of Cessation-and-Contemplation cultivation. Naturally, constrained by its format and purpose, it does not achieve the same level of systematic thoroughness as the *Great Cessation-and-Contemplation* or other dedicated Tiantai works on the subject. Nevertheless, Confucian intellectuals familiar with *Zhou Yi* could, through this text, gain a preliminary appreciation of the "flavor of Chan". To a significant extent, Master Ouyi successfully accomplished his task of using *Zhou Yi* as a medium to introduce Tiantai Cessation-and-Contemplation to a Confucian audience.

Conclusions

In summary, a dynamic of mutual influence and borrowing existed between Confucianism and Buddhism in the realm of cultivation practice. This situation arose not only from Confucian intellectuals proactively engaging with and understanding Buddhism—practicing its meditative methods, and even assimilating them to reform and refine their own tradition of self-cultivation—but also from Buddhism's own active adaptation to Chinese culture. This involved simplifying the various meditative methods imported from India and making them more life-oriented and ethically grounded.

During this process, the Buddhist side emerged figures like Master Zhiyi and Master Huineng, who radically adapted Indian meditation practices and pioneered the Sinicization of Buddhist cultivation. It also included eminent monks like Master Ouyi, who actively adapted to the Confucian cultural milieu, using Confucian classics to expound Buddhist practice. These figures paved the way for the exchange and integration of Confucian and Buddhist cultivation practices, constituting a vital part of the broader historical process of Buddhism's indigenization in China.

Cultivation, defined as the practical activity undertaken by individuals through specific methods to achieve improvement in spiritual, physical, or other aspects, is not the exclusive domain of any particular religion. It exists broadly across various cultural traditions. From Confucian self-cultivation, to practices like standing meditation (站樁) and energy work (練氣) in martial arts, and even to acts of helping others—all can be viewed as forms of cultivation.

In our contemporary era, advancements in technology and increased productivity have led to a tremendous improvement in people's material living conditions compared to the past. However, this has been accompanied by an objectively accelerated pace of life across society, which has, for some, contributed to feelings such as anxiety, pressure, and meaninglessness. There is a pressing need for many to find spiritual solace and fulfillment. In this regard, the elements of cultivation found within traditional culture represent a significant intellectual resource worthy of serious study and exploration.

For both Confucianism and Buddhism, the question of how to sustain their wisdom and vitality in the modern age requires the emergence of individuals like Masters Zhiyi, Huineng, and Ouyi—figures capable of driving the modern transformation of ancient cultivation traditions. They must pioneer methods of practice adapted to the new cultural environment. Furthermore, creating works like *Zhou Yi Chan Jie* that expound traditional methods

of cultivation in a discourse relatively familiar to contemporary audiences is undoubtedly of great practical significance for helping modern people settle their bodies and minds.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

T = Taishōshinshū daizōkyō 大正新脩大藏經 [Buddhist Canon Compiled During the Taishō Era (1912-1926)]

X = Manji Shinsan Dai Nippon Zokuzōkyō 卍新纂大日本續藏經 [The Manji Edition of the Great Japan Supplementary Buddhist Canon]

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