

Editorial Note

The academia usually applies the Western historiographical methodology to Buddhist studies. However, most of the research conclusions cannot convince the Buddhist society and even cause a lot of conflicts. The application of Western historiographical methodology to Buddhist research started from the late Ching and early Republican era. Due to the adoption of this methodology, it makes a great impact on the Chinese historiography, and thus the historians of so-called the Yigupai (the Doubting Antiquity School) continuously appear in the academia of historiography and become the main stream of the research in modern historiography. Although the research attitude of the Doubting Antiquity School contributes something to historiography, this attitude often makes some ridiculous conclusions and becomes a joke. For example, Gu Jiagang is a case in point; he proposed the theory that the history of ancient China was created “layer upon layer,” which shocked the researchers of the Chinese ancient history study; however, his viewpoint that “Yu is a worm” also became a joke. Why does a scholar who masters the methodology of historiography surprisingly have such extremely different evaluation results? The answer is that the Doubting Antiquity School uses the assumption that “those unknown must be nonexistent” as the logic premise of its research, and therefore it results in the false belief that anything “unknown” must be “nonexistent.” In addition, both Eastern and Western research methods on historiography overemphasize the method of documental study rather than actual realization; the insufficiency and errors of the method are the important factors in making wrong conclusions too. In sum, the completely adoption of the thought and method of Western historiography, yet without the capability to examine if the premise is correct or not, will make one lack of the wisdom to discover and criticize the errors. This way of research will definitely lead to the unreliable research results or even to a complete mistake.

With the application of historiographical method, the academia has made severe mistakes even in the historical research of the mundane world, which the public are familiar with; with the same methodology, if the academic research is about Buddhism, which is in essence beyond the mundane world and pursues the ultimate-reality wisdom of the dharma-realm, and if the researchers do not clearly understand the essence and true reality of both life and dharma-realm or believe the truth that there are real practice and actual realization of the ultimate-reality wisdom in Buddhism, how could it be possible not to make mistakes? For such a kind of proposition, we do not follow the wrong premise and attitude of “doubting everything” which is claimed by the Doubting Antiquity School; on the contrary, some researchers of our Association undergo the research of the proposition of historiography with the attitudes of finding the truth, conforming to the principle of three-valid-cognition-ways that is consistent with the traditional Buddhist positivism, and emphasizing the importance of “Positivist Buddhism and Practical Buddhist Study.” They submitted their research results with the format of thesis and have passed our review

process. The following three papers have been accepted in this issue:

1. True Historiography versus New Historiography—A Brief Discussion on the Position of Buddhism in Historiography Based on *The Agama Sutras* (Tsai Lichen)
2. Historical Right, Historical Responsibility and Historians (Pai Chihwei and Tsai Lichen)
3. Buddhist Research versus Historical Imagination—A Brief Comment on Kevin Lu’s “How Did Mahayana Buddhism Reform Savaka Sutta?: On Mahayana’s Hermeneutical Strategies by Two Kinds of Buddhist Paradigms of *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*” Based on *The Agama Sutras* (Kao Huiling and Tsai Lichen)

Tsai Lichen’s article “True Historiography versus New Historiography—A Brief Discussion on the Position of Buddhism in Historiography Based on *The Agama Sutras*” criticizes, from the development history of historiography, the modern scholar Liang Qichao who challenged the viewpoints of old historiography about the definition of history, the scope of subject, etc. in the name of “new historiography”; at the same time, both Eastern and Western historiographical societies proposed various historical theories and philosophical concepts in their articles in the name of “new historiography” to challenge the former scholars’ theories and philosophical concepts, and it even provoked the challenges from postmodernism to the traditional Historicism. As a result, the traditional historiography, which is based on the historical remains such as documents, texts, actual materials, etc., almost collapsed, and the fear of the “death of history” was raised in the historiographical society. Therefore, the flourishing of “new historiography” reversely results in the crisis of the “death of history.”

Tsai thinks it is a wrong definition of history that both new and old historiographies all study the history based on the historical remains such as texts, actual materials, etc. The correct definition of history should be based on all facts, rather than the historical remains, to explore the natures, scope of subject, functions, etc. of history. This article thinks the natures of history possesses the characters of past, present and future rather than the character of past thought by the traditional historiography or the character of present thought by very few historians. In addition, the subject of history includes not only human beings; its scope should also include the animals that coexist with human beings. The complete subject of history should even include all sentient beings of the ten dharma-realms.

The article thinks both new and old historiographical researches based on texts, actual materials, etc. will definitely lead to the inevitable problems of breakage, discontinuity, imagination, untruth, etc. of history, which are questioned by postmodernism. If the subject of history only includes human beings, it will definite lead to the narrow and short vision of human beings, and endanger the survival of human beings finally. Therefore, both the new and old historiographies are full of untruth and imagination, and are the false historiographies which cannot benefit the sentient beings. They are also the false historiographies that conflict with each other and result in the “death of history.” The

true historiography uses the eighth consciousness Tathagatagarbha, which each sentient being in the ten dharma-realms has, as the criteria to judge the subject of history. The original entity of Tathagatagarbha really exists and can record all karmic deeds; it also can manifest the rules between the name dharma (the seven consciousnesses) and the form dharma (the materials). The true historiography based on the real existence of Tathagatagarbha is the real one that conforms to the true reality of the dharma-realm and can benefit all sentient beings.

The article clarifies the basic definition, properties, scope of subject and functions of history, and criticizes both new and old historiographies for their using the name-and-form as the starting and ending points of internal logic, which will surely lead to the conflict and inconsistency of breakage and discontinuation in history. The article proposes that Tathagatagarbha acts as the starting and ending points of internal logic in historiography, and it can avoid the conflict and inconsistency of breakage and discontinuation in history. This viewpoint rebuilds a firm, solid base and structure for historiography and makes it become alive again. In summary, this article is not only innovative in the academic field but also pioneering; it will produce a fundamental influence on the historiography in the future and let the historiography progress from the age of the false one that endangers sentient beings to the age of the true one that can benefit all sentient beings.

“Historical Right, Historical Responsibility and Historians,” coauthored by Pai Chihwei and Tsai Lichen, explores the behavior that both the new and old historians write about history based on partial facts selected from all facts; this kind of right to select the facts is the historical right. This article thinks the historians should take the responsibility for the implementation of historical right; the historical right and historical responsibility are a kind of relation between cause and effect. While writing about history, most of the new and old historians wrongly build the value and significance based on the self-belongings of desire-realm, which lead to more and more fights for the worldly fame and wealth among human beings. These historians should be responsible for inciting people to fight; they also cannot be free from the rules of cause-and-effect in the dharma-realm; no matter they believe the existence of cause-and-effect rules or not, the facts of the dharma-realm are manifested and recorded truthfully. The article also reminds the historians to face the true reality of the dharma-realm so that the real history can be truly manifested and enhance its function of correcting current behavior through history to benefit sentient beings. This is a part of the true historiography too. Therefore, while performing the historical right, the historians should precisely understand the historical responsibility which they should take at the same time. The article thinks, when implementing the historical right to study the facts of history and find its rules, the past historians’ vision is very narrow and short; only based on the extremely short human history of several thousand years, they try to deduce the historical rules of the whole dharma-realm, and thus often come to the wrong conclusions. Therefore, all historians should learn and propagate the true historiography, broaden both their and all sentient beings’ outlook with the method of actual realization, and enhance all sentient beings’ merits and virtues of the

dharma-realm; these are the responsibility which the historians should take.

Based on the concept of historical right that historians choose the historical facts, this article broaden the job scope of historians to conform to the true fact of the ten dharma-realm sentient beings, and therefore ultimately achieves the practice of the true historiography. From another aspect, the same as the historians who record the history, all modern staff of news and media select parts of the facts from various facts happened every day as the news and disseminate them; they are all the historians who perform their historical rights; therefore, they should comply with the historians' ethic regulations and take the corresponding historical responsibility as well. From an extended concept of historical right, everyone, when living, selects parts of the facts, recognizes them and performs various karmic deeds according to the recognition; therefore everyone is the historian too and should take the responsibility of historical right for his selected recognition of the facts. The article researches the scope of historical right, historical responsibility and historians, which have been neglected by the historiographical society before. It is also a highly innovative and pioneering article which is an excellent work seldom found in the historiographical field.

“Buddhist Research versus Historical Imagination—A Brief Comment on Kevin Lu’s ‘How Did Mahayana Buddhism Reform Savaka Sutta?: On Mahayana’s Hermeneutical Strategies by Two Kinds of Buddhist Paradigms of *Aṅgulimāla Sutta*’ Based on *The Agama Sutras*,” coauthored by Kao Huiling and Tsai Lichen, explores the concept that Buddhist studies should use the doctrines of Buddhism as the kernel rather than the historical imagination and wrong judgment from the misunderstanding of texts. By citing Kevin Lu’s series papers as examples and commenting on them, this article shows that the research method of historiography will make various mistakes if using the historical imagination and doctrinal imagination as the kernel. The article thinks Kevin Lu’s claim about “Sravakayana and the Sravakayana sutras being the host of Mahayana and the Mahayana sutras” and his presupposition about the Sravakayana history preceding the Mahayana history are a wrong historical imagination of “Mahayana being not the Buddha’s teaching” posited by him, and do not conform to the historical facts. The facts recorded in *The Agama Sutras* are: After the Buddha had attained the Buddhahood, He expounded the Sravakayana dharma of Hinayana; it is not that the Buddha became a Buddha after He preached the Sravakayana dharma; the Buddha’s achievement of Buddhahood resulted from practicing the dharma of Mahayana Bodhisattva-Way in His past lives rather than practicing the dharma of Sravakayana Liberation-Way; therefore the Buddha is the realizer of the highest achievement of Mahayana Bodhisattva-Way. The Buddha is a real Buddha who had attained the Buddhahood at that time, but not an *arhat* who only know the Liberation-Way of *The Agama Sutras*, as claimed by Kevin Lu. In addition, the successor of the Buddha is not an *arhat* of Sravakayana but is Bodhisattva Maitreya. All these are the historical facts admitted by the three-vehicle practitioners. The above evidence can prove that “Mahayana being not the Buddha’s teaching” is only historical imagination but not a historical fact. Because *The Agama Sutras* record that Bodhisattva Maitreya

will become a Buddha in the future and is the successor of the Buddha, it manifests the fact that the realization level of the *arhats* is far below that of Bodhisattva Maitreya. It also shows the fact that all the sages and saints of the three-vehicles heard the Mahayana teachings at the same time, and proves that the Hinayana sound-hearers had heard the Mahayana teachings too. Due to not having actually realized the Mahayana dharma, these sound-hearers could not understand the dharma of Mahayana Bodhisattva-Way so as to be unable to fulfill the mental function of mindfulness; because they could not memorize the contents of Mahayana teachings, the Mahayana sutras which they collected are very rough and include the Buddhist terms only. Therefore, only under the premise of the historical fact that “Mahayana and the Mahayana sutras are the host of Sravakayana and the Sravakayana sutras,” the historical facts and the Buddhist doctrines can be consistent with each other. Only this way will the Buddhist studies be complete and in conformity with the facts, and can be consistent with the true history of the propagation of the Buddha dharma.

In addition, the article thinks Kevin Lu’s presupposition about only incommensurability between Hinayana Sravakayana and Mahayana Bodhisattva in Buddhism is also a wrong concept which results from the ignorance of the historical facts and Buddhist doctrines. In fact, in Buddhist doctrines, both commensurability and incommensurability exist in at least four stages: but there exists only one model of Mahayana and Hinayana is merely the elementary stage for entering Mahayana rather than a model. The four stages are, in order from the lowest to the highest, the sentient beings of the six ordinary karmic paths, Hinayana Sravakayana (including Pratyekabuddha), Mahayana Bodhisattva, and Buddha. Among them, the state of the lowest stage of the six ordinary karmic paths is a state that can be measured by all sentient beings of the four stages; the state of Hinayana Sravakayana is a state that can be measured by all sentient beings of Hinayana Sravakayana, Mahayana Bodhisattva and Buddha. The same scenario can be applied to the higher stages. On the other hand, the state of Buddha possesses the characters that cannot be measured by the sentient beings of the lower three stages; the state of Bodhisattva possesses the characters that cannot be measured by the sentient beings of the lower two stages, and so on. The three stages, Hinayana Sravakayana, Mahayana Bodhisattva and Buddha, are the three stages existing at the same time for the sentient beings of the evil world of five turbidities; they can progress toward the higher stages through gradual practice step by step in sequence, with the Buddha stage as the only model, and there does not exist the problem about paradigm shift or extinction.

The article brings up various excellent comments on Kevin Lu’s papers about the wrong premise of research method in historiography and the phenomenon of professional insufficiency in applying the methods. It provides an actual example for us to see the insufficiency and wrong premise or assumption in the research method of modern Western historiography, and also to see that a professional Buddhist researcher should possess sufficient Buddhist knowledge so as not to fall into

the historical imagination. The viewpoints of this article are very creative in explaining the Buddhist doctrines and commenting on the research methods of historiography; it is a very good work too.

According to the brief introductions of the above three articles, we can know that both new and old historiographies can neither truly recognize nor set up the most fundamental connotations of definition, character, scope of subject and function of history; besides, the historiographical theory and methods they adopt are of no help to the introspection of difficulties in historiography and cannot find the solution. Therefore, in current human development process, the historiography is still an immature science which has a rough prototype because the recorded human history exists for only several thousand years. This kind of science, which is rough and immature, also has a very immature and funny research method. It is because the most critical and important fact and proposition in the true reality of dharma-realm and historiography are: “Does there exist Tathagatagarbha that is the base of all living beings?” This proposition about being or non-being can never be solved through the extremely immature research method of historiography such as “comparative reading” between the modern and ancient documents, especially through the documents from the ancient ordinary people or the research methods of historiography that explain the text by analyzing the development of etymology and semantic logic.

The practice method of Sravakayana Liberation, that of Bodhisattva’s ultimate-reality wisdom or even the state of Buddhahood possessing both virtue and wisdom, claimed by Positivist Buddhism, are all based on the real existence of Tathagatagarbha for the personal realization of Sravakayana Liberation, Bodhisattva’s ultimate-reality wisdom or ultimate Buddhahood. Only the method of Positivism can fix the problems of the research methods of Buddhist historiography or even worldly historiography. Consequently, all Buddhist researchers, historical researches or philosophical researches using the research methods other than the method of Positivism, especially using the method of text interpretation, can never really and completely solve the problems. The detailed discussions in the three papers about historiography in this issue exactly reflect this fact. Hope the wise in Buddhist and academic societies can contemplate the rationale in the papers together and march toward the state of true historiography that personally realize liberation and wisdom.

Best Regards,

Pai Chihwei, The Chief Editor

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