

## Editorial Note

In the pursuit of truth, the sages and saints since ancient times, around the world, all have their actual realization based on the observation of facts, and expound it to sentient beings through rigorous demonstrations. Based on this truth-seeking spirit of Buddhist practical theory, this Journal is published to propagate the correct theory of Buddha-dharma with modern academic papers, and to demonstrate the positivist spirit that is often neglected by many scholars in modern Buddhist academia. In addition to that, the papers of this Journal all explain the profound Buddhist doctrines based on the rigorous methodology according to the principle of three-valid-cognition-ways for Buddhist treatises, namely valid cognition by ultimate teachings, direct perception and logical inference. The principle of three-valid-cognition-ways is exactly the academic standard that the modern Buddhist academia, which follows the system of Western theology, lacks. Owing to the general lack of argumentation standard in modern Buddhist academia, the researchers often express their views individually in an unrestrained way, which makes the Buddhist academic papers away from the goal of seeking truth; this is a great loss to the whole Buddhist world and academia. Because a large amount of human power, time and resources has been used, and yet the wrong conclusions have often been drawn, without any help in the pursuit of truth, the actual realization of liberation and the greater glory of dharma-realm; it is certainly a great loss to the people of the world. To avoid this long-term waste and loss of resources, and also to help the academia pursue the truth, accurately correct the direction and actually understand the standard of three-valid-cognition-ways for Buddhist treatises (which is full of positivist spirit and is always followed in traditional Buddhism), this Journal requests all the authors to write papers based on this standard and it really deserves special attention from the Buddhist world and academia.

Only those papers that are based on the standard of three-valid-cognition-ways for Buddhist treatises can correctly deal with all the propositions about Buddhism and philosophy and reach reliable valid conclusions; these conclusions will have the significance of actual realization and practice, but not just researches and empty talks like explanatory notes in ancient books. For this reason, the academic papers based on the standard of three-valid-cognition-ways for Buddhist treatises will be foreseeably the standard and the

main stream that are definitely followed by the Eastern and Western philosophic academia in the future. Owing to the lack of elements of three-valid-cognition-ways for Buddhist treatises during the training process in modern academia, to write academic papers based on the strict standard of three-valid-cognition-ways for Buddhist treatises becomes a highly difficult task of academic original writing. It is also the academic capability that the modern Buddhist academia urgently needs to build. Under such environmental conditions and standard, three articles are presented in this issue:

1. A Brief Exploration on Noble Dharma-Seal in *The Agama Sutras*—And A Brief Discussion on the Historic View of Neither-Arising-Nor-Ceasing Dharma (Tsai Lichen)
2. A Brief Discussion on the Root of Morality Based on *The Agama Sutras*—And Brief Comment on Shi Zhaohui's *Buddhist Metaethics* (Chen Chienyuan, Tsai Lichen)
3. The Connotations and Denotations of Alaya Consciousness—Comment on Chen Yibiao's "About the Changes in the Literal Meaning of Alaya Consciousness" (Yu Minghong)

According to the positivist standard of three-valid-cognition-ways, Tsai Lichen's article "A Brief Exploration on Noble Dharma-Seal in *The Agama Sutras*—And A Brief Discussion on the Historic View of Neither-Arising-Nor-Ceasing Dharma" explores the meaning of Noble Dharma-seal, which is the Buddhist standard proposed by Buddha Sakyamuni in *The Agama Sutra* as the criterion for judging whether various Buddhist theories are correct or not. This article investigates the relationship between the dharma-seal and the connotations of "ultimate reality" realized by Buddha Sakyamuni, and then further deeply into the essential ideas that "dharma" has two main categories in the Buddhist core doctrine: "arising-and-ceasing dharma" (with different names of five-aggregates dharma, dependent-arising dharma, condition-arisen dharma, all dharmas, etc.) and "neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma" (with different names of nirvana, emptiness-nature, Tathagatagarbha, etc.). This paper explicates that arising-and-ceasing dharma and neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma are two kinds of dharmas that definitely exist in the dharma-realm; there are strict classification and logic relationship between these two. If the classification and relationship between these two kinds of dharmas are confused and one thinks that they are interchangeable, or proclaims that only

one of the two exists, it will make serious errors in logic. Therefore, this kind of classification and relationship can be used as the standard to judge various theories, and is also the basic element of which dharma-seal is composed. In Tsai's article, dharma-seal is constructed of "fundamental dharma-seal" and "correction dharma-seal" corresponding to arising-and-ceasing dharma and neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma respectively; this article also thinks that, in the three Hinayana dharma-seals, the dharma-seal of nirvana being tranquil is "fundamental dharma-seal" and precisely the neither-arising-nor-ceasing Mahayana Seal of One Ultimate Reality, which includes the other arising-and-ceasing "correction dharma-seals." This view on dharma-seal is indeed an innovative idea in the academic world.

In addition, Tsai's article analyzes the related documents and concludes that, "the Buddhist history being 'the historic view of arising-and-ceasing dharma' expounded by Shi Yinshun is not in accordance with the standard of dharma-seal." Hence, the author presents the unique "historic view of neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma." Concerning the part related to "dharma-seal and the historic view" in this article, the author's analysis finds that Shi Yinshun's division of the Buddhist history in India into three periods corresponding respectively to the three Hinayana dharma-seals made serious errors in logic. On the other hand, the author also proves that "the historic view of neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma" is the correct historic view in accordance with the Buddhist doctrines, and neither-arising-nor-ceasing dharma is taken as the Buddhist core doctrine, whether in the Mahayana or Hinayana teachings. This view is also an innovative idea of great academic value and accords with the standard of three-valid-cognition-ways for Buddhist treatises.

With the practical theory of *The Agama Sutras*, the article "A Brief Discussion on the Root of Morality Based on *The Agama Sutras*—And Brief Comment on Shi Zhaohui's *Buddhist Metaethics*" (co-authored by Chen Chienyuan and Tsai Lichen) explores the core proposition about ethics in Western philosophy—the root of morality, about which human beings have been concerned for more than two thousand years and even in the difficult development position of modern material civilization. This article thinks that a stable value system which cannot be destroyed should be established first while exploring the propositions about ethics. In modern ethics, the difficult position, in which the moral terms for good, justice, moral patients, etc. in Western philosophy have always been unable to be clearly defined for over two thousand years, still persists; its inability to significantly guide people to

the practice of human morality is because it lacks a stable consistent value system. This article thinks that the ten dharma-realms are the eternal and stable value system in Buddhism, and it is proved from *The Agama Sutras* that the embryo-entering consciousness, Tathagatagarbha, is the origin that gives birth to, dwells in and sustains the ten-dharma-realms, and therefore is the root of value. Owing to the real existence of Tathagatagarbha, which can be actually realized, it gives the value system of ten dharma-realms the significance of actual realization and practice. This is an important innovative idea in modern Buddhist and academic worlds.

In the value system of ten dharma-realms, the six ordinary karma paths of ten dharma-realms are the choice of karma paths faced by all sentient beings; the four noble dharma paths are the choice of dharma paths faced by those who dislike the transmigration (*samsara*) of karma paths. Human beings are facing the choice of karma paths or dharma paths in every happening of each lifetime. If one does not have the correct value and wisdom to choose, one is unable to explore and define the proposition about ethics. This article thinks that the Buddhist doctrine proposes “the wisdom choice by free will,” which has the significance of actual realization, namely to choose the moral practice with the wisdom of actual realization by free will. This article also thinks that, although Kant claimed Christianity to be a rational religion, yet based on the premise of those postulates which cannot be actually realized or verified, it is intrinsically not a rational religion. In Buddhism, it is to actually realize the three following facts: 1. the choice by free will, 2. the permanent existence of Tathagatagarbha, 3. the wisdom of ultimate reality of dharma-realm; based on the premise that all of the three facts can be thoroughly and personally realized, it makes Buddhism become a real rational religion, and therefore, makes the wisdom choice by free will have the significance of guidance on moral practice.

In addition, Chen’s and Tsai’s article also selects Shi Zhaohui’s book *Buddhist Metaethics* as a basis for comment, because she explores many important propositions about modern ethics in her book. Although Buddhism is an ancient religion, it still can provide, surpassing the limits of time and space while in this difficult development position of modern material civilization, the inspiring wisdom for various important propositions and definitions of moral terms in modern ethics as the judging standard of moral practice for modern people; it is because the Buddhist doctrines are true reality of the universe and cannot be changed.

Hence, this article thinks that Buddhism is intrinsically scientific, advanced and civilized, and at the same time, it also shows that Buddhism always surpasses the universal value of mundane freedom, democracy, human right, etc. to search for the supra-mundane absolute freedom, namely becoming Buddha, which is the ultimate universal value. This article has a complete description and discussion about the structure of modern ethics; concerning the definition of good and the root of morality, a unique innovative idea in accordance with the practical theory of *The Agama Sutras* is also presented with a great depth, breadth and altitude. This article also proposes a brilliant and innovative view about the research methodology for ethics. Therefore, the content of this article is so wonderful that makes it an excellent piece of writing rarely seen.

Using the semantic terms “connotation” and “denotation,” Yu’s article “The Connotations and Denotations of Alaya Consciousness—Comment on Chen Yibiao’s ‘About the Changes in the Literal Meaning of Alaya Consciousness’” explains the ultimate-reality mind of dharma-realm, which is also called the Alaya consciousness, the eighth consciousness, store consciousness, Vipaka consciousness, Adana consciousness, mind, what the perception depends on, etc., and explicates that the existence of Alaya consciousness is an objective fact; hence it has concrete connotations and denotations and its existence is also observable. For this reason, the Alaya consciousness exists objectively and has the significance of actual realization. Taking Chen Yibiao’s article as an example, this article points out that most Western and Japanese scholars study the Buddhist doctrines by regarding it as a thought. It in fact conflicts with the teachings of Buddhist sutras, because there is lots of recorded evidence in Buddhist sutras about the requirement of actual realization. Those researchers, due to their prejudices and wrong methodology, have drawn invalid conclusions, which are like a game of explanatory words in ancient books.

From the text of *The Agama Sutras*, this article explores the connotations of Alaya consciousness. The connotations mentioned in *The Treatise on Completing the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only*, *The Collected Mahayana Sastras* and *Samdhinirmocana Sutra* are cited as examples for the important reference to the actual realization of denotations of Alaya consciousness. For example, the Alaya consciousness independently and originally exists since beginningless time and is the root cause of all dharmas. The permanently existing Alaya consciousness is described from many aspects; the conditions and ways of its existence are

entirely different from those of other various dharmas. In addition, the Alaya consciousness hides in the physical body and sustains the sentient being's life; it is the object which each sentient being is greedy for and the self to which each sentient being is internally attached. Hence, the Alaya consciousness is the essence of mind which has concrete connotations. However, the term "Alaya consciousness," in semantics, actually has three meanings, namely "something that stores things, something where things are stored and something that sustains things." Concerning the question that the relationship between the Alaya consciousness and seeds is the same one or different ones, those scholars (since ancient time, all around the world) who are unable to actually realize the Alaya consciousness can only imagine and speculate on the answer with various misunderstandings. This article interprets the connotations and denotations of Alaya consciousness with a brilliant and innovative view. The author also points out that the denotations of Alaya consciousness can not be perfectly described through language, because it is the real object which the language refers to and the target for actual realization; only through actual realization can it be recognized. Only those Mahayana bodhisattvas who have seen the Way can actually realize the Alaya consciousness, truly understand the connotations and denotations of Alaya consciousness and can provide the correct interpretation; so it is not understood by those *arhats* who have not actually realized it, nor can they provide the correct interpretation. Therefore, this article is also an excellent piece of writing with a brilliant and innovative view.

The essence of Buddhist practical theory is to provide the wisdom, which comes from the actual realization of true facts in dharma-realm, as the basis of moral practice; all the authors, readers and the people who have been criticized can benefit from the pursuit of truth to the greater glory of dharma-realm. The three articles above are all written based on the positivist standard of three-valid-cognition-ways. Owing to the strict demonstrations, they have drawn the valid conclusions which can provide important reference for the academic world. All the articles are excellent pieces of writing rarely seen. On behalf of Journal of True Enlightenment, I am grateful to many authors for their earnest contributions and patience for the review by editorial board; I also owe my sincere gratitude to the editors who have reviewed the articles with their best. With the determination to benefit the Buddhist and academic worlds, this Journal is the first to apply the positivist standard of three-valid-cognition-ways to the review of articles. We look forward to the recognition of this standard or any suggestion from the Buddhist and academic worlds. Lastly, it is hoped that the

Buddhist and academic worlds all pay their respects to the three-jewels (*triratna*) because of the benefit in karma paths and dharma paths obtained from the publication of this Journal.

**Best Regards,**

**Pai Chihwei, The Chief Editor**

*Journal of True Enlightenment*

**December 18th, 2008**