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A Discourse on Doubt

**: Centered on the understanding of doubt and the
process of transforming doubt into belief**

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I. Introduction

Upon entering the Buddhist fold, one frequently encounters fellow practitioners proudly proclaiming their faith. The author shares this sentiment. Yet, when examining our daily lives, how often do our actions truly align with the Buddha's teachings? With these questions in mind, let us delve into the nature of doubt. What afflictions does doubt engender? How does doubt manifest and what are its consequences? And how can we dispel doubt and cultivate belief? This essay will explore these questions pertaining to the affliction of doubt.

This paper primarily relies on scriptures and commentaries as its foundational texts. It first elucidates the definition of the affliction of doubt, followed by an analysis of the attendant afflictions it gives rise to and their subsequent consequences. Ultimately, the paper proposes the practice of shame and repentance as a means to eradicate doubt, and the cultivation of aspiration and offerings as a means to establish and solidify faith. By perfecting one's discipleship and seeking the Buddha's blessings, it is possible to transcend doubt and cultivate unwavering belief.

By delving into the affliction of doubt, it is hoped that this exploration will serve as a catalyst for further inquiry. May all Buddhist practitioners, upon entering the Dharma, be able to dispel doubt and cultivate belief, thereby diving deep into the ocean of the Dharma and truly realizing the inconceivable merits and benefits conferred by the Triple Gem.

II. The definition of doubt

Based on the discussions in the Commentary on the Treatise on Contemplating the Mind, Primary Entrance to the Order of the Realms, Abhidharma Treatise on the Division of Matters, and Abhidharma-kosha, we can formulate a comprehensive definition of "doubt" in Buddhism.

Doubt, as defined in various Buddhist texts, is a mental affliction arising from ignorance and characterized by uncertainty, indecision, and a lack of clear understanding regarding the truth or reality of things. Specifically, it manifests as:

Uncertainty about the ultimate truth: Due to ignorance and delusion, one doubts the true nature of reality. As stated in the Commentary on the Treatise on Contemplating the Mind, "Since one has not yet attained the true reality, one is in a state of ignorance. This obscuration is caused by foolishness. Because of this ignorance and darkness, doubt arises regarding the true principles."¹

Hesitation in the pursuit of truth: Driven by ignorance, one hesitates and wavers in their search for truth. The Primary Entrance to the Order of the Realms states, "When one seeks the truth with a foolish mind, one is hesitant and undecided; this is called doubt."²

Confusion about the truth: Doubt is also characterized by confusion and a lack of clarity regarding the truth. The Abhidharma Treatise on the Division of Matters defines doubt as "being confused about the truth and unable to understand it."³

Uncertainty about the Three Jewels and the Four Noble Truths: More specifically, doubt manifests as uncertainty regarding the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and the Four Noble Truths. As explained in the Abhidharma-kosha, doubt is characterized by "hesitation, indecision, uncertainty, and a lack of definitive judgment" regarding these fundamental doctrines.⁴

In summary, doubt is a mental hindrance that obscures one's understanding of reality and prevents progress on the spiritual path. It

¹ Guanding, Commentary on the Treatise on Contemplating the Mind, vol. 2, Taishō Tripitaka 46, p. 597.

² Zhizhe, Primary Entrance to the Order of the Realms, vol. 1, Taishō Tripitaka 46, p. 668.

³ Gunavarman and Bodhiruci, Abhidharma Treatise on the Division of Matters, vol. 5, Taishō Tripitaka 26, p. 652.

⁴ Xuanzang, Abhidharma-kosha, vol. 6, Taishō Tripitaka 26, p. 483.

arises from ignorance and manifests as uncertainty, hesitation, and confusion.

To summarize the above discussions, "doubt" can be defined as a state of mind arising from ignorance and foolishness, leading to suspicions, hesitations, doubts, and speculations about the ultimate truth of all things.

III. Subtle afflictions arising from doubt

Based on the *Commentary on the Verses on the Eight Consciousnesses*, it states: "Disbelief, laziness, sloth, dullness, restlessness, loss of mindfulness, incorrect understanding, and distraction, these eight are called great followings."⁵ Furthermore, the *Commentary on the Treatise on the Eight Consciousnesses* explains: "What are great followings? They are called great because they possess three meanings. They are called followings because they rely on foolishness and doubt as their root."⁶ Since ignorance, foolishness, and wrong views are the root of all afflictions, it can be inferred that the subsidiary afflictions arising from doubt include disbelief, mental disturbance, dullness, restlessness, forgetfulness, laziness, sloth, and incorrect understanding, as shown in the table.

Subtle Afflictions Arising from Doubt	Characteristics	Scriptural Basis
Disbelief	Harboring wrong views, one disparages,	The Abhidharma- kosha volume 11 states, "Disbelief is

⁵ Xingzhou, *Commentary on the Verses on the Eight Consciousnesses*, Complete Tripitaka.55, p. 442.

⁶ Shanchang et al., *Commentary on the Treatise on the Eight Consciousnesses*, Complete Tripitaka.55, p. 455.

	disregards, and disbelieves in the truth and all things.	characterized by an impure mind, accompanied by wrong views. One who disbelieves disparages the Four Noble Truths, meditative states, and attainments. They do not accept the causes such as generosity and their corresponding results. This is called disbelief." ⁷
Mental Disturbance	The mind is chaotic and unable to focus on a single object.	The Abhidharma-kosa on the Aggregates volume 1 defines mental distraction as follows: "What is mental distraction? It

⁷ Xuanzang, *Abhidharma-kosha*, vol. 11, Taishō Tripitaka 29, p. 391.

		<p>is characterized by a scattered mind, a confused mind, a mind with diverse thoughts, a bewildered mind, a mind that does not dwell on a single object, and a mind that does not abide in a single state. This is called mental distraction."⁸</p>
Dullness	<p>One is in a state of stupor, with both body and mind immersed in dullness.</p>	<p>The Abhidharma-kosha volume 9 states, "What is dullness? It is characterized by heaviness of body, heaviness of mind, and even stupor and</p>

⁸ Xuanzang, *Abhidharma-kosa on the Aggregates*, vol. 1, Taishō Tripitaka 26, p. 615.

		drowsiness. All of these are called dullness." ⁹
Restlessness	The mind is restless and follows after wandering thoughts.	The Abhidharma-kosha volume 9 states, "What is restlessness? It is characterized by an unquiet mind, a mind that flits from one object to another, and a mind that is agitated. All of these are called restlessness." ¹⁰
Forgetfulness	The mind is scattered and forgetful.	The Abhidharma-kosha on the Categories volume 3 states, "What is

⁹ Xuanzang, Abhidharma-kosha, vol. 9, Taishō Tripitaka 26, p. 497.

¹⁰ Same as note 7.

		forgetfulness? It is characterized by vain thoughts, empty thoughts, forgetfulness, and a mind that is directed towards external objects. This is called forgetfulness." ¹¹
Laziness	One is reluctant to do what should be done.	The Sutra on the Establishment of the Correct Mindfulness
Sloth	One indulges in ease and comfort, leading to the creation of negative karma.	volume 33 states, "What is laziness? It is the abandonment of diligence. This is called laziness. ... What is sloth? It is the failure to perform

¹¹ Xuanzang, Abhidharma-kosha on the Categories, vol. 3, Taishō Tripitaka 26, p. 700.

		good deeds. This is called sloth." ¹²
Incorrect Understanding	One holds incorrect or inverted views.	The Abhidharma-kosha on the Categories volume 3 states, "What is incorrect understanding? It is wisdom that is led astray by unreason." ¹³

As can be seen from the table above, these subsidiary afflictions all arise from disbelief in the Buddha's knowledge and vision. This disbelief gives rise to doubt, leading one to believe in their own deluded thoughts and to act accordingly.

IV. The outcomes resulting from suspicion

Why does doubt arise? How does doubt manifest? What are the consequences of doubt? Due to ignorance and wrong views, in order to maintain greed and self-interest, doubt easily arises. The causes of doubt are complex. It can manifest as unfounded, inexplicable suspicions. For

¹² Paramartha, The Sutra on the Establishment of the Correct Mindfulness, vol. 33, Taishō Tripitaka 17, p. 192.

¹³ Xuanzang, Abhidharma-kosha on the Categories, vol. 3, Taishō Tripitaka 26, p. 700.

example, seeing a tree at night, one may doubt if it is a person or a non-person, as mentioned in.¹⁴

Furthermore, while in a state of doubt, one may engage in further speculative thinking, thus intensifying the doubt. Doubt can also arise from a lack of understanding, such as doubting the truth, as mentioned in.¹⁵

Additionally, one may be hindered by preconceived notions, stubbornly adhering to their own views and doubting others. As stated in Chapter 6 of the *Cheng Wei Shi Lun*, "What is doubt? Its nature is to hesitate about the truths of all dharmas, and its function is to obstruct the growth of non-doubtful virtuous qualities. It is said that due to hesitation, virtuous qualities do not arise."¹⁶

Thus, the existence of doubt prevents the growth of virtuous qualities.

The preceding analysis has shown that doubt arises from ignorance and speculation, making it difficult to reach correct conclusions when in doubt. So, what are the consequences of doubt? The *Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom* Chapter 17 states, "Doubt is like a cover that obscures the mind, preventing one from developing a stable mind regarding all dharmas. Without a stable mind, one can gain nothing from the Dharma. This is like a person entering a mountain of treasures but, being handless, unable to take anything."¹⁷ Doubt prevents one from gaining anything from the Dharma. Moreover, the *Mahayana Sutra on the Contemplation of the Mind at Birth* Chapter 6 states, "Some bodhisattvas, due to lack of faith, experience fear. This is like a person without hands,

¹⁴ Huiyuan, *Da Cheng Yi Zhang*, Chapter 6: "Doubt refers to the state of indecision about a situation. There are two kinds of doubt: doubt about facts, such as doubting whether a tree seen at night is a person or not; and doubt about principles, such as doubting the Four Noble Truths. In Hinayana Buddhism, only doubt about principles is considered to be a hindrance. In Mahayana Buddhism, both kinds of doubt need to be eliminated. Hence, the ten fetters are differentiated in a coarse way." Taishō Tripitaka 44, p. 583.

¹⁵ Same as note 13.

¹⁶ Xuanzang, *Cheng Wei Shi Lun*, Chapter 6, Taishō Tripitaka 31, p. 31.

¹⁷ Kumārajīva, *Great Treatise on the Perfection of Wisdom*, Chapter 17, Taishō Tripitaka 25, p. 184.

who, even if they reach a mountain of treasures, cannot take anything. Similarly, without the hand of faith, one cannot obtain anything even when encountering the Three Jewels."¹⁸ Therefore, faith is like a hand. Those with faith are capable of upholding the Dharma. When the affliction of doubt arises, one lacks the "hand of faith" to grasp the extraordinary virtues of the Three Jewels. Below, we will analyze the consequences of doubt from four perspectives.

(I) To arouse suspicion

Buddhism emphasizes karma and causality. From the perspective of karmic wisdom, those who are deeply entrenched in doubt inevitably attract those with similar karmic afflictions who are also suspicious and distrustful. If one finds that others are constantly suspicious and distrustful of whatever they say or do, it can be a very embarrassing and unfortunate situation. It is common to hear people lament, "Why don't you believe me? I'm telling the truth. How can you doubt that I have your best interests at heart?"... These are all the results of one's own karma.

(II) Good fortune fades, bad luck sets in

Doubt breeds disbelief, which in turn fosters alienation. Prolonged alienation leads to the dissolution of positive connections and the solidification of negative ones, creating an ever-widening chasm between individuals. Once these connections are severed, reunion becomes unlikely, and even if it does occur, it is devoid of the warmth and positivity of the past. Thus, doubt transforms positive connections into negative ones.

¹⁸ Prajñā, Mahayana Sutra on the Contemplation of the Mind at Birth, Chapter 6, Taishō Tripitaka 3, p. 318.

(III) To lose one's good deeds

The *Upasaka-sūtra* states that any vow, whether virtuous or harmful, sows seeds at every moment.¹⁹ However, the most detrimental aspect of a vow is regret.²⁰ Doubts often lead to regret. The *Avatamsaka Sutra* asserts, "All virtuous conduct arises from aspiration."²¹ Consequently, regretting a vow renders the previously sown virtuous seeds ineffective. Thus, doubt is tantamount to a loss of merit.

Particularly at the moment of death, when one harbors doubts and experiences profound regret, they may make negative vows, such as vowing to abandon Buddhist practice or to no longer believe in the Dharma. Such malevolent vows not only obstruct rebirth in the Pure Land but also continuously sow seeds of evil karma.²² Given that the Saha world is replete with negative conditions, these individuals are constantly engaging in evil actions.²³

¹⁹ Dharmagupta, *Upasakaśīla Sūtra*, vol. 7: "Good man! There are two kinds of sins that sentient beings commit: one is breaking a precept, and the other is having no precepts. A person who breaks a precept, even if they kill only one sheep, will always bear the sin of killing, whether they are killing or not. Why is this? Because they have made a vow beforehand. A person who has no precepts, even if they kill a thousand mouths, will only bear the sin of killing when they are killing, but not when they are not killing. Why is this? Because they have not made a vow. Therefore, for all good and bad dharmas, the mind is the root." Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 24, p. 1069.

²⁰ Dharmagupta, *Upasakaśīla Sūtra*, vol. 7: "Furthermore, there are those who, after committing a deed, do not have full awareness of it, and they repent at three times; and there are those who, after committing a deed, do have full awareness of it, and they do not repent at three times. Just as it is with evil, so it is with good." Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 20, p. 1071.

²¹ Śīlābhadrā, *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, vol. 77, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 10, p. 427.

²² Gu Kun, *Jingtu Suixue*, vol. 2: "Those who harbor doubts at the moment of death cannot be reborn in the Pure Land." Complete Tripitaka, vol. 62, p. 444.

²³ Dharmagupta, *Upasakaśīla Sūtra*, vol. 7: "Some say, 'If good precepts are complete, evil precepts are also complete.' This is not so! Why? Because evil precepts are easy to acquire, due to a single cause, namely, making a vow. Good precepts are not so, as there are five faculties, and therefore difficult to attain; because they are difficult to attain, it is necessary to cultivate them fully." Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 24, p. 1070.

(IV) Obstacles arising from doubt towards a spiritual guide

In the *Nirvana Sutra*, the Buddha stated, "Due to the diverse natures and desires of beings, the Buddha taught various doctrines. These diverse teachings, for over forty years, have not revealed the ultimate truth."²⁴ Given the varied roots and aspirations of sentient beings, the Buddha employed diverse methods of teaching. Moreover, these teachings were conveyed through skillful means. The specific skillful means varied from individual to individual, ensuring that beings could enter the Buddha's Dharma. This skillful means is, in essence, the method. Without these skillful and expedient means, beings would be unable to enter the Buddha's Dharma. Similarly, a good spiritual friend, wishing to guide beings into the Buddha's Dharma, must also employ skillful means.

The *Great Treatise on the Bodhisattva's Fundamental Mind* states in its third volume, "The wonderful fruit of bodhi is not difficult to attain, but a true spiritual guide is indeed difficult to encounter."²⁵ While the attainment of enlightenment may be challenging, encountering a genuine spiritual mentor is even more arduous. If one is fortunate enough to meet such a guide but harbors doubts about their skillful means, what consequences might ensue? The *Avatamsaka Sutra* provides a case in point. The bodhisattva, Sudhana, sought guidance from a seemingly external teacher, the Brahman Śvetaprabha. This Brahman instructed Sudhana to leap off a fiery mountain. Sudhana, filled with doubt, thought, "If I jump, won't I lose my life? A human birth is hard to obtain, and the Dharma is even harder to hear. Is he asking me to commit suicide? How can this be the Dharma?" Thus, he considered leaving. However, countless heavenly beings assured him that this was a true spiritual guide, and eventually, Sudhana jumped. At the moment of leaping, he attained countless

²⁴ Dharmagupta, *Nirvana Sutra*, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 9, p. 386.

²⁵ Banruo, *Great Treatise on the Bodhisattva's Fundamental Mind*, vol. 3, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 3, p. 305.

samadhis.²⁶

When the Bodhisattva Sudhana, due to his profound cultivation, began to harbor doubts, he was timely reminded by the heavenly protectors. If we, too, were to doubt the skillful means of a good spiritual teacher, would we not lose the immeasurable accomplishments and virtues bestowed upon us by that teacher? Moreover, we would be unable to enter the Buddha's Dharma.

V. To dispel doubt and cultivate belief

The affliction of doubt is a common human experience. Often, when others have no ill intent, we suspect that they must have some hidden motive. For instance, if someone clears their throat, we might wonder if they are displeased with us. If someone says something, we may question their sincerity. Sometimes, we even suspect the worst of others based on only half-heard statements. Driven by our delusions and clinging to our afflictions, we manifest countless expressions of doubt. How can we eliminate doubt and cultivate belief?

²⁶ Śīlābhadrā, Avatamsaka Sutra, vol. 64: "At that time, the Bodhisattva Sudhana bowed at the Brahman's feet, clasped his palms together, and said, "Holy one, I have already aroused the supreme, unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment mind, but I do not know how a bodhisattva should practice the bodhisattva path or cultivate the bodhisattva way. I have heard that you are skilled in instruction; I beseech you to teach me." The Brahman replied, "Good man, if you can climb this mountain of knives and throw yourself into a fiery pit, all the practices of a bodhisattva will be purified." At that moment, Sudhana thought to himself, "It is difficult to obtain a human birth, to be free from difficulties, to be without afflictions, to obtain the pure Dharma, to encounter a Buddha, to have complete faculties, to hear the Dharma, to meet a good person, to encounter a true spiritual teacher, to receive proper instruction, to earn a livelihood in a right way, and to practice the Dharma. Could this be a demon or a demon's servant? Could this be a wicked demon, feigning the appearance of a bodhisattva's spiritual teacher, in order to make it difficult for me to cultivate good roots, to shorten my life, to obstruct my practice of the path to omniscience, and to drag me into the evil paths, wishing to obstruct my Dharma and the Buddha's Dharma?" Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 10, p. 346.

(I) Contrition and repentance

In the *Great Collection Sutra of the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Dharmākara*, Volume 7, the Buddha said, "Well done! Well done! You are able to feel shame and repent. In my Dharma, there are two kinds of people who are considered blameless: first, those who are naturally virtuous and have never committed any offenses; second, those who have committed offenses but feel remorse and repent. These two kinds of people are considered courageous and pure in my Dharma."²⁷ Here, it is stated that those who commit evil deeds but feel remorse and repent can attain purity. Similarly, in the *Great Treatise on the Bodhisattva's Fundamental Mind*, Volume 3, it says, "As one commits offenses, one repents, and thus karmic obstacles are eliminated."²⁸ This passage also indicates that by repenting immediately after committing evil deeds, one can eliminate karmic obstacles. Furthermore, in the *Sūtra on the Differences of Karma for the Elder Śūka*, the Buddha stated, "If a person commits a grave offense but deeply reproaches themselves and repents, never committing the offense again, they can eradicate the root of their karma."²⁹ It also says, "There are cases where karma is created but does not ripen: if a being creates evil karma through body, speech, or mind, but after committing the offense, they feel fear, shame, and remorse, and vow never to commit it again, this is called creating karma that does not ripen."³⁰ In other words, if one commits an evil deed and immediately awakens to its consequences, feeling fear, shame, and deep remorse, and vowing never to repeat it, they can purify themselves through repentance. Similarly, the karmic consequences of actions motivated by doubt can also be purified through repentance.

²⁷ Xuanzang, *The Great Collection Sutra of the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Dharmākara*, Volume 7, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 13, p. 757.

²⁸ Prajñā, *The Great Treatise on the Bodhisattva's Fundamental Mind*, Volume 3, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 3, p. 306.

²⁹ Fazhi, *Sūtra on the Differences of Karma for the Elder Śūka*, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 1, p. 893.

³⁰ Same as note 28.

(II) To foster and consolidate belief

i. The definition of religious belief

To establish faith, one must first understand what faith truly is. In the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, Volume 8, it is stated, "If one wishes to cultivate the initial stage of drying up defilements, but has not yet connected with the Dharma-water of the Tathāgata, then one should allow this mind to flow into the perfect and wonderful opening, and from this true and wonderful perfection, true and wonderful faith is repeatedly generated. This abiding, wonderful faith extinguishes all delusive thoughts without remainder, and is pure and true in the middle way. This is called abiding in faith."

³¹Relying solely on wisdom, one truly follows one's original perfect and subtle nature, no longer activating delusions; only then can one abide in faith. Faith is a hallmark of the first bhūmi. Without sufficient faith, it is difficult to enter the first bhūmi, let alone complete it, much less attain the supreme enlightenment of a Buddha.

ii. The significance of belief

As the saying goes, "The ocean of Dharma can only be entered through faith."³² In the Avatamsaka Sūtra, Volume 14, it states, "Faith is the mother of all virtues, nurturing all good qualities." ³³Furthermore, the Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra also records, "The Ten Dharmas states, 'From what does a spiritual guide arise? Faith is the supreme vehicle. Therefore, the wise should rely on faith. Those who lack faith do not give rise to

³¹ Paramartha, The Śūraṅgama Sūtra, Volume 8, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 19, p. 142.

³² Zhizhe, Mohe Zhiguan, Volume 4: "The ocean of Dharma can only be entered through faith." Taishō Tripitaka, vol.46, p. 45.

³³ Śīlābhadra, Avatamsaka Sūtra, Volume 14, Taishō Tripitaka, vol.10, p. 72.

wholesome qualities, just as a burnt seed cannot sprout."³⁴ ³⁵With faith, one can cultivate all good qualities; without it, they cannot flourish. In the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Volume 7, it is also said, "If one has a firm and pure faith, one can constantly associate with good friends, and all Buddhas and their powers will be able to enter into one's wisdom."³⁶ Thus, it is evident that faith is of utmost importance.

iii. Ways to build and reinforce belief

Given the paramount importance of faith, how can one establish and strengthen it?

First, one must make vows. As stated in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Volume 77, "All Buddhist activities arise from great vows, and all practices cultivated by bodhisattvas arise from dedications."³⁷ With the power of vows, the seed of faith is sown.

Second, offerings increase virtuous connections. Virtuous connections foster joy, and joy in turn leads to faith. Thus, offerings can establish and strengthen faith.

Third, one must cultivate the qualities of a disciple. As previously analyzed, doubts arising towards a spiritual teacher can hinder one's attainment. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate the qualities of a disciple to strengthen one's faith in the teacher. The *Śūrāṅgama Sūtra* states, "One should approach a teacher without arrogance and stay away from hatred. When encountering various phenomena, one should give rise to wonder, as

³⁴ Sanghabhadra, *Da Cheng Shi Fa Jing*, "Faith is the supreme vehicle, through which one attains enlightenment. Therefore, the wise should respectfully approach faith and similar qualities. Faith is the best in the world, and those who have faith will never lack. Therefore, the wise should respectfully approach faith and similar qualities. Those who do not have faith, do not give rise to wholesome qualities, just as a burnt seed cannot sprout." *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol.11, p. 764.

³⁵ Fa Zun, *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, Volume 1, Supplement to the Tripitaka, vol.10, p. 631.

³⁶ Śīlābhadrā, *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Volume 7, *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol.10, p.35.

³⁷ Śīlābhadrā, *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, Volume 77, *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 10, p.423.

if a Buddha had appeared in the world."³⁸With the complete qualities of a disciple, one can have unwavering faith in the teacher's blessings, whether they are favorable or unfavorable, and can thus receive the teacher's extraordinary expedient means.

Fourth, one should seek the blessings of the Buddha. In the study of Dharma, doubts can arise not only towards the teacher but also towards the Dharma itself, preventing one from understanding it correctly. One can seek the Buddha's blessings to dispel these obstacles and cultivate a complete and powerful root of faith. As the *Song of Enlightenment* says, "If one seeks the Buddha's power, one will soon attain enlightenment."³⁹With sincere and devout prayers, one can request the Buddha and bodhisattvas to bless them with the wisdom to understand and believe in the Dharma, even to the point of attaining the Buddha's knowledge, vision, and realization. Through long-term practice and accumulation of merit, one will naturally penetrate and understand the profound meaning of the Dharma.

In summary, to dispel doubt and cultivate faith, one can employ the practice of repentance with shame. Additionally, one can establish and strengthen faith through making vows, offerings, cultivating the qualities of a disciple, and seeking the blessings of the Buddha.

VI. Conclusion

This paper delves into the definition, consequential afflictions, outcomes, and remedies for the affliction of doubt. It places particular emphasis on the consequences of doubt and the methods to eradicate it and cultivate belief. The primary objective is to awaken individuals to the detrimental effects of doubt, motivating them to actively employ the

³⁸ Buddhatrātā, Śūraṅgama Sūtra, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 17, p.920.

³⁹ Xuanjue, Song of Enlightenment, Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 48, p395.

practice of repentance with shame to eliminate doubt, and then, following the Buddha's wisdom, to cultivate faith through making vows, offerings, and perfecting the qualities of a disciple, as well as seeking the Buddha's blessings. This paper aims to help individuals cultivate the root and power of belief, attain the Buddha's wisdom, and genuinely benefit from the Dharma.

The author acknowledges that there are still many shortcomings in this paper, such as the need for further in-depth research into the various manifestations of doubt. The author humbly requests that readers overlook any errors and provide constructive feedback.

Reference Materials

I. Ancient texts (in chronological order of dynasties)

- Kumārajīva (Posterior Qin): *Da Zhi Du Lun* (T. 25).
- Dharmakṣema (Northern Liang): *Uposatha Sutra* (T. 24)
- Paramārtha (Northern Wei): *Zheng Fa Nian Chu Jing* (T. 17)
- Dharmaguptayaśa (Xiao Qi): *Wuliangyi Jing* (T. 9)
- Saṅghabhadra (Xiao Liang): *Fo Shuo Da Cheng Shi Fa Jing* (T. 11)
- Guāndīng (Sui): *Guan Xin Lun Shu* (T. 46)
- Zhizhe (Sui): *Fajie Cidai Chu Men* and commentary on *Mohe Zhiguan* (T. 46)
- Huīen (Sui): *Da Cheng Yi Zhang* (T. 44)
- Fazhi (Sui): *Fo Wei Shou Jia Chang Zhe Shuo Ye Bao Cha Bie Jing* (T. 1)
- Xuānzang (Tang): *Abhidharmakośa*, *Abhidharma-samuccaya*, *Abhidharma-dhātu-kāya*, *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya*, and *Cheng Weishi Lun* (T. 26, 29, and 31)
- Bānrúo (Tang): *Da Cheng Ben Sheng Xin Di Guan Jing* (T. 3)
- Śīlābhadra (Tang): *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (T. 10)
- Xuānzang (Tang): *Mahāyāna Mahāsaṃnipāta Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (T. 13)
- Paramārthā (Tang): *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (T. 19)
- Buddhatrātā (Tang): *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (T. 17)
- Xuānjue (Tang): *Yongjia Zhengdao Ge* (T. 48)
- Guṇabhadra and Bodhiyasha (Song): *Vibhāṣā-śāstra* (T. 26)
- Gukun (Qing): *Jingtu Suixue* (62 of Xin Xu Zang)
- Xingzhou (Qing): *Bashishi Guiju Song Zhu* (55 of Xin Xu Zang)
- Shānzhang et al. (Qing): *Bashishi Guiju Lun Yi* (55 of Xin Xu Zang)
- Fazun (Republic of China): *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (10 of Dazang Jing Bu Bian)