

The Declaration of the Candidate
Date _____

**Is Realization Sudden or Gradual?
An Appraisal of the Doctrinal Positions of
the Northern and Southern Schools of Ch'an
Tradition and Early Buddhism**

Date _____ Candidate's Signature _____
By _____

Ven. Yin Ling

We certify that this dissertation, "An Appraisal of the Doctrinal Positions of the Northern and Southern Schools of Ch'an Tradition and Early Buddhism," of Ven. Yin Ling, is his own work and that he has successfully completed it under our supervision. We recommend the submission of this dissertation to be

The Dissertation Submitted to

The Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies

University of Kelaniya Sri Lanka

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy

Date _____ Advisor's Signature _____
November 2008

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abbreviations.....	vi

Chapter I:

Introduction.....	1
1. Meditative Exercises.....	8
2. The Mahāyāna Sūtra and Ch'an.....	12
2.1 Prajñāpāramitā---Transcendental Wisdom.....	14
2.2 The Avatamsaka Sūtras and religious Cosmotheism.....	18
2.3 Vimalakīrti Sūtra and its influence on Ch'an.....	23
2.4 The Psychological View of the Process of Enlightenment in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra.....	26

Chapter II:

Historical Background of the Beginning of Ch'an Buddhism in China.....	30
1. The Chinese Traditional philosophical Thought and Ch'an Buddhism.....	30
2. The Ch'an Thought before rise of the Ch'an School.....	33
2.1 Kumarajīva and Buddhabhadra.....	34
2.2 Wisdom Not Being Knowledge.....	36
2.3 The Suddenness of Enlightenment.....	39
3. The Mainstream of Ch'an School.....	43
3.1 Etymology of Ch'an.....	43
3.2 Early History of Ch'an.....	45
3.3 Bodhidharma.....	50
3.4 The Teaching of Bodhidharma.....	57
3.4.1 Bodhidharma's "Discourse on the Twofold Entrance to the Dao and the Four Acts of Mahāyāna" thought.....	60

3.5 Bodhidharma's Disciples and the Transmission of the Dharma.....	65
3.6 Bodhidharma and his Successor, the Second Patriarch.....	66
3.7 The Second and the Third Patriarchs.....	68
3.8 The Fourth Patriarch of Ch'an school.....	72
3.9 The Fifth Patriarch and His Successors.....	76

Chapter IV:

Comparisons and differences between Ch'an and Teachings of some other Schools

Chapter III:

Sudden Enlightenment and Gradual Enlightenment.....	79
1. The Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng.....	80
2. Hui-neng's Ch'an Thought.....	87
3. Historical Debates of Sudden and Gradual Enlightenment.....	93
4. The Sudden Enlightenment and Gradual Enlightenment in the Platform Sūtra.....	105
5. The Development of the Southern School of Ch'an in China.....	114
5.1 Seeing into one's nature and becoming a Buddha.....	114
5.2 The Dharma of Mind Transmission.....	120
5.3 Sudden Enlightenment followed by Gradual Cultivation.....	123
5.3.1 Zong-mi explices Sudden and Gradual.....	125
5.3.2 The mind of the absolute in Ch'an Buddhism.....	131
6. The Understanding of Mind in the Northern School of Ch'an.....	133

Chapter IV:

Is Enlightenment Gradual or Sudden: Attitude of Ch'an and Early Buddhism.....	139
1. Early Beginnings of the Issue in China.....	139
2. The Issue as Reflected in Tian-tai School.....	146
3. In Later of Ch'an Thought.....	148
4. The Position in Theravāda.....	156
5. Enlightenment as Understood in Theravāda.....	157
6. Path to Enlightenment.....	159
7. Place of Mental Culture in the Path.....	162
8. The Graduated Scheme of Liberation.....	167
9. Differences in Faculties, Practice and Mode of Realization.....	170

10. Samathayānika and Vipassanayānika.....	172
11. Germinal Stage of the Controversy.....	173
12. Dependence on Scriptures.....	177
13. In Later Theravāda Buddhism.....	180

Chapter V:

Major points of Comparison and difference between Ch'an and Teachings of some Major School of Buddhist Thought.....	183
1. Ch'an and Dhyāna.....	183
2. Ch'an and Yogacāra.....	186
3. Ch'an and Mādhyamika.....	190
4. Ch'an and Enlightenment.....	193

Chapter VI:

Conclusion.....	199
-----------------	-----

Bibliography.....	205
-------------------	-----

Meditative practice is a vital aspect of the cosmological teachings of Early Buddhism. This is clearly seen in the Buddhist practice leading to the cessation of dukkha, which is the sole objective of the committed practitioner of the path. My readings made it clear that cleaning, caring, purifying the mind, and making it malleable to use it as a tool for the development of insight wisdom is the only way prescribed in early Buddhism as the way to liberation. I also understood that the Buddhist texts emphasizing mind culture present two meditative systems for this. These are: *serenity (samatha)* and *insight (vipassanā)*.