

Achieving Mental Healthy in China with Vipassanā Cultivation

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INTRODUCTION

The thirty years of economic rapid development including urbanization and industrialization in China has created an unbalanced society. The fast changing society has a huge impact on the Chinese. Their mentalities are far behind the economic growth. Consequently, China is marked as one of the most mental ill countries in the world.¹

Buddhism has impact on the Chinese culture. From the past, people always sought inspiration from Chan Buddhism. The Neo-Confucianism movement during the Song dynasty and Ming dynasty was the result of borrowing ideas from Chan Buddhism.² Chan Buddhism has influenced

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1. More than 17 percent of Chinese adults have a mental disorder. Donald G. McNeil Jr. "Mental Illness: Far More Chinese Have Mental Disorders Than Previously Reported, Study Finds." <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/16/health/16glob.html> Web. Dec. 15, 2013.

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2. Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964). p. 472. And Yu-Lan Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. (ed. Derk Bodde). New York: Macmillan, 1966. p. 256.

Chinese culture, arts and spiritual traditions.

Modern people are adrift amid the great confusion and uncertainty of contemporary life. The Chan teaching can give us a foundation on which to construct a new and powerful view of human existence. However, traditional Chan alone has some limitations. Reading Chan books can be comforting spiritually, but it lacks effects to cure mental illness in modern China. Chan stresses on the highest level of reality (*paramārtha-satya*) and it suits those with sharper faculties. Ordinary people will easily be lost without a Chan master's guidance.

It seems that modern Chan masters such as Ven. Sheng-yen and Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh had successfully combined both Chan and Vipassanā traditions. When people encounter Vipassanā meditation, they can experience the effects instantly.

Chinese Taoism meditation and traditional Martial arts such as Taiji (*Qigong*) are also effective in terms of reducing pressure and promoting physical health. Vipassanā can offer more than Taiji. The Vipassanā technique of meditation in Theravāda tradition is the foundation for mindfulness training, the foundation of Chan Buddhism.

In the following, we will exam the key features of Vipassanā meditation³ and Chan meditation and try to find out whether Vipassanā has more advantage over Chan for modern Chinese people.

VIPASSANĀ

Before enlightenment, the Buddha had practiced concentration (*samatha*) meditation with the two teachers: Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta (MN 26.15-20). The Buddha entered the four *jhāna* (*Skt. dhyāna, absorption*), obtained the threefold knowledge (*tevijjā, AN 3:58-59*): knowing the past lives, the *saṃsāra*, and *karma*. Finally, he discovered the four noble truths (*dukkha, pratītyasamutpāda, nirvāna, the path*).

By practicing concentration meditation (*samatha bhavanā*) one can develop a calm, concentrated and unified state of consciousness. *Samatha*

3. Vipassanā here means the insight meditation practiced in the present Theravāda countries.

meditation is common to all Indian religions. The Buddhist meditation that differs from other religious meditation system is *Vipassanā bhāvanā* (insight meditation).

In the Mahāsatipatṭhāna sutta (DN: 22), meditation is explained as:

1. *kāyānupassanā*: contemplating of the body.
2. *vedanānupassanā*: contemplating on the arising feelings in our mind such as happy, unhappy, and indifferent feelings.
3. *cittānupassanā*: contemplating on different types of consciousness (related to greed, hatred, delusion, non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion) arising in our mind.
4. *dhammānupassanā*: contemplating on the four noble truths, the five aggregates, twelve bases, eighteen elements, and four great elements, etc.

If we take Vipassanā (insight meditation) which includes understanding of three characteristics (*anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*) into account, we can consider *dhammānupassanā* as insight meditation. As *cittānupassanā* is a meditation to concentrate on the different aspects of the mind, it can also be regarded as insight meditation. The *vedanānupassanā* (concentrating on feelings) can also be an insight meditation. But, *kāyānupassanā* which is like the in-and-out-breathing is under the *samatha* (concentration meditation).

The four establishments of mindfulness is also called “bare insight” - the direct contemplation of mental and bodily phenomena without a prior foundation of *jhāna* (meditative absorption).⁴

The main purpose of Buddhism is to see things as they are. To see things as they really are means to see them in terms of the three characteristics - as impermanence, as *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness), and as no-self. “When the noble disciple sees all the factors of being as stamped with these three marks, he no longer identifies with them, no longer appropriates them by taking them to be mine, I, or self. Seeing thus, he becomes disenchanted with all formations. When he becomes disenchanted, his lust and

4. Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Introduction” *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society. 1995): p.38.

attachment fade away and his mind is liberated from the taints.”⁵ There were some people who realized Arahantship immediately after listening to the Buddha. This indicates that even by only practicing Vipassanā meditation, one can attain enlightenment.

In order to see reality as it is, we should be restrained from external and internal behaviors. The term Vipassanā means to see things in a special way as they are in reality. It is often tied together with *samādhi* (concentration) since Vipassanā insight can only be produced by calm concentration of mind. When we are the state of *samādhi*, we are in the middle position without bias. But, it is not the permanent stage. We have achieved it by artificial efforts such as religious activities and concentration meditation. When we lose our attention, we also lose the state of *samādhi*. This state of mind should be confirmed by Vipassanā, an insight to see things as they are.

Although an enlightened one behaves like an ordinary person in this world, he is not attached to things of the world because he understands through wisdom (*paññā*) that everything is impermanent, *dukkha*, and no-self. Thus he can keep his concentration forever; it is assured and confirmed.

Samādhi is not the permanent status. It should be confirmed by insight; by understanding the true nature of the world, one's concentration is fully confirmed. The defilements such as greed and hatred in our bias mind are oppressed by *samādhi* temporarily. But, through understanding or insight, we can uproot them permanently.

The main focus of Vipassanā is upon self-as-experiencing. Vipassanā, is certainly applicable in the life of a monk and is absolutely necessary for his Nibbanic attainment however it can be applied much more readily in ordinary daily life. Since Vipassanā is an insight that views everything, even *jhāna* states, as impermanent, *dukkha*, and no-self and provides the truly liberating knowledge (*paññā*), these questions thus arise: Why not use Vipassanā directly and exclusively, bypassing the *jhāna* series entirely? The contemporary meditational schools in Theravāda countries

5. Ibid.

are increasingly answering “yes” to these questions.⁶

Contemporary Vipassanā movements share some similarities with Chan Buddhism in China during the Tang and Song dynasties. In other words, Vipassanā and Chan stress on *paññā/prajñā* bypassing the *jhāna/dhyāna* stage.

MEDITATION AND CHINESE BUDDHISM

The earliest form of Chinese Buddhism was introduced to China via Central Asia. When the Chinese were first brought face to face with Indian Buddhism with its rich and elaborate, imagery, concepts, and modes of thinking, they were fascinated at first and finally over-whelmed and conquered. After a few centuries, however, the practical nature of the Chinese began asserting itself; it began to search for certain features within Buddhism which it could understand and practice, and in this search it soon picked on the meditation exercise as the essence of Buddhist discipline.

Respiratory exercises play a much more important role in China because of the Taoist notion that man is created and animated by air or breath. When the body becomes filled with pure air, it is transformed from a gross heavy body into one that is light and subtle.

The Chinese emphasized breathing exercises or control of the breath. The influential and popular sūtra teaching this method was: the *An-pan-shou-i-ching* (Sūtra on Concentration by Practicing Respiratory Exercises), translated by An Shigao (安世高) in 148 CE. The Chinese characters *an-pan* represents the Sanskrit term *anāpāna* for inhalation and exhalation.

In China, Dao-an (312-385) and Hui-yuan (334-416) were among the earliest Chinese monks to emphasize the importance of meditation. Dao-an went to great lengths to collect meditation sūtras and comment on them.

One of Hui-yuan’s close collaborators, Buddhahadra (359-429 佛陀跋陀罗), was a famous meditation master who had trained some well-known Chinese meditation practitioners in the north. Buddhahadra

6. King lists six points about Vipassanā. Winston L. King, *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992): 92-96.

translated the *Dharmatrāta-dhyāna Sūtra* (达摩多罗禅经) and taught meditation at Lu-shan. A Chinese scholar Lu Cheng (吕澂)⁷ postulated that the first patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism, referred initially to Dharmatrāta in the early years of the development of the Chinese Chan School.

Traditionally, it was with Bodhidharma that the Chan School usually dated its beginning in China.

Vipassanā in Chinese Tiantai School

The Chinese can understand Vipassanā of the Theravāda tradition via the Chinese traditional Tiantai meditation system – *Zhi-guan* 止观.

After the introduction of Buddhism to China, Tiantai was the first Chinese school to systematically develop its thoughts in theory and practice. The real founder of the school was Zhiyi (538-597), who spent most of his life practicing meditation on Mount Tiantai in modern Zhejiang, from which the school got its name.

The practice of this school consists of meditation based on the methods of *zhi* and *guan*. *Zhi* (Skt. *śamatha*,) refers to meditative practices aimed at the stilling of thought and at the development of concentration. *Guan* (Skt. *vipaśyanā*) is translated with such terms as “analysis” or “clear observation”, and refers to the application of one’s power of concentration to dependent co-arising.

Zhiyi’s meditation is called “the round and abrupt meditation”. In general, it teaches us how to observe the three truths (三谛 empty, conventional, and the middle.) in our daily life. Each moment of mind can be checked by the three: empty, conventional, and the middle.

Guan in Tiantai is similar to Theravāda Vipassanā.

Vipassanā: see all things as impermanent, *dukkha* and no-Self. One can practice any one of the three; when one is practiced, the others applied: “Since the three characteristics are closely interlinked, any one of them can be made the main portal for entering the domain of insight, but the

7. Lu Cheng, *Origin of Chinese Buddhism* 中国佛学源流略讲 (Beijing: 中华书局, 1979) p. 396.

Buddha”s usual approach is to show all of three together—impermanence implying suffering and the two in conjunction implying the absence of self.”⁸

Guan: see all things as empty, conventional and the middle. One can practice any one of the three; when one is practiced, the others are applied. Empty, conventional and the middle are identical.

Tiantai differs from Theravāda Vipassanā: Tiantai uses more skillful means, such as repentance, stressing on adjusting the body, adjusting breathing at the initial stage. Repentance is the very first item of the conditions of meditation. Repentance is also related to *śīla* – the moment one does some wrong, one can repent. *Śīla* is the foundation of meditation. Repentance is stressed to keep one”s confidence in practice.

CHAN SCHOOL

Following the Indian patriarchal succession, Bodhidharma”s “Mind Dharma” is held to have been transmitted through a single line of Chinese patriarchs:

First Patriarch Bodhidharma – cultivate ascetic practice. Based on the Yogācāra text *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, he stressed on mind and self-effort in practice. He wrote *The Two Entries and the Four Practices*. His great contribution to Chan was his insistence on directly experiencing Buddha-nature through practicing sitting meditation.

Huike (487-593) as the Second Patriarch followed Bodhidharma ascetic practice (wondering without permanent dwellings).

The Third Patriarch Sengcan (d. 606?), in his work, *Faith in Mind*, stressed on the mind.

The Fourth Patriarch Daoxin (580-651) -- with solid historical ground, lived in one monastery with a large community of followers. He developed two methods for practicing Chan based on the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and the *Prajñā sūtra*,: 1) By taking the sitting posture. 2) Not limited to sitting posture, but one”s mind will be in accord with the *Samādhi* of One Act.

8. Bhikkhu Bodhi, p. 40.

The Fifth Patriarch Hongren (601-674) wrote *The Essentials of Cultivation*, which emphasized sitting. He used the Diamond Sutra as his basis.

The real founder of the Chinese Chan School is the Sixth Patriarch Huineng (638-713). His school is also called the Southern School, or Sudden Awakening School, opposed to the Northern School, Shenxiu (605-706), who took “sitting Chan” as his main job.

Huineng’s teachings are based on the Diamond Sūtra (*prajñā*) and Mahāyāna Nirvāṇa Sūtra (Buddha-nature). For him, one can attain enlightenment without sitting. All forms are equivalent to one form. Any time, any place, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down, there is no situation that is not an opportunity to practice Chan. In this view sitting was not, only not necessary, but could be a hindrance:⁹

Good friends, the deluded person may be motionless in body, but he opens his mouth and speaks of the right and wrong, the strength and weakness, the good and bad of others. This is to go against the Way. If you concentrate on the mind or concentrate on purity, this is to impede the Way (i.e., enlightenment).

...Externally, for the mind to refrain from activating thoughts with regard to all the good and bad realms is called “seated” (*zuo*). Internally, to see the motionlessness of the self-nature is called “meditation” (*chan*).

For those from the Theravāda tradition, if you understand Ajahn Chah’s teaching, you will understand Huineng. Ajahn Chah’s “Training the mind”¹⁰ also stressed on the mind. Often, Chinese Buddhists refers to Ajahn Chah as Chan master.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHAN SCHOOL

The center of growth in the Chan School soon shifted to several new lines in South China claiming descent from Huineng—one centered on Mazu Daoyi (709-788) in Jiangxi province and the other on Shitou Xiqian (700-790) in Hunan.

9. John R. McRae, Trans. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000): p. 45.

10. http://www.ajahnchah.org/book/Training_this_Mind1.php

Over the next two centuries, these movements flourished, producing a long list of outstanding masters who have subsequently been enshrined as the fathers of classical Chan culture. The period of the late Tang Dynasty has been regarded as the Golden Age of Chan. Ultimately, the distinctive teachings of the Five Houses of Chan took shape.¹¹ The teachings of these five schools are similar; the differences lie in the methods of teaching.

In place of scriptural study, Chan Buddhism emphasized the integration of Chan cultivation and the moment-to-moment activities of everyday life.

In line with this practice-centered approach, the early Chan monks rejected the subsidized life of the city temples, returning to the earlier Buddhist ideal of wandering mendicancy, or, more commonly, gathered around eminent masters like Baizhang Huaihai in remote monastic communities where manual labor and a self-sufficient lifestyle were part of the rule. In this they exemplified in their lives the Lotus Sutra teaching that all walks of life and modes of livelihood are in accord with the buddhadharma. The result was a practical, vital teaching easily adaptable to the rapid changes taking place in Chinese society.¹²

Chan gradually penetrated all layers of Chinese society. Chan's practical and work-oriented lifestyle, accorded well with the traditional outlook of the Chinese, which rejected appeals to abstract speculation but instead put its faith in human goodwill and mankind's ability to create happiness and order through its own efforts.¹³

The Use of Huatou – The Modern Chan Practices in China

Master Xuyun (Hsu Yun, Empty Cloud 1840-1959) is considered the greatest Chan master of the 20th century.¹⁴ Modern Chan practices in China mainly follow him. The method used is a traditional Lin Ji practice – *Huatou* (话头).¹⁵

11. That is, the Weiyang 为仰, Yunmen 云门, Fayan 法眼, Caodong 曹洞, and Linji 临济 lines of Chan. Later under Linji, another two sub-schools developed: Huanglong 黄龙派 and Yangqi 杨岐派.

12. Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *The Record of Linji*. Translation & commentary by edited by Thomas Yūhō Kirchner (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 2009): p.62.

13. Op. cit. 62-63.

14. 惠空“虚云和尚在当代佛教中之定位” <http://www.yjsfj.com/jntdetail.asp?id=110>

15. 净慧“虚云老和尚的禅风” <http://www.fjdj.com/wumin/2013/07/155335269683.html>

Huatou is a question given by the master to the student. The student should keep it in his/her mind and strive to work on it. Concentration on one question or *huatou* might last for ten, twenty, even thirty years. A common question to investigate is: “What was my original face before I was born?” or “Who is the person chanting the Buddha’s name?”

The aim of *huatou* practice is to generate a profound and intensely concentrated sense of doubt. When there is great and all-consuming doubt, there is great awakening; small doubt, small awakening; no doubt, no awakening. The doubt causes one to concentrate on it and nourish it until it becomes great doubt. One may want to change *huatou* from time and time again, looking for just the right magical combination of words. It takes some time for beginners to start arousing doubt.¹⁶

When wandering thoughts are discovered, they should be promptly dismissed; attention should be returned immediately to the *huatou*. In time, such diversions will become fewer and fewer, and concentration on the *huatou* will become like a steady stream, infusing and uniting one’s whole being. This is the proper condition for generating great doubt. When great doubt comes, the power is immense. One is no longer aware of one’s body, the world, or anything in the entire universe. Only the doubt is left.

The concentrated power of doubt leads headlong into the explosion of wisdom. For *Huatou* practice, the object of concentration is the questioning and doubt itself rather than the usual objects used for meditative calming and contemplation. Practicing *huatou* is just like practicing the combination of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

Forceful approach to *huatou* should be taught selectively and, above all, used under strictly controlled conditions. It is an approach that is appropriate only for persons whose minds are already stable and calm, either because of natural endowment or previous meditative practice. For beginners, the gentle method is more suitable.

16. Dan Stevenson, *Hoofprint of the Ox: Principles of the Chan Buddhist Path as taught by a Modern Chinese Master* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) p.130.

Ven. Sheng-yen suggested that modern people may not be suitable for *huatou* practice. “This kind of patience and long-term commitment to Chan practice was very much the norm in pre-modern China. Times are different today; however, in this modern world, life is not so simple and routine. People are more preoccupied, stressed, and hurried. Few are willing and able to devote the time and patience necessary to simmer themselves thoroughly on such a low heat.”¹⁷

Also, practice requires hard work and strong self-control or strong intention. When circumstances that call for firm moral commitment and action arise—especially situations involving life and death, fame and fortune, or sexual relations—one may not possess the will power to do what is right, even though the right course of action is clear in one’s mind. The reason for this lack of self-control is the lack of power from practice.¹⁸

Ultimately, Chan practitioners wish to reach the point where they can enter any environment with full freedom, where the mind does not fluctuate in any environment.

Ven. Sheng-yen – Silent Illumination

Chan master Sheng-yen (1931-2009) became a monk at the age of thirteen. He went to Japan where he received a Master’s Degree (1971) and Doctorate (1975) in Buddhist literature from Rissho University. In 1975 he formally received transmission from Chan Master Dong Chu of the Cao Dong tradition of Chan, and in 1978 he received transmission from Chan Master Ling Yuan of the Lin Ji tradition. In 1977 he traveled to the United States where he served as the Abbot of The Temple of Enlightenment in New York. A Buddhist University and monastery were established at Dharma Drum Mountain in 2000.

The Method Instructed by Ven. Sheng-yen is silent illumination. Broadly speaking, silent illumination practice can be organized into three stages of development.¹⁹

17. Dan Stevenson, *Hoofprint of the Ox*. p.130.

18. op. cit. p.133.

19. op. cit. p. 153-158.

“just sitting” --just attentively minding your body, poised in the posture of seated meditation.

expanding one’s field of awareness from the body to the external environment.

subtle reification of self and object disappear, and everything is present except you. There are no thoughts of self, no dualistic oppositions between self and external environment, and no discriminating or self-grasping thoughts. Hear something, and it is as though nothing is heard. See something, and it is as though nothing is seen. Yet the mind is perfectly clear and unclouded.

Ven. Sheng-yen’s teaching is based on Cao Dong tradition and combined with Vipassanā.

Thich Nhat Hanh – Mindful Living

Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh was born in Vietnam in 1926, and since the age of sixteen has been a Chan Buddhist monk, teaching the art of mindful living.

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be mindful is to be truly alive and present with those around you and with what you are doing. We bring our body and mind into harmony while we wash the dishes, drive the car or take our morning cup of tea.²⁰

He uses simple and clear language to instruct his students. Here are some instructions from his recent teaching at the Blue Cliff Monastery in Pine Bush, New York.²¹

“We have the habit of running and we have to learn how to stop in order for us to be able to touch deeply the present moment. The here, the now,” he said. “That is why walking means stopping. Stop the running.” “You bring your concentration to the sole of your foot and you touch mother earth like that. You say “I have arrived in the here and now, where

20. http://www.deerparkmonastery.org/our_practice/mindful.html

21. “Day of Mindfulness” at the Blue Cliff Monastery in Pine Bush, New York. Sept, 3, 2013, from WSJ <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2013/09/03/a-day-of-mindfulness-with-thich-nhat-hanh/>

all the wonders of life are available,””

He suggested walking with two steps on the in breath, chanting to ourselves “I have arrived, I have arrived,” and three steps on the out breath, chanting “I am home, I am home, I am home.” This gives us “solidity” which prevents our mind from being pulled away, he said.

He even teaches us to program mindfulness into our computers by sounding a bell every 15 minutes that would remind us to breathe deeply. Based on traditional Chan and Vipassanā, his teaching is easy to follow.

VIPASSANĀ PRACTICE IN MODERN CHINA

Recently, the Vipassanā meditation taught by S. N. Goenka was introduced to China. Currently, there are three centers and it attracts some white-collar middle class in China.²² The Vipassanā center in China is known as international NGO (non-governmental organization), is not linked to Buddhism. Many first time practitioners are impressed.²³ Some Chinese Buddhists also go to Myanmar to practice Vipassanā.²⁴

The current Vipassanā teachings in China are based on English translations, often technical Buddhist terminologies are re-translated. When reading these new translations, Chinese Buddhists feel Vipassanā is a new religion for them. While non-Buddhists feel Vipassanā teaching is purely a technical method for reducing pressure. The traditional Chinese Buddhist terminologies should be used when teaching Vipassanā to the Chinese.

TAIJI, CHAN AND VIPASSANĀ

Chinese Taoism meditation and traditional Martial arts such as Taiji, are also effective in terms of reducing pressure and promoting physical health. Some forms of martial arts in Taiji can be used before and after

22. <http://www.vipassana.org.cn/>

23. <http://www.douban.com/note/211379111/>

24. Rupert Arrowsmith, “Being a monk in Myanmar: Personal transformation in a changing country” October 15, 2013. http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/14/world/asia/myanmar-buddhist-monk-retreat-experience/index.html?hReadpt=hp_c5

sitting meditation. Those techniques are easily accepted by the Chinese. Vipassanā can offer more than Taiji. The Vipassanā technique of meditation in Burma/Myanmar and Thailand is the foundation for mindfulness training, the foundation of Chan Buddhism.

Chan depends on self-effort and one needs to work on one’s own mind. It is effective in the ancient monasteries where one is practicing together with the enlightened Chan masters. Modern Chan monasteries in China do not practice Chan, but Pure Land or a mixed of both. Only a few Chan monasteries, such as the Baolin monastery in Hebei, still follow Ven. Xuyun’s Chan practice of *Huatou*. Often, people who have practiced Chan for many years still cannot grasp the Chan practice. Ultimately, the monastics have no confidence to instruct others; or they cannot offer clear instructions to those modern urbanites. As suggested by Ven. Sheng-yen, modern people need a more subtle form of meditation.²⁵

Any Chinese Buddhists from Chan tradition who encounter Vipassanā mediation may immediately like Vipassanā. Here are the differences between the two:²⁶

Vipassanā	Chan
Easy to learn at start: clear instructions from the start.	Difficult to learn: one just follows others and practice in the Chan hall without detailed instructions.
Easy to find qualified teachers.	Difficult to meet Chan masters.
One to one session: students have the chance to report to teachers daily.	Chan master is on a high seat in the meditation hall, and only gives general instructions in the style of Dharma-talk. For the beginners, there is no chance to have one-to-one instruction in China.
Under the guideline of the teacher.	Self-practice, self-realization.

25. See above page 6.
26. This also based on my personal experiences of practice Chan in China and Vipassanā in Thailand and Myanmar.

Basic technical skills are available.	No fixed methods. <i>Huatou</i> is difficult for beginners.
Stress on the present moment of dhammas.	Stress on MIND.
See dhammas only during meditation, no self.	Empty.

CONCLUSION

The rapid economic growth with increasing urbanization and industrialization has created an unbalanced society in China. The government is more concerned on economic growth than anything else. Consequently, China is considered as one of the most mental ill countries in the world. One may argue that Buddhism/Chan may help Chinese ease their unbalanced minds but unfortunately, the government's ideology leaves no space for religion to be taught publicly in society.

Recently, more people visit temples and monasteries. But the traditional Chinese Buddhist Schools such as Chan and Pure Land have their limitations. Vipassanā meditation in the Theravāda tradition is more effective for the modern Chinese. Vipassanā has the advantage over Chan because it: 1. has less religious ideology, 2 is easy practice with solid methods, 3. has a clear stage of cultivation. 4. is easy to find instructors.

The traditional Chinese Buddhist terminologies should be used to teach Vipassanā to the Chinese. It is the best if the Vipassanā teacher knows Chan Buddhism. The Vipassanā technique of meditation is the foundation for training mindfulness, the foundation of Chan Buddhism.

In general, the Chinese should try to practice Vipassanā first as the foundation and as practice progressed, one can move on to Chan. In fact, one can practice both Vipassanā and Chan like the Chan Masters, Thich Nhat Hanh and Venerable Sheng-yen.

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