



The Sixth Patriarch's Radically Inclusive, Unifying Method of Teaching Dharma (continued)

六祖大師兼容並蓄之教法（續）

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The Sixth Patriarch's dying wish was that his top ten remaining monastic students not stay at the monastery he established, but instead spread the teachings to other regions. He's not encouraging these ten disciples to stay where they are, but to move on after he passed into Nirvana. However, before they left, he wanted to teach them how "to explain the Dharma without departing from its original source."

They were mostly ready to move on, but he still had yet to give them the most important insight into his teaching method, which is fairly detailed and technical. We want to pay particular attention to the term "without departing from its original source." The Sixth Patriarch gave us several lists that will help us classify and navigate every aspect of perceived external reality and internal state of consciousness thus creating a matrix which allows us to understand everything. Understanding this matrix is important because it allowed the Sixth Patriarch insight into his disciples' capacities so that he could gauge where they needed help seeing their own natures and facilitating their own liberation. He tells his disciples:

"First you should bring up the teaching of the three classifications of dharmas, and then the thirty-six complementary pairs—answer [any] with its opposite; this avoids [setting up in] either side.

In explaining all these teachings never depart from the essential nature. If someone should ask about something, answer with its opposite, thus neutralizing the pair. Always find the opposite principle: for example, "coming" and "going" are relative to each other; ultimately the two cancel each other out—and then there is no place to set up."

六祖大師的遺願是希望他座下這十大弟子不要墨守他所建立的道場，而是到他方弘揚佛法。他並沒有鼓勵這十位弟子因循舊法，而是鼓勵他們在他圓寂之後繼續精進。臨行前，六祖叮囑他們「說法，不失本宗」。

他的弟子們大多已能弘化一方，但六祖大師必須讓他們了解教法的精隨，這是非常微細且具技巧性，這裡我們要特別注意「不失本宗」這句。以下六祖大師詳列幾個方式，幫助我們觀察與認識所感知的內在意識與外在事物。這個列表很重要，可以讓六祖大師明白弟子們的理解程度，判斷他們在哪些方面需要提點，以得到自悟自解：

先須舉三科法門。動用三十六對。出沒即離兩邊。

說一切法。莫離自性。忽有人問汝法。出語盡雙。皆取對法。來去相因。究竟二法盡除。更無去處。（《六祖壇經·付囑品第十》）

Following that teaching, he shares a series of lists to more deeply understand these three classifications of dharmas and the thirty-six complementary pairs. The three classifications of dharmas includes the “heaps”, “realms”, and “entrances”. The five “heaps” are also referred to as the *skandas* in Sanskrit and include form, feeling, perception, mental “actions” and impulses, and consciousness. The eighteen “realms” include the six sense faculties, six sense objects, and the six sense consciousnesses. The twelve “entrances” are the six sense faculties and the six sense objects. The six sense faculties are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and the thinking mind. The six sense objects include sights, sounds, scents, flavors, tangible objects, and ideas. The essential nature embraces all of these dharmas, and so it is called the “storehouse consciousness.” The “essential nature” that he points to is analogous to the “original source” that he referred to on the previous page. He continues:

“If you give rise to a thought, consciousness “turns,” and the six consciousnesses are stirred to “go out” the six sense faculties and perceive the six sense-objects. Thus, the eighteen realms are activated from the essential nature.”

This is important to highlight because he is stating that everything that is perceived, the interaction between that which is perceived, and also the ability to perceive everything that is perceived is all “activated” from the “essential nature”. To teach or “explain the Dharma”, we can not depart from the “original source”, also referred to as the “essential nature”, and he goes onto explain:

“If the essential nature deviates, it creates the eighteen wrongs. If the essential nature is true and right, it creates the eighteen rights. Misusing it is the activity of living beings; using it well, this is the activity of a Buddha. How does this [differing] usage come about? It all comes from the essential nature.”

To awaken, we have to use our essential nature properly. If we do so, we will be Buddhas. If we misuse our essential nature, then we won't be Buddhas. So we can deduce that anyone who is not awakened, is an ordinary living being, and is thus in some way misusing the essential nature through one or more of the eighteen wrongs.

Next, he goes on to describe the thirty-six complementary pairings:

接著，我們看到詳細的列表，以幫助我們更深入理解三科法門和三十六對相應法。

法有三類，即陰、界、入。五陰。在梵文中也稱為skandas，包括色、受、想、行、識。界是十八界。六塵、六門、六識是也。十二「入」是六塵、六門。外六塵——色、聲、香、味、觸、法。內六門——眼、耳、鼻舌、身、意是也。自性能含萬法。名含藏識。此處六祖大師指的「自性」與前段所提到的「本宗」相似。

他繼續說：

若起思量。即是轉識。生六識。出六門。見六塵。如是一十八界。皆從自性起用。（《付囑品第十》）

上述這一段特別重要，因為六祖大師指出，一切被感知的事物、感知的能力，被感知事物之間的相互作用以及感知一切被感知事物的能力都是由「自性」起作用。說法不失本宗，也就是自性。接下來，六祖大師進一步解釋道：

自性若邪。起十八邪。自性若正。起十八正。若惡用即眾生用。善用即佛用。用由何等。由自性有。（《付囑品第十》）

要開悟，我們必須如法運用我們的自性，才能成佛；如果用錯了，就無法成佛。因此，我們可以推斷，任何還未覺醒的人都是凡夫；某種程度上，迷失自性，在十八界中還有漏。

Five complementary pairings of the insentient external world:
 “heaven and earth,
 sun and moon,
 light and darkness,
 yin and yang,
 water and fire.”

Twelve complementary pairings of phenomenal things:
 “words and objects,
 being and nonbeing,
 material and immaterial,
 perceptible and imperceptible,
 defiled and undefiled,
 matter and emptiness,
 motion and stillness,
 pure and turbid,
 sacred and mundane,
 clergy and laity,
 old and young,
 large and small.”

Nineteen complementary pairings arising from the essential nature:

“strengths and weaknesses,
 deviating and true,
 foolish and discerning,
 deluded and wise,
 scattered and focused,
 kind and cruel,
 moral and dissolute,
 deceptive and genuine,
 real and vain,
 biased and fair,
 afflictions and bodhi,
 permanent and impermanent,
 compassion and malice,
 joy and resentment,
 generous and stingy,
 advance and retreat,
 birth and death,
 the Dharma-body and the physical body,
 the Transformed-body and the Reward-body.”

接下來，六祖大師繼續描述三十六對相應法：

對法外境，無情五對：

天與地對
 日與月對
 明與暗對
 陰與陽對
 水與火對

法相語言十二對：

法與語對
 有與無對
 有色與無色對
 有相與無相對
 有漏與無漏對
 色與空對
 動與靜對
 清與濁對
 凡與聖對
 僧與俗對
 老與少對
 大與小對

自性起用十九對：

長與短對
 邪與正對
 癡與慧對
 愚與智對
 亂與定對
 慈與毒對
 戒與非對
 直與曲對
 實與虛對
 險與平對
 煩惱與菩提對
 常與無常對
 悲與害對
 喜與瞋對
 捨與慳對
 進與退對

Thus the thirty-six complementary pairings include: the five pairings of the insentient external world, the twelve complementary pairings of phenomenal things, and the nineteen complementary pairings arising from the essential nature.

All of these pairings are dualistic pairs of opposites that act as two sides of a balancing scale. The scale is in balance when the two sides are in balance, neither more or less on one side or the other. This state of balance has the potential for dynamic action or change, from a point of equanimity. It could also be said that these opposites also effectively cancel each other out, instead of balancing each other, which would return one back to the zero state where there are no marks and no place to set-up. The non-dual state also encompasses each pair of opposites. Everything is included in the thirty-six pairs. It's worth noting that the nineteen complementary pairings arising from the essential nature, are all states experienced by living beings.

The essential nature encompasses not only these nineteen complementary pairings, but all the other myriad dharmas as well. By following the Sixth Patriarch's instructions, the disciples could go on to use these three classifications of dharmas and thirty-six complementary pairs as teaching tools to address any situation that has ever been created or encountered by themselves or their future disciples or any living being. So the Sixth Patriarch gave the disciples a framework for teaching, a way to describe and address whatever situation they encounter:

“If you understand and know how to use these thirty-six complementary pairings, you can string together all the teachings in the sutras, and whether coming or going, you can avoid both extremes. Use your essential nature when discoursing with others. Outwardly be unattached to appearances while right in the middle of appearances. Inwardly, be empty without clinging to emptiness. If you cling to appearances, you will just compound your wrong views; if you cling to emptiness, you will only magnify your ignorance.”

【Editor's note: All quoted passages are from *The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra*. Buddhist Text Translation Society, 3 Sept. 2014.】

☞ To be continued

生與滅對
法身與色身對
化身與報身對
(《付囑品第十》)

三十六對相應法包括：對法外境，無情五對、法相語言十二對、自性起用十九對。

這些都是成對的一一二元對立，就像天秤的兩邊，中間就是兩邊平衡，不偏不倚，處於中道；而這種平衡狀態具備改變的潛力。這種不二的狀態包含每一對的對立面，一切法都含藏在三十六對之中。值得注意的是，從自性產生的十九對，是顯現眾生所面對的問題。

自性不但包含這十九對，也涵蓋其餘一切諸法。根據六祖大師的教誨，弟子們可以將這三科法門和三十六對相應法作為教學工具，來處理自己或未來在化導眾生時所遇到的各種情況。六祖大師為弟子們提供一個教學藍本，讓他們能夠應付各種狀況：

此三十六對法。若解用。即道貫一切經法。出入即離兩邊。自性動用。共人言語。外於相離相。內於空離空。若全著相。即長邪見。若全執空。即長無明。(《付囑品第十》)

【編按：本文所有英文引文均出自佛經翻譯委員於2014年9月3日出版的《六祖法寶壇經》英譯新版。】

☞ 待續

