

Gushan Zhiyuan: Interpreting the Buddha-Nature of Insentient Beings through the Notions of Mind-Inclusion and Mind-Contemplation

Shuman Chen

Abstract

Using textual analysis, this paper examines Gushan Zhiyuan's interpretation of the Buddha-nature of insentient beings. In the *Jin'gangpi xianxing lu*, a commentary on Zhanran's *Jin'gangpi*, Zhiyuan deems the concepts of inclusion and contemplation, closely associated with the mind, as prerequisites for justifying the Buddha-nature of insentient beings. The mind, as an agent, possesses and includes all the three thousand dharmas; the mind, as a thinking being, can contemplate its own three thousand dharmas of/in/as one moment of thought. Because all dharmas are included in the all-pervasive minds of sentient beings who have Buddha-nature, it is valid to suggest that insentient beings also have Buddha-nature.

Zhiyuan, however, underscores that insentient beings per se cannot engage in spiritual practice or attain Buddhahood because they have no minds. This view of Zhiyuan's, I argue, contradicts Zhanran's philosophy, for Zhanran does imply in the *Jin'gangpi* that insentient beings can attain Buddhahood. I suggest that, by considering the Buddha-nature of insentient beings completely contingent on the mind, Zhiyuan, to some extent, denies their Buddha-nature. This paper

Shuman Chen is the Abbess of Pukai Meditation Center, Taichung Branch of Chung Tai Chan Monastery, Taiwan.

challenges Zhiyuan's implication that sentient beings' Buddha-nature possesses insentient beings, which differs from Zhanran's assertion that insentient beings themselves really possess Buddha-nature.

Keywords: Buddha-nature, mind-inclusion, matter-inclusion, mind-contemplation, three thousand

中文大學出版社: 具有版權資料