

Appropriating the Other and Transforming Consciousness into Wisdom: Some Philosophical Reflections on Chinese Buddhism

Vincent Shen*

I. Introduction

In responding to today's urgent situation full of conflicts created by self-enclosure of different parts such as different disciplines, cultures, political and religious groups, etc., we humans should be more concerned with one another and the possibility of mutual enrichment. In order to overcome antagonism by appealing to effective dialogue, I have proposed in recent years "strangification"¹ and "language appropriation" as viable strategies. The term "strangification," a neologism that might appear strange in English, yet is much more understandable in Chinese—*waitui*外推, means etymologically an act of going outside of oneself to the other, or going outside of one's familiarity to the strangeness, to the stranger. This act presupposes the appropriation of language by which we learn to express our ideas or values in language either of others or understandable to others. "Strangification" and "language appropriation" in their turn presuppose an original generosity toward the other, without limiting oneself to the claim of reciprocity, quite often presupposed in social relationship and ethical golden rules.

Philosophically speaking, before we can establish a sort of reciprocity, emphasized for example in Marcel Mauss' *Essai sur le don* as the principle of human society, there must be a generous act of going outside of oneself to

* Lee Chair in Chinese Thought and Culture, Department of Philosophy and Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto. E-mail: vincent.shen@utoronto.ca.

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¹ The concept of "strangification" was first proposed by F. Wallner of University of Vienna as an epistemological strategy in interdisciplinary research. This concept was later developed by myself to the domains of intercultural interaction and religious dialogue.

the other, so that there can be established accordingly a relation of reciprocity. The new principles for society and ethics that we are looking for should base themselves on original generosity and strangification as the act of going outside of oneself to the other.

In this paper, I will conduct some philosophical reflections on Chinese Buddhism based upon strangification, language appropriation, and generosity to the other.² I do not make the distinction, as FUNG Yu-lan did, between "Chinese Buddhism" and "Buddhism in China." Rather, I use the term "Chinese Buddhism" to denote broadly those Buddhist tendencies introduced and developed in China without basing their "Chineseness" upon any criteria whatsoever.

Fung took *Weishi* 唯識 or the Conscious-Only School as his example of "Buddhism in China," and the Middle Path School and Chan or Zen Buddhism as the best examples of "Chinese Buddhism." He said:

There were certain schools of Buddhism which confined themselves to the religious and philosophical tradition of India, and made no contact with those of China. An example is the school known by the Chinese as the *Xiang Zong* or *Weishi Zong*, which was introduced by the famous pilgrim to India, Xuanzang (596-664). Schools like this may be called "Buddhism in China." Their influence was confined to restricted groups of people and limited periods. They did not and could not reach the thought of every intellectual, and therefore played little or no part in the development of what may be called the Chinese mind. (Fung: 242)

On the other hand, Fung thought that *Mādhyamika*, the Middle Path School, or in Chinese, the *Sanlun Zong* 三論宗 (the Three Treatise School), belonged to his category of "Chinese Buddhism" because of its similarity with Daoism, especially with Daoism in its method of moving always to higher levels of discourse, and Daoist achievement, which for Zhuangzi 莊子 was "sitting in forgetfulness (*zuo wang* 坐忘)" and for Jizang 吉藏, *Nirvāṇa* (Fung: 245-246). However, according to Wing-tsit Chan, both the Three Treatise School and the Consciousness Only School lasted only for several centuries and failed to exert a lasting influence on Chinese thought. For him, the Consciousness Only School was completely alien to Chinese tradition and, together with the Three Treatise School, was merely an "Indian system transported on Chinese soil" (Chan: 373). Nevertheless, Wing-tsit Chan did see something much deeper in saying "both were introduced into China by outstanding philosophers. Both have something profound and subtle to offer which China had never known" (Chan: 357).

I have no intention here of disputing Fung on his distinction between "Chinese Buddhism" and "Buddhism in China," or in arguing against Wing-tsit Chan's judgment of these two schools as "alien to Chinese tradition." What intrigues me is the supposed "strangeness," "alienness," or

² This text is first delivered as the keynote speech at the International Symposium on *Yogācāra* Buddhism in India, Tibet, China, and Japan organized by Prof. Leslie Kawamura at the University of Calgary, September 6-8, 2002.

"otherness" in Chinese Buddhism, especially the dimension of the other in *Weishi* Buddhism, which, for me, instead of being taken as alien to the Chinese Mind, could become an enriching resource for Chinese philosophy. What interests me here concerns the problem of how we go outside of our own familiarity and go to the other, to the strangers and learn from them.

I would take Buddhism in general and *Yogācāra* or *Weishi* Buddhism in particular, as a case par excellence of strangification and appropriation of language. Buddhism has well strangified itself to South Asia, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, Europe, North America, and now to the whole world. In Chinese history, Buddhism has become an essential part and an inner dynamism of Chinese culture itself. However, before we discuss Buddhism, let me make a detour to discuss my concepts of appropriation of language and strangification.

II. Strangification and Language Appropriation

The concept of strangification, first proposed by Prof. Fritz Wallner, my colleague in Constructive Realism, as an epistemological strategy for interdisciplinary research (Wallner), has been extended by me as a strategy of cultural interaction and religious dialogue, so as to be applicable not only to different micro-worlds constituted by different scientific disciplines or research programs, but also to different cultural and religious worlds (Shen 1994, 1997, 2002). According to Constructive Realism, different scientific disciplines, because of their methods and languages, construct accordingly different micro-worlds, only to be bridged by the strategy of strangification. There are three types of strangification.

The first is linguistic strangification, by which we translate one discourse about the findings or supposed truth in the context of one particular discipline or research program into the language of or one understandable to other disciplines, to see whether it works there or, on the contrary, becomes absurd thereby. If the latter case occurs, then reflections must be made concerning the methodology and principles by which one has established the first discourse. If one discourse is translatable into and thereby understandable to other disciplines, it should be said to have a larger truth because of its universalizability and ability to be shared with other micro-worlds.

The second is pragmatic strangification. Since science is also culturally and socially bound, if we can draw the truth of one particular discipline from its social and organizational context and put it into another social and organizational context, we can make clear thereby its pragmatic implication and enlarge its applicability in a different social context. If it can still work there and develop in the new context, this means that it has a larger or more universalizable truth. Otherwise, if it cannot work any more in the

new social context, then it is limited only to a particular socio-practical context and is not to be seen as universalizable.

The third is ontological strangification. I tend to think that, when an act of strangification is conducted with an ontological detour to a direct experience with Reality Itself in order to understand another's micro-world, then there is an ontological strangification.³ This means that our direct experience with Reality Itself can nourish our language and our dialogue with others.

When extended to the cultural and religious worlds, I should say that, if a value/cultural expression/religious belief is universalizable by being able to be translated into value/cultural expression/religious belief claimed by another culture or religious community, then it has a larger or universalizable validity. Otherwise, its validity is limited only to its own world and reflection must be made on the limit of one's own value/expression/belief. Also, if one value/expression/belief is universalizable and applicable in other social and pragmatic contexts, this means that it has larger validity than in its own context of origin. Finally, a value/expression/belief, when universalizable by a detour of experiencing Reality Itself, for example, a direct experience with other people, with Nature, or even with the Ultimate Reality, would be very helpful for mutual understanding among different cultural and religious worlds. Especially when we come to religious dialogue, which presupposes by its own nature ontological strangification, one's experience with Ultimate Reality is very helpful for understanding others' religious discourses and practices.

Further, strangification presupposes language appropriation. As we can see, a person, as you and I, from infancy to adulthood, has to learn various kinds and different levels of language. In the beginning of our lives, we learn language via the generosity of our significant others who are generous in talking to us. Because of language appropriation, we begin to open up a world of meaningfulness. When grown up, we learn all kinds of discipline, knowledge, technique, and cultural expression; all these belong to some sort of language appropriation. Language appropriation enriches our lives with knowledge and meaningfulness. Through appropriating a language understandable to others, we will be able to strangify ourselves via that kind of language. This is also applicable to the collective process of learning. For example, when China began to open itself to Buddhism during the Han Dynasty, or more recently, to Western philosophy and science, these could be seen essentially as a process of language appropriation.

³ On this point I differ from F. Wallner who understands ontological strangification by the fact that we can travel from one microworld to another micro-world, which for me is merely ontic and can become ontological only when in the access to the other micro/cultural/religious world there is a detour through Reality Itself or Ultimate Reality. Apart from this, I have modified Wallner's two realms of reality, the "Reality Itself" and "Constructed Reality," into three, in adding the "Life-World" which mediates the Reality Itself and Constructed Reality. Also I have modified somehow his pragmatist vision of science (Shen 1994).

For me, the most fascinating phenomenon about Buddhism consists in its strangifiability or universalizability, in the past into the Asian world, and now almost into the whole world. As a student in Chinese philosophy, I take Buddhism's conquest of China as a case of successful strangification. Buddhism entered China during the Han 漢 Dynasty, arguably around 2 BCE according to the earliest record, beginning as a popular religion and facing a lot of hostile criticism, such as Buddhist monks' cutting their hair and leaving their parents as against Chinese ethics, especially filial piety; Buddhist monks paid no respect to political leaders (the emperor and his officers); Buddhist monks made no contribution to economic production; Buddhism was a "barbarian or strange cult," etc. However, it succeeded finally in becoming an essential element of Chinese culture and, together with Confucianism and Daoism, constitutes one of the three Great Teachings of China. Since the beginning of the 4th century CE there have emerged progressively different schools of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, such as the *Sanlun* 三論 School, *Tiantai* 天台 School, *Faxiang* 法相 or *Weishi* 唯識 School, *Huayan* 華嚴 School, Pure Land or *Jingtu* 淨土 Buddhism and Chan 禪 Buddhism, etc.

III. Buddhism and Strangification

This great success comes from the fact that Buddhism, in the long history of its conquest of China, has adapted itself to the context of Chinese culture by taking different measures of strangification and language appropriation.

First, concerning linguistics strangification. There were successive translations of Buddhist scriptures and intellectual dialogue with Daoism and Confucianism through a process of language appropriation. The translation of Buddhist scriptures was not easy in the beginning, and the quality of translations was quite low, so much so that Kumārajīva (343-413) once criticised "translation" as "chewing rice for others, which would not only lose its original taste, but also make people feel like vomiting" (TSD 50: 332). Yet later, in the Tang 唐 dynasty, especially with Xuanzang 玄奘 (596-664), translation became a systematic and rigorous institution, having its own special spaces, regulations, functions, and procedures. Because of this, we can see *Weishi* Buddhism, especially its founder Xuanzang, who conducted the largest translation project in Chinese history till now, as an excellent model of strangification. In his *Report of Returning Country*, it is said that

In the past Xuanzang noticed that Buddha emerged in the West and his posthumous teachings propagated to the East, though its best scriptures have yet to come to us [and] we're still in need of its perfect teaching. Therefore I always thought of visiting there to learn it despite my own life. That's why in the April of the third year of Zhenguan I traveled to India, stepping on the immense desert of Tianzhu, crossing the highest Mount Xueling, ...traveling through fifty

thousand li...and explored the enlightening thought of strange countries.” (Xuanzang 1989: 7)

This text shows that Xuanzang saw the meaning of his trip to India as having “explored the enlightening thoughts of strange countries.” This tells us that in his mind he truly realized the idea of learning from the other. It is also interesting to notice that Xuanzang conducted double strangification in having not only translated 75 Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, mostly Yogācāra works, but also the famous *Dasheng Qixinlun* (大乘起信論) (*Awakening of Belief in Mahayāna*), arguably attributed to Aśvaghosa, from Chinese back to Sanskrit. Indeed, Xuanzang has the virtue of paying gratitude to others by making a returning contribution to their intellectual generosity.

Further, there was also the so-called *geyi* 格義, which meant to appropriate Daoist and Confucian concepts in order to render Buddhist concepts understandable to Chinese intellectuals. This was done by ZHU Faya 竺法雅 (c.4th century) and KANG Falang 康法朗 (c.3rd century). Even though Dao'an (道安 312-385) criticized *geyi* as “running against Buddhist doctrine,” he himself used Laozi and Zhuangzi's terms for analogical understandings of Buddhist doctrine. Also, he allowed his disciple Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416) to use Zhuangzi's terms in explaining Buddhist Scriptures. This could still be considered as *geyi* in a broader sense.

There was also doctrinal re-contextualization; for example, Daosheng 道生 (355-434) posited the thesis that “All sentient beings can become Buddha,” confirmed by the later translated *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, and thereby made itself congenial with the Confucian doctrine that “Everyone can become Yao 堯 and Shun 舜.” In the Tang dynasty, Zhanran 湛然 (711-782) proposed the idea that “Even non-sentient beings have Buddha nature,” an important concept for today's ecological thinking, in its seeing all beings, sentient or non-sentient, as the manifestation of the immanent, universal, absolute, true Buddha as such.

Unfortunately, this line of thought was not followed by the *Weishi* School, which made the distinction of five natures in which we find a category of “sentient beings without Buddha nature (*youqing wuxing* 有情無性).” This idea has its origin in the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra*. Xuanzang, who was sensitive to its potential conflict with Daosheng and *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*'s doctrine of Buddha nature, was in the beginning reluctant to introduce it to China. However, under the command of his Indian Master, the Venerable Śīlabhadra, he nevertheless kept it in his writings. This distinction of five natures and the doctrine that some human beings could not attain Nirvāna and therefore could not become Buddha, was continued by Kuiji 窺基 (632-682), in his *Cheng Weishilun Shuji* (成唯識論述記) and his commentary on *Avatamsaka-sūtra*. Kuiji's disciple Huizhao 慧沼 (650-714) developed it systematically and thereby criticized other schools, rendering, therefore, more vehement the conflict that already existed between *Weishi* and other Chinese *Mahayāna* Buddhist schools. This was also one of the reasons that the *Weishi* School failed to become more popular among Chinese people, who seemed

to be much in need of encouragement from the saying that "All sentient being has Buddha nature."

Second, concerning pragmatic strangification. It was necessary for Buddhism to withdraw from its Indian context and to adapt itself to Chinese socio-politico-ethical context. Envisaging criticism from Chinese elitists, Buddhists took different measures of strangification. For example, Buddhism faced the critique of anti-filial-piety by translating, commenting on or even inventing some Buddhist scriptures on filial piety. The early translated *Lindu Jijing* (《六度集經》) (*Collected Sūtras on Six Paramitās*) already featured the importance of filial piety by saying that filial piety was more important than charity. The second part of the *Brahma-jāla-sūtra* (*Fanwanjin* (《梵網經》)), attributed to Kumārajīva as translator, also emphasized the filial piety of Sākyamuni and combined filial piety with Buddhist *śīlas* (commandments). Buddhist scholar QI Song 契嵩 (1011-1072) in his very influential *Xiaolun* (《孝論》) (*On Filial Piety*), said that Buddhism, more than other religions, emphasized filial piety. QI Song also equalized the five Buddhist *śīlas* (*wujie* 五戒) with the Confucian five cardinal virtues: *ren* 仁, *yi* 義, *li* 禮, *zhi* 智, and *xin* 信. In the Tang Dynasty, an invented sutra in Chinese, the *Fumu Enzhong Jing* (《父母恩重經》) (*Sutra on the Weighty Grace of Parents*) appeared to feature a Buddhist value of filial piety.

The *Ullambanapātra-sūtra* (《盂蘭盆經》), said to be translated into Chinese by Dhamarakṣa 竺法護 (266-313), is often seen as the *Xiao Jing* (《孝經》) of Buddhism, in which we find the story of Maudgalyāyana (*muliān* 目蓮), a disciple of Sākyamuni, who enters purgatory to relieve his mother from suffering. This led to the biggest national Buddhist festival—All Souls, which has been held on about the 15th of the seventh moon, from the 6th century until now, with the joint participation of Confucianism and Daoism. Together with innumerable Chinese commentaries and related literature, images and dramas, all these transform Buddhism into a religion of filial piety.

Buddhism also faced the critique of disrespect for the emperor and his officers. To this Huiyuan 慧遠 (331-414) answered, in his *Samen Bujing Wanzhe Lun* (《沙門不敬王者論》) (*On Why Buddhist Monks Don't Pay Respect to Political Leaders*) by distinguishing common believers from Buddhist monks. Buddhist common believers in the secular world should pay respect to and obey the emperor, his officers, and social ethics, while Buddhist monks should go beyond worldly ethics and rituals so as to concentrate on Buddhist truth and enhance their spirituality. Once a monk has perfected his virtue, he saves by the same token, not only his parents, brothers and relatives, but also the whole world. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of Buddhist monks leaving their home for spiritual cultivation is much the same as those of Confucians.

Unfortunately, not all pragmatic strangification communicates the right message to Chinese people. For example, concerning ethics, the ordering of terms expressing ethical relationship, such as "mother and father" and "wife

and husband,” in Indian Buddhist Scriptures, when translated into Chinese, were rendered as “father and mother” (sometimes modified as “paying filial piety to father and mother”), and “husband and wife.” The phrase “marry one’s wife” was quite often rendered as “marry one’s wife and concubines” in Chinese. As to political relations, republican relation might be rendered as imperial relation. A good example of this can be found in Volume 2 of the *Dirghagama*, where Sākyamuni praised the country of *Vraja* people, who often held meetings to discuss righteous affairs in a republican way. Yet, when rendered into Chinese, it reads “the Emperor and his subjects are in harmony and the superior and inferior respect each other” (君臣和順，上下相敬) (TSD 1:12). The consequence of this is that the messages contained in Buddhist Scriptures of more egalitarian ethics and republican politics were turned into hierarchical and totalitarian terms in order to adapt to Chinese culture and thereby the Chinese people were unable to learn for their own long term benefit.

Finally, concerning ontological strangification. “Emptiness” could be seen as the Ultimate Reality of Buddhism. With the experience of Ultimate Reality, Buddhists were able to make Buddhism understandable to other indigenous philosophies such as Confucianism and Daoism. The Buddhist experience of emptiness, the Daoist experience of *dao* 道 and *wu* 無, and the Confucian experience of *ren* 仁 (humanness, humanity, and cosmic interconnectedness) and *cheng* 誠 (sincerity and true reality), though quite different in themselves, still enjoy some sort of similarity and complementarity as experiences of Ultimate Reality. Therefore, much effort has been made to meet one with another, through which a Confucian or a Daoist might be able to understand a Buddhist discourse on “emptiness” and Ultimate Reality. From as early as Mourong’s 牟融 *Libuolun* 《理惑論》 (*On the Correction of Doubt*, c.196 BCE), different versions of complementarity have been proposed among these three teachings. Also, by proposing various versions of the doctrine of the Common Origin of Three Teachings (*sanjiao tongyuan* 三教同源), Buddhism made an effort to accommodate itself to the intellectual milieu of traditional Chinese culture.

IV. Wisdom, Middle Path and the Other

Now I would like to come to the second part concerning wisdom, especially *Weishiz*’s concept of transforming consciousness into wisdom. By “wisdom” I mean the Buddhist concept of *prajñā*. According to Xuanzang in his regulations on translation, the fifth category of “terms not to be translated” (*wu bu fan* 五不翻) concerns the term *prajñā* because “the use of the term *prajñā* shows respect, whereas the use of the term *zhihui* 智慧 (wisdom) turns to be superficial” (般若尊重，智慧輕淺).⁴ Nevertheless, we still use the term “wis-

⁴ These five categories are: 1. Those that represent secrecy: 2. Those that represent multiple

dom” here to render its meaning, especially concerning *Weishi*’s concept of *zhuanshi chengzhi* 轉識成智 or *zhuanshi dezhizhi* 轉識得智, conversion of consciousness into wisdom or to get wisdom. In fact, wisdom was the common concern of both the *Sanlun* School and the *Weishi* School, respectively originated in the two Indian *Mahayāna* Buddhist schools, the *Mādhyamika* and the *Yogācāra*, and both judged by Wing-tsit Chan to be alien to Chinese tradition. Their difference consists in the fact that, for the *Sanlun* School, *prajñā* means emptiness, whereas for the *Weishi* school, wisdom is based on the marvellous being of *Alaya-vijñāna*.

I would say that both *Sanlun* and *Weishi* keep a certain dimension of the other, which makes them alien to the immanentist tendency of Chinese Buddhism. Here I do not want to indulge myself in comparison. It suffices to say that, for the *Sanlun* School, the other is that which lies always beyond in denying or making void that which one arrives at in negative dialects: to render void in order to show the non-substantial character of the Ultimate Reality. The Middle Path, which is *prajñā*, consists in understanding the interdependent causation in the sense of non-substantiality. After destroying any dualistic situation in the process of negative dialectic, even the reality of interdependent causation should be denied. The *Sanlun* School, basing itself on three treatises, that is, Nāgārjuna’s *Mādhyamika-sāstra* (*Treatise on the Middle Doctrine* 《中觀論》), *Dvādaśanikāya-sāstra* (*Twelve Gates Treatise* 《十二門論》) and Nāgārjuna’s disciple, Āryadeva’s *Sāta-sāstra* (*One Hundred Verses Treatise* 《百論》), puts its emphasis on *prajñā* and sees wisdom in emptiness.

The Buddhist term *Sūnyatā* or emptiness could have many meanings. I would suggest that we can discern three main layers of meaning: First, on the ontological level, “emptiness (*kong* 空)” means that all things come and go by interdependent causation and therefore are without any substance of their own. Second, on the spiritual level, it means that the spiritual achievement of a sage consists in total freedom, attaching himself neither to being nor to non being, neither to dualism nor to non-dualism, even not to any form of spiritual achievement, no matter how high and deep it is. Finally, on the linguistic level, emptiness means that all words we use are but artificially constructed, without any fixed correspondence to reality.

Although Indian Buddhism puts much emphasis on the ontological and the linguistic senses of emptiness, generally speaking, Chinese *Mahayāna* Buddhism emphasises mostly the spiritual sense of emptiness. For example, although we can find all three meanings in Sengzhao’s 僧肇 *On the Emptiness of the Unreal* (《不真空論》), Sengzhao himself would interpret “emptiness,” in appropriating Daoist philosophy, as the spiritual achievement of a sage. For example, we read:

Unless one possesses the wisdom and special penetration power of a sage, how can he harmonize his spirit with the realm of neither being nor non-being?

meanings; 3. Those that represent objects not found in China; 4. Those that are in accordance with ancient usage; 5. Those that bring better respect.

The sage moves within the thousand transformations but does not change, and travels on ten thousand paths of delusions but always goes through. (TSD 45: 152-153)

This spiritual achievement of a sage, who has no attachment to either being or non-being, and no attachment to his own spiritual achievement whatsoever, belongs to the marvellous function of his mind/heart, which on the one hand is non-substantial and empty, but on the other hand is marvellous in its function and self-transcendence. Because of this, Dao (the Ultimate Reality) and Sage are not far away from us but realized all at the moment of enlightenment. "Things when touched become real.... Man when enlightened becomes marvellous" (TSD 45: 152-153).

In order not to attach oneself to being or non-being or to any horizon of spiritual achievement, a negative dialectic is necessary to depart from any fixation or presumed foundation. In Jizang's 吉藏 (549-623) *Treatise on the Double Truth* (二諦義), we find a negative process of levelling up. The first level, according to Jizang, is the worldly view of being on the one hand and the true view of non-being on the other. Then, through a negative dialectic, one moves on to the second level, where both being and non-being belong to the worldly view, whereas non-duality (or middlelessness) belongs to the true view. Then, again through negative dialectic, comes the third level on which both duality and middlelessness are worldly views, whereas neither-duality-nor-centrality is the highest truth.

In his *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, Fung's interpretation of the theory of double truth is misleading. Fung saw the point of this theory to be the denial of all one-sided truths (Fung: 245-246). However, according to Jizang's argument, the real point of this theory is to overcome any dualism rather than merely the one-sidedness of the worldly view and the true view. The negative dialectic consists in first denying the dualism between *you* 有 (being) and *wu* 無 (non-being), then that between two one-sided-views, and finally that between the one-sided-view and the middle (central) view. The true middle path is thus interpreted as neither one-sided-nor-middle, realized in the process of negative dialectic as emptiness, which is freedom from all kind of dualism constituted by sophistic or playful discourse.

It is clear then that in this negative dialectic, the refutation of mundane views is identical with the elucidation of true view. However, when a true view is held in place of a mundane one, it has to be refuted again. It is only through an endless dialectical process of denial that the enlightened can keep to the real Middle Path. In Chinese philosophy, the concept of Middle Path comes down from the category of the Great Ultimate in the *Book of Documents*, which interprets it as impartiality or non-onesidedness. In the fifth (therefore middle) category of the "Royal Ultimate" (*huangji* 皇極), interpreted by ZHU Xi 朱熹 as the Great Middle (*daxiong* 大中), we read,

Without deflection, without unevenness,
Pursue the splendid righteousness.
Without any selfish preferences,

Pursue the middle path;
 Without deflection, without partiality,
 Broad and long is the middle path.
 Without partiality, without deflection,
 The middle path is level and easy;
 Without perversity, without one-sidedness,
 The middle path is right and straight. (Legge: 331-332)

In the case of *Sanlun* Buddhism, the concept of Middle Path, inherited from Nāgārjuna, is interpreted as “emptiness” which can be arrived at only through unceasing negative dialectic, free from all names and is “inexplicable in speech and unrealizable in thought,” and therefore rid of all discursive sophistry or playful discourse. There emerges then the universal principle of spiritual equality according to which all *dharmas*, conceived from the viewpoint of emptiness, would show no sign of difference and are, therefore, equal one to another, and are seen as different facets and manifestations of the same *Bhūtataṭhātā*. Summing up the spirit of the *Mahāprajñā-pāramitā sūtra*, Jizang said,

Such a doctrine is recondite and abstruse, deep and profound as to be unfathomable... the primal theme of the sūtra under discussion is to entertain the Dharma-nature with nothing particular to dwell upon and the ultimate fulfillment of the Dharma-nature is to attain nothing whatever that has been gained. (Fang: 199)

Here all *dharmas* are equal, not because all of them are “irreducible other,” that their otherness is worthy of our unconditional generosity, but rather because ultimately speaking they are empty, without substance and without gain. The true meaning of *prajñā* therefore accords well with the philosophy of emptiness. I myself am quite amazed by Jizang’s three typologies of wisdom: First, the Ultimate wisdom (*shixian prajñā* 實相般若) which penetrates genuinely into the Ultimate Reality, or the emptiness of all things; second, the illumining wisdom (*zhenguan prajñā* 正觀般若) which throws light upon the Ultimate Reality in all its different facets and manifestations; third, the linguistic wisdom (*wenzi prajñā* 文字般若), with powerful linguistic expressions elucidating the perfect congruence between the Ultimate Reality and its manifestations. Unfortunately, the *Sanlun* School’s negative dialectic aiming at emptiness and no-gain, though rich in the abstract art of refutation and negation, was unable to show common people any positive values for everyday life and was therefore divorced from the Chinese mind. This explains the reason that it declined in the 9th century.

V. The Dimension of the Other in *Yogācāra*

In the case of *Weishi* Buddhism, *prajñā* consists in moving away from the two extremes; there is neither the grasper nor the grasped, and yet still there remains the nature of depending on others, which, though non-substantial

and to be purified, is not to be annihilated. For the *Weishi*, non-discriminating wisdom realizes the true thusness and the *Bhūtatathatā*, depending on the marvelous being of consciousness. *Yogācāra* attains wisdom not by the method of negative dialectic, but by its yoga praxis that purifies and finally transforms consciousness into wisdom. The idealistic doctrine of this school is quite often exaggerated, so that there is no self, no *dharma*s, but Consciousness Only, and everything else is merely a definite form of manifestation of the Consciousness. For me, the most interesting philosophy of the school of Conscious Only is its analysis of consciousness, which serves as a praxiological program and the conversion of consciousness into wisdom as its final goal of spiritual achievement.

Weishi is famous, not to say notorious, in its awesomely detailed analysis and minute classification of all kinds, presented most completely in the so called 100 *dharma*s which are classified into five categories: *Citta*-dharma (mind), *Caitasika*-dharma (mental contents), *Rūpa*-dharma (material elements), *Citta-viprayukta-samskāra* (things not associated with mind) and *Asamskṛta*-dharma (non-created elements), as they were elaborated out of the 75 *dharma*s of the *Abhidharma-kosa* (Takakesu: 72-74). All these minute distinctions lead to what Dr. HU Shi胡適 called "a tedious scholastic philosophy" (Hu: 106). This could be seen as one of the reasons that *Weishi* was not easily accessible to the common Chinese people, except for a few sophisticate-minded intellectuals.

We have to understand that *Yogācāra*'s minute distinctions and classifications are not purely intellectual inventions, as they appear in the process of yoga praxis. They are very useful in discerning where one is and where to proceed in one's spiritual itinerary. Even if we could find intellectual pleasure in these kinds of minute conceptual distinctions, without spiritual progress all kinds of distinctions prove themselves to be in vain and without gain.

Yoga praxis itself, though not to be seen as an intellectual invention, is very much related to Buddhist Scriptures and therefore to a "textual other" in order to appropriate it in a process leading to wisdom. This is very clear in its Indian origin. For example, in the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* of Asanga, a special regard was paid to Scriptural texts and the hermeneutic understanding of their meaning. We find this in the teaching and lesson explored in the fourteenth chapter of the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, which, in describing the way of praxis towards the fullest unfolding of *Bodhisattvahood*, seems to emphasize the textual other and the hermeneutic procedure of treating it by starting with linking one's mind to the names of sūtras, then censuring gradually the categories of words and their meaning (*artha*) both individually and collectively.⁵ There, dharma seems to be found in the sutra, *geya*,

⁵ Read for example verses 4, 5, in Chapter 14. I use S.V. Lamaye's translation (Asanga 1992: 260). From time to time this translation needs corrections. Here I pick up this Scripture to serve my purpose of comparing Indian *Yogācāra* with Chinese *Weishi* in respect to the problem of the other.

etc.⁶

In the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, six kinds of thought are discerned in the study of texts: fundamental thought, consecutive thought, thought of pondering, thought of affirmation, thought of subsumption, thought of expectation—some having their own subdivisions of steps or methods. For example, in the case of pondering thought, we have methods such as calculation, comparison, reflection, and perspicacious observation of Buddhist texts. These hermeneutic considerations and understandings of textual meaning lead eventually to the self-awareness that “the thought is the only foundation and there is nothing other than thought” (Asanga 1992: 262).

The practitioner then should go through eleven kinds of mental acts⁷ and nine steps of elaboration,⁸ which show gradual progression to enlightenment and are therefore very interesting from the point of view of spiritual praxiology and pedagogy. For my part, what is most remarkable is that, once one arrives at the supra-mundane wisdom, one achieves equality of oneself with others. There is five-fold equality: equally no-self, equally suffering, equally working, equally lack of payment in return, and equally like other Bodhisattva. In his compassion for all creatures, he does all his best for their welfare; he employs himself in the *artha* of their life; and he is tireless for his work, for which he has no anxiety and expects no return from others. This shows generosity to others without condition. In Chapter 14 of *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, we read the following two verses:

Verse 38:

Those who, without the view of self, have here the view of self,
Those who, without suffering, are extremely afflicted *for others*,
Those who, without waiting for returns, develop the work of all. (Asanga 1992: 274; italics my correction)

Verse 41:

The sons of victor have affections for the creatures;
They have employment, and they are tireless,
He (Bodhisattva) is the supreme marvel in the worlds; or rather not!
As the others and self are identical for him. (Asanga 1992: 275)

We should point out that this kind of unconditional generosity towards the other is preponderant in Asanga's writings. Take another example: in Chapter 4 of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*, where Asanga discussed the problem of knowing reality (*Tattvartha*), it was written that

⁶ This is very similar to the *Yogācāryabhūmi-sāstra*. See for example *Yogācāryabhūmi-sāstra* in TSD 30: 418-419.

⁷ Such as discursive thought, judgment, non-discursive thought, judgment alone, non-discursive, non judgmental mental act of pacification, mental act of inspection, mental act of tying and checking, mental act of retaining, mental act of cause of pacification, mental act of cause of apathy, mental act of continuation, mental act of good deeds etc.

⁸ Such as holding thought, restraining, retaining, supporting, taming, appeasing, appease more, rendering unified, and awaiting.

The *Bodhisattva* has many benefits: he rightly engaged in thoroughly ripening the *Buddhadharmas* for himself and for others, in thoroughly ripening the Dharma of the Three Vehicles. Moreover, thus rightly engaged, he is without craving for possession or even for his own body.... You should know that the bodhisattva thus rightly engaged carefully attends all virtuous beings with worship and reverence. And all un-virtuous beings he carefully attends with a mind of sympathy and a mind of supreme compassion. And in so far as he can and has the strength he is engaged in dispersing their faults. He carefully attends all harmful beings with a mind of love. And in so far as he can and has the strength, being himself without trickery and without deceit, he works for their benefit and happiness, to eliminate the hostile consciousness of those who do evil because of their faults of expectation and practice. (Asanga 1979: 156-157)

It was probably because of his respect for the "textual other" that Xuanzang made the effort to travel to India and bring 657 Buddhist scriptures back and translated 75 of them into Chinese. However, generally speaking, later the Chinese *Weishi* School did not much discuss the hermeneutic procedure of treating the textual other. Even less discussed was the "ethical other" as the subject of unconditional generosity. Rather it put more emphasis on the purification of consciousness and its transformation into wisdom. Even when "equality" was mentioned, it did not evoke so much an unconditional generosity towards the other, but rather mentioned it as a spiritual horizon to be attained.

I tend to think that the dimension of the other might have begun to be reduced in the development of Indian *Yogācāra*, but its reduction becomes more evident in the Chinese *Weishi* School: from ontological otherness to constructed otherness, to transcendental emptiness of the other. This is what is implied in Prof. Thomé Fang's argument that *Yogācāra* began with a kind of descriptive phenomenology taking the one hundred dharmas as description of reality, thus sharing some views of the *Abhidharmakosa*. Then, it was developed into a constructive phenomenology in the form of critico-epistemological idealism. Finally, it culminated in the transcendental phenomenology that might well be reconciled to some extent with the philosophy of *Sunyata* based upon the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (Fang: 167-168). In this process of appropriation, the other might be reduced to a transcendently constructed otherness or even an empty otherness, giving rise to no unconditional generosity. The focus, therefore, is now on the purification of one's consciousness.

VI. Structure of Consciousness and its Purification

The purification of consciousness takes the form of consciousness analysis. There is an analytic progression from the five consciousnesses to the empirical self-consciousness, to the transcendental self-consciousness, and then finally to the ontological origin of all consciousness, the *Alaya-vijñāna*. Five sense perceptions—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting—are seen as the five consciousnesses. Then comes the consciousness prop-

erly speaking, which is empirically the center of the five sensations or the sense-centered consciousness, which could be called the empirical self-consciousness.

For my part, it is philosophically questionable to separate these six "consciousnesses," or to separate the five consciousnesses from the sixth, because when there is consciousness of their activities, the five senses always work with empirical self-consciousness so as to form a conscious perception of the object that appeared in any definite form. The five senses or some of them have to work together to reach the object thereby perceived. Phenomenologically speaking, the object of perception appears in profiles, and we always perceive it with a certain "imagined totality." This is the effect of the co-working of the senses in body-movement and their passive synthesis in our empirical consciousness. The use of such a distinction consists only in the praxiological discernment; therefore, the distinction is itself methodological, not ontological.

Now, the seventh consciousness as the thought-centered consciousness, the *manas-vijñāna*, from which come all willing and thinking, and which often attaches itself to its own imagined centeredness as its own true self, is quite similar to the Cartesian *Je pense*, or the Husserlian transcendental Ego. Although the *Je pense* for Descartes and the transcendental ego for Husserl are seen as the ultimate constituent of our self and the transcendental constituting dynamism of all our empirical experience, for the *Weishi* School, they are not the ultimate self but only a derivative transformation of the eighth consciousness.

Finally, the eighth consciousness, the "storehouse consciousness," *ālaya-vijñāna*, contains all seeds or potentialities of right/wrong thoughts and good/evil deeds to be manifested and thereby effected in the former seven forms of consciousness and receives also their influences. That is to say that *ālaya-vijñāna* exercises double processes: on the one hand, it realizes the seeds into deeds and thoughts in the process of manifestation; on the other hand, it receives the influence or is fumigated by the former seven consciousnesses in its actual operation. All these distinctions in psychic layers are meaningful and eventually abandoned in the process of Yoga praxis for the benefit of the enlightened and the multitude of others and should not to be imagined as real distinctions.

VII. The Transformation of Consciousness into Wisdoms

For me, the most interesting part of the philosophy of consciousness in the *Weishi* School consists in the conversion of consciousness into wisdom. This presupposes that we enter into the Ultimate Reality, either as *ālaya-vijñāna* (according to the tradition of Xuanzang) or as *bhūtatathatā* (according to the tradition of *Paramārtha*) itself, both related with but detached from (yet not determined by) all other dharmas and from the determination of

all specific representations and names. From this Ultimate Reality, the eighth consciousness is transformed into mind/heart corresponding to the wisdom of the grand perfect mirror. Then, basing upon this, one could transform the seventh consciousness into mind/heart corresponding to the wisdom of equality. Then, upon these two, one could transform the sixth consciousness into mind/heart corresponding to the wisdom of marvelous observation. Finally, basing upon all these, one could transform the five actual consciousnesses into the wisdom of achieving all deeds.⁹

There is a double process in the transformation of consciousness into wisdom. On the one hand, there is the process of retracing self-awareness, going back to deeper and more original layers of self-awareness from the five consciousnesses to the sixth to the seventh to the eighth consciousness, until we arrive at the Original Ground, either the *alaya-vijñāna* or the *bhūta-tathatā*. On the other hand, there is the process of purifying manifestation, which transforms first the eighth consciousness into the wisdom of the grand perfect mirror; then purifies and realizes the seventh consciousness into the wisdom of equality; then purifies and realizes the sixth consciousness into the wisdom of marvelous observation; and finally purifies and realizes the five consciousnesses into the wisdom of achieving all deeds.

According to the tradition of *Paramārtha* in the 6th century, "The so-called original nature of heart is the true noumenon. The heart of all sentient being is imbued with equality. All sentient being is *bhūtatathatā*; all sentient being owns Buddha nature" (TSD 26:305). Yet according to the tradition of Xuanzang, not all sentient beings are capable of converting consciousness into wisdom and becoming Buddha.

We could say that the state of perfect wisdom, if any, is nothing but the functioning of the nature of consummate perfection (*parinispanna*). *Weishi*'s theory of the three natures reveals to us a successive progression from

⁹According to the *Buddhabhūmi*, "Transform the eighth consciousness into the heart corresponding to the wisdom of grand perfect mirror, which is thus called because it could retain in itself all seeds of merits and virtues, and manifest and give birth to all representations of all bodies and lands; Transform the seventh consciousness into the heart corresponding to the wisdom of equality, which is thus called because it is far away from the two extreme distinction of self and other, and attests to the equality of all things. Transform the sixth consciousness into the heart corresponding to the wisdom of marvelous observation, which is thus called because it could regard all things without any hindrance. Transform the five actual consciousness into the wisdom of achieving all actions, which is thus called because it is capable of realizing and achieving all external activities" (*Buddhabhūmi*, in TSD 26: 302; my translation). On the other hand, according to Xuanzang's *Cheng Weishi Lun*, it is for the reason of encouraging sentient beings, but not for ontological reason, to cling to wisdom and relinquish consciousness that these four wisdoms are attained by the transformation of the eighth consciousness. "The four wisdoms are attained by the transformation of the mental attributes of the eighth, the seventh, the sixth, and the first five consciousnesses respectively.... In order to encourage sentient beings to cling to Wisdom and relinquish consciousness, we say that one attains the four wisdom by virtue of the transformation of the eighth consciousness" (Xuanzang 1973: 770).

the nature of imagined discrimination to that of dependence on others (*paratantra*) to that of consummate perfection. As the *Cheng Weishi Lun* says,

One does not see the *paratantra* as long as one has not seen the *parinispanna*, When one has not perceived and realized *parinispanna* (by a *prajñā* that discerns immediately), one cannot discern the 'nature of *paratantra*,' for, not having yet understood that *parikalpita* is void (non-existent), one cannot in reality know the manner of existence of *paratantra*. (Xuanzhang 1973: 637)

The realization of the nature of consummate perfection, with which one is in the Ultimate Reality, begins from the realization of the nature of depending on others, "That *parinispanna* is neither identical nor separated from *paratantra*"; and "this *parinispanna* is neither different nor non-different from that *paratantra*" (Xuanzhang 1973: 635). This is to show that the other, or the dependence on the other, and the world of dynamic relationship in which one depends on the other are quite essential to the understanding of the Ultimate Reality and the attainment of consummate perfection.

It is very interesting to notice here that this relation between the three natures is quite similar to, though philosophically speaking still different from, the Heideggerian distinction of *Vorhandenheit*, *Zuhandenheit*, and *Dasein* (Heidegger: 95-107). According to Heidegger, those "beings-present-at-hand," in the mode of *Vorhandenheit*, are taken as substances without any connection to human existential concern; whereas those beings-ready-to-hand, in the mode of *Zuhandenheit*, as *Zeug* or tools around us referring one to another, would be able, under existential analysis, to show our existential concern; and finally, human beings as *Dasein*, in questioning on Being and by an authentic act of existence, could become manifestations of Being and serve as the "there" of Being. It is only by understanding through existential analysis beings-ready-to-hand in their mutual reference that we can deepen ourselves into the understanding of Being's manifestation in human beings as *Dasein*. This Heideggerian notion is helpful for us to understand Xuanzhang's notion about the relation between dependence on others and consummate perfection in the sense that *Zuhandenheit*'s reference to one another could be understood as sort of dependent on others and that an existential analysis of *Zuhandenheit* may lead to the emergence of understanding *Dasein*.

VIII. Conclusion: Rediscovering the Dimension of the Other

Chinese Buddhism's openness to the textual other and the ethical other culminates with Xuanzhang's appropriation of *Yogācāra* Buddhism, even if the status of the other has changed from Indian *Yogācāra* Buddhism to Chinese *Weishi* Buddhism. Unfortunately, this openness to the other has undergone a process of reduction in Chan Buddhism. When Chan Buddhism came on the scene in the history of Chinese Buddhism, it radicalized the

proposition "All sentient beings can become Buddha" into "all sentient beings are originally Buddha," supposing that Buddha nature or the absolute mind/heart is the same in everyone and everywhere. For Chan Buddhism, the *bhūtatathatā* reveals itself in the selfsameness of the absolute mind/heart and the everydayness of its manifestation. Since the self-nature of everyone, the *bhūtatathatā*, reveals itself in the self-sameness of the absolute mind/heart, there is no place for the other. In the *Platform Sūtra*, transformation of consciousness into wisdom is merely nominal, not noumenal. It reads:

It is the nature of the wisdom of grand mirror to be pure and calm; the wisdom of equality means no sickness of one's mind/heart; the wisdom of marvellous observation sees no merit of one's own; the wisdom of achieving all deeds is the same as the grand mirror. The fifth and the eighth transformations work on the side of cause, and the seventh and the sixth transformations work on the side of effect. They are all but transformations of names, not transformations of noumenon. (TSD 48:356)

For Chan Buddhism, there is no need to refer to the Scriptures.¹⁰ Chan Buddhism uses *dhyāna* to attain one's Buddha nature and combines it with the *prajñā*, even in identifying them into one.¹¹ There is the primacy of practice over any argumentation and hermeneutics of texts. Chan masters use situational methods of teaching in order to let their disciples penetrate into their own Buddha nature, sometimes even by beating and shouting, such as in the case of Linji Chan, beyond the use of any language. Although this method might lead to a direct insight into the unfathomable emptiness without the need to discern any progressive steps (TSD 48:357),¹² it tends to deny the function of language and texts, which is very important for human civilization and philosophy. Chan's denial of language and texts leads itself to shouting and beating, the effect of which on human understanding is still hard to determine, and yet unfortunately the Scriptures are thereby abandoned without being carefully read.

Buddhism has long since penetrated both the intellectual life and the everyday life of the Chinese people. This might have been pushed by Chan Buddhism that has even gone so far as to become immanent to people's everyday life. As the *Platform Sutra* says,

If one's heart is even, there is no need of obeying obligations. If one's act is right, there is no need of practicing *dhyāna*.... *Prajñā* is to be sought in one's

¹⁰ For example, we read, in the *Platform Sutra*, "Therefore it is known that we possess *prajñā* in our own nature, and we should always contemplate by using our own wisdom, without going through scriptures (故知本性自有般若之智，自用智慧，常觀照故，不假文字)" (TSD 48:350).

¹¹ We can see this point clearly in Huineng's慧能 saying that "Calmness and wisdom are the foundation of my method.... In the case of those whose hearts and words are both good and in whom the internal and the external are one, calmness and wisdom are identified. Self-enlightenment and practice do not consist in argument (我此法門以定慧爲本，...心口俱善，內外一種，定慧即等。自悟修行，不在口誦)" (TSD 48: 352).

¹² In Chinese: 聖諦尚不爲，何階級之有？

heart; there is no need of searching for metaphysical truth in the external world. Just to listen, to say, and to cultivate one's self in this way, and the Western paradise appears just in the present moment. (TSD 48:352)¹³

We should say that the loss of dimension of the other in Chan Buddhism has brought huge changes to Buddhism in China. According to Nāgārjuna and Asanga in the Indian tradition, the Buddhist way of life should lead to compassion and altruism, to a way of existence for the enlightenment of the other, of all sentient beings. Yet Chan Buddhism would interpret it as the enlightenment of one's own heart in everyday life. In everything great or small of everydayness there is the Dao of enlightenment. Though this has the merit of transforming Buddhism into the everyday life of the Chinese people, by the same token it has taken Chinese life and philosophy in the realm of immanence, without any necessity to be open to the other, to go outside of one's self and go to the stranger, to the other.

This, among others, has a huge impact on Chinese thought in capturing it within the philosophy of immanence and eventually to a certain form of self-enclosure. Today, more contributions should be made to Chinese culture by bringing it back to the dimension of alterity or the other. There we need the strategy of strangification and the virtue of generosity toward the other, in order to transform Chinese culture, already rich in immanent resources, into a renovative cultural dynamism complemented by resources from the alterity.

I do believe that the Chinese mind in general and Chinese Buddhism in particular, like our ideal model Xuanzang, should be able to go outside of its familiarity and go to the stranger, to the other. It should learn again from the other and be generous towards the other. The *Weishi* School, in its renewal movement in modern times, for example in the efforts of YANG Rensan 楊仁山, OUYANG Jingwu 歐陽竟無 and others to modernize Buddhist studies, paid much attention to *Weishi's* relation to science and speculative philosophy. Now, we should understand that praxis is more fundamental to *Weishi* than are science and speculative philosophy. In praxis, there is always the dimension of the other. We should keep on appropriating the other by translating unceasingly the other into our familiarity, and, on the other way round, by unceasingly going outside of our self, our familiarity, to the side of the other, of strangeness and alterity, with an original and unconditional generosity. In this way we could truly realize a process of mutual enrichment.

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¹³ In Chinese: 心平何勞持戒，行直何用修禪。恩則孝養父母，義則上下相憐。讓則尊卑和睦，忍則眾惡無諍。……菩提只向心覓，何勞向外求玄。聽說依此修行，西方只在目前。

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