DISCURSIVE RESOURCES AND COLLAPSING POLARITIES:
THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF TANG DYNASTY SCHOLAR-OFFICIALS

by

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To my loving parents, Robert and Ruth

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This was a long time coming.

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months buried in libraries in China when my main source of insight was on the other side of the world, in Ann Arbor and now in Cambridge.

My early exposure to Buddhist studies came from Professor Luis O. Gómez, who also assumed directorship of my doctoral program during a crucial period of transition in my time at Michigan. If it were not for his encouragement and guidance, I doubt I would been motivated to stay on. His way of probing using multilayered questions presented in a gentle, non-confrontational manner remain for me a paragon of effective teaching and dialogue. Over the years, his teaching and mentoring have changed my thinking, attitude, and perspective on several different areas of study.

The Michigan philosophy department more than satisfied my keen interest in philosophy, especially philosophy of religion. Among the many excellent philosophers in the department at the time, I must single out Professor Edwin M. Curley, whose analytical reading skills continue to astonish me, as does his meticulous style of teaching and research. He graciously invited me to serve in my very first teaching position as his Graduate Student Instructor for the 300-level course in the philosophy of religion. My learning curve was steep, but with his guidance, it proved to be a tremendous learning experience.

Although I lack formal training in the history of art, Professor Martin Powers kindly agreed to join my dissertation committee and supplied a fresh source of originality and challenged me to consider questions that had never before occurred to me. The phrase and notion of "discursive resources" first arose in conversation with Marty. I have no doubt done a disservice to his original usage. I trust I have not taken it too far afield. His sharp insight into a great diversity of fields is incredible.

iv

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Table of Contents

List of Appendices

Appendix

Chapter 1

Introduction

Doctrinal boundaries between religious traditions in medieval China were extraordinarily flexible, and the traditions were constantly shaping and drawing from one another. Yet much of modern scholarship still attends to single traditions, thereby neglecting the complex interplay between the traditions, an integral feature of religion in China. This myopic focus is partly due to the pejorative connotations associated with the notion of religious "syncretism," in which religious mixtures are supposedly corrupted, mongrel versions of putatively pure, reified essences. Instead of demarcating the field along sectarian lines, my research reveals how major strands of thought in medieval China did not belong to any one tradition and how this was true not only of the lower classes or of folk religions but also of the doctrinal speculations of the elite.

Following the collapse of imperial power and patronage in the wake of the devastating An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755-763), influential scholar-elites sought answers beyond the classical Confucian tradition, in which they all were trained from a young age. These eighth-century thinkers paved the way for a resurgence of Confucian

thought that eventually, after many twists and turns, developed into what is now called

"Neo-Confucianism."[1]

While many Neo-Confucian categories and concepts bear striking similarities to

earlier Buddhist notions, most Neo-Confucians throughout history would have

vehemently denied such claims about Buddhism's place in their tradition's pedigree. Zhu

Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and other famous Song Neo-Confucians traced their recent ancestry

instead to the late Tang when Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Li Ao 李翱 (774-836)

allegedly rescued Confucianism from decline. Modern scholarship has largely followed

suit in crediting Han Yu and Li Ao with the late Tang "revival" of Confucianism.[2]

Most of these ninth-century forerunners of Neo-Confucianism, however, drew

directly from their eighth-century role models.[3] And while Li Ao, and particularly Han

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[1] For example, see Charles Hartman, *Han Yu and the T'ang Search for Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), [for a critique that challenges Hartman's attribution of Song Neo-Confucian qualities to Han Yu, see David McMullen, "Han Yu: An Alternative Picture," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49.2 (Dec., 1989): 603-657]; James T. C. Liu, "How Did a Neo-Confucian School Become the State Orthodoxy?" *Philosophy East & West* 23 (1973): 483-505; idem., *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Hoyt Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992). For more general treatments of the "rise" of Neo-Confucianism, see John H. and Evelyn N. Berthrong, *Confucianism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000); John Berthrong, *Transformations of the Confucian Way* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998); Wing-tsit Chan, "Chu Hsi's Completion of Neo-Confucianism," *Etudes Song* 2.1 (1973): 59-90; Carson Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957); and Liu Shu-hsien, *Understanding Confucian Philosophy: Classical and Sung-Ming* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998).

[2] Most textbook accounts have followed Fung Yu-lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, 2 volumes, trans., Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983; first edition published in 1937).

[3] See the lucid expositions of Liang Su's influence on Li Ao in Timothy H. Barrett, "Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism in the Thought of Li Ao," (unpublished Ph.D.

Yu, were conspicuous for their well-documented censure of various Buddhist practices and teachings, their mentors from the eighth-century were openly sympathetic and, in some notable cases, deeply devoted to Buddhism.

The eighth-century especially witnessed a vibrant interchange between ideas drawn from Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist sources. Modern researchers have long remarked on, but seldom studied, the presence of Buddhist themes and ideas in post-Tang dynasty Confucianism and although the Buddhist connections go as far back as the fourth-century CE, they are plainly evident in the thought of leading scholar-officials in the eighth-century. These scholar-officials drew openly from non-Confucian sources, and their subsequent inclusion of Buddhist and Daoist ideas indelibly shaped the history of the Confucian tradition for a millennium afterwards.

These key ideas, however, were often found in the sources of more than one religion. So while the rhetoric of debate between traditions persisted, the central concepts, categories, terms, and phrases shaping and expressing the thought of Tang scholar-officials were neither exclusively Buddhist, nor exclusively Confucian, nor even a syncretism, but were instead resources upon which these figures drew in forming their own intellectual, cultural, and religious repertoires.[4] Instead of analyzing their thought

dissertation, Yale University, 1978), pp. 162-181; also see Timothy H. Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 60-65, 144-145. Peter K. Bol also briefly discusses the effect of the eighth-century generation of scholar-elites on their ninth-century heirs in *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 110-111, 122. Nishiwaki Tsuneki analyses the late eighth and early ninth-century figures as a movement in intellectual society. Nishiwaki Tsuneki 西脇常記, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka* 唐代の思想と文化 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha 創文社, 2000), pp. 87-192.

[4] For superb recent studies that see religion as cultural resources that people draw on in forming their religious repertoires, see Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local*

from the perspective of the analytical category, 'syncretism,' which is vulnerable to a number of key objections, I examine several resources in the repertoires of three highly influential scholar-officials—Li Hua 李華 (ca.710-ca.767), Dugu Ji 獨孤及 (725-777), and Liang Su 梁肅 (753-793)—who dominated intellectual circles during one of the most pivotal periods in Chinese history. Unlike early Tang scholars, for Li, Dugu, and Liang, *wen* 文 (literary culture) was no longer the central concept. *Dao* 道 was. Drawing on diverse sources from different traditions, these men claimed that to reach, preserve, and illumine the *dao*, one should stimulate the mind (*xin* 心) so as to follow principle (*li* 理) and rectify the nature (*xing* 性). They taught that in the end, one would realize that "to recover the nature fully" is also "to accord with the *dao*."

One of the best treatments of the thought of the eighth-century scholar-elites is Peter K. Bol's account in the fourth chapter of his far-ranging and seminal *"This Culture of Ours"*.[5] But as Benjamin A. Elman and others have pointed out,[6] Bol conveniently excludes Buddhism in his analysis while acknowledging that "leading scholars in all traditions influenced each other and that intellectual change did not respect boundaries."[7]

Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Robert F. Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religion* 42.4 (2003): 287-319. They both appropriate from Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[5] The fourth chapter is aptly entitled, "The Crisis of Culture after 755," pp. 108-147.

[6] Benjamin A. Elman, "Review of Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*: *Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* and Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55.2 (December 1995): 519-535.

[7] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 18. Another prominent scholar guilty of a similar omission is Angus C. Graham in his *Two Chinese Philosophers* (La Salle, IL: Open Court

For those who seek to understand "how intellectual Buddhist monks or doctrinal texts influenced shih thinking,"[8] he suggests, "We need to ask what elite scholars who followed Buddhist teachings were learning and why they thought it important."[9] Bol then leaves it to others to explore the role of Buddhism in Tang intellectual culture.[10] This

Press, 1992). Graham openly admits that he ignores the Buddhist influences on the Cheng brothers' thought, and his excuse is that he simply does not know enough about Buddhism. For more on this, see Philip J. Ivanhoe's revised edition of *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition: The Thought of Mencius and Wang Yang-ming* (Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., 2002).

[8] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 18.

[9] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 19. Decades ahead of Western scholarship is Fujiyoshi Masumi's classic overview in Fujiyoshi Masumi 藤善眞澄, "Tōdai bunjin no shūkyōkan 唐代文人の宗教観," *Rekishi kyōiku* 歴史教育, 17.3 (1969): 28-35. Fujiyoshi Masumi concludes that Tang scholar-elites' scant knowledge of Buddhism should preclude them from being labeled "Buddhists" in the sense that we use the term today. Apart from the numerous counter-examples of influential Tang scholar-elites evincing a broad understanding of Buddhist doctrine, the problem plaguing Fujiyoshi's argument is that the requirements for carrying the label, "Buddhist," in today's world are also unclear.

[10] For the Song, there has been a relatively recent proliferation of research. For example, see Mark Halperin, "Pieties and Responsibilities: Buddhism and the Chinese Literati (780-1280)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Berkeley, 1997) and Halperin's *Out of the Cloister*; Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999); Robert Gimello, "Mārga and Culture: Learning, Letters, and Liberation in Northern Sung Ch'an," in Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello, eds., *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 1992), pp. 371-437; Koichi Shinohara, "Ta-hui's Instructions to Tseng K'ai: Buddhist 'Freedom' in the Neo-Confucian Context," in Irene Bloom and Joshua Fogel, eds., *Meeting of Minds: Intellectual and Religious Interaction in East Asian Traditions of Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 175-208. For some interesting recent work on Buddhist-Confucian thought in the Ming, see Jennifer Eichman, "Spiritual seekers in a fluid landscape: A Chinese Buddhist network in the Wanli period (1573--1620)," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2005); Colin Jeffcott, "Peng Shaosheng or Peng Jiqing? Biographies of a Confucian Buddhist," in Benjamin Penny, ed., *Religion and Biography in China and Tibet* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002), pp. 148-177; as well as the classic studies by Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-En* (New York: Columbia

study is intended to help fill this need. As the Tang dynasty (618-907) was a lively period of religious blending, it should not be surprising that many prominent scholars of the Confucian tradition were also ardent students of the Buddhism of their time. Despite their central importance to the history of Chinese religious and philosophical thought in this key, transitional stage, there is a remarkable dearth of scholarship on the eighth-century figures that form the core of this dissertation.

Not only was the eighth-century a time of vibrant interchange between Buddhist and Confucian ideas, it was also a critical period in the development of a thriving scholarly discourse in the private sphere, as explored by scholars such as David McMullen, Stephen Owen, and Yang Xiaoshan.[11] In the first half of the Tang, intellectual life was dominated by the advisory colleges and bureaucratic institutions, whose operations comprised four main subjects: canonical scholarship, state ritual scholarship, the compilation of the dynastic histories, and the production of bibliographic catalogues and large literary anthologies.[12] Overall, the early Tang was a time in which the intellectual borders between the traditional disciplines were formally maintained at the institutional and bibliographical levels. Even in the mid-Tang, approaches to many activities, including canonical and ritual scholarship, were still highly compartmentalized

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University Press, 1980); and Edward Ch'ien, *Chiao Hung and the Restructuring of Neo-Confucianism in the Late Ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[11] David McMullen, *State and Scholars in the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese 'Middle Ages': Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Yang Xiaoshan, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects as Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[12] David McMullen divides his meticulous study of Tang Confucianism using these categories. McMullen, *State and Scholars in the T'ang*.

and defined by rigid boundary lines. They reflected the diverse social, political, and intellectual contexts in which the Tang scholar-elite operated. This kind of compartmentalization was characteristic of intellectual life in the early Tang.[13]

After the loss of central control following the An Lushan rebellion (755-763), the court no longer constituted the center of the intellectual world, and certain scholarly boundaries that had previously been conventional began to be removed. The catalyst for this was the development of private or unofficial literary and scholarly activities and the increased emphasis in the literary tradition on private areas of experience.[14] This latter shift can be traced to what some Tang thinkers considered to be a pre-existing "crisis of culture," which they held to be responsible for the loss of central authority in 755. These intellectuals began to doubt the efficacy of the methods of the early Tang and began to question whether *wen* 文 ("culture") could shape and improve human behavior. When mid-Tang scholar-elites began to think that cultural forms could effect social change only

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[13] My use of compartmentalization is consonant with Ch'ien's and Brook's "compartmentalism." "Compartmentalism recognizes that different teachings explain different areas of reality and touch on different aspects of truth," in Timothy Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of the Three Teachings and Their Joint Worship in Late-Imperial China," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 21 (Fall 1993): 14; Brook builds on Ch'ien, who identifies the Tang as a period in which compartmentalism was dominant; Ch'ien, *Chiao Hung,* pp. 117ff.

[14] This is one of McMullen's main themes in his *State and Scholars*. Stephen Owen uses a related though different meaning of the "private sphere" in his *The End of the Chinese 'Middle Ages': Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture*. Owen's private sphere excludes "serious" philosophical reflection: "By 'private sphere' I mean a cluster of objects, experiences, and activities that belong to a subject apart from the social whole, whether state or family. In the creation of private space, some assertion of superfluity and play is essential. Anything that is serious or 'matters' has, by definition, entered China's fractal cosmology and been subsumed into the larger interests of the state and the moral order of society" (p. 88). See also Yang Xiaoshan, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects as Tang-Song Poetry*.

when they were expressions of a personal understanding of the *dao* 道, they in effect

repudiated the early Tang connection between social values and *wen*.[15] In this context,

the proponents of the *guwen* 古文 movement searched for an all-encompassing unity.[16]

The old boundaries began to crumble.

That many prominent eighth-century scholar-elites looked to Buddhism as a

major source of inspiration was likely connected to this more general rise of the

unofficial, scholarly sphere, which had begun to serve as the primary venue for discourse

on ethical and socio-political philosophy.[17] The important transitional period of the

eighth-century thus witnessed a dramatic and creative tension among the scholar-elites

between the preservation of the traditional compartmentalization and the search for a

universal synthesis.

This dissertation examines the relationship between the Buddhist and Confucian

discourses of three key figures in Tang intellectual culture—Li Hua 李華 (ca.710-

ca.767), Dugu Ji 獨孤及 (725-777), and Liang Su 梁肅 (753-793). I shall set these

thinkers in their historical contexts. In developing a theoretical framework for this

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[15] Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours",* pp. 108-110.

[16] Cf., Charles Hartman, *Han Yu and the T'ang Search for Unity.*

[17] Cf., David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth-century," in Arthur Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 312-13; Jo-shui Chen, *Liu Tsung-yuan and Intellectual Change in T'ang China, 773-819* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 21-22, 120-121, 163, 178-180, 190; see also Bol, *"This Culture of Ours",* p. 18-21.

project, I shall probe the analytical utility of the category, 'syncretism,' for characterizing medieval Chinese thought.[18]

Why these three thinkers?

I have taken these three figures as the foci of my study for a number of reasons. First, they are commonly cited as the leading figures of the *xingming* 性命 movement[19] in the eighth-century and as the immediate precursors of the *guwen* 古文 movement in the ninth-century, which were the two most influential movements in Tang intellectual culture.[20] All three were in the center of the mainstream elite circles of their time. And

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[18] Moreover, given the paucity of records of Tiantai figures in the period between Guanding 灌頂 (561-632), the second patriarch, and Xuanlang 玄朗 (673-754), the fifth patriarch and master of Jingxi Zhanran, this period between the 630s to 750s is referred to by Japanese scholars as "Tiantai's First Dark Age" (*Tendai daiichi ankoku jidai* 天台第一暗黒時代). See Shimaji Daitō 島地大等, *Tendai Kyōgakushi* (1933; reprint edition, Tokyo: Nakayama Shobō 中山書房, 1978). Thus, this dissertation also sheds light on how Tiantai was still referenced during this time. I am grateful to James Robson for pointing me to this. See also the work seeking to redress Shimaji's characterization of a "Dark Age" in Linda L. Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty: Chan-jan and the Sinification of Buddhism," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1993; Sekiguchi Shindai 関口真大. "Gyokusen Tendai nit suite," 玉泉天台について *Tendai gakuhō* 天台学包 1 (1959):10-17; Chen Jinhua, *Making and Remaking History: A Study ofTiantai Sectarian Historiography*, Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series no. 14. (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies in Tokyo, 1999); and Chen Jinhua, "One Name, Three Monks: Two Northern Chan Masters Emerge from the Shadow of Their Contemporary, the Tiantai Patriarch Zhanran (711-782)," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 22.1 (1999): 1-91.

[19] The *xingming* emphasis on "interior or psychological questions" centered on discussions of human nature and methods of self-cultivation. See David McMullen, *State and Scholars*, pp. 105-112. See also Nishiwaki Tsuneki, pp. 97-100.

[20] For prominent examples, see Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*; McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth-century"; McMullen, *State and Scholars;* Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism in T'ang Intellectual Life, 755-805," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press,

during a period when recommendation letters and additional writings by candidates could significantly affect the outcome of the official examinations, all three held influential, high-level government posts.

Second, they possessed an awareness of themselves as a group of intellectuals continuing an illustrious tradition upholding long lost cultural values. Dugu Ji singled out Li Hua as largely responsible for the restoration of culture, and when Dugu Ji died, other scholar-elites identified him as Li's successor. Dugu's best student and literary executor was Liang Su, who traced his intellectual descent from the line of Li Hua and Dugu Ji. Li, Dugu, and Liang were thus part of a self-consciously formed line of scholar-elites sharing a common agenda for cultural restoration.

Third, Li Hua and his successors set the stage for the emergence of the *guwen* movement in the ninth-century when the forerunners of Neo-Confucianism, Li Ao and Han Yu, rose to prominence. Liang Su, in particular, influenced mainstream elite circles after him.[21] For example, Li Ao drew a great deal of inspiration from Liang. Timothy Barrett traces key phrases and concepts in Li Ao's *Fuxingshu* 復性書 to Liang Su's

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1960), pp. 77-114; their entries in William Nienhauser, et. al., eds., *Indiana Companion to Chinese Literature, vol. 1* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); and Nishiwaki Tsuneki, pp. 87-192.

[21] This is especially so in terms of intellectual influence, cf., Nishiwaki Tsuneki, pp. 155-158. Bol cites Quan Deyu (759-818), who became chief examiner and chief minister, as the next figure to claim succession in the line of Li, Dugu, and Liang. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 122. For an insightful description of mainstream elite thought in the mid-Tang, with Quan as a chief representative, see Anthony DeBlasi, *Reform in the Balance: The Defense of Literary Culture in mid-Tang China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

writings and calls Liang Su the most influential writer and thinker of that crucial, transitional period of the eighth-century.[22]

Scope and Limitations

This dissertation's temporal scope is bounded on one end by the career of Li Hua and on the other by that of Liang Su. The devastating and destabilizing effects of the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755-763), including the collapse of imperial control, wrought significant institutional and political transformations carrying major ramifications for the lives of the scholar-elite. Li Hua was the first post-rebellion restorationist in the line leading up to Liang Su, so it is natural to begin our account with Li Hua. After Liang Su's death in 793, the line diverges. Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759-818), who eventually became chief minister, claimed to be Liang's successor.[23] Liang also had considerable influence on literati outside of the mainstream, including Li Ao and Han Yu.

Exemplary studies have already been conducted on the generation immediately after Liang Su,[24] but there has been comparatively little work done on their eighth-

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[22] Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 60.

[23] Bol discusses how the lines of succession diverge after Liang in *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 122. See also the extremely helpful flowchart in Nishiwaki Tsuneki, p. 187.

[24] On Li Ao, see Barret, *Li Ao.* On Han Yu, see Charles Hartman, *Han Yu,* and David McMullen, "Han Yu: An Alternative Picture," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies,* 49.2 (1989): 59-103. On Liu Zongyuan, see Jo-Shui Chen, *Liu Tsung-yuan and Intellectual Change in T'ang China, 773-819* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), and William H. Nienhauser, Jr., Charles Hartman, William B. Crawford, Jan W. Walls, and Lloyd Neighbors, *Liu Tsung-yuan* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973). For an incisive analysis of Han and Liu's attitudes to popular religion, see William H. Nienhauser, Jr., "Han Yu, Liu Tsung-yuan, and Boundaries of Literati Piety," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 19 (Fall 1991): 75-104. On Quan Deyu, see DeBlasi, and his "Striving for

century predecessors.[25] While Barrett and others have adroitly traced the doctrinal sources of the non-Confucian influences in these ninth-century thinkers, I argue that the mid-Tang scholar-elites appropriated Buddhist ideas and categories in an even more explicit manner generations earlier. Studying how the eighth-century thinkers influenced and were influenced by the Buddhism of their time will help uncover the Buddhist doctrinal roots that lie farther from the surface in the writings of the ninth-century literati.

Furthermore, this study will concentrate on Buddhist and Confucian ideas and will only explicitly treat Daoist elements as they arise in the sources themselves. Undoubtedly, Chinese Buddhism from the outset drew from and was shaped by Daoism and indigenous Chinese ways of thinking and practice, so focusing on Chinese Buddhist elements will necessarily entail investigating certain Daoist along the way. Clearly, Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su were all involved to various degrees with Daoist clergy and

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Completeness: Quan Deyu and the Evolution of the Tang Intellectual Mainstream," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61.1 (2001): 5-36. On early ninth-century Confucian thought in general, see Zhang Yue 张跃, *Tangdai houqi ruxue* 唐代后期儒学 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 1994). Guo Shaolin details some of the Buddhist sources in the thought of the major ninth-century literati; Guo Shaolin 郭紹林, *Tangdai shidaifu yu fojiao* 唐代士大夫與佛教 (Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubanshe 河南大学出版社, 1987). For a general overview of the correspondence between members of the *guwen* movement and Buddhist clergy, see Sun Changwu 孙昌武, *Tangdai wenxue yu fojiao* 唐代文学与佛教 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe 陕西人民出版社, 1985). For a superb study from the Buddhist side of the early ninth-century Buddhist-Confucian discourse, see Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 255-311.

[25] See for example Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, pp. 110-122; Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism"; McMullen, *State and Scholars in the T'ang*, pp. 62-63, 106-108, 245-247; McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory"; Silvio Vita, "Li Hua 李華 and Buddhism," in Antonino Forte, ed., *Tang China and Beyond: Studies on East Asia from the Seventh to the Tenth-century* (Kyoto: Istituto Italiano di Cultura Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 1988), pp. 97-124; and the first chapter of Mark Halperin's *Out of the Cloister*, though Halperin focuses on the Song.

institutions. For instance, Liang Su wrote a very short treatise on the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 ("Biographies of Immortals") and includes numerous allusions to Daoist classics, such as the *Daode jing* 道德經 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, in his *Xinyin ming* 心印銘.[26] Dugu Ji originally entered the bureaucracy through the Daoist-decree examination of 754 and, early in his career, composed what became famous works on Daoist themes.[27] Nevertheless, they all wrote substantially more about Buddhist doctrine, practice, personages, and communities. Therefore, the core of this dissertation will follow closely the content of the primary sources, necessitating a more direct focus on the Buddhist and Confucian elements found in those texts.

Moreover, in this dissertation, I focus on thought, doctrine, and philosophy, but not because I think that religious practices are irrelevant, or that religion is purely an inner, psychological matter, or that doctrinal fidelity is the touchstone of religious commitment. Others have studied to good profit the type and degree of literati piety in the Tang.[28] My study, however, differs from those in that it concentrates on syncretism at the level of doctrinal categories and concepts. A one-sided emphasis on issues of practice to the exclusion of issues of doctrine, philosophy, and intellectual life can also be

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[26] QTW 519:10a-11a, 520:1b-2b. Cf., Benjamin Penny, "Chapter Five: Immortality and Transcendence," in Livia Kohn, ed., *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 120.

[27] David L. McMullen, "Tu-ku Chi," in William Nienhauser, et. al., eds. *Indiana Companion to Chinese Literature, vol. 1* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 820-821.

[28] Cf., Halperin, *Out of the Cloister*; Nienhauser, Jr., "Han Yu, Liu Tsung-yuan, and Boundaries of Literati Piety"; Donald Sutton, "A Case of Literati Piety: The Ma Yuan Cult from High T'ang to High Qing," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 11 (1989): 79-114; David Johnson, "The City-God Cults of T'ang and Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (December 1985): 363-457.

detrimental to achieving a balanced, holistic understanding of Chinese religion and cannot do justice to its many manifestations and dimensions.

Confucianism in the Tang

Arriving at a precise definition of 'Confucianism' is a controversial undertaking, and it is especially so in the context of the Tang. In the following two sections, I propose a working definition of Tang 'Confucianism', and along the way, highlight a few of the more pertinent secondary sources on the subject.

In his oft-cited *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, Peter Bol rightly points out the historically contingent content of the term, 'Confucianism,' and he immediately identifies 'Confucianism' with a Chinese equivalent—*ru* 儒: "The learning associated with being a ju, the most obvious Chinese equivalent of 'Confucian,' was not constant." Bol then draws a distinction between *wenshi* 文士, "who had a talent for literary composition," and *rushi* 儒士, "who were men of scholarship but not necessarily literary skill." He infers from this a division between two ways of being "one who learns," and concludes that "[t]he existence of wen and ju perspectives on learning leads me to resist typing all shih as Confucians and shih learning as Confucianism."[29]

While it is true that not all *wenshi* should be thought of as Confucians, Bol's conclusion draws too sharp of a distinction between the *wenshi* and the *rushi*, for as he

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[29] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours",* p. 15-18.

mentions in numerous places, there was a great deal of overlap between the two.[30] Bol

admits that *wenshi* could also be "men of scholarship," and that *rushi* studied *wenxue*. He

seems to say that *wenshi* were generally considered better at literary composition while

rushi were more concerned with "scholarship." But an integral part of Bol's general

argument is that Tang intellectual culture was a literary culture in which forms of

scholarship were conceived of in terms of the broader field of literature.[31] How then

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[30] The analysis by Bol focuses on literary concerns. Other scholars of the Tang view
Confucianism primarily through the lenses of the later Neo-Confucianism. Some deride
Tang Confucianism as an unsophisticated and primitive precursor to what they perceive
as the more rational, coherent, and systematic Neo-Confucianism that developed in the
Song. On this view, Confucian thought in the Tang is only interesting because it bore the
seeds of a Confucian revival that came to fruition in the Neo-Confucianism of the
subsequent dynasties. Hence, they often analyze Confucian thought in the Tang "in view
of their connections to or implications for the nature and evolution of this Confucian
revival…" (Jo-shui Chen, *Liu Tsung-yuan and Intellectual Change in T'ang China, 773-
819* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 5). For example, Jo-shui Chen
asserts that the intellectual culture of the Tang was characterized by canonical
scholarship, which "in the early Tang was an intellectual backwater. It neither brought
into being refreshing Confucian ideas, nor was guided by any epistemological or
philosophical vision." The other "Confucian oriented academic activities, such as history
and ritual study, also eschewed developing new intellectual outlooks." Confucianism,
however, was "a system of values governing conduct; it remained a crucial ideological
pillar of the Chinese social and cultural order" (p. 18). In speaking of Liu's generation,
Chen moreover claims that "literature played no significant role in bringing together
these promising literati… Their group may be characterized as an intellectual group with
specific political goals, or as a rather secretive political alliance with intellectual
interests" (p. 58). In contrast to Bol's emphasis on the primacy of the literary, then, Chen
defines Confucianism in the Tang as a philosophy of values or a socio-cultural ideology.

[31] Bol considers changes in Tang intellectual culture to revolve mainly around shifts in
attitudes toward literature. He regards the *guwen* movement as a "literary-intellectual
movement in which self-conscious thinking about values played a central role" (p. 23).
So for Bol, not only did the "Confucian revival" envision "a resolvable tension between
wen (the literary) and tao (moral-philosophical interests)," but also in the Tang, literary
culture was central and dominant (p. 23). Throughout the Tang, forms of scholarship
were thought of as works within the larger field of literature. Literary composition "was
the most common way of connecting learning, values, and social practice, and changing
the way men wrote was the common way of influencing intellectual values" (p. 27).

could the *rushi* be praised by their contemporaries as excelling in scholarship but be without literary talent? Either Bol must qualify his claim that scholarship in the Tang was understood in terms of literature, or the line between *rushi* and *wenshi* is so vague as to be a distinction without a difference. The problem lies with both horns.

The difficulty involved in proving that *wenshi* were not 'Confucians' largely rests in Bol's equation of 'Confucianism' with its putative Chinese equivalent, *ru*. One way out of the dilemma would be to see that an analytical category does not always require an equivalent in the other language for it to be useful. Indeed, some scholars who use the term, 'Neo-Confucianism,' do not think of it as corresponding to a specific word in Chinese.[32] Rather, the term can be used to indicate a group of people or ideas sharing a set of common properties. The group that Bol seizes on in his book is the *shi*, the small, elite group in Chinese society that underwent radical changes in identity between the Tang and Song.[33] Analyzing Tang intellectual culture in terms of the *shi* emphasizes

[32] Cf., Wm. Theodore de Bary: "Yet, granting the Western provenance of both expressions, this alone should not be grounds for disqualifying either 'Confucianism' or 'Neo-Confucianism.' Regularly, as historians, we use non-Chinese terms like 'Traditional China,' 'Early Modern,' or 'Late Imperial China' to good pedagogic effect, for the sake of denoting long-term historical developments of which the Chinese themselves, being accustomed to periodize things in dynastic terms, had not usually conceived." In "The Uses of Neo-Confucianism: A Response to Professor Tillman," *Philosophy East & West* 43.3 (July 1993): 543. This is in the context of the debate between de Bary and Tillman on the use of the term, 'Neo-Confucianism' played in *Philosophy East & West* 42.3 (July 1992), 43.3 (July 1993), and 44.1 (January 1994).

[33] Bol was certainly not the first to investigate the changing identity of the *shi*. He traces the social history of this group in Bol,*"This Culture of Ours"*, chapter 2. Bol builds on the work in social history of Patricia B. Ebrey, Robert M. Hartwell, David Johnson, and Denis C. Twitchett, among others. East Asian scholarship on this subject is even more abundant. A classic study is Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi 宇都宮清吉, *Chūgoku kodai chūseishi kenkyū* 中国古代中世史研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1977).

socio-political factors, which is partly why Bol views his work not simply as intellectual history but as the history of intellectual culture.

'Confucianism,' as David McMullen has shown, however, can also be a useful heuristic category as it highlights the common intellectual heritage and training of the scholar-elite.[34] While both this heritage and training were developed and continued in a socio-political backdrop, this version of 'Confucianism' emphasizes intellectual factors. This is not to say that one should treat intellectual issues in isolation from their socio-political contexts. Indeed, such factors are closely connected to intellectual developments as is evident in the shift from the early Tang hereditary aristocracy, who were acutely aware of their status and traditions, to the late Tang elite community, which exhibited greater diversity in social background and which cohered around a common experience of education and office and around common attitudes to learning,[35] to the Southern Song literati, who predominantly hailed from local elite families.[36] Rather, the category of 'Confucianism' frees us from the restrictions inherent in traditional Chinese classifications, which were not in any case universally approved, employed, or clearly defined. 'Confucianism' can be helpful in elucidating what most *wenshi* and *rushi* had in common besides a shared social identity.

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[34] Bol takes issue with McMullen's characterization of his subject as Tang Confucianism, but McMullen's description of Tang Confucianism does more justice to the richness and range of Tang intellectual life. Peter K. Bol, "Review of David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*," *Journal of Asian Studies* 48.1 (Feb., 1989): 142-143. Cf., McMullen, *State and Scholars,* pp. 3-4.

[35] McMullen, *State and Scholars*, p. 10.

[36] For his terminological shift from Tang aristocrats to Northern Song scholar-officials to Southern Song literati, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, p. 34.

'Confucianism': A Working Definition

Although I shall not here attempt to propound a fully developed definition of what it means to be 'Confucian' in the Sui-Tang, a project that would require a much longer exposition, I shall suggest one way that such a project might begin and conclude with a brief, provisional, working definition. The first step is to recognize that the meaning of *ru* changed through time, and that the identification of *ru* with 'Confucian' needlessly limits the utility of the term, 'Confucian.' By rejecting the necessity of matching the concept of *ru* with 'Confucian,' one becomes free to look for an alternative notion of what it would mean to be 'Confucian' in the Sui-Tang. Most *wenshi* and *rushi* had a common expertise in a specific textual-ritual tradition and body of knowledge, which were based largely on the Classics, as well as a common commitment to the maintenance and advancement of this tradition and knowledge. Because the textual-ritual tradition and body of knowledge were found in the 'Confucian' Classics, it would be reasonable to describe this textual-ritual tradition as 'Confucian.' Insofar as a *shi* held this expertise and commitment, whether he was a *wenshi* or a *rushi*, he shared in this common tradition, which for heuristic purposes can be designated, 'Confucian.'[37]

One may reasonably object to this usage of 'Confucian' as simply identifying the classical tradition in China. As I acknowledge above, however, the classical tradition overlaps with the Confucian tradition, so whether one calls them classical scholars or

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[37] Anthony DeBlasi defines *ru* in much the same way I have defined 'Confucian.' But he ultimately eschews the use of 'Confucianism' for the same reasons as Bol and prefers to translate *ru* as "classical." DeBlasi, *Reform in the Balance: The Defense of Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (Albany: SUNY Presss, 2002), p. 16.

Confucian scholars is a matter of what one wishes to emphasize. One may also object that my usage labels 'Confucian' those who are simply humanist scholars. Yet, although the classical tradition shares much in common with the broader humanist tradition, what I have in mind here is narrower—that set of texts known as the Confucian Classics, the associated commentarial literature, and the body of knowledge built around them.

Moreover, my definition of what it means to be 'Confucian' in the Sui-Tang does not privilege philosophy narrowly defined,[38] yet it manages to emphasize important intellectual factors, which is a distinct virtue from the perspective of intellectual history. It is narrow enough that it excludes the vast majority of Buddhist and Daoist clergy, as well as the small minority of literati who lacked any commitment to the shared tradition. But it is broad enough that it can encompass most *wenshi* and *rushi*, the ones who shared this expertise and commitment. Moreover, it is sufficiently flexible to include more than literary scholars (the *wenshi*). It enables one to speak about a group of men that are not completely captured by the categories of '*wenshi*' or '*rushi*.' This group includes not only the literary scholars, but also the *Chunqiu* 春秋 exegetical scholars from whom Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) and others drew, the "neo-legalists" such as Du You (735-812) 杜佑, and the scholars of the earlier phases of the *xingming* movement, among whom were Dugu Ji, Liang Su, and Quan Deyu.[39] Thus, being 'Confucian' in the Tang

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[38] The common assumption of the inevitability of Neo-Confucianism is closely connected to a myopic focus on "philosophy," narrowly defined as metaphysics, epistemology, or ethics. Most professional philosophers nowadays, however, would consider that reasoning about theories of literature, history, society, and politics is also to be engaged in the activity of philosophy.

[39] For meticulous summaries of the *Chunqiu* exegetical scholars in the Tang, see McMullen, *State and Scholars*, pp. 79-81, 101-105. For the "neo-legalists," see

can refer not only to mastering certain kinds of literary scholarship, but also to classical

exegesis, theories of politics, history, and ritual, as well as to notions of moral cultivation.

The scholar-elites who engaged in these fields had a common educational background

and commitment to a shared tradition, and 'Confucian' can be a convenient shorthand for

referring to them.

Eighth Century Buddhist-Confucian Thought

Contemporary scholarship on eighth-century intellectual culture, compared to that

on the ninth-century, is relatively scarce. Currently the most cited work is probably Bol's

treatment in his *"This Culture of Ours"*.[40] Bol builds on the classic studies of David

McMullen and Edwin G. Pulleyblank.[41] With the exception of a perfunctory treatment of

the religious activities of their subjects, all of these modern scholars fail to deal in any

detail with the defining role of Buddhism. Bol's analysis privileges literary concerns and

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Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism in T'ang Intellectual Life, 755-805" in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 77-114. On developments in political thought, see Josephine Chiu-Duke, *To Rebuild the Empire: Lu Chih's Confucian Pragmatist Approach to the Mid-T'ang Predicament* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000). On Tang theories of ritual, see the definitive work by Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and McMullen, *State and Scholars*, pp. 113-158. On Tang theories of history, see McMullen, *State and Scholar*, pp. 159-205. On the *xingming* scholars and phases, see McMullen, *State and Scholars*, pp. 105-112.

[40] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, pp. 110-123.

[41] Cf., David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory"; and his magisterial *State and Scholars in Tang China*; and Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism."

conveniently ignores the important role of Buddhism in Tang-Song intellectual culture.[42] Pulleyblank helpfully highlights the significance of Zhanran 湛然 (711-782) and his Tiantai teachings to the eighth-century circle of elite scholars but does not engage in a more systematic reflection on the precise nature of those connections.[43] McMullen repeatedly claims that religious concerns were relegated to a "private" sphere separate from the "public" sphere in which the Confucian discourses transpired, thereby pushing the consideration of Buddhist influences outside the scope of his inquiry.[44] Yet, as discussed earlier, McMullen and others also contend that the eighth-century witnessed the rise of unofficial, non-court sponsored, scholarly activities, as well as an increased emphasis in the literary tradition on private areas of experience and on questions of moral self-cultivation. The catalyst for this development was the collapse of central control after the An Lushan rebellion in 755-763. The post-rebellion court no longer constituted the center of intellectual culture, and many conventional scholarly boundaries began to be removed. The result was vigorous probing of classical Confucian texts for solutions to the perceived cultural crisis. Because of the post-rebellion breakdown of imperial patronage, this discussion was conducted outside the court-sponsored colleges and bureaucratic institutions through the medium that McMullen and others have identified as "private" writings. Thus it seems that the elite discourses on Buddhism and on Confucianism were

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[42] See my discussion in the first section of this chapter.

[43] Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism," pp. 91-93.

[44] For example, see McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory," pp. 312-313.

both conducted in a "private" sphere.[45] So the argument that scholar-elites were Buddhists in private but Confucians in public belies the evidence.

Perhaps the most thorough study of the connections between eighth-century scholar-elites and Buddhism is Nishiwaki Tsuneki's *Tōdai no shisō to bunka*.[46] Nishiwaki masterfully elucidates the complex social webs connecting many distinguished Tang literati, including those associated with Li Hua and with eminent Buddhist clergy. Mark Halperin, too, provides a scrupulous discussion of the attitudes of late eighth-century scholar-elites toward Buddhist devotion and gives brief consideration to the case of Liang Su.[47] Neither Nishiwaki nor Halperin, however, aim to explore in detail the specific elements of the doctrinal ties between Buddhism and Confucianism in the thought of these eighth-century scholar-elites.

There are a few specific studies of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su. Jiang Yin's *Dali shiren yanjiu* contains biographical information on Dugu Ji and Liang Su with extensive quotations from the primary sources arranged in chronological order.[48] Silvio

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[45] For more on the "private sphere" in medieval China, see also Yang Xiaoshan, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects as Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) and Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese `Middle Ages': Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

[46] Nishiwaki, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka*.

[47] Halperin, "Pieties and Responsibilities," pp. 53-61. Halperin, *Out of the Cloister*, chapter 1.

[48] Jiang Yin 蒋寅, *Dali shiren yanjiu* 大历诗人研究, 二册 (2 vols.) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 552-599. In addition, further biographical information can be found in Kanda Kiichirō 神田喜一郎, "Ryō Shuku nenpu 梁蕭年普," *Tōhō gakkai sōritsu nijūgoshūnen kinen tōhōgaku ronshū* 東方學會創立二十五周年紀念東方學論集, (Tokyo: Tōhō gakkai 東方學會, 1972), pp. 259-274; and Luo Liantian 羅聯添, *Tangdai shiwen liujia nianpu* 唐代詩文六家年普 (Taibei: Xuehai Chubanshe 學海出版

Vita's meticulously annotated list of Li Hua's Buddhist epigraphic texts is invaluable.[49]
Yu Xueming and Pan Guiming have sketched out the thought of Liang Su in the context
of the development of the Tiantai tradition and Zhanran's teachings in particular.[50] The
field is now ripe for a thorough and systematic explanation of the integral relationship
between Buddhism and Confucianism in the thought of mid-Tang intellectuals.

Methodological Matters

My dissertation seeks to combine careful textual analysis across a broad range of
sources, maintain sensitivity to historical contexts, provide a judicious application of
relevant critical theories of religion, and bring to bear the rigor and clarity associated with
the best philosophical discussions in ethics and religious philosophy. Such an
interdisciplinary project engages questions that belong primarily to the fields of religious
studies, intellectual history, and philosophy, while its source materials belong primarily
to the field of Chinese literature and Chinese Buddhism. This work thus spans at least
four disciplines that are usually housed in separate departments—Asian literature and
culture, religious studies, history, and philosophy. This description is partly contingent on

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社, 1986); and Luo Liantian 羅聯添, "Dugu Ji kao zheng" 獨孤及考證, *Dalu zazhi* 大陸
雜誌, 48.3 (March 1974): 117-138.

[49] Silvio Vita, "Li Hua 李華 and Buddhism." For general overviews of Tang literati
Buddhist activities and their attitudes toward Buddhism, see Shinohara Hisao 篠原寿雄,
"Tōdai bunjin no bukkyō rikai ni tsuite," 唐代文人の佛教理解について, *Indogaku
Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 10.2 (1962): 227-32; and Fujiyoshi Masumi.

[50] Yu Xueming 俞学明, "Liang Su yu Tiantai zong: Tang rushi jiaoyou de yige fanli" 梁
肃与天台宗：唐儒释交游的一个范例, *Fojiao wenhua* 佛教文化 78.4 (2005); Pan
Guiming and Wu Zhongwei 潘桂明， 吴忠伟, *Zhongguo tiantaizong tongshi* 中国天台
宗通史 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江苏古籍出版社, 2001), pp. 327-344.

the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the contemporary Western academy has constructed itself. Just as some mid-Tang scholar-elites subverted the traditional disciplinary boundaries of their time, unsurprisingly, a study of their thought calls for flexibility and fluidity in navigating across contemporary disciplinary boundaries. Instead of labeling such a project, "multidisciplinary," and thereby suggesting that it has no proper disciplinary home, it would be more appropriate to consider it "interdisciplinary" in a particular way, a project which by taking up questions primarily associated with three fields (i.e., religious history, intellectual history, and philosophy), and using sources primarily associated with another (i.e., Chinese literature), seeks to generate results that will interest those working in each of the associated disciplines.[51]

      This dissertation, then, is intended to be of use and interest to at least four groups. First, I intend the discussions of the analytical utility of the category 'syncretism' in general, of medieval Buddhist-Confucian syncretism in particular, and of the secular-sacred paradigm in medieval China to be of interest to those studying the history and theory of religions, especially Asian religions. Second, this dissertation aims to interest Chinese intellectual historians by demonstrating the significant role that Buddhism played in medieval Chinese thought and in the development of the later Confucian tradition. Third, I hope that discussions of Buddhist and Confucian ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological theories will be helpful to those philosophers concerned with related issues in Western traditions and to the steadily increasing group of philosophers

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[51] I build on the description of transdisciplinarity from Parimal Patil's "Necessity, Naming, and the Existence of Īśvara" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2001), pp. 3-4.

interested in the history of Chinese philosophy in its own right. Fourth, the copious exegeses of important Tang texts and their contexts should prove useful to Sinologists studying similar periods and issues.

Sources

The most complete collection of the writings of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su is contained in the enormous 1000-*juan Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文 (*Complete Tang Prose*), which was compiled under imperial order in 1814.[52] It attempted to assemble all extant prose compositions by Tang authors. Li Hua's collected works are found in *juan* 314, page 1 to *juan* 322, page 79, which is a total of 147 pages. Dugu Ji's are in *juan* 384, page 1 to *juan* 393, page 26, for a total of 208 pages. Liang Su's in *juan* 517, page 1 to *juan* 522, page 16, which gives a total of 119 pages. Halperin and others as early as *Zanning* 贊寧 (919-1001), the author of the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* 宋高僧傳, have identified the importance of stone inscriptions as historical documents.[53] And many of Li, Dugu, and Liang's writings on Buddhism are preserved as epigraphy. The other major Tang prose collection, the *Wenyuan Yinghua* 文苑英華 commissioned by the Song

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[52] The standard edition is now the *Zhonghua shuju* version of 1983 and its successive reprints. *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, compiled by Dong Gao 董誥 (Reprinted, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1983).

[53] Halperin's "Pieties and Responsibilities" is explicitly based on an examination of stone inscriptions. See also Silvio Vita, "Li Hua 李華 and Buddhism."

emperor in 982, contains much of the same material.[54] Some of their pieces are also found in the smaller anthology, *Tang Wencui* 唐文粹. Jiang Yin has helpfully collected and chronologically correlated these to other documents pertaining to the lives of Dugu and Liang, including their biographies in the *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書.[55]

All three men were famous for their poetry, but only the poetry of Li and Dugu survive. These can be found in *Quan Tang Shi* 全唐詩 (Complete Tang Poetry), completed under imperial command in 1703.[56]

We are fortunate to have for consultation Dugu Ji's *Piling Ji* <<毗陵集>>, one of the very few collections of complete works by a mid-Tang writer that is extant.[57] It consists in seventeen *juan* of prose and three of poetry.

Many of Liang Su's most important Buddhist writings are collected in the *Fozu Tongji* 佛祖統紀, a major source for Tiantai history.[58] Also extant is Liang Su's three

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[54] *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華, compiled by Li Fang 李昉, et. al. (Reprinted, Beijing: Zhonghu shuju 中華書局, 1966). The documents are not, however, arranged according to author, so they are slightly more troublesome to track down.

[55] Jiang Yin 蔣寅, *Dali shiren yanjiu* 大历诗人研究, 二册 (2 vols.). The 25 Dynastic Histories are available online at the Academic Sinica website and through the University of Michigan Asia Library's website.

[56] *Quan Tang Shi* 全唐詩, compiled by Cao Yin 曹寅, et. al. (Reprinted, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1960). For Li Hua, see volume 3, pp. 1585-1590. For Dugu Ji, see volume 4, pp. 2760-2779.

[57] Dugu Ji 獨孤集, *Piling ji* 毗陵集, (Sibu congkan 四部叢刊, Beijing and Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1919-1936; Preface dated 1791). The extant editions derive from a manuscript copy made in the imperial library by Wu Guan 吳琯 (1436-1504).

[58] *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, compiled by Zhi Pan 志磐 (1220-1275), completed 1269. T. 49.0438a19-0440c11.

volume abridgement and introduction to Zhiyi's monumental *Mohe Zhiguan* 摩訶止觀,
in which Liang radically reduced the bulk, rearranged some of the material, added
comments of his own, and included an introduction, which became a celebrated work in
its own right and later circulated independently from the text it introduced.[59]

None of the above-mentioned works by Li Hua, Dugu Ji, or Liang Su have had
any portions translated into modern languages beyond half a dozen paragraphs in the
secondary literature.[60]

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[59] Liang Su 梁肅, *Shanding zhiguan* 刪定止觀, Xuzang jing 續藏經, X55.0915a-0915c,
(also available in the *Dainihon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經 (Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1902-
1905)). Cf., Barrett, "Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism in the Thought of Li Ao,"
pp. 174-175.

[60] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, pp. 114-121; Halperin, "Pieties and Responsibilities," pp.
57-59; Hartman, *Han Yu*, pp. 187-188, 191; Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai during the T'ang
Dynasty," pp. 183-184.

Chapter 2

The Lives and Careers of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, Liang Su, and Zhanran

Several similarities connect Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su. As is well-

established, they were foundational figures in the *guwen* 古文 (or "plain-style writing")

movement, a literary-intellectual style emphasizing both moral self-cultivation and socio-

political responsibility.[61] These three figures also shared an interest in moral

psychological issues such as self-cultivation, the nature of the mind, and the ethical status

of human nature. Although as state officials, they spent much of their careers in

government, their writings and social connections show that they were concerned not just

with socio-political policies, but also with individual, moral development and

transformation. These intellectual pursuits were no doubt shaped and informed by their

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[61] In his *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), Peter K. Bol charts the emergence of *guwen* as a literary and intellectual style in the late eighth century and its great flourishing in the eleventh and explores the tension in *guwen* between the cultivation of the individual versus socio-political responsibility. See especially pp. 108-147. See also David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth Century," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 307-342; and Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism in T'ang Intellectual Life, 755-805," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 77-114.

religious involvement and especially by their studies of Buddhism.[62] Their Buddhist writings evince both their devotion to various versions of Buddhism, as well as their extensive reflection on aspects of Buddhist teachings. Tiantai Zhanran especially had a close connection to this group and to the eighth century scholar-elite educated in the Confucian Classics. These three figures also all at some point held high official posts and were respected as influential government figures. More importantly, they all took a great interest in the guidance and education of the succeeding generation of scholars and displayed a self-conscious attitude toward their place in intellectual culture.

Li Hua 李華 (c. 710-c. 769)

Li Hua was one of the great literary giants of his day. He was known especially for his prose and literary criticism and as a leading figure in the *guwen* movement, composing many works in the *guwen* style. He also wrote famous pieces in the euphuistic and ornamental style of the day, *pianwen* 駢文 ("parallel prose"). In addition, Li was one of the most influential literary patrons of the eighth century. His style (*zi* 字) name was Xiashu 遐叔. We know that Li Hua lived during the reigns of three Tang emperors, Xuanzong 玄宗 (712-756), Suzong 肅宗 (756-763), and Daizong 代宗 (763-779), but his exact dates are the subject of speculation and intense debate.[63]

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[62] See Nishiwaki Tsuneki 西脇常記, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka* 唐代の思想と文化 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha 創文社, 2000); pp. 155-163.

[63] See Silvio Vita, "Li Hua 李華 and Buddhism," in Antonino Forte, ed., *Tang China and Beyond: Studies on East Asia from the Seventh to the Tenth Century* (Kyoto: Istituto Italiano di Cultura Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 1988), pp. 97-124; Huang Tianpeng 黃天朋, "Li Hua shengzu kao" 李華生卒考, *Zhongyang wenshi* 中央文史, 28, 29 (June 1937); Liu Sanfu 劉三富, "Ri Ka no shisō to bungaku" 李華の思想と文學,

There is some consensus on the year of Li's death, but there is as yet no clear

evidence of the date of his birth. Huang Tianpeng offers a reasonable argument that Li

Hua was born around the same time as his friend, Xiao Yingshi 簫穎士 (717-760), since

both men took their *jinshi* 進士 exams in the same year.[64] I, therefore, follow McMullen

in giving c. 710-c. 769.[65]

Documentation on the date of Li's death is both more copious and more

complicated. His biography in the *Xin Tang Shu* and the text of the eulogy by Liang Su

梁肅 (753-793) in the *Quan Tang Wen* and the *Wenyuan Yinghua* all claim that Li Hua

died in 766.[66] However, several other documents provide data conflicting with that date.

Some of Li Hua's own writings were clearly composed after 766.[67] Two passages in the

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Chūgoku bungaku ronshū 中國文學論集, 4 (1974): 62-71; Yin Zhongwen 尹仲文, "Li
Hua zunian kaobian" 李华卒年考辩, *Hebei Daxue Xuebao* 河北大学学报, 2 (1979): 85-
87; Pan Lv Qichang 潘呂棋昌, *Xiao Yingshi yanjiu* 蕭穎士研究 (Taibei: Wenshizhe
chubanshe 文史哲出版社), 1983, pp. 40-41; Kanda Kiichirō 神田喜一郎, "Ryō Shuku
nenpu" 梁肅年普, *Tōhō gakkai sōritsu nijūgoshūnen kinen tōhōgaku ronshū* 東方學會創
立二十五周年紀念東方學論集 (Tokyo: *Tōhō gakkai* 東方學會), 1972, pp. 259-274;
David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth Century," Arthur F.
Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale
University Press, 1973), pp. 307, records "c. 710-c. 767" but changes to "d. c. 769" in
David McMullen, "Li Hua," in William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion
to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp.
537-538. See especially Vita, pp. 99, who suspects that McMullen changed his dates for
Li Hua in light of Liu's 1974 study.
[64] See Pan Lv.

[65] For the date of birth, see McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth
Century," and for the date of death, see McMullen, "Li Hua."

[66] *Quan Tang Wen* 522.7b-8b; *Wenyuan Yinghua* 982.1a-1b.

[67] *Gu Xiangguo Bingbu shangshu Liangguo gong Li Xian zhuan* 故相國兵部尚書梁國公
李峴傳, *Li Xiashu Wenji* 2.14b-17a (post-767, see Yin, p. 86); *Tang zeng taizi shaoshi
Cui gong shendaobei* 唐贈太子少師崔公神道碑, *Li Xiashu wenji,* 2.18b-23a (according

Song Gaoseng Zhuan refer to him as still active in 769 and 774.[68] Also, Liang Su's eulogy was commissioned by Dugu Ji 獨孤及 while Dugu was Prefect of Changzhou 常州, a position he took up in 774.[69] Thus, a date of death of 766 is untenable.

Citing work by Huang Tianpeng, Yin Zhongwen, and Kanda Kiichirō, Silvio Vita argues that the most likely hypothesis is that Li Hua died in 774.[70] He holds that the version of the document by Liang Su, collected in *Tang Wen Cui* 唐文粹, actually records the date of *Dali jiunian* 大歷九年 (774) instead of *Dali yuannian* 大历元年 ("First year of Dali," i.e., 766). The difference is due to the orthographic error typically found in Tang manuscripts, in which the cursive forms of *yuan* 元 and *jiu* 九 look sometimes very similar.

The clan Li Hua hailed from, the Zhaojun 趙郡 Li, was one of the most powerful of Northern China. Although by the time of the Tang, they were no longer in their original lands, many of their members occupied positions in the bureaucratic elite. The particular branch of this clan to which Li Hua belonged, the Zanhuang 贊皇 branch, became especially prominent during Li's lifetime.[71] Other than the overall professional

to Yin, p. 86, this was written in 767-68; Liu, "Ri Ka no shisō to bungaku," p. 62, claims it was composed later than 769); *Chuyuan xinchi ji* 廚院新池記, *Li Xiashu Wenji* 3.18b-9a (composed in 770; see Vita, p. 100); *Yu waisun Cui shi ersun shu* 與外孫崔氏二孫書, *Li Xiashu Wenji* 1.30a-32a (written in 774; see Huang).

[68] *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T.50.0798a17-18 and T.50.0797a2-3.

[69] For Dugu Ji's chronology, see Luo, *Tangdai shiwen liujia nianpu*, p. 39.

[70] Vita, pp. 100-101.

trajectory of his clan and branch, however, little else is known about Li's family background.[72]

Li Hua began an official career by taking the *jinshi* degree in 735 and passed the *hongci* 宏詞 exam in 743. His first appointments were minor posts, including Editor in the Department of the Palace Library (*Bishusheng jiaoshulang* 秘書省教書郎). In 752, Li was promoted to Investigating Censor (*Jiancha yushi* 監察御史), which placed him in the central government and took him on tours of inspection in the provinces. His principled attitude in performing his duties eventually brought him into conflict with the clique of Yang Guozhong 揚國忠. This caused his transfer to a position that would make better use of his zealously upright attitude—Rectifier of Omissions of the Right (*You buque* 右補闕). His job was to check the mistakes in documents coming directly from the throne. The *Jiu Tang Shu* adds that afterwards, he also took up the positions of Attendant Censor (*Shiyushi* 侍御史) and Vice Director (*Yuanwailang* 員外郎) of the Ministries of Rites and Personnel. Li Hua was at court until the onset of the An Lushan rebellion in 755.[73]

The An Lushan rebellion critically affected Li's life and career. During the rebellion, he was captured and forced to collaborate. In the new government of An Lushan, he worked alongside those who had freely sided with the rebels. Li Hua was

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[71] David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao Chün in Late T'ang and Early Sung," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 37.1 (June 1977): 21. Vita, p. 101.

[72] Vita, p. 101.

[73] Vita, p. 101.

appointed to the relatively high rank of Drafter of the Phoenix Hall (*Fengge sheren* 鳳閣捨人).[74]

When Emperor Suzong reclaimed the capitals in 757, he punished the collaborationists, among whose number Li Hua was counted. Li was demoted to a provincial post in the southeast, where he was to live out the rest of his days. During the Shangyuan period 上元 (760-62), Li was repeatedly recalled to the capital to serve in the central government. He turned down every invitation. The *Xin Tang Shu* records that he felt the guilt from his recent compromises and felt that collaboration disqualified him from meeting the moral requirements for holding higher office.[75]

Even after his relocation to the southeast, Li continued to contribute at a local level. Around 764, Li Xian 李峴, at that time imperial commissioner in charge of personnel in the south and an old friend of Li Hua, recruited him to his staff, bestowing on Li the honorary title of Acting Vice Director of the Ministry of Personnel (*Jianjiao Libu yuanwailang* 檢較吏部員外郎).[76] Shortly thereafter, however, Li fell very ill and had to resign all his official posts. He retired to the countryside at Shanyang 山陽 sub-

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[74] Vita speculates that this was equivalent to a Drafter in the Secretariat or *Zhongshu sheren* 中書捨人, an official charged with drafting documents related to government policies. *Fengge* was the name of the Secretariat (*Zhongshu sheng* 中書省) from 684-705 and an informal name for that institution after 705. See Vita, p. 102. See also Charles O. Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 214. Vita points out that as the Rectifier of the Omission of the Left, Li Hua was already assigned to the Secretariat, but that this new position brought with it a higher rank.

[75] *Xin Tang Shu* 203: 5776.

[76] For more on Li Xian (709-766 or 712-766), see *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書 112: 3343-46; *Xin Tang Shu* 131: 4504-06. For more biographical information on Li Xian, see Vita, p. 102.

prefecture in Chuzhou 楚州 (present-day Huaian 淮安 in Jiangsu). He spent the last decades of his life in poor health but, as his writings testify, "content in poverty and senility."[77]

Despite his demotion, feelings of shame, and departure from the capital following the An Lushan rebellion, Li maintained a wide network of influential scholar-elites, both in the capital and in the southeastern provinces.[78] His mentors included Yuan Dexiu 元德秀 (695-753), whom Li considered his master, and Sun Di 孫狄 (c. 671-c. 760), who is famous for having presided as examiner over many major literary figures, including Li Hua and Xiao Yingshi in 735. After moving to the south, Li joined the circles of the refugee intellectuals, who lived in relative peace as part of a temporary, post-rebellion migration movement.[79] As previously explored, Li had profound influence over the next generation of the *guwen* literary group, especially Dugu Ji and Liang Su.[80]

Even after the rebellion, Li continued to write commemorative texts for Buddhist clergy, records for local institutions, epitaphs, sacrificial prayers, and occasional poetry.[81]

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[77] *Xin Tang Shu*, 203: 5776. See Vita, p. 102-103.

[78] For more details, see McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth Century"; Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism in T'ang Intellectual Life, 755-805," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 77-114; Liu Sanfu 劉三富, "Ri Ka no shisō to bungaku" 李華の思想と文學, *Chūgoku bungaku ronshū* 中國文學論集, 4 (1974): 62-71; Nishiwaki Tsuneki 西脇常記, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka* 唐代の思想と文化 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha 創文社, 2000), pp. 150-160; and Vita, p. 103.

[79] Pulleyblank, "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism in T'ang Intellectual Life, 755-805), pp. 83-85.

[80] Liu, "Ri Ka no shisō to bungaku," p. 17; Nishiwaki, pp. 155-160; and Vita, p. 103.

In his detailed description of Li's involvement with Buddhism, Silvio Vita summarizes Li's approach to Buddhism, which was characterized by Li's use of "the weight of the Confucian tradition and a sensible ear toward using the language of *literati* in the expression of religious concepts."[82]

Of his own attitude toward Buddhism, Li wrote, "I take delight in following Zengzi's manner and revere the Way of India."[83] In spite of his claims to balance Confucian and Buddhist allegiances, in a stele composed for the Qianyuan Guoqing monastery, Li declares that the Son of Heaven takes the Way of the Five Emperors and Three Kings as "surplus to the Tathagata's six perfections" (*rulai liudu zhi yu* 如來六度之余).[84] His proclivity for balancing both traditions, with a leaning toward the Buddhist side, helps to explain his preference for friendships with scholar-monks who showed an interest in the classical tradition.[85] In particular, Li Hua developed a close friendship with Jingxi Zhanran 荊溪湛然 (711-782). Zhanran had even composed a brief explanation of the main Tiantai tenets expressly for Li's benefit.[86] Li Hua was also responsible for the earliest known attempt at Tang Tiantai lineage construction.[87]

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[81] For an extensive and eloquent essay on Li Hua's Buddhist writing, see Vita.

[82] Vita, p. 122.

[83] Vita, p. 122; *Hangzhou Hanyuxian Longquansi gu dalüshi bei* 杭州杭余縣龍泉寺故大律師碑, *Wenyuan Yinghua* 860.2b-5a, *Quan Tang Wen* 319: 4b-8a.

[84] Vita, p. 122; *Taizhou Qianyuan Guoqingsi bei* 台州乾元國清寺碑, *Wenyuan Yinghua* 859: 7a-8b; *Quan Tang Wen* 318:8a-10a.

[85] Vita, pp. 122-23.

[86] This was the *Zhiguan Dayi* 止觀大意. For the dedicatory line, see T. 46.1914.459a14.

Most of Li Hua's early works were lost in the An Lushan rebellion. A collection compiled by his elder son, Li Gao 李羔, circulated during Li Hua's lifetime. But it was lost in the Song as an independent work. Single pieces from it were included in the *Wenyuan Yinghua* and *Tang Wen Cui*.[88] The *Siku Quanshu* contains a *Li Xiashu Wenji* 李 遐叔文集. The anonymous editor compiled it using all writings by Li Hua extant at that time, as well as Dugu Ji's preface written around 769.[89] On the basis of Dugu's preface, which lists representative titles by Li, Li Hua's most important pieces are preserved in the *Siku Quanshu*, as well as in the general anthologies compiled in the Song.

Li's significance for later generations cannot be overemphasized. Beyond his influence on Dugu Ji and Liang Su, Li also had considerable ties to Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824). Among Li's close followers were Han Yunqing 韓雲卿, Han Yu's uncle, and Han Hui 韓會, Han Yu's elder brother. Li also counted on the support of Cui Youfu 崔佑甫 (721-780), a Grand Councilor and director of the dynastic history in the 770s.[90]

Among Buddhists, Zanning, in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, describes Li Hua as an example of a "renowned Confucian" (*mingru* 名儒) who succumbed to the superiority of Buddhism.[91] In the Northern Song, Qi Song 契嵩 (1007-1072) was engaged in

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[87] See Linda L. Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty: Chan-jan and the Sinification of Buddhism" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1993), pp. 182-84.

[88] Vita, p. 103.

[89] McMullen, "Li Hua," p. 538.

[90] McMullen, "Li Hua," p. 538.

[91] T. 50.2061.800a12. See also Vita, p. 123.

apologetics in the face of attacks from literati who were casting aspersions against Buddhist teachings and practices.[92] Qi Song listed Li Hua as a "defender of the Law," one of the famous Tang scholar-elite who adopted and supported Buddhism. As documented later in the section on Zhanran, prominent monastic communities considered him an invaluable patron and frequently commissioned him to compose inscriptions. Finally, the *Fozu Tongji* included a short biography of Li Hua that placed him as one of the lay disciples of the Sixth Tiantai Patriarch, Zhanran.[93]

Dugu Ji 獨孤及 (725-777)

Dugu Ji was born in Jingzhao 京兆 prefecture in Haozhi 好畤 county in present-day Qian 乾 county in Shaanxi 陝西 province.[94] His style name was Zhizhi 至之. Dugu Ji was a highly influential literary figure and court official. He came from an aristocratic Turkish clan that married into both the imperial families of the Sui and the Tang. At the time of his birth, Dugu's father was the magistrate of Haozhi county.

Records tell of his precociousness.[95] At six, he was said to have recited from memory the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao Jing* 孝經). When he was eleven, he was

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[92] For more on Qi Song, see Elizabeth Morrison, "Ancestors, authority, and history: Chan lineage in the writings of Qisong (1007--1072)" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2004).

[93] T. 49.2035.204a2-8. See also Vita, p. 124.

[94] See the compiled biographies on Dugu in Jiang Yin 蔣寅, "Zuowei shiren de Dugu Ji" 作为诗人的独孤及, Kaifeng, Henan: *Henan daxue xuebao* 河南大学学报 36.4 (July 1996): 47-51; Jiang Yin 蔣寅. *Dali shiren yanjiu* 大历诗人研究, 二册 (2 vols.) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 128-131.

enrolled in the capital's state academy directorate, the scholarly body most closely

connected to the Confucian tradition.[96] Within the directorate, Dugu was placed in the

Grand Academy (*tai xue* 太學), which had an enrollment of about three hundred. The

Grand Academy was meant for the sons and grandsons of officials of the fifth degree and

above. The main function of the state academy directorate was to prepare students for the

annual examinations at the capital. It also housed the principal shrine to Confucius and to

the officially acknowledged exemplars of the Confucian commentarial tradition.[97]

When Dugu turned eighteen, his father passed away, and his mother assumed full

parental duties. Dugu continued to succeed in his studies and garner attention. In 744, at

the age of nineteen, Dugu published *Wuji Zhalun* 吳季札論, which was well received and

praised by his seniors.[98] Around that time, Xiao Yingshi took up residence in Puyang 濮

陽 (present-day Puyang in Henan 河南 province) and started teaching students, including

Dugu. Xiao eventually became famous for teaching a number of students who, like Dugu,

had left the metropolitan academy and were preparing for the examinations.[99] Under the

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[95] Jiang, *Dali shiren yanjiu*, p. 128.

[96] Jiang, "Zuowei shiren de Dugu Ji," p. 47; David McMullen, *State and Scholars in Tang China* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 17-18.

[97] McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, pp. 18-19.

[98] Wu Jizha (fl., 6th century BC) was heir to the Kingdom of Wu but renounced his claim to the throne. "On Wu Jizha," QTW 389:10a-11a; Dugu, *Piling ji*, juan 7; Jiang, "Zuowei shiren de Dugu Ji," p. 47.

[99] David McMullen, "Hsiao Ying-shih," in William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 427. McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, pp. 49-50.

tutelage of Xiao, Dugu successfully passed the Taoist-decree examination of 754. His

first post was as Junior Officer of Huayin 華陰, which was just east of Chang'an.[100]

With the onset of the An Lushan rebellion, Dugu fled his post to avoid capture.

When the two capitals were reclaimed in 757, Dugu traveled to the southeast to take up

minor posts. During the next two years, his mother and his two younger brothers all

passed away. He remained in the southeast during this time.

Under the reign of Daizong 代宗 (r. 762-779), Dugu occupied his most notable

posts. He was appointed Commissioner of the Left (*Zuoshiyi* 左拾遺) in 764, and the

next year, he was named Erudite in the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*taichang boshi* 太常

博士).[101] Starting in 768, Dugu began a provincial prefectship at Haozhou 濠州. Two

years later, he took up his next prefectship at Shuzhou 舒州 (both in modern Anhui

province 安徽). Finally, after three years in Shuzhou, he landed a prefectship in the

strategically significant Changzhou 常州 (modern Jiangsu 江苏), which was especially

sought by officials because of its prestige. Dugu remained there until his death in 777. He

received posthumously the canonization of "exemplary" (*xian* 憲).[102]

Like his peers in the *guwen* movement, Dugu championed the primacy of the

Confucian canon and the moral function of literature, condemning the dominant style as

ornamental and euphuistic. To climb his way up the ladder of officialdom, however, he

[100] David McMullen, "Tu-ku Chi," in William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 820.

[101] Jiang, "Zuowei shiren de Dugu Ji," p. 48.

[102] McMullen, "Tu-ku Ji," p. 821.

had to demonstrate that he could handle himself in the high-flown, hyperbolic style of his contemporaries, in which he proved to be a master.[103]

In addition, Dugu composed in the rare but greatly respected genre of *shiyi* 諡議 (treatises regarding honorary titles conferred on the dead). He also left a large number of epitaphs for members of his own family, as well as others. His corpus includes sacrificial prayers, inscriptions for institutions, occasional verse, and various texts for Buddhist monasteries and Daoist temples.

Moreover, Dugu had extensive relationships with various Buddhist establishments, including Tiantai and Chan figures. Dugu also had a hand in Chan hagiography, being commissioned by a Chan monastic community to write an inscription for a stele that commemorated the court's conferral of a title and name for Sengcan 僧粲 (death before 604) and his pagoda.[104]

By the end of his career, Dugu had many admirers, among whom were Cui Youfu 崔祐甫 (721-780), Chief Minister and director of the dynastic history, and Quan Deyu 權 德輿 (759-818), an extensively well-connected and influential intellectual of the late eighth and early ninth centuries.[105] By far Dugu's most significant student was Liang Su, who studied with him closely when Dugu was prefect of Changzhou and who edited and

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[103] McMullen, "Tu-ku Ji," p. 821.

[104] For a contentious study of this inscription, see Chen Jinhua, "One Name, Three Monks: Two Northern Chan Masters Emerge from the Shadow of Their Contemporary, the Tiantai Patriarch Zhanran (711-782)," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 22.1 (1999): 1-91, especially pp. 11-28.

[105] For a superb study of Quan Deyu, see Anthony DeBlasi, *Reform in the Balance: The Defense of Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

postfaced his collected writings. Dugu's influence on the later *guwen* movement also extended to his son, Dugu Yu 獨孤鬱 (778-816), who became a close friend of Han Yu.

The earliest extant version of Dugu's collected works originally edited by Liang Su, the *Piling Ji* 毗陵集, derives from a manuscript made in the imperial library by Wu Guan 吳琯 (1436-1504).[106] Piling was the hometown of Dugu Ji and coincidentally the hometown of Zhanran. This collection consists in seventeen *juan* of prose and three of poetry. Much of his writings are also extant in the major early Song anthologies, such as the *Quan Tang Wen* and the *Quan Tang Shi*.

Liang Su 梁肅 (753-793)

The most influential figure in the intellectual culture of the late eighth century, Liang Su was a key intermediary figure linking the pre-An Lushan generation of *gu wen* thinkers, such as Li Hua and Xiao Yingshi, with the forerunners of Neo-Confucianism in the ninth century, Li Ao 李翱 (772-841) and Han Yu.

Liang Su had two style names (*zi* 字)—Kuanzhong 寬中 and Jingzhi 敬之. Liang was descended from an aristocratic family originally based in Anding 安定 (northeast of modern Jingchuan 泾川 county in Gansu 甘肅 province). In the early Tang, Liang's family was still serving the central government as officials, but several generations before Liang, the family moved to Luhun 陸渾 (northeast of modern Song 嵩 county in Henan 河南 province) and was only able to secure local posts. His immediate family moved to

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[106] McMullen, "Tu-ku Ji," p. 821.

Hanguan 函關 (east of modern Xin'an 新安 county in Henan province) where Liang was born.[107]

The month after An Lushan's rebels captured Luoyang, they also took Hanguan. Two years after Luoyang was recovered in 757, Shi Siming 史思明 (d. 761) retook Luoyang. During these several years, the area surrounding Hanguan was a hotly contested military region. In this war-torn sector, Liang spent the first several years of his childhood. To avoid the military aftermath in Henan following the An Lushan rebellion, in 761, Liang's family fled to the Jiangnan 江南 area and the following year, moved temporarily to Suzhou 蘇州. In 763, they settled in the Changzhou 常州 area in the southeast, which had become a hotbed of intellectual culture.[108]

There is disagreement over the year in which Liang began to pursue his budding interest in Buddhism and started to study under Jingxi Zhanran. Hu Dajun and Zhang Chunwen record the date of his visit to the Tiantai Mountains 天台山 to study with Zhanran as early as 764, which would make Liang a very gifted eleven year old.[109] The

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[107] This account of Liang's life draws much from Kanda Kiichirō 神田喜一郎, "Ryō Shuku nenpu" 梁蕭年普, in *Tōhō gakkai sōritsu nijūgoshūnen kinen tōhōgaku ronshū* 東方學會創立二十五周年紀念東方學論集 (Tokyo: *Tōhō gakkai* 東方學會, 1972), pp. 259-274. See also Hu Dajun 胡大俊 and Zhang Chunwen 张春雯, "Liang Su nianpu gao," 梁肃年谱稿, *Gansu shehui kexue* 甘肃社会科学 6 (1996): 45-48.

[108] Hu Dajun and Zhang Chunwen, 6 (1996): 48-49.

[109] Hu Dajun and Zhang Chunwen, 6 (1996): 49; Liang Su, "Weimo jing shulue" 維摩經略疏, QTW 518.

more likely date is 771 based on evidence from Zhanran's biography in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*.[110]

During Liang's rise to prominence in the Jiangnan area, he joined the circle of poets and thinkers that gravitated around the poet-monk, Jiaoran 皎然 (730-799).[111] Liang's interpretation of Buddhism, however, seemed to deviate sharply from Jiaoran's type of eclecticism. For there is a distinct version of Buddhism dominating Liang's writings—Tiantai. This level of devotion to a specific kind of Buddhism was especially unusual for a lay follower during the Tang. In particular, Liang seemed devoted to his mentor, Zhanran. The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* claims that Liang was one of the three or four men who truly understood Zhanran's teachings.[112] Liang also studied under Yuan Hao 元浩 (death circa 817), whom Liang considered Zhanran's successor.

The year after his father passed away in 769, Liang, at the tender age of seventeen, became acquainted with Li Hua and Dugu Ji, both by then well established leaders of the literary world, who were greatly impressed by Liang's precociousness. In 774, Dugu Ji moved to Changzhou to take up his prestigious appointment there, and Liang returned to Changzhou to study formally with him. Three years later, when Dugu passed away, Liang collected and edited Dugu's works in twenty *juan* and added a postface.

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[110] *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* T50.2061.739b09-740a16. See Jiang Yin, *Dali shiren yanjiu*, pp. 572-573; Charles Hartman, "Liang Su," in William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 562.
[111] For poems of Jiaoran to Liang, see QTSh 918:9213, 919:9238.

[112] T. 50.2061.740a3-16. See possible skepticism regarding the sources of these claims, see Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 62.

In 779, Liang was appointed the magistrate of Tanzhou 潭州 (modern Changsha 长沙 in Hunan 湖南 province). In 780, by virtue of his brilliant literary abilities, Liang was called to Chang'an to take up the prestigious position of Reader-in-Waiting in the Eastern Palace (*Donggong xiao shulang* 東宮校書郎). Before the end of the year, however, Liang begged leave to visit his family in Jiangnan. He remained in the southeast and took up local posts. His ostensible reason for giving up his appointment in the capital and returning to the Jiangnan region was to be closer to his ailing mother.[113]

In 781, Liang moved to Changzhou to tend to his mother. Several months later, Liang was summoned to the capital to serve as Commissioner of the Right (*Yoshiyi* 右拾遺), but on account of his mother's condition, he resigned the post and returned to Changzhou.[114] While in Changzhou, Liang resumed his studies of Buddhism under Zhanran until 782, when Zhanran passed away. The following year, Liang's mother succumbed to her illness and passed away.

Relieved of his filial duty to his late mother, Liang returned to the capital to take up his original position as Commissioner of the Right. At this time, he also wrote his famous *Shanding Zhiguan* 刪定止觀, an apologetic document that consisted in an abridgement of Zhiyi's 智顗 (539-597) *Mohe Zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 and Liang's famous preface.[115] At the close of his term in 785, he returned to Changzhou.[116]

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[113] Hu Dajun and Zhang Chunwen, 1 (1997): 45.

[114] Jiang Yin, *Dali shiren yanjiu*, p. 583.

[115] X55.915.690-734; QTW 517

[116] Hu Dajun and Zhang Chunwen 1 (1997): 46.

By this time, Liang's professional network and literary influence were extraordinarily extensive. Upon his return to the capital in 790, Liang had many of the most promising scholars of the next generation seeking his support and instruction. In the subsequent year, Liang took up a position in the capital as Rectifier of Omissions of the Right 右補闕, entered the ranks of the Hanlin 翰林 academy, and resumed his position as imperial tutor in the Eastern Palace.

In 792, Liang supervised the *jinshi* examination that graduated Han Yu, Li Guan 李觀 (766-794), and several other political and literary leaders of the next generation. This class of successful *jinshi* candidates later became known as the *longhu bang* 龍虎榜 ("The cohort of Dragons and Lions").[117] Liang passed away a year later in Chang'an.

While Liang Su was an active mentor and teacher in his last years in the capital, modern studies have shown it unlikely that Li Ao or Han Yu had any extensive, personal contact with Liang.[118] Instead, his profound influence extended deeply throughout mid-Tang literary culture and left an indelible imprint on the thought of his intellectual successors.

Zhanran 湛然 (711-782)

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[117] See John Lee, "The Dragons and Tigers of 792: The Examination in T'ang History" *T'ang Studies* 6 (1988): 25-47.

[118] Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?*, pp. 60-65; Hartman, "Liang Su," p. 563.

One of the common threads tying together Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su is the close connection to the Sixth Tiantai Patriarch, Zhanran, who was responsible for several developments in Tiantai Buddhism.[119]

The life of Zhanran can be divided into four phases.[120] The first phase comprises his early years (711-727) before he left home in search of religious teachings and teachers. In the second (727-755), he accomplishes his lengthy religious training. The third (755-765) is his most productive period of writing and resulted in the publication of his most famous works. The final phase (765-782) was a time of revisions of previous points aimed at appealing to a wider audience.

Zhanran was born in Jinling Jingxi 晉陵荊溪 (modern Yixing 宜興 in Jiangsu 江苏) in 711.[121] His secular surname was Qi 戚. His family raised him in a household that provided him with an education in the Confucian classics. Zhanran was considered a precocious youth, excelling in his studies.[122]

From seventeen, Zhanran went traveling in search of religious teachers. In 728, he traveled to Jinhua 金華 (in modern Zhejiang 浙江),[123] where he met the monk, Fangyan 方岩 (dates unknown), and studied the *Mohe Zhiguan* 摩诃止观 under him.[124]

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[119] For the most recent full-length study of Zhanran's life and career, see Penkower.

[120] Penkower, pp. 35-37.

[121] Jinling was also known as Piling 毗齡, which was also the hometown of Dugu Ji.

[122] See *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T. 50.2068.739b09-740a06; *Fozu Tongji* 佛祖統紀 T. 49.2035.188c05-189b25.

[123] The biographical accounts in *Fozu Tongji*, *Shimen Zhengtong*, and *Tiantai Jiuzu Zhuan* differ slightly in their records of the year Zhanran left home. The discrepancy is

In 730, Zhanran met Xuanlang 玄郎 (673-754) on Mount Zuoxi 左溪 (in modern Zhejiang 浙江). Xuanlang had retired to this mountain around 703 where he remained, until his death in 754. The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* describes Xuanlang as "well-versed in the Confucian classics and Daoist texts. He did not find the study of these secular texts objectionable. But it was only through [the study and practice of] *zhiguan*, not through other [non-Buddhist] teachings, that one could reach enlightenment."[125] Though formulaic, this mention of his facility with Confucian and Daoist texts is conspicuous. Zhanran continued to study with Xuanlang until his own ordination in 748 at the unusually late age of thirty-eight.[126] Thus, Zhanran remained in Zhejiang studying Tiantai for over twenty years. There is relatively little known about Zhanran during his time of training on Mount Zuoxi.[127]

After his ordination, Zhanran left Zuoxi to study with the Vinaya master, Tanyi 曇一 (691-771) in Yuezhou 越州 (in modern Shaoxing 绍兴 county in Zhejiang). All of Zhanran's Buddhist training seems to have taken place in the Zhejiang region. Tanyi was

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one to three years. *Fozu Tongji* T. 49.2035.188c05ff.; *Shimen Zhengtong* 釋門正統 X. 75.1513.274c02-276b15; *Tiantai Jiuzu Zhuan* 天台九祖传 T. 51.2069.102c06-103b22.

[124] The only biographical information on Fangyan is in *Fozu Tonji*, which merely states that he taught the *Mohe Zhiguan* to Zhanran. T. 49.2035.245c12. For a possible relation of Fangyan to Xuanlang, see Penkower, p. 46.

[125] T. 50.2061.875c15-16. See Xuanlang's biography in *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* T. 50.2061.875b26-876a22.

[126] Penkower conjectures that the late ordination anticipated Zhanran's departure from Xuanlang to study Vinaya under another master. Penkower, p. 59.

[127] For a good summary of available data, see Penkower, pp. 53-58.

of Korean descent from a family who had been living in China for generations.[128]

Zhanran may have become interested in studying with Tanyi because Tanyi was a major

disciple of Fashen 法慎 (666-748), who was known for teaching that Tiantai *zhiguan*

encapsulated the overall meaning of all the sutras and that all Buddhist doctrine is all-

encompassing and includes even the insights of Confucianism.[129]

This theme of including Confucianism within the scope of Buddhism is carried

into Zhanran's own teachings:

> The spread of Buddha's teachings depends upon these. Ritual and music must
> first be propounded. Then the true *dao* can be put forth… The *Qingjing Faxing
> Jing* 清淨法行經 declares: 'Candraprabha (*Yueguang* "Moonlight") Bodhisattva
> is known there as Yan Hui 顔回 (a disciple of Confucius). Guangjing 光净
> Bodhisattva is known as Confucius. And Jiasa 迦葉 Bodhisattva is known as
> Laozi.' Since the point of reference [of that sutra] is India, 'there' indicates 'here'
> (China).[130]

This attempt to harmonize religious and sectarian divisions is characteristic of Tiantai and

Zhanran's *panjiao* syncretism, which treats non-Tiantai teachings not as mutually

exclusive but as forming a hierarchy of truth with Tiantai at the top.[131] This scheme

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[128] For Tanyi's biography, see *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* T. 50.2061.798a22-799a15.

[129] For Fashen's biography, see *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* T. 50.2061.796b14-797a07.

[130] 佛教流化實賴於茲。禮樂前驅真道後啟。。。 清淨法行經云。月光菩薩彼稱顔回。光淨菩薩彼稱仲尼。迦葉菩薩彼稱老子。天竺指此震旦為彼。*Zhiguan Fuxing Chuanhongjue* 止觀輔行傳弘決 T. 46.1912.343c15-20. The *Qingjing Faxing Jing* is no longer extant. See Penkower, pp. 66-67.

[131] Penkower, p. 67. See also Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

incorporates Confucianism, which most likely appealed to the eighth century scholar-elites who, like Li and Liang, gravitated toward Zhanran. Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) too, the great literary figure of the generation of Han Yu and Li Ao, is listed among Zhanran's disciples.[132] So the borders of orthodoxy during this period were not as clearly drawn as commonly depicted, not just between Buddhist sects but also between Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings.[133] Thus, Zhanran's decision to study under a Vinaya master is not so strange once one sees the connection with *zhiguan* teachings and understands how faint the borders between sects and traditions were.

After leaving Tanyi, Zhanran sojourned to Kaiyuan Temple 开元寺 in Wujun 吴郡 (in modern Jiangsu 江苏) and practiced *zhiguan* and lectured on the *Mohe Zhiguan.*

When Xuanlang died in 754, Zhanran returned to Mount Zuoxi. The following year, he went to Lin'an 臨安 (modern Zhejiang 浙江) to compose the first draft of his *Zhiguan Fuxing Chuanhongjue* 止觀輔行傳弘決. But with the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion, he moved in 756 to the Guoqing Temple 国清寺 on Mount Tiantai 天台山 to evade the violence. When the war made its way to the area of Mount Tiantai, Zhanran moved several times around the region.[134]

In 758, Zhanran arrived in his hometown of Piling, which was also the hometown of Dugu Ji, and stayed until early 762.[135] He then returned to Mount Tiantai and

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[132] *Fozu Tongji*, T. 49.2035.201b03.

[133] See Appendix for more on this issue.

[134] Penkower, pp. 70-80

continued his prolific productivity. During this period in Piling and Mount Tiantai,

Zhanran composed almost all his major works on *zhiguan*.[136]

Especially noteworthy in this regard is his text written for his favorite lay disciple,

Li Hua. This, the *Zhiguan Dayi* 止觀大意, was written for Li during Li's exile and later

self-enforced retirement. It is probable that Li commissioned this text in person and that

the two met while Zhanran was in his hometown of Piling, as it was in Li's region.[137]

In 774, Zhanran traveled to Mount Wutai 五台山. Shortly thereafter, on his return

to Mount Tiantai, Zhanran stopped briefly in Suzhou 蘇州, where he instructed

Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839), who would later become the fourth Huayan 華嚴

patriarch.[138] Zhanran then returned to Mount Tiantai in 775-76. At this point, Zhanran

had received several invitations to court, but he turned down all of them.[139]

In 782, Zhanran passed away on Mount Tiantai while teaching his students. Liang

Su wrote his memorial inscription.[140]

Conclusions

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[135] Piling was also known as Jinling. For an explanation reconciling the various biographical discrepancies on his dates in Piling, see Penkower, pp. 81-84.

[136] Penkower, pp. 87-92.

[137] See Penkower, pp. 90-91.

[138] This is recounted in Chengguan's biography in *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* T. 50.2061.737a04-c20, and in *Fozu Tongji* T. 49.2035.293a26-294a28.

[139] See Penkower's discussion of a possible exception late in Zhanran's life. Penkower, pp. 109-110.

[140] *Fozu Tongji* T. 49.2035.189b04-25.

In sum, Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su were highly sensitive to their roles and responsibilities in continuing a glorious but long lost cultural tradition bequeathed to them by the ancient sage-kings. As a line of scholar-elites spanning almost the entirety of the eighth century, Li, Dugu, and Liang formed a kind of informal lineage, each developing ideas on moral psychology and self-cultivation that shared much in common with prevailing Buddhist theories, especially as taught by Zhanran, whose career spanned the lives of all three of these figures. Zhanran was not only a seminal figure in the Tiantai lineage, he was also instrumental in shaping the direction of the eighth century *guwen* movement in its evolving views on the *dao* and its connection with *wen*.

These three thinkers in particular constituted a coherent group. Liang Su compiled and edited Dugu's collected writings and traced his intellectual heritage through Dugu and then Li Hua. Dugu Ji took a keen and early interest in the career of the precocious Liang, while also valorizing Li as the prime mover in the movement to restore ancient cultural values. There were of course other major figures involved, such as Xiao Yingshi, but Li, Dugu, and Liang constituted a self-conscious and cohesive line of scholar-elites with a common cultural, religious, and moral agenda.

Chapter 3

Syncretism and Discursive Resources in Tang Intellectual History

Beyond Syncretism: Resource, Repertoire, and Religion

A natural first step to evaluating the utility of a category is to locate or determine

its definition. Syncretism is, however, a confusing concept whose content seems to

change with the whims of its wielders. Part of the problem with defining the term is its

contentious past and complicated etymology. The first instance of the term 'syncretism'

(*sunkretismos*) is found in Plutarch's *Moralia* (ca. 50–120 CE), where Plutarch discusses

how the Cretans often quarreled with each other but when confronted with an outside

enemy, made up their differences and united. This, Plutarch says, is what the Cretans

called "syncretism."[141]

Some scholars have pointed out that this usage has very little to do with the

modern meaning of the term. Instead, they contend that the term 'syncretism' stems from

sunkeranumi, which means to mix things that are incompatible.[142] This was used by

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[141] Cited in Carsten Colpe, "Syncretism," in Mircea Eliade, editor in chief, *Encyclopedia of Religion, vol. 14* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1987), p. 218.

[142] Anita Leopold and Jeppe S. Jensen, "Introduction to Part II," in Leopold and Jensen, eds., *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader* (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2004), p. 14,

Protestant theologians to denounce heresies against Reformed orthodoxy. In this polemical context, the guardians of orthodoxy employed the verb, *sunkretizein*, which meant to combine the confessional differences of competing Reformed sects. The humanistic theologians Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469-1536) and Georg Calixt (1586-1656) both employed the term *sunkretizein* to describe their aims and were subsequently accused of practicing *sunkretizein*.[143] The religious authorities considered their theologies dangerous because they were pro-Catholic and were seen as a betrayal of principles and an attempt to secure unity at the expense of truth.[144] The shifts in syncretism's meanings over time were largely a product of its changing polemical contexts. Rather than giving the history of its many definitions, a better way of getting at the core issues surrounding syncretism as an analytical category is to examine the problems directly. These polemical issues often directly dictated the changes in the definitions of syncretism.

Perhaps the most pressing problem with the category of syncretism is its polemical nature and its use as a pejorative term, one that derides mixture.[145] This attitude to syncretism can be traced to its contentious past, which is rooted in theological contexts. 'Syncretism' entered the discourse on religious studies in the wake of the Reformation and acquired overriding negative connotations that it has carried ever since.

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citing H. Usener, *Gotternamen. Versuch einer Lehre von der Religiosen Begriffsbildung* (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1896), pp. 337-340.

[143] Leopold and Jensen, "Introduction to Part II," p. 15.

[144] J. Moffat, "Syncretism," in J. Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. 155, quoted in Leopold and Jensen, "Introduction to Part II," p. 16.

[145] For an excellent volume of essays on this subject, see Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw, eds., *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

This derogatory view of syncretism remained firmly in place during the ensuing period of missionary expansion. It became a term of abuse applied to castigate colonial local churches that had freed themselves from mission control and had begun to indigenize Christianity "illegitimately."[146]

In this context, Hendrik Kraemer, a historian of religions and missiologist engaged in the International Missionary Council, wrote a now oft-maligned book entitled, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.[147] For Kraemer, syncretism is primarily a non-Christian phenomenon. At first, Kraemer denies that Christianity and Islam are syncretistic, but then admits that syncretism is inevitable and can even be found in anti-syncretistic religions like Christianity and Islam. Contrary to these religions, however, non-Christian religions have an innate syncretistic tendency, leading them naturally into an illegitimate mingling of religions. He believes that syncretism represents a radical departure from authentic religious truth.[148]

The pejorative attitude of European Churches toward syncretism evident in the theological disputes of the seventeenth century was continued through missionary policy and ideology and was then carried into academic anthropology. In a well-known passage at the end of his *Nuer Religion*, Evans-Pritchard reasonably remarked that anthropologists

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[146] Stewart, "Syncretism and Its Synonyms," pp. 45-46.

[147] Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938).

[148] See the discussions in Robert Baird, *Category Formation and the History of Religions* (the Netherlands: Mouton & Co N.V., 1971), pp. 142-152; Leopold and Jensen, "Introduction to Part II," in Leopold and Jensen, eds., *Syncretism in Religion*, pp. 22-23.

and theologians occupy distinct fields.[149] Anthropologists could describe the socio-cultural context and form of religious beliefs, but they were not in a position to judge the validity of these beliefs. In so doing, as an anthropologist and theorist of syncretism, Evans-Pritchard surrendered the term to theologians and missionaries, who perpetuated its derogatory connotations. And, as Charles Stewart claims, "these [negative connotations] could never be kept entirely out of anthropological discourse."[150]

Another means by which syncretism acquired a pejorative slant in anthropology is through its connection to colonialism, for modern ethnology was born in the context of European colonization and was first conducted by assiduous missionaries or colonizers. The concomitant colonialist notions of race and culture transferred into later anthropological studies more or less intact. In general, syncretism referred to innovations following the process of mixing of opposed cultural forms.[151] The term kept its negative reputation from theology when early ethnographers continued to insinuate that the products of syncretism were *ipso facto* incomplete and impure. The history of colonization and its attendant missionary expansion highlight the extent to which ascriptions of syncretism can serve as expressions of power and social control.

Part of what is behind this pejorative view of syncretism is the belief that syncretistic entities harbor elements that are logically incompatible with each other. And some scholars insist on defining syncretism as a logically inconsistent mixture, thereby

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[149] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956).

[150] Stewart, "Syncretism and Its Synonyms," p. 46.

[151] See the discussion in Leopold and Jensen, "Introduction to Part IV," in Leopold and Jensen, eds., *Syncretism in Religion*, pp. 142-143.

perpetuating its pejorative associations.[152] Although it is theoretically possible for a

syncretism to be a logically consistent blend, the negative connotations are already so

entrenched that scholarly insistence to the contrary would largely be in vain.

A further criticism of syncretism as a category is related to the connection

between syncretism and the quest for origins. Syncretism is often used to describe the

process by which a religion arises from two or more distinct, autonomous religious or

cultural entities that *predate* the syncretistic fusion. But as some scholars have pointed

out, not only are such pre-existing, unadulterated entities little more than analytic

abstractions, but the very search for origins is endless. As the historian of religions

Robert Baird remarks, "The historian must jump into the stream of history somewhere if

he is to study anything… The only limitation placed on the historian's quest is the limits

of the information available as one moves into the remote past." This limitation imposed

by the availability of data might prevent the historian from ever discovering the source,

but even if more data were found, "the historical method will push the historian back still

further in his search for historical antecedents."[153] Just as syncretism has often been

deployed in polemical contexts, so too is the vain search for origins often driven by

ideological or sectarian motives and in the service of rhetorical functions.[154]

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[152] For example, see Hendrik M. Vroom, "Syncretism and Dialogue: A Philosophical Analysis," in Jerald D. Gort, et al., eds., *Dialogue and Syncretism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), pp. 26-35; Richard F. Gombrich, *Buddhist Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[153] Baird, p. 145.

[154] See Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Search for Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origin of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

What is criticized here is not the attempt to locate the proximate causes of phenomena or to trace part of the trajectory of an idea through history. Rather, it is the undisclosed agenda, with its normative or teleological end, that is behind the quest for the once and for all, ultimate origin, source, or absolute beginning of religion(s).

A neglected aspect of this search for origins in the discourse around syncretism is the distinction between syncretism as a process and as a state. Most objections in this regard have been leveled against syncretism as a description of a process, one which can never be traced to its ultimate beginning. But supporters of the utility of syncretism could reply that syncretism is best used to denote the "state or condition in which the characteristics of the object are systematically correlated among themselves."[155] This can apply to an entire religion, or to its particular components or traits. As a description of the state or condition of a religion and not the process by which the religion arose, scholars of syncretism could escape the charges of searching for origins and of relying on entities that predate the syncretistic mixture. Since syncretism refers to the state or condition of the religion, it is silent about how the religion began and says nothing about what predated the religious amalgam. So while most recent scholarship, especially on Chinese religions, has focused on analyzing syncretism as a process, treating 'syncretism' as a state or condition instead would free one from the objections raised in this section.[156]

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[155] Colpe, p. 219.

[156] A recent trend in studies of syncretism as process draws inspiration from theories of linguistics that attempt to discover a universal grammar or general mode of cognition underlying all our language and ways of thinking. For example, see the studies of syncretism as "creolization" cited in Part IV of Leopold and Jensen, eds., *Syncretism in Religion*, pp. 142-254.

A different but closely related criticism is that syncretism presupposes two or more pure and discrete religious entities. Yet historians of religions have long expressed the view that there are no "pure" religious traditions.[157] The history of Buddhism presents an excellent example. The standard account depicts the construction of Chinese Buddhism as an autonomous religious system originating in India and assimilating a variety of local traditions, practices, and cults as it traveled across Asia. However, to take only the case of Chinese Buddhism, the putative encounter between Buddhism and Chinese culture "was with a Buddhism already sinified."[158]

Some advocates of the category 'syncretism' readily concede that there exist no pure, ideal religious traditions. They contend that all that needs to be accepted is that syncretism involves the combination of elements from two or more traditions that are different.[159] Thus, syncretism is the mixing of two or more religious traditions that are themselves already syncretized, but syncretized in different configurations or combinations. In this sense, syncretism is a universal characteristic of those entities falling under the general category of 'religion.'

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[157] Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, trans., J. E. Turner (New York: MacMillian Publishing, 1938), p. 609, cited in Andre Droogers, "Syncretism: The Problem of Definition, the Definition of the Problem," in Jerald Gort, et. al., eds., *Dialogue and Syncretism*, p. 9.

[158] Robert Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the* Treasure Store Treatise (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press and the Kuroda Institute, 2002), p. 18. See also Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries AD)," *Artibus Asiae* 47 (1986): 263-352; Stanley K. Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[159] Charles Stewart, "Syncretism and Its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture," *Diacritics* 29.3 (Fall 1999): 55.

But if all religions are syncretistic, how useful can this description be? As Baird has objected, if it is true that such borrowing, blending, and influencing is universal and inevitable in the formation of religions, then:

> [N]o real purpose is served by applying the term syncretism to such a phenomenon. Historically speaking, to say that 'Christianity' or the 'mystery religions' or 'Hinduism' are syncretistic is not to say anything that distinguishes them from anything else and is merely equivalent to admitting that each has a history and can be studied historically.[160]

The syncreticity of all religions is thus an unexceptional fact. All religions are and have always been composites of various historical elements, and they will continue to contribute to new hybrid religions in the future.

In this dissertation, therefore, I shall set aside 'syncretism' as an analytical category and employ a different set of terms: discursive resources and repertoires. The resources include terms, concepts, and phrases that, while variously employed by diverse traditions, did not belong exclusively to any one tradition. They were available to intellectuals of the time to draw upon in making their points.

In conceiving of religions in terms of repertoires, I draw upon the research in cultural sociology, especially the work of Charles Tilly, who has pioneered the use of 'repertoire' an analytical category, as well as the research by Ann Swidler, who has shown with detailed empirical evidence how people use culture as a repertoire that they perform in negotiating their lives.[161] In this connection, it is helpful to think of the use of

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160 Baird, p. 146.

these terms in the visual and performing arts. The image implies that individuals can vary in their command of the movements, phrases, scenes, pieces, or plays in their repertoires. Not only can individuals differ in their mastery of the repertoire, they can also cultivate and hone their skills in wielding the array of resources available to them.

Thinking of religions in terms of repertoires and resources avoids the three main objections against syncretism. First, repertoires are built and wielded by people and are not attributed to religions themselves since people have agency and not religions, which are abstractions. On this, Robert Campany states:

> [We] should avoid picturing religions as really existent things in the world; as organisms; as hard-sided, clearly demarcated containers of people and things; and as agents, because picturing them in all these ways falsifies the actual state of things and skews our research question in unfortunate ways. Religions do not exist, at least not in the same way that people and their textual and visual artifacts and performances do. And when religions are metaphorically imagined as doing things, it becomes harder to see the agents who really and nonmetaphorically do things: people.[162]

Speaking in terms of religious repertoires avoids treating religions as pure or discrete entities and circumvents the essentialism objection.

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[161] See especially Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Swidler, *Talk of Love*. Strangely, in her *Talk of Love*, Swidler neglects to mention the work of Tilly. See also Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religion," and Hymes, *Way and Byway*. Martin J. Powers utilizes "repertoires of contention" in a related way. See his *Pattern and Person: Ornament, Society, and Self in Classical China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[162] Campany, p. 319.

Moreover, examining resources within repertoires says nothing about the ultimate origins of any one religion, thereby avoiding the origins objection. Furthermore, the terms 'repertoire' and 'resource' are free of pejorative connotations.

In what follows, I shall show how three key intellectuals of the eighth-century drew upon Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian sources in explicating their views of one resource in particular, the *dao*, in such a way that the final product was not Buddhist, Daoist, or Confucian. This is mainly because, I argue, the central concepts, terms, and phrases upon which they built their theories were not, for the most part, the sole preserve of any one tradition. Instead, they operated as discursive resources in the repertoires of these important scholar-officials.

The Discursive Resources of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su

In this section, I chart how Li, Dugu, and Liang utilize various discursive resources, focusing mainly on *dao*, in describing their solution to social disorder. For them, the importance of literary culture (*wen*) was overshadowed by their overriding concern for recovering, maintaining, and elucidating the *dao*. Their method involved arousing the mind so that one can follow principle and rectify one's nature. By recovering one's original nature, one is thereby in harmony with the *dao.* Much of what these three thinkers write on *dao*, the mind, *li*, and the nature anticipate later Neo-Confucian theories of self-cultivation.

"This Dao of Ours"

Peter Bol has argued that *siwen* 斯文, which he translates as "this culture of ours," constituted the controlling idea in reference to which the Tang and Song dynasty (960-1279) elite constructed their axiologies. In the early Tang, Bol argues, scholar-elites thought that *wen* were models and forms that were based on a tradition stretching back to the time of the ancient sage-kings, and transmitted by Confucius through the Classics.[163] *Wen* included the textual legacy of the past and the manner in which it was, and should continue to be, expressed. The *wen* created by the sages and former kings, from which the cumulative tradition arose, both replicated and preserved the manifest patterns of heaven-and-earth (*tiandi* 天地), and served as guides for the harmonious functioning of human society. They further assumed that *wen* directly influenced behavior, so they synthesized the traditions of the past in support of the newly unified Tang empire:[164]

> T'ang and Sung dynasty (960-1279) scholars participated in "This Culture of Ours": they mastered the traditions, they imitated them in practice, and they continued and elaborated on them with their own scholarship and literary writing. They could claim, as Confucius had before them, that by maintaining 'This Culture of Ours' as a cumulative tradition they were according with the natural order of things and continuing the legacy of antiquity.[165]

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[163] Although focusing on literary culture, Bol's periodization differs slightly from the traditional periodization of literary history into early, high, middle, and late. For the weaknesses of the traditional periodization, see Paul W. Kroll, "Poetry of the T'ang Dynasty," in Victor H. Mair, ed., *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 275.

[164] Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 76-107.

[165] Bol, p. 1.

In the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion of 755-763, the same scholar-elites who sought to save *siwen* suffered through a crisis of faith in the viability of that culture to influence behavior and ameliorate contemporary problems.[166] Tang scholar-elites from Li Hua in the eighth century to Han Yu in the ninth helped to dismantle, often unintentionally, the foundation of the aristocratic culture of medieval China by introducing a "self-conscious inquiry and debate over ideas."[167] These scholar-elites came to believe that writing had to be grounded in a personal understanding of the *dao*. By the end of the Tang, this trend ultimately brought about the separation of "thinking about values" from "thinking about cultural forms," and when eventually scholar-elites began to ponder what values they should seek rather than what literary styles they should employ, the search for the *dao* became primary.[168]   During the eighth-century, these two grand concepts, *wen* and *dao*, vied for supremacy among the intellectual elites. Eighth-century scholars viewed *wen* as the medium for illuminating the *dao*. As Liang Su explains in his preface to Dugu Ji's collected works:

> The greatest is the heavenly *dao*. Next is human *wen*. In ancient times, the sage-kings used it to regulate the hundred measures. The ministers below used it to augment the five teachings [on virtue]. When virtue deteriorated even further, complaints manifested in the songs, and criticisms appeared in the official records.

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[166] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 109. Another important change in the post-rebellion period was a shift of the creative center of scholarship from court-sponsored projects and institutions to private scholarship and informal writing. Cf., David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For a slightly different kind of post-rebellion shift toward the "private sphere," see Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese 'Middle Ages'* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

[167] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 110.

[168] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, p. 109.

> Thus, the *dao* and virtue (*de* 德), humaneness and justice, would not be illuminated except through *wen*.[169]

Thus, by Liang's time, developing *wen* was already no longer an end in itself. *Wen* had become a means for establishing the *dao*. In addition to being the medium for expressing the *dao*, *wen* also served as the vehicle for spreading or propagating the *dao*.[170] Relegated to a supporting role, *wen* had become merely ancillary to *dao*, as can also be seen in Liang's description of Dugu Ji, "[Whenever Dugu spoke,] he always put *dao* and virtue before the study of *wen*."[171]

Throughout most of Chinese history, *dao* was a hotly contested term. It functioned as a discursive resource that could be and was appropriated by diverse traditions and various individuals.[172] While during the early Tang, the more commonly occurring phrase may have been "This Culture of Ours" (*siwen*), Liang and others also referred to "This *Dao* of Ours" (*sidao*).[173]

What did *dao* mean to Liang Su and what place did it have in his repertoire? For Liang, the *dao* was first and foremost the "way" of Buddhism. As he set out in his *A*

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[169] 夫大者天道，其次人文，在昔圣王以之经纬百度，臣下以之弼成五教。德又下衰，则怨刺形於歌咏，讽议彰乎史册。故道德仁义，非文不明。QTW 518.3b-4a.

[170] QTW 518.5b-6a. Bol translates *fayang* 發揚 as "expresses" but a more accurate rendering in this context is to spread or propagate.

[171] QTW518.5b.

[172] For a recent work that charts some of these uses of *dao*, see Robert F. Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42.4 (2003): 287-319.

[173] QTW 517:14a, 522:8a, 393:16a. See also 517:15b, 518:23a.

Treatise on Tiantai Doctrine (天台法門議 *Tiantai Famenyi*), Liang states: "To practice

the teachings of the Buddha, there are just three matters [to attend to]. These are

discipline, meditation, and wisdom (*jie, ding, hui* 戒定慧). 'This *Dao* of Ours' begins

with stimulating the mind and results in enlightenment."[174] Among his many references

to the *dao* are his frequent pronouncements that the substance of the Great *Dao* is the

cosmic body of the Buddha.[175]

Given that the *dao* for Liang is so closely connected to standard Buddhist

teachings, it should be no surprise that the vehicle for propagating the *dao* is not just *wen*.

Liang criticized the scholars of his day for relying too much on embellished language and

stylized writing.[176] Liang outlines in detail how the Tiantai Buddhist practice of *zhiguan*

止觀 ("calm and contemplation") is what will "rescue the world and illumine the *dao*."[177]

What then is this *zhiguan*? From the start of his *The Overall Meaning of Tiantai*

Calming and Cessation (*Tiantai Zhiguan Tongliyi* 天台止觀統議), Liang Su explains

how *zhiguan* is the method that enables one to see beyond the particularized principles of

the myriad *dharmas* and returns one to true reality, which grounds our inherent natures:

> What is the function of *zhiguan*? It is what guides the [particularized] principles
> (*li*) of the myriad *dharmas* (*fa* 法) and returns one to reality (*shiji* 實際). What is
> reality? It is the original nature (*xingzhiben* 性之本).[178] The reason things are

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[174] Liang 517:14a.

[175] QTW 519:10a-b.

[176] QTW 517:18a

[177] QTW 517:18a

unable to return [to the original nature] is because they move (*dong*) in darkness (*hun*). To shine light on the darkness is called illumination (*ming*) and to halt movement is called quiescence (*jing*). Illumination and quiescence are the substance (*ti*) of *zhiguan*. The cause is called *zhiguan*. The effect is called wisdom and stillness (*zhiding*). The cause is called practice (*xing*). The effect is called completion (*cheng*). To practice is to practice this [*zhiguan*]. To complete it is to demonstrate this [*zhiding*—wisdom and stillness] as evidence [that one has carried out *zhiguan* successfully].[179]

The practice of "calm and contemplation" (*zhiguan*) directly counteracts our

tendencies toward constant activity in a state of spiritual, moral, and epistemic darkness,

preventing us from recovering our true natures. Through *zhiguan*, one reaches a state of

wisdom and stillness, which is evidence that one has practiced *zhiguan* successfully.

Even more significantly, the *zhiguan* practice guides us from the confusing morass of the

myriad *dharmas'* particularized principles to their common basis in the universal nature

(*xing*), which is intimately connected with the universal principle.[180] The passage above

implies that "reality" is identical to the universal principle, which is itself the root of

nature.[181] The practice of *zhiguan* enables the practitioner to go from seeing just the

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[178] Possibly, "Root of the nature."

[179] 夫止觀何為也。導萬法之理而復於實際者也。實際者何也。性之本也。物之所以不能復者。昏與動使之然也。照昏者謂之明。駐動者謂之靜。明與靜止觀之體也。在因謂之止觀。在果謂之智定。因謂之行。果謂之成。行者行此者也。成者證此者也。 T49.2035.0438c27-0439a04; QTW 517:15b-16a.

[180] Thus, Liang anticipates a main contention of later Neo-Confucianism, which identifies the nature (*xing*) with principle (*li*).

[181] This metaphysical dimension of the 'real' (*shiji*) is in contrast to a common *guwen* emphasis on the 'real' in the sense of practical, everyday concerns and events. The rhetoric around this practical 'real' is used to counteract the composition of flowery or artful language as an end in itself. An example of this is in Bai Juyi's preface to his "New Folk Songs" (*Xin Yuefu*).

particularized manifestations of the universal principle to realizing the universal principle itself.[182]

Liang has explained how practicing the Tiantai teaching of *zhiguan* enables one to grasp the universal principle and thus illuminate the *dao*. This is, of course, a radical departure from the early Tang position that literary culture (*wen*) reproduced the constant principles of the universe and that hence, moral reform could come only through literary culture. It goes even further than what Bol has pointed out as simply separating morality from culture.[183]

For Liang, salvation lay outside the classical texts. He found the solution to the cultural crisis in a Tiantai Buddhist practice, which he believed leads not only to a Buddhist enlightenment but to a harmonious and orderly kingdom.

What place, then, does Liang see for literary culture (*wen*)? In one instance, Liang asserts that *dao* will not be made clear except through *wen*, thus seeming to give *wen* a necessary role in the expression of *dao*.[184] Elsewhere, however, Liang proclaims that *zhiguan* is "what will save the world and illumine *dao*."[185] He laments that "people today still rely especially on embellished language to explain [the teachings.]"[186] There thus

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[182] This distinction between manifested principle and universal principle also anticipates another major contention of Song Neo-Confucianism.

[183] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours",* p. 109ff.

[184] QTW 518:3b-4a.

[185] T49.2035.0439.b27; QTW 517:18a.

[186] T49.2035.0439.b29-c01; QTW 517:18a.

seems to be a tension here between seeing *wen* as the necessary or only means for expressing the *dao* versus *zhiguan* as the proper medium for illuminating the *dao*.

One possible explanation is that Liang's thinking on this relationship changed over time. His *Zhiguan Tongli* was written about seven years before his preface to Dugu's collected works.[187] So it is certainly possible that his views on the priority of *wen* or *dao* shifted, but such a radical departure from his earlier stance would surely have been reflected more clearly in his other writings. There was also little occurring in his life during those years to elicit such a dramatic response.

Some scholars have resorted to explaining away the Buddhist elements by appealing to a division of public and private spheres, in which the Buddhist writings are relegated to a distinct private space.[188] However, textual evidence is abundant showing that these thinkers did not compartmentalize their lives or thoughts in this way. For Liang, knowing and promoting the *dao* was not necessarily contingent on the medium of *wen*, and he explained this in the same documents in which he laid out his views on the role and function of literary culture (*wen*), that is, in the putatively "public" documents. At least in his writings, Liang combines both "public" and "private" concerns. His theories and arguments in his Buddhist writings also had greater implications for supposedly public issues, such as good governance.

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[187] Jiang Yin 蒋寅. *Dali shiren yanjiu* 大历诗人研究. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1995, vol. 2, pp. 577-586.

[188] In addition to Bol, see David McMullen, "Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid-Eighth-Century," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 91-93.

For Liang, *dao* had priority over and was not dependent on literary culture (*wen*). In mourning the passing of his mentor, Dugu Ji, Liang laments that with the loss of Dugu, both "This *Dao* of Ours" (*sidao*) and "This Culture of Ours" (*siwen*) were in decay, but it was not because *dao* was contingent on *wen* for its expression.[189] In his preface to the collected works of Li Hua's nephew, Li Han, a decidedly non-Buddhist document, Liang elaborates on the relation between *wen* and *dao*: "Thus, the root of *wen* is in the *dao*. When *dao* was lost, *wen* had to be broadened using *qi* ("vital energy"), which proved inadequate…"[190] As Liang claims here, *dao* is not dependent on *wen*; in fact, *wen* has its foundation in the *dao*. It would thus be reasonable that *dao* could be expressed and reached through other means, such as through the Tiantai practice of *zhiguan*.

Thus, even in his writings that were not explicitly produced for and in Buddhist contexts, Liang maintains the independence of *dao* and *wen* and asserts the primacy of *dao* over *wen*. However, one is still left in Liang's writings on literary culture (*wen*) with the conflict between describing *wen* as the necessary medium for the *dao* and *zhiguan* as the best way to reach the *dao*.

Here we can see the effects of operating in an unsettled cultural milieu and in a period of social transformation in which people are questioning and overturning established traditions and previously held systems of belief. The An Lushan rebellion of the mid-eighth century drove the imperial family out of the capital and threw the government into an institutional crisis. Scholar-elites, who either fled the invaders or were forced to serve the rebels, traced the court's inability to re-establish central authority

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[189] QTW 522:8a.

[190] QTW 518.5b-6a.

to a much earlier and more profound crisis of culture. As Ann Swidler has remarked, "In such periods, ideologies—explicit, articulated, highly organized meaning systems (both political and religious)—establish new languages and styles for new strategies of action."[191]

While still being worked out, these "ideologies" are not perfectly consistent, but they "aspire to offer unified answers to questions of how human beings should live."[192] While in this state of flux, ideologies claim ground in a contested cultural arena. Their influence is strong but not deep because, at least initially, such systems of thought do not provide a complete repertoire of resources. Even as people explore new ways of thinking and acting, they still depend a great deal on their traditions. This new ideology thus adds new elements to an existing repertoire of resources, but it does not fully supplant the previous repertoire.[193]

In the case of these eighth-century scholar-officials, the "new" way of thinking came from Buddhism, and specifically, from Tiantai Buddhism. Although Li, Dugu, and especially Liang had extensive knowledge about the Buddhism of their time, they wrote in "unsettled" situations, and their thinking on the *dao* and on solutions for their current cultural crisis was still in its formative stages. Their occasionally inconsistent attempts to reconcile the early Tang fixation on *wen* with their own confidence in Tiantai *zhiguan* are

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[191] Swidler, p. 99. Swidler here draws on the work of Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[192] Swidler, p. 99.

[193] Swidler, p. 101.

symptomatic of their unsettled contexts and their struggle to accommodate a diversity of new discursive resources in their broader cultural-religious-intellectual repertoires.

For Liang, the central role of the *dao* went beyond its links to literary culture (*wen*) and Tiantai practice. Grasping the *dao* was so crucial because without it, the task of restoring harmony to the kingdom would prove impossible. Good governance was dependent on the ascendancy of the *dao*. Unless rulers and ministers apprehended and lived in accordance with the *dao*, they would be unable to govern properly.[194] Moreover, Liang took pains to emphasize that one should be concerned not with moving up in status or position (*wei* 位), but with whether the "way" was blocked up or flowing freely, that is, whether people were following the *dao*.[195] Of course, living in an "unsettled" socio-economic context, Liang lamented those instances in which a man has grasped the *dao*, but lacks the opportunity to take office and make a difference in the kingdom.[196] He admitted that without these professional and political opportunities, the *dao* would not be fully manifested in the government or the kingdom.[197] Liang was a realist in this regard. This explains much of his drive to locate and successfully secure such opportunities for promising young men taking the examinations, such as Han Yu. His influence over mainstream elite circles persisted long after his death.[198]

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[194] QTW 519:5a

[195] QTW 518:2a-b.

[196] QTW518:16b.

[197] QTW 518:21a-b; 522:8a.

[198] See especially John Lee, "The Dragons and Tigers of 792: The Examination in T'ang History," *T'ang Studies* 6 (1988): 25-47. For more on Liang's intellectual influence, see

In insisting that social harmony depends on recovering and preserving the *dao*, Liang echoed a persistent theme in the writings of Li Hua and Dugu Ji.[199] But Li Hua and Dugu Ji also brought other resources to bear in describing how one could preserve the *dao.* Both Li and Dugu asserted that this could not be done through words or language. In fact, literary embellishments (*yan* 言) harm the *dao.* For Dugu, the cultural crisis resulted from an over-reliance on literary expression, which prevented the recovery of the *dao.*[200] So for both Dugu and Li, as with Liang, literary culture was not the answer to restoring social harmony. Instead, in addition to the "This *Dao* of Ours" (*sidao*) referring to the way of the Buddha, it was also the way of Daoism and the Confucian Classics, and Dugu advocated looking to such texts as the *Daode Jing* and the Five Classics as sources for finding the *dao.*[201]

Thus, not only did Li, Dugu, and Liang treat the search for *dao* and not *wen* as central, but they also turned to other cultural-religious resources, including those in Buddhist and Daoist sources, to guide them to the *dao.*

*Starting with the Mind (*Xin)

Nishiwaki Tsuneki, pp. 155-158. Bol cites Quan Deyu (759-818), who became chief examiner and chief minister, as the next figure to claim succession in the line of Li, Dugu, and Liang. Bol, *""This Culture of Ours""*, p. 122. For an insightful description of mainstream elite thought in the mid-Tang, with Quan as a chief representative, see Anthony DeBlasi, *Reform in the Balance: The Defense of Literary Culture in mid-Tang China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

[199] QTW 384:12b-16b; QTW317:8b-9a.

[200] QTW 388:18a-b.

[201] QTW 384:12b-16b (*Daode Jing* 73), QTW 393:16a-b.

When do we know that we have discovered the true *dao*? We must look to the evidence of the mind (*xin*), and not to the records laid out in words and language.[202] For Li, Dugu, and Liang, *xin* too was an important conceptual resource. Liang was unequivocal in asserting that the path to enlightenment necessarily starts with activating or stimulating the mind.[203] He reminds us that for the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597), it too all started with "resolving the mind."[204]

In his elegiac *Inscription for the Impression of the Mind* (*Xinyin Ming* 心印銘),[205] a key text for Liang's philosophy of mind that is replete with Buddhist references and Daoist overtones, Liang declares that all things originate in the metaphysical "mind" (*xin*), which itself resides in the physical body.[206] He equates this universal mind with the Buddha-mind and the Dao mind, maintaining that amid all the transformations and permutations of reality, only the mind persists. Liang advocates a kind of metaphysical idealism, claiming that when the mind arises, dharma (*fa* 法) arises; when the mind perishes, dharma perishes; and when the mind changes, the world changes; when the mind expands, the world expands. The mind remains distinct from the world of phenomena, which is why it is synonymous with the pantheon of Buddhas. Like the Buddha, the mind exists beyond the world's ephemeral, ever-changing phenomena.

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[202] QTW 320:13b.

[203] QTW 517:14a, 519:16a.

[204] QTW 520:8b.

[205] 心印 in Buddhism often referred to the Buddha-mind, which is "sealed" upon all sentient beings.

[206] QTW 520:1b-2a.

For Dugu, the mind is also the starting point for establishing harmony in society. He argues that the mind regulates the emotions of joy and grief.[207] If one can control the mind, one can control one's emotions. This is why if the mind is harmonious, then the external affairs will reflect this harmony on the outside. This is an important factor for scholar-elites in government, such as Dugu. The key to good governance and social harmony is to maintain equilibrium in the mind and by extension, in one's emotional life.

Behind this assertion of the primacy of the mind is the identification of the human mind with the mind of Heaven and Earth and the mind of Buddha, equating the human mind with something of cosmic proportions.[208] For Dugu, like the *dao*, the mysteries of the mind too are indescribable. This is a characteristic that it shares with the Buddha mind. On many occasions, Dugu seems to think the human mind and the Buddha mind point to the same referent.

Similarly, Li Hua also identifies the human mind with the Buddha mind. Li claims that he has attained the Buddha mind and maintains that the Buddha mind resides in all beings.[209] Like Dugu and Liang, Li also drew substantially from Buddhist theories of the mind in expounding his overall position on self-cultivation.[210] And like Dugu and

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[207] QTW 389:8a-b.

[208] QTW 384:19a.

[209] QTW 320:10a-b.

[210] This emphasis on the human mind being identical to the Buddha mind is closely linked to developments in contemporaneous Buddhist thought, specifically in Chan Buddhism. These theories are generally associated with Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709-788), though there is good reason to think they originated with the lineage of Shitou Xiqian 石头希迁 (700-790). See the entries related to the 'mind' in Iriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高 and Koga Hidehiko 古賀英彦, *Zengo Jiten* 禅語辞典 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku 思文閣,

Liang, he saw the source of social harmony as originating in this mind. He advocates stimulating the mind and cultivating the self. Then one's household will follow *li* (principle).[211]

Among all three thinkers, harmony is often described in terms of *li* and stimulating the mind is usually with a view towards according with *li*. What then do they mean by *li*, and why did they consider it so crucial?

Extending Li *("Principle")*

For Li Hua, *li* means the underlying principles of phenomenal reality and was closely connected to the Buddhist concept of *tathatā*. Once you grasp *li*, you are like the Buddhist Suchness, which in this context means the inherent nature of reality:

> That which was transmitted by Tiantai Zuoxi[212] has *zhiguan* as its root… Because of words, you can interpret its meaning. Because you have the meaning, you can understand the *li*. Because you have the *li*, you can be one with Suchness (*tathatā, ru* 如). And meditation and wisdom are both cultivated. The duality of emptiness and existence are both abandoned.[213]

1991). I am indebted to James Robson for this insight. The paucity of documentation linking between these Chan figures and Li, Dugu, and Liang make further speculation difficult. This tantalizing topic awaits further research.

[211] QTW 317:8a.

[212] Tiantai Zuoxi 天台左溪 was Zhanran's master and a Tiantai patriarch, also known as Xuanlang 玄朗 (673-754).

[213] 左溪所传，止观为本。祇树园内，常闻此经；然灯佛前，无有少法。因字以诠义，因义以明理，因理以同如，定慧双修，空有皆舍。 QTW 320:2a-b.

But before one becomes like Suchness, a more fundamental problem persists. How does one proceed from stimulating the mind to realizing the *li*? Li's answer is contained in his term of art, the phrase, "Extend the mind and [reach] *li*" (*tuixin erli* 推心而理).[214]

At first, Li's emphasis on direct apprehension of *li* by the mind seems puzzling. Early Tang writers thought knowledge of *li* came through the medium of literary culture, and the mind's role was to be a vehicle for demonstrating one's grasp of *li*. Li approximates a similar view in one passage. On this sequence of the written word leading to enlightenment regarding the *li*, Li Hua writes that awakening (*wu* 悟) to the *li* comes through the medium of literature (*wen* 文) and is evinced in the mind (*xin* 心). And from *li* one can reach Suchness (*ru*).[215]

However, Li gives the mind a much more direct role in cultivating the self and in coming to knowledge of *li*. In his essay, *On* Zhi *and* Wen, Li argues that literary culture (*wen*) became an unreliable means for bringing order to society.[216] He attributes the downfall of previous dynasties to the deficiencies in literary culture. He argues for a shift in emphasis from literary embellishments to "substance" (*zhi* 質), proclaiming that literary culture is not as important as substance, by which he means the content of the writing, specifically the moral values that it embodies and espouses. By what means did

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[214] QTW 318:12a.

[215] QTW 319:5b-6a.

[216] QTW 317:6a. See also Bol, *""This Culture of Ours""*, p. 113.

Li intend to effect this shift to "substance"? Did he expect that merely emphasizing substance would result in a more moral society?

He did not think that the solution lay simply in increasing the quantity and quality of the content of "substance" whenever literary culture became weak. As with *zhiguan* practice, the starting point is the human mind (*ren xin* 人心). The mind did not serve only as a demonstration of awakening to *li*. It was not merely a marker or a device for monitoring one's progress. To reach *li* (*zhi li* 致理), one was to utilize the mind. This was the meaning behind his key phrase, "Extend the mind and [reach] *li*."[217] Unfortunately, Li Hua's extant writings do not provide a full explanation of *li* and its role in ordering the kingdom. For that, we must turn to Liang Su.

In his *Zhiguan Tongyili*, Liang declares that *li* is at the root of enlightenment.[218] Through practicing *zhiguan*, one awakens, and the content of this awakening is *li.* When one is enlightened, one has reached the level of the Buddha and attained the understanding that he had of the fundamental principles (*li*) of reality. Liang contrasts *li* with "traces" (*ji* 跡). Knowledge of *li* constitutes the basis of the Tiantai doctrine and the transmission, application, and teaching of this doctrine form its "traces."[219] The specific Tiantai doctrine upon which Liang focuses is the "Three Truths" of empty, provisional, and middle (*kong jia zhong* 空假中), which, if correctly comprehended and employed,

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[217] QTW 318:12a.

[218] QTW 517:15a.

[219] QTW 517:16b.

will lead one to accurate apprehension of *li*.[220] Clearly, Liang here understands and uses *li* in a context informed by and for purposes arising out of his Buddhist background and commitments.

Even more than Li Hua, Liang advocates and emphasizes the centrality of extensively exploring and according with *li*. He often uses such phrases as "extending to the most marvelous *li*" (*tui shangmiao zhi li* 推上妙之理),[221] "reaching the *li*" (*zhili* 致理),[222] and "fully [embodying or expressing] *li*" (*jinli* 盡理).[223] Beyond *li*, however, lies an even more foundational concept.

Nature (Xing) *as the Ground of Virtue*

For Liang, *li* was closely connected to the nature (*xing* 性). By 'nature' is meant not the natural environment, but the essence of a thing as in, for example, "human nature." While one might think that "human nature" would be a good translation for the *xing* of a human, it would obscure the fact the "original nature" (*benxing* 本性) of a human being is identical to the "original nature" of all things.[224] Moreover, the 'nature' for Liang was often identified with the Buddha Nature.[225] From the section on *dao*, recall

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[220] QTW 517:16b-17a.

[221] QTW 517:17a.

[222] QTW 523, *Di Wu Biao* 第五表.

[223] QTW 517:1a.

[224] In this, these eighth-century thinkers anticipated Neo-Confucian theories of *xing*, which incorporated aspects of the Buddhist view.

Liang's explanation of the relationship between universal *li* and universal nature. In his *Zhiguan Tongyili*, Liang claims that the "reality" (*shiji*) is the universal *li*, which is itself the root of our nature. The practice of *zhiguan* enables the practitioner to go from seeing just the particularized manifestations of the universal *li* to realizing the universal *li* itself. It is in this sense that "reality," being the universal *li*, is the basis of our universal nature.

In another passage, Liang expands on how *zhiguan* relates to both the universal nature and the universal *li*, and he employs a key term of art, *zhengxing shunli*:

> The function of *zhiguan* is how one distinguishes between differences and similarities and examines sages and spirits; it causes the host of beings "to rectify their natures and accord with *li*" (*zhengxing shunli* 正性順理). To rectify one's nature and accord with *li* is how one walks the path of awakening and reaches profound understanding.[226]

The key phrase here is "to rectify one's nature and accord with *li*" (*zhengxing shunli*). *Zhiguan* rectifies our nature because it guides us from false views of our natures to the correct view of our universal nature. By so doing, it puts us in touch with the basis of our universal nature—the universal *li*.

Liang's use of this phrase recalls a well-known line from the beginning of the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong Yong* 中庸), a chapter of the *Li Ji* 禮記 that had become popular by Liang's time: "What Heaven has conferred is call nature (*xing*). According with nature is called the *dao*."[227] While the *Doctrine of the Mean* specifically states that

225 QTW 517:15b-20a, 519:11a-b.

226 止观之作，所以辨异同而究圣神，使群生正性而顺理者也。正性顺理，所以行觉路而至妙境也。QTW 517:18b; T. 49.2035.439c12-c14.

the *dao* is the accordance with nature, it makes no mention of *li*. But Liang's close

identification of nature with *li* makes plausible the parallel between according with the

nature and according with *li*. Both are equated with the *dao.*

In another famous piece by Liang, the *Tiantai famenyi* 天台法門議 (also known

as *Zhizhe dashi zhuanlun* 智者大師傳論), in which Liang pays homage to Zhiyi while

summarizing core Tiantai doctrines, Zhiyi's teachings on *zhiguan* are labeled by Liang as

"this *dao* of ours" (*sidao* 斯道).[228] Thus, the *dao* for Liang included the teaching of

zhiguan, which enables us to "rectify one's nature and accord with *li*."

After explaining the basic meanings of the fundamental Tiantai doctrines of the

Three Truths (*sandi* 三諦) of emptiness (*kong* 空), the provisional (*jia* 假), and the

middle (*zhong* 中), Liang concludes, "Essentially speaking, it is like the saying that the

sage 'reaches all depths and grasps the seeds [of all things]' and 'exhaustively

comprehends *li* and fulfills the nature' (*qiongli jinxing* 窮理盡性)."[229] Charles Hartman

has adroitly charted the use of the phrase *qiongli jinxing* from its origins in the *Yi Jing*

through its echoes in such supposedly Confucian texts as the *Doctrine of the Mean* and

medieval commentaries on the *Analects* to its appropriation by such Buddhist texts as the

Platform Sutra and finally to its application in the works of Han Yu's illustrious

contemporaries, including Li Ao and Zongmi 宗密 (780-834) in his *Yuanren lun* 原人

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[227] See *Sishu Zhangju Jizhu* 四書章句集注, 2nd edition, compiled and edited by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2006), p. 17.

[228] QTW 517:14a; T49.2035.0440a26-a27

[229] QTW 517:17a; T49.2035.0439b04. The first saying is also from the *Yi Jing. Zhouyi zhushu* 周易注疏, edited by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 in 659 (*Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 edition), 7.15a.

論.[230] Hartman concludes that Liang Su's writings contain probably the first instance in which this phrase is used to combine earlier interpretations of the phrase as applying to the sage and later Buddhist usages as an epithet for what he calls the ontological Absolute.[231]

In the remainder of the passage, Liang elaborates on the relationship between *li*, nature, the practice of Tiantai teachings such as *zhiguan,* and the sage:[232]

> Essentially speaking, [practicing the Tiantai teachings] is like the saying that the sage 'reaches all depths and grasps the seeds [of all things]' and 'exhaustively comprehends *li* and fulfills the nature' (*qiongli jinxing* 窮理盡性). The teachings enlighten the foolish. They clear up the obstructions of the confused. Clearing up [obstructions] leads to awareness. Awareness leads to being perfected. Being perfected leads to being constant. Being constant thus leads to fulfillment. [The foolish being] enlightened leads them to illumination. Illumination leads to transformation. Transformation leads to completion. Completion leads to union with the one.[233]

Here Liang lays out the progression toward sagehood through practicing Tiantai teachings and reveals the great achievement of the sage: his ultimate union and perfect harmony with the universal *li* and human nature.

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[230] Charles Hartman, *Han Yu and the T'ang Search for Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 187-210. For the original phrase, see *Zhouyi zhushu* 周易注疏, edited by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 in 659 (*Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 edition), 9.2a.

[231] Hartman, *Han Yu*, p. 195.

[232] "The sage" is also another referent for the Buddha.

[233] 举其要，则圣人极深研几穷理尽性之说乎？昧者使明，塞者使通，通则悟，悟则至，至则常，常则尽矣；明则照，照则化，化则成，成则一矣。QTW 517:17a; T49.2035.0439b04-06.

Dugu Ji too maintains that people have lost touch with and departed from their true nature.[234] He blames this on the decline of literary culture (*wen*) and its excessive focus on surface embellishments rather than on following nature.[235] His solution was to focus on recovering the original nature. Like Liang, Dugu turned to Buddhism for his antidote. He repeatedly refers to the original nature as identical to the Buddha Nature and describes it is as being originally empty (*kong*).[236]

Similarly, Li Hua often writes that the original nature is empty, as well as originally pure and clear.[237] Moreover, for Li Hua too, the original nature is identical to the Buddha Nature.[238]

The Nature and the Dao

Going one step further and coming full circle, Li Hua links the original nature and the *dao* by declaring that the ultimate goal is to follow the original nature and cultivate *dao*. Li holds that the nature and the *dao* exist harmoniously in virtuous men. While among the non-virtuous, the nature and the *dao* clash.[239] So for Li, the defining characteristic of the virtuous man (*junzi* 君子) was whether his current nature was consistent with and embodied the *dao*. Implicit in this distinction is a theory of two

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[234] QTW 384:26b-17a.

[235] QTW 388:17a-b.

[236] QTW 389:15b, 390:3a, 390:24a-b.

[237] QTW 319:8a, 320:11b-12a.

[238] QTW 316:17b, 320:4a, 6a, 8b-9a.

[239] QTW 321: 16a, 318:11a; 318:4a.

natures, a view of human nature that is a prominent part of later Neo-Confucian philosophy. Unfortunately, no detailed explanations of this theory is found in Li's extant writings.

Dugu's views also come full circle. Ultimately, one is to merge the original nature and the *dao*.[240] The key is to follow one's nature, which if done successfully will harmonize one with the *dao*, and then to cultivate the *dao*, which if done correctly will in turn rectify one's nature (*zheng xing* 正性).[241] Thus, one's nature and the *dao* exist in a symbiotic relationship to each other. Following one's nature results in harmonizing with the *dao*. Cultivating the *dao* leads to rectifying the nature.

In sum, for these thinkers, cultivation starts with stimulating the mind and that when one subsequently comprehends, follows, and extends *li*, one will then be able to rectify and recover one's original, true nature, which in turn will enable the cultivation of the *dao*.

Conclusions

Consideration of the pejorative term objection, the origins objection, and the essentialism objection led to a negative evaluation of the utility of 'syncretism' as an analytical category. After briefly exploring 'discursive resources' as an alternative, I utilized it as a framework to interpret the thought of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su. A detailed examination of their theories of self-cultivation revealed the importance of four key terms of art—*dao*, the mind, *li* ("principle"), and the nature (*xing*). This investigation

[240] QTW 392:1b.

[241] QTW 388:18a-b, 391:24a-b, 392:10a.

uncovered their debts to Buddhism. Dearth of documentation on their connections to lineages of Buddhism besides Zhanran's Tiantai precludes drawing definite conclusions about their intellectual ancestry. Further fascinating lines of inquiry include the pathways of conceptual exchange between and among the various Buddhist lineages and the prominent groups of scholar-elites during the Tang.

Chapter 4

Syncretism Revisited: Discursive Resources and Contested Claims
in Tang China

In claiming that an idea or concept is Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, Islamic,

Christian, or Judaic, one is making an assertion of authority that is open to contestation.

When someone composes and disseminates a teaching about a meditative practice such as

the *zhiguan* 止觀 ("calm and contemplation"), one thrusts into the intellectual world a set

of ideas and practices vulnerable to counter-claims. In the case of *zhiguan*, Zhiyi made a

claim of ownership by labeling the teaching 'Buddhist.' Fortunately for Zhiyi and others

who identified themselves as 'Buddhist,' no known authority in the medieval Chinese

intellectual sphere proposed an exactly similar teaching or attempted to co-opt the

specific term. Nor was this doctrine copied, duplicated, or appropriated wholesale by any

non-Buddhist writer whose writings are extant or referenced in any identified works. And

no known non-Buddhist authority has laid a counter-claim to authorship of this set of

ideas and practices. As there are no counter-claims of ownership from non-Buddhist

sources over the idea of *zhiguan*, one can confidently label this teaching 'Buddhist.' If

this were not the case, then the religious affiliation of *zhiguan* would be up for grabs. To

claim that a teaching is part of or originates from one tradition and not another is to

engage in a social practice. Claims and counter-claims to authorship are characteristic of participation in a discursive arena.

Here, the role of community is integral. Discourses are, by their very nature, social. While historians commonly see themselves as making factual claims regarding whether doctrine X belongs to religion A, which is to say the relation of a doctrine to the doctrines held by those who identify themselves as belonging to one tradition or another, they often leave unexamined the social dimensions of intellectual intercourse.[242] Accurate assessment of conflicting claims over doctrinal affiliations of discursive resources unavoidably entails involvement in a social practice. Appreciating and identifying the power dynamics at work in any claim of ownership over a concept, term, phrase, or object are necessary to make sense of the conflicting claims of doctrinal identity and for a full understanding of the historical reality.[243]

The four overarching terms in my discussion of the thought of Li, Dugu, and Liang—*dao*, mind, *li,* and nature—patently were and still are contested resources in the discursive arenas of Chinese and East Asian intellectual culture. This chapter looks beyond these three thinkers and delves into the thought of the next generation of scholar-officials, specifically, the two figures usually recognized as the forerunners of Song Neo-Confucianism, Li Ao and Han Yu. It will also show how the analytical category of discursive resources can facilitate understanding of contested religious claims in non-elite social settings.

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[242] I appreciate the prompting of Edwin Curley to clarify this point.

[243] For a related idea of symbolic systems acting as instruments of domination, communication, and meaning, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed., John B. Thompson, trans., Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 1991), especially pp. 163-170.

What does it mean to claim that, "In the discursive arena, *zhiguan* is a 'Buddhist' doctrine and resource?" Minimally, I propose that it means 1) someone has proposed a teaching called *zhiguan*, 2) someone has explicitly labeled that teaching to be 'Buddhist' or, by self-identifying as a 'Buddhist' who is proclaiming 'Buddhist' teachings, someone has implied by association that the teaching is 'Buddhist,' and furthermore 3) there is a general consensus among participants in the discursive arena that the teaching is 'Buddhist.'

Similarly, I propose that a 'Buddhist repertoire' is minimally one that belongs to someone who self-identifies as 'Buddhist' and one of which there is a general consensus among participants in the discursive arena that it is 'Buddhist.'

Notice that for some resource or repertoire to be 'Buddhist' in the senses that I have laid out, it is necessary that there exist a general consensus supporting this claim in the relevant discursive arena. Absent a consensus, the label of a resource or repertoire is unclear. This is because such claims and counter-claims are part of a social practice.

An important implication is that the study of a resource's "origins" is largely irrelevant to the identification of a resource or repertoire as properly belonging to one tradition or another. While it is of definite historical interest to trace the textual history or origins of a resource or repertoire, an equally significant question concerns the rhetorical and social significance of the contested resource. Once a tradition has incorporated an element, it has claimed ownership over it. The contestation of the claim and counter-claims involves power dynamics that are central to understanding the relationship between different intellectual resources and repertoires in eighth-century China.

The scholarly study of a resource's origins often shifts into the realm of apologetics. In his otherwise elegant and meticulous study of Li Ao, Timothy Barrett argues that Li Ao was an "orthodox" Confucian[244]:

> Hitherto Li's writing have been seen as posing the question of his orthodoxy—was he a Buddhist or Taoist, rather than a true Confucian? A close look at how the *fu-hsing shu* (*fuxing shu*) was actually written—the historical and personal circumstances, and especially the conventions of argumentation employed—leads me to conclude that he can only be called a Confucian.[245]

Much of Barrett's commentary and exegesis of the *Fuxing shu* are concerned with the question of Li's Confucian orthodoxy. By the end of his book, however, Barrett senses the limits of such a line of inquiry and suggests a more fruitful branch:

> But it also leads me to conclude that choosing between these three labels may not be our best way to arrive at an accurate interpretation of Li Ao. In this publication, I have felt obliged to accept the terms of the question as formulated by my predecessors, but in future much more may be gained from asking in far broader terms how orthodoxy and tradition were conceived of in pre-modern China and in what ways an individual like Li Ao could link himself to a particular orthodox tradition. In my own opinion, only when this larger background comes into focus as sharply as do the immediate details of his own life and times will we begin to understand Li Ao.[246]

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[244] For an illuminating discussion of the problems with "orthodoxy" as applied to China, see Martin J. Powers, "Questioning Orthodoxy," *Orientations* 28.10 (November, 1997): 73 – 74.

[245] T.H. Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 155.

[246] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 155.

While I agree with Barrett's self-analysis that choosing between the three labels is an inadequate method of interpretation and that the researcher ought to broaden his scope of inquiry, I disagree that the way to do this is by asking primarily how orthodoxy and tradition were conceived of in pre-modern China.[247] One of the problems with looking to how pre-modern Chinese "conceived" of these concepts and categories lies in the ambiguity attendant in the word "conceive." If this implies a self-conscious awareness or control of the concepts of "tradition" or "orthodoxy," then we would again be accepting the terms of the question as bequeathed by our predecessors. Very often, people are unaware or are hardly self-conscious of their own frameworks and categories of thought.

I do not, then, claim that Tang dynasty scholar-officials, or any medieval Chinese for that matter, ever consciously thought in terms of the categories of resources and repertoires. Whether they did is outside the scope of my inquiry although there is good reason to surmise that some scholars did think in these terms. Put differently, this study is an etic, rather than an emic, study in the sense that it presents an account expressed in terms of the categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by outside observers and scholars.

My contention is that rather than viewing such words, phrases, concepts, images, artifacts, practices, and symbols as belonging to one or another tradition, it would be more useful to treat them as existing in contested discursive arenas as resources a) from which people drew in forming their cultural and religious repertoires, b) into which they

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[247] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 155.

imputed meaning and content, and c) upon which they laid claims and counter-claims of authority.

Essentialism Revisited: Power Struggles and False Dichotomies

In the study of Chinese religions, a common exercise is to ask whether a particular teaching, practice, symbol, or personage belongs to one or another religious tradition. This section questions the essentialist assumptions behind this exercise. Two closely intertwined problems are associated with this kind of essentialism, and I shall treat them together.

First, the classic textbooks and introductions to Chinese Buddhism are prime examples of the pitfalls of trying to identify which discursive resources can be traced or properly belong to which religious tradition. These works regularly attempt to label concepts, terms, and other symbolic resources as "Buddhist," "Daoist," "Confucian," "Chinese," or "Indian."

For example, there is the pioneering work by Arthur Wright, who divides the history of Buddhism into four stages—preparation (65-317 CE), domestication (317-589), independent growth (589-900), and appropriation (900-1900).[248] This basic periodization finds echoes in the major histories of Chinese Buddhism for the next three decades.[249] The textbook narrative centers around the issue of sinification, which is often

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[248] Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959).

[249] For example, see Erik Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: the spread and adaptation of Buddhism in early medieval China*, 2 volumes. 2nd edition, revised. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972/1959); Kenneth K.S. Chen, *Buddhism in China: A Historical*

understood as a way of conceptualizing the manner and extent to which Indian Buddhism and Chinese culture interacted through encounter and dialogue.

The standard account considers the Sui-Tang period the high point of Chinese Buddhism. Though some scholars, such as Weinstein, emphasize the severe anti-Buddhist persecutions and overall negative attitude of the court towards Buddhism, they seem unanimous in pointing to this period as the apogee of Buddhist doctrinal development in China.[250] In the Sui-Tang, so the story goes, the truly indigenous Chinese schools arose—Tiantai, Huayan, Pure Land, and Chan. With the emergence of these fully sinified schools, Chinese Buddhism finally succeeded in distancing itself from the authority of the Indian tradition and embarked on new and original trajectories.

In describing the process of sinification, scholars have taken at least two different approaches. Some scholars prefer to emphasize the resiliency of Chinese culture in the face of the Indian tradition, while others choose to make Indian Buddhism the touchstone by which a nascent Chinese Buddhism is judged. Kenneth Ch'en's writings on Chinese Buddhist history, including his *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, are excellent

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Survey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Kenneth K.S. Chen, *The Chinese transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973); Tsukamoto Zenryu. *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: from its introduction to the death of Hui-yuan.* Translated by Leon Hurvitz. (Tokyo, New York: Kodansha International, 1985); and Paul Demieville, "Philosophy and religion from Han to Sui," in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds. *The Cambridge history of China, volume 1: the Ch'in and Han empires, 221 B.C.-A.D. 220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 808-878.

[250] In addition to the sources cited above, see Stanley Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of T'ang Buddhism," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press and Association for Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 56ff.

examples of the first option.[251] The second option is exemplified by Erik Zurcher's

monumental work, *The Buddhist Conquest of China.*[252]

Dividing these approaches is the central question concerning which side was more

dominant. Did Chinese culture force Buddhism to adapt itself to the Chinese context, or

did Buddhism alter the Chinese culture it encountered? If the former can be properly

described as "sinification," then the latter might be more accurately labeled

"Buddhification." Most recent scholarship tries to avoid the two extremes of sinification

and Buddhification, and instead, attempts to take into account both the considerable

extent to which Buddhism changed to accommodate Chinese culture and the profound

influence of Buddhism on Chinese culture.

However, the flaw in all of these approaches is that they adhere to the agenda of

identifying and then dividing up the objects of study into their respective parts of "Indian

Buddhism" and "Chinese culture," or as shall be shown later, "Buddhism" and "Daoism"

and "impure Buddhism"/ "impure Daoism" and "pure Buddhism"/ "pure Daoism."

There is yet another aspect of the essentialism problem. The sinification and

Buddhification models presuppose the essentialist categories of "Indian Buddhism" and

"Chinese culture."[253] The objection says that these terms seem to refer to reified, discrete,

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[251] Kenneth K.S. Ch'en, *The Chinese transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973); Kenneth K.S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

[252] Zurcher, *Buddhist Conquest*.

[253] Another critique others have raised is that sinification leads to a periodization closely linked to political chronology, ignoring significant socio-cultural changes that are not parallel to political developments. However, the sinification model in itself does not entail a politically based periodization. The sinification model could also be used with a

autonomous entities when in fact, they are only placeholders with indeterminate referents. They are "idealized ideological constructs" and "analytic abstractions."[254] There is no single entity to which these terms refer. They exist only as sites of "unremitting contestation" and are terms whose meanings can vary widely depending on how they are being wielded and by whom.[255]

A critical part of the essentialism problem is that in the Buddhification model, Chinese versions of Buddhism are evaluated according to their fidelity to "Indian Buddhism." For instance, many scholars viewed the influence of *xuan xue* and Han cosmological thought and the early practice of *ge yi* ("matching concepts") as symptomatic of the Chinese propensity for misinterpreting Buddhist doctrine by putting it in indigenous terms.

For example, the scholarly consensus by Robinson's time was that Kumarajiva was the first prominent figure to identify the differences between Indian Buddhist and indigenous Chinese ways of thought.[256] Based on this, Robinson's thorough study of Madhyamika doctrine seeks to answer the questions, "To what degree and in what way did fifth-century Chinese Buddhists understand the Madhyamika teaching that

socio-culturally based periodization. Cf., Stephen F. Teiser, "Introduction: The Spirits of Chinese Religion," in Donald S. Lopez Jr., ed., *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 17-18.

[254] Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the* Treasure Store Treatise (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute, 2002), pp. 15-16.

[255] Sharf, p. 16.

[256] Richard H. Robinson, *Early Madhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967).

Kumarajiva introduced? … In what respects was the Buddhism of Kumarajiva's disciples Indian, and in what respects was it Chinese."[257]

Similarly, Zurcher tries to determine the time when the ethnic Chinese finally discovered the true meaning of the Indian Buddhist doctrines. He points to Dao'an and Huiyuan as pioneers in this respect:

> The most important point, however, is that Tao-an's great and original mind had recognized the fundamental difference between the foreign doctrine and the Chinese cultural heritage which was his own by birth and education, and that he, after having recognized this, had entered upon a life-long quest for the real message of this doctrine. The awareness of the difference between Buddhism and traditional Chinese thought … characterizes even more Tao-an's most gifted disciple, Hui-yuan.[258]

While Zurcher singles out Dao'an and Huiyuan as among the first Chinese Buddhists to truly understand (Indian) Buddhism, Richard Robinson contends that Sengrui, an alleged disciple of Dao'an and a contemporary of Huiyuan, had an even better grasp of Madhyamika doctrine than the other two, who "never did understand Madhyamika."[259] Regardless who actually had the more "accurate" knowledge of Madhyamika doctrine, both Zurcher and Robinson, as well as many other scholars, structure their accounts around the degree to which the Chinese understood "Indian Buddhism."

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[257] Robinson, p. 5.

[258] Zurcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, p. 205.

[259] Robinson, pp. 115-122, 157.

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In addition to his textbook account of the putative Buddhist conquest of China, Zurcher also published an otherwise excellent survey of how early Daoists failed to "get Buddhism right."[260] As Stephen Bokenkamp has aptly pointed out regarding Zurcher's landmark 1983 article, Zurcher set out to educate scholars of Daoism about the real nature of the Buddhist elements incorporated into their object of study.[261] According to Zurcher, these Buddhist resources in Daoist texts are "hopelessly misunderstood and mixed up." Daiosts are guilty of "extreme distortion and devaluation" of Buddhist teachings, which are "absorbed and digested to such an extent that they have virtually lost their identity." Zurcher describes the "receiving system" of Daoism as full of "misunderstandings," "confusion," "hybridization," "amalgamation," "merger," "distortions," "fantastic notions," and "incorrect interpretations."[262] Rather than criticizing Chinese Buddhism for misinterpreting Indian Buddhism, here we have Zurcher denigrating the Daoists for distorting Buddhism.

Similarly, on the subject of Buddhist apocryphal sutras, Daniel Overmyer argues for the purity of the "Buddhist gospel" underlying the Daoist and folk religious language of these texts.[263] He adduces the concept of expedient means (*upāya*) to explain how

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[260] Erik Zurcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence," *T'oung Pao* 66 (1980): 84-147.

[261] Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree: The Lingbao Attempt to Replace Buddhism in China and Our Attempt to Place Lingbao Daoism," in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and Chinese Society: Ancient and Medieval China*, vol. 1 (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2004), pp. 317-339.

[262] See Bokenkamp, "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree, for a more detailed discussion of Zurcher's article on this point.

"most [Chinese sutras] are not amalgamations of disparate elements, but attempts at effective communication." The communication in question is this "Buddhist gospel" conveyed through a hybrid medium including, in this case, Daoist and folk Chinese religious elements. As with Zurcher, whom Overmyer sees himself rebutting, Overmyer too takes the search for pure origins into the realm of apologetics. Overmyer defends the "gospel" of "freedom from restraint and fear" and "liberation from taboos and divination," which he views as somehow essential to the 'good news' of Buddhism.[264] These features are supposedly characteristic of authentic Buddhism.

Rather than seeing the power dynamic and contestation of resources in a discursive sphere, Overmyer prefers to interpret the Daoist elements in Buddhist texts as obfuscating the true Buddhist "gospel." This causes him to sharply demarcate and to force the elements into one tradition or another based on their provenance, while ignoring the irrelevance of the true historical origins, as opposed to the rhetoric over the origins, with regard to the struggle over who can claim the element as theirs. This causes Overmyer to search for some way to categorize the contested elements as either Buddhist or Daoist and leads him to such conclusions as:

> A clearly Buddhist voice likewise appears to be lost in some Tun-huang texts,
> where Buddhist figures and terms are simply used along Taoist lines as symbols
> of exorcistic power… Buddha power is sought here, but so are the powers of *yin*
> and *yang*, the four seasons, the stars and planets, and the five sacred peaks of

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[263] Daniel Overmyer, "Buddhism in the Trenches: Attitudes Towards Popular Religion in Indigenous Scriptures from Tun-huang," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 50.1 (June 1990): 197-222.

[264] Overmyer, "Buddhism in the Trenches," pp. 213, 220.

China. All are sought quite indiscriminately… No trace can be found of Buddhist ethics or salvation.[265]

Again, Overmyer treats Buddhism as an atemporal, stable, pure monolith. He attempts to look past the allegedly non-Buddhist resources to get at the core Buddhist "gospel" of ethics or salvation.

Even in more recent secondary literature, this approach is ubiquitous. A good example is Barrett's study of Li Ao, which I touched on earlier. Specifically, Barrett mentions the example of Kumarajiva as a touchstone: "It was only at the start of the fifth century that the great Central Asian translator Kumarajiva (344-413) was able to make clear the many significant differences that existed between Buddhist and native ways of thought."[266]

As Barrett mentions here, one key factor scholars often adduce in explaining how the Chinese gained clearer access to a more 'accurate' Buddhism is the improved quality of the available translations. The standard, textbook narrative of the rise of Buddhism in China, which I have been discussing here, portrays the Chinese as overcoming their earlier confusion only when given access to translations, such as those by Kumārajīva and Xuanzang, that were more accurate or authentic. But what is meant here by 'accurate' or 'authentic'? Recent studies have shown that earlier conceptions of the social, cultural, and institutional settings of early Indian Buddhism are flawed because they depend too much on canonical texts, which allows some writers to present early

[265] Overmyer, "Buddhism in the Trenches," p. 204.

[266] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 13.

Indian Buddhism as an atheistic, rationalistic, and humanistic set of beliefs.

Archaeological evidence and analysis has not only enabled scholars to revise and refine

previous views of early Indian Buddhism, but also highlighted how little is known about

early Indian Buddhist history. Our relative ignorance of, for example, the socio-cultural

and institutional developments of early Mahāyāna further exacerbates the difficulty

involved in assessing the original doctrinal and ideological significance of Mahāyāna

texts.[267] Exclusive reliance, therefore, on scriptures and other traditional, canonical

sources in forming a comprehensive picture of early Indian Buddhist religious doctrine

and practice without considering their social, cultural, and ideological contexts would

lead to an erroneous portrayal of early Buddhism. But since so little is known about these

contexts, it would be very difficult to describe "authentic Indian Buddhism" or to use it as

an evaluative standard to measure the "accuracy" of Chinese Buddhist ideas.

Instead of approaching Chinese Buddhism as if it were mainly a response to an

encounter with a foreign dialogue partner, the empirical evidence reveals that the

historical, linguistic, and conceptual developments were primarily of Chinese

provenance.[268] Local, not foreign, factors played a much greater role in the formation of

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[267] The most commonly cited scholar on this is probably Gregory Schopen. See Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India.* Michigan Studies in Buddhist Traditions, Vol. 2 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997); Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003)

[268] This is related to the "western impact" theory and the encounter-response paradigm prevalent in cold war-era historiography. See Judith B. Farquhar and James L. Hevia, "Culture and Postwar American Historiography of China," *Positions* 1.2 (Fall 1993): 486 – 525; and Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2nd ed., 1997).

Buddhism in China. Famous foreign monks, such as Dharmarakśa, Kumārajīva, Bodhiruci, and Paramārtha, influenced the spread of Buddhism in China, but they were few and highly dependent on Chinese translation assistants. The Chinese monks who successfully traveled to India and developed fluency in Indic languages were also extremely rare. Rather than the norm being the Chinese encountering or dialoguing with foreign monks, the much more common phenomenon was that both the "dialogue partners" and the "dialogue language" were Chinese. As Robert Sharf states:

> It thus difficult to speak in simple terms of a Chinese dialogue or encounter with Indian Buddhism. Chinese functioned as the sole Buddhist ecclesiastical language from the inception of Buddhism in the Han down through the medieval period, and given the paucity of bilingual clerics, whatever "dialogue" transpired took place largely among the Chinese themselves. Their encounter was with a Buddhism already sinified…[269]

Sharf goes on to point out that both the Chinese elite and the uneducated masses were mainly ignorant of the alterity of Indian Buddhism.

Since Chinese Buddhism developed mainly through the agency and language of the Chinese themselves, the very idea of a pure Buddhism extractable from the morass of Chinese religions and culture, or as Barrett puts it, "native ways of thought,"[270] patently belies the historical data.

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[269] Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the* Treasure Store Treatise (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute, 2002), p. 19.

[270] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 13.

In highlighting the one-sidedness of the supposed encounter between Indian Buddhism and Chinese culture, Sharf not only emphasizes the futility of isolating the Buddhist from the Chinese elements, he also touches on the central problem in the sinification and Buddhification models as exemplified by the textbook narratives of Kenneth Chen and Erik Zurcher: agency.[271] Does Chinese culture exert its influence over Buddhism, or vice versa? Which side is active and which is passive?[272] This issue of agency is inextricably tied up with the problem of the encounter paradigm and the impact-response model.

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[271] Michel Strickmann distinguishes between sinicization and sinification, a distinction later utilized by John McRae. See Strickmann, "The Tao among the Yao: Taoism and the Sinification of South China," Sakai Tadao sensei Koki Shukuga Kinen no Kai 酒井忠夫先生古稀祝賀記念の会, eds., *Rekishi ni okeru minshū to bunka: Sakai Tadao Sensei koki shukuga kinen ronbunshū* 歴史における民衆と文化:酒井忠夫先生古稀祝賀記念論文集 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai 国書刊行会, 1982), pp. 23-30. John McRae, *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 110-111. The difference seems to be that sinicization is a process whereby Buddhism was the passive partner influenced and shaped by Chinese cultural and political conditions. Sinification, though, is a more general term that describes the long-term process whereby Han Chinese civilization overwhelmed, incorporated, and pacified non-Han peoples as it expanded its cultural sphere. McRae points out how Buddhism was used as part of the sinification project. This distinction raises some interesting issues in relation to the dichotomies of passive and active, as well as foreign and native. In both cases, Chinese culture is the most dominant agent, and in the sinification case, Buddhism's agency is only derivative since it is deployed by "Han Chinese civilization." So to label "sinicization" as a passive process is inaccurate (as McRae does on page 110). Moreover, in both cases, "Chinese culture" is the native partner, while Buddhism as a foreign element becomes co-opted or complicit in the sinification model. Thus, sinicization seems to be a kind of sub-category of sinification, as it too involves a dominant "Chinese culture" influencing and imposing itself on some "foreign" entity. This may be a case of a distinction without a (significant) difference.

[272] Another useful dichotomy is between the foreign and the native, which I discuss above. This involves issues of power relations that I think are not necessarily a part of the Chinese culture and Buddhism duality, so I will set aside further discussion of this tantalizing topic in this paper.

Instead of becoming trapped by such simplistic dichotomies, a better option is to collapse these polarities by highlighting the extent to which *all* parties are active and passive agents. The encounter is not between *two* reified entities, but between different elements from different social, cultural, institutional, ideological, and doctrinal sources. It is not that there were two monolithic, abstract, autonomous agents involved, with one responding to the impact of the other. Rather, the many and diverse constituent elements were supplied by numerous individuals, most of whom were Chinese in the case of Chinese religions. Thus, what the sinification and Buddhification models seem to allude to is the complex clash and integration of various elements from different sources that are contributed not by abstract entities, but by individual human agents.

The problem with the invocation of such monolithic terms as 'Chinese culture,' 'Daoism,' or 'Buddhism' is that is employs a hasty generalization from an unrepresentative sample. It involves an inference from a much smaller subset of the broader category to the broader category itself. For instance, could one conclude that, since some Buddhist text evinces the notion of sympathetic resonance, that text bears the mark of 'Chinese culture'?[273] For this move to succeed, one would need to establish that the notion of, for example, sympathetic resonance was somehow characteristic of

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[273] Although Sharf adduces the notion of sympathetic resonance, he also strengthens his case by finding parallels to Daoist thought. See his *Coming to Terms.* Other excellent examples of fine-grained micro-level studies of religious and cultural mixing in Chinese Buddhism include Stanley K. Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); James Robson, "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System: A Case Study of the Southern Marchmount," in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and Chinese Society* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), pp. 341-383; Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); and Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries AD)," *Artibus Asiae* 47 (1986): 263-352.

Chinese culture. Otherwise, this argument would rely on an unrepresentative sample and result in a hasty generalization. How do we know that this notion is distinctive of Chinese culture? Is it found in any other cultures? Moreover, there is much more to Chinese thought and culture than the notion of sympathetic resonance. Why should that notion stand here for 'Chinese culture'?

One way of dealing with these difficult questions is to recognize that 'Chinese culture' or 'Buddhism' as vague, monolithic, reified entities have sharply circumscribed heuristic value, and that analyses of greater sophistication would necessitate a more refined scope and a more particularized analytical level. Hence, categories such as 'Indian Buddhism' and 'Chinese culture' are useful as heuristic devices in general descriptions of cultural phenomena on a grand scale. But a more accurate account would require a far more detailed and nuanced explanation of not only the specific social, cultural, political, institutional, ideological, and doctrinal components, but also the individual human agents and their ideas and practices. A full understanding of the components, elements, and resources, and the roles they played in Chinese religion ought to take into account the dynamics of power involved in the discursive arena.

In her recent book on Buddhism and Daoism in medieval China, Christine Mollier attempts to do the former but forgets the latter. That is, she examines in meticulous detail the various component elements over which the Buddhists and Daoists fought, but this then devolves into a quest for origins itself, ruling in favor of one side or other, neglecting to see that the actual historical origins of the resource were rarely integral to the power struggles in China's discursive arenas. The end of her introduction accurately encapsulates her perspective:

Whereas the great Taoist debt to Buddhism has been recognized now for a long time, some of the Buddhist sutras here examined show clearly that the influence operated in the other direction as well, and that Buddhists on some occasions drank from the Taoist well. It is in this context of concrete exchange that the perennial question, "Is it Buddhist or Taoist?" which often appears to be vacuous, becomes pertinent once again.[274]

I examine Mollier's arguments in more depth later, especially the issue of whether or when such questions as, "Is it Buddhist or Daoist?" are ever pertinent, but I wish to note here the persistent prevalence of the latter of the twin dangers in this kind of essentialism.

Thus, the problem is not only the simplistic dichotomies invoked, but also the associated tendency to veer into apologetics, claiming that some resource truly belongs to one tradition and not another, while failing to recognize that such resources exist as contested components in discursive arenas.

Imputing Meaning and Content

The notion that one imputes meaning and content into discursive resources is not foreign to the Tang Chinese context. A strikingly similar concept can be found in the opening section of Han Yu's famous "On the Dao" (*Yuan Dao* 原道):

Ren (humaneness) is broad concern. *Yi* (rightness) is doing what is right. To act out of these [two] is the *dao* (Way). What one is within oneself, without relying

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[274] Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), p. 22.

on anything outside oneself, is *de* ("inner power"). But *ren* and *yi* are fixed terms, while *dao* and *de* are open concepts.[275]

According to Han Yu, *de* and *dao* are both *xu wei* (虛位) or "open concepts." They are open in the sense that the different persons who wield them and the varying contexts in which they are used are what determine the meanings of the terms. Han Yu recognizes people can legitimately use *dao* to denote any number of ways of being, doing, or seeing. He contrasts his usage with that of Laozi:

> Laozi belittled benevolence and rightness, denying and denigrating them. His perspective was narrow. Someone sitting in a well and gazing up at the Heavens will say that the Heavens are small, but this is not because the Heavens are small. Laozi performed only minor acts of benevolence and isolated acts of rightness, so it was only natural that he belittled them. What he called the *dao* was simply the way with which he was familiar. But this is not what I call the *dao*. What he called *de* (inner power) was simply the inner power with which he was acquainted. But this is not what I call *de*. Whenever I talk about the *dao* or *de*, they always are united with benevolence and rightness. This is what people throughout the world mean when they talk [of the *dao* or *de*]. The *dao* and *de* that Laozi talked about are separate from benevolence and rightness. This is just one person's private manner of expression.[276]

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[275] 博爱之谓仁，行而宜之之谓义，由是而之焉之谓道，足乎己无待于外之谓德。仁与义为定名，道与德为虚位。Han Yu 韓愈, *Han Changli Ji* 韓昌黎集, edited by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書官, 1964), 3.11.60. My translations are adapted from translation notes by Philip J. Ivanhoe. Any inaccuracies or infelicities of translation are my sole responsibility. See also Hartman, *Han Yu*, pp. 145-62, and Gao Buying 高步瀛, *Tang Song Wenjuyao* 唐宋文舉要, 3 volumes (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1976), pp. 143-56. My interpretation differs from Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, pp. 128-29. I am grateful for discussions on this passage with Philip J. Ivanhoe.

[276] 老子之小仁义，非毁之也，其见者小也。坐井而观天，曰天小者，非天小也。彼以煦煦为仁，孑孑为义，其小之也则宜。其所谓道，道其所道，非吾所谓道也；其所谓德，德其所德，非吾所谓德也。凡吾所谓道德云者，合仁与义言之也，天下

Han Yu acknowledges that *dao* and *de* are so clearly and commonly contested that they almost act as placeholders. He grants Laozi's use of these terms but neutralizes and disparages it as merely "one person's private way of talking." In laying out how his own usage of *dao* and *de* differs from Laozi's, Han imputes a different content to the terms.

At the close of this essay, Han directly challenges the Buddhists and Daoists' version of *dao*, comparing it unfavorably to the *dao* of the former sage-kings:

> What are the teachings of the former kings? They taught that benevolence is broad concern. Rightness is doing what is right. To act out of these [two virtues] is the *dao*. What one is within oneself, without relying on anything outside oneself is inner power. Their teachings are recorded in the *Book of Poetry, Book of History, Book of Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*… Their *dao* is easy to understand and their teachings are easy to implement.[277]

Han continues with his vehement censure of Buddhist and Daoist institutions and ends with his infamous call to laicize the clergy, close down the temples and monasteries, and burn their scriptures:

> If someone asks, "What *dao* is this?" I will reply, "This is what I call the *dao*. This is not the *dao* of Daoism or Buddhism described earlier." Emperor Yao transmitted this *dao* to Emperor Shun. Emperor Shun transmitted it to Emperor Yu. Emperor Yu transmitted it to Emperor Tang. Emperor Tang transmitted it to Kings Wen and Wu and the Duke of Zhou. Kings Wen and Wu and the Duke of

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之公言也。老子之所谓道德云者，去仁与义言之也，一人之私言也。Han Yu, 3.11.60-61.

[277] 夫所谓先王之教者，何也？博爱之谓仁，行而宜之之谓义，由是而之焉之谓道，足乎己无待于外之谓德。其文，诗书易春秋。。。 其为道易明，而其为教易行也。Han Yu, 3.11.62-63.

Zhou transmitted it to Kongzi. Kongzi transmitted it to Mengzi. When Mengzi died, it was not transmitted further… I say, "If [Daoism and Buddhism] are not blocked, [the *dao*] will not flow. If they are not curtailed, [the *dao*] cannot be implemented. Return their followers to human life. Burn their books. Convert their temples into homes. Make clear the *dao* of the former kings in order to guide the people. Then 'widowers and widows, orphans and the childless, the disabled and the sick can be properly nurtured.' This basically is what needs to be done."[278]

Embedded in his excoriating attack on Buddhism and Daoism is his claim to possess a *dao* superior to that of the Buddhists and Daoists.

For Han, such "open" terms as *dao* differ from "fixed" terms (*ding ming* 定名) like 'benevolence' (*ren* 仁) and 'righteousness' (*yi* 義). Han agreed with Laozi on the meanings of benevolence and righteousness; they disagreed over their importance but not their meanings. For Han, *ren* and *yi* were not contested in the sense that *dao* and *de* were. In the terminology of this study, open terms are more characteristic of discursive resources than fixed terms because multiple parties impute different content into open terms. Thus, in Han Yu's writing is found an indigenous, medieval Chinese discussion of one distinguishing trait of discursive resources.

Earlier, I examined several key discursive resources in the thought of Li Ao, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su including *li, xin, dao, wen,* and *zhengxing shunli*. For them, these operated as "open" terms. In what follows, I will briefly revisit Liang's views of *xing* and

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[278] 曰：「斯道也，何道也？」曰：「斯吾所谓道也，非向所谓老与佛之道也。」尧以是传之舜，舜以是传之禹，禹以是传之汤，汤以是传之文武周公，文武周公传之孔子，孔子传之孟轲。轲之死，不得其传焉。。。 曰：「不塞不流，不止不行。人其人，火其书，庐其居，明先王之道以道之，鳏寡孤独废疾者，有养也，其亦庶乎其可也。」Han Yu, 3.11.62-63.

qiongli jinxing and further explore how Han Yu and Li Ao, the most famous of Liang's

successors, imputed meaning and content to central discursive resources.

One example of what Han would consider an "open" term is "nature" (*xing*).

Drawing upon many earlier prededents, including Liang Su's *Zhiguan tongli* and Mengzi

himself, Han Yu argues that the sage (*sheng* 聖) and the ordinary man share a common

nature: "Shun was a man; I am a man."[279]

In his *Zhiguan Tongyili*, Liang Su states this notion even more clearly:

> How can the state of the sage (*sheng* 聖) and the state of the ordinary man
> (*fan* 凡) be so vastly separated and cut off from one another? There is only one
> nature. To attain it is called awakening; to lose it is called delusion. There is only
> one principle (*li*). To be ignorant of it is to be an ordinary man. To realize it is to
> be a sage. The deluded separate themselves from it; principle does not separate
> from them. Those who lose touch with the nature lose it by themselves; the nature
> does not cause one to lose it.[280]

Liang Su influenced the generation after him in adopting a discursive resource

from the *Book of Changes* to express this idea that we have the potential to realize our

common nature with the sages. The phrase was *qiongli jinxing* ("exhaustively

comprehend principle and fulfill the nature"), which was taken up later by the Neo-

[279] Han Yu, *Yuan Hui* 原毀 in *Han Changli Wenji Jiaozhu* 韓昌黎文集校注, edited by
Ma Qichang 馬其昶 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe 古典文學出版社, 1957), pp.
13-14.

[280] 凡所为上圣之域，岂隔阔辽夐，与凡 境杳绝欤？是惟一性而已，得之为悟，失
之为迷；一理而已，迷而为凡，悟而为圣。述者自隔，理不隔也；失者自失，性不
失也。T49.2035.0439c08-0439c12. QTW 517:18a-b. Also see Hartman, *Han Yu*, p. 191.

Confucians. As explored earlier, Liang elaborated on the relationship between principle, nature, the practice of Tiantai teachings such as *zhiguan,* and the sage:

> Essentially speaking, it (practicing the Tiantai teachings) is like the saying that the sage "reaches all depths and grasps the seeds [of all things]" and "exhaustively comprehends principle and fulfills the nature" (*qiongli jinxing* 窮理盡性). They (the teachings) enlighten the foolish. They clear up the obstructions of the confused. Clearing up [obstructions] leads to awareness. Awareness leads to being perfected. Being perfected leads to being constant. Being constant thus leads to fulfillment. [The foolish being] enlightened leads them to illumination. Illumination leads to transformation. Transformation leads to completion. Completion leads to union with the one.[281]

Here Liang lays out the progression toward sagehood through practicing Tiantai teachings and reveals the great achievement of the sage: his ultimate union with the universal principle and human nature.

In these passages, Liang imputes profound content to this discursive resource originating from *The Book of Changes*: "Through harmony they followed the Way and ordered what was right. They developed their natures to perfection through the understanding of Principle (*li*) and thereby attained to the will of Heaven."[282] Liang most likely built on Kong Yingda's commentary on the *Changes*:

> The Sages used the *Changes*, first, through harmony with them to follow to completion the moral strength of Sagehood, and next, through government in

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[281] 举其要，则圣人极深研几穷理尽性之说乎？昧者使明， 塞者使通，通则悟，悟则至，至则常，常则尽矣；明则照，照则化，化则成，成则一矣。 T49.2035.0439b04-06. QTW 517:17a.

[282] Richard Wilhelm, trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 3rd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 262.

accord with them to determine the right course for human relationships. They were also able to understand fully the deepest and most mysterious Principle (*li*) of all things and to develop to perfection what nature has given to them as human beings. And when they had understood this Principle of all things, their natures were also developed to perfection. When these two were achieved simultaneously, they understood perfectly their allotted destiny (*ming*) and were certain about their fortunes.[283]

In his book on Han Yu, Charles Hartman argues that Kong Yingda's reading falls far short of positing *qiongli jinxing* as a "metaphysical Absolute" in the way that Liang Su does.[284] Hartman, however, is imprecise in his use of the term "Absolute." He refers to the phrase as a description of a "metaphysical Absolute" but also declares that it meant Absolute wisdom or Neo-Confucian sagehood.[285] Yet, it is not self-evident, nor does Hartman make it clear, how Neo-Confucian sagehood is equivalent to a metaphysical Absolute or Absolute wisdom. His repeated capitalization of 'Absolute' also makes it seem as if he were apotheosizing the concept behind the term 'absolute,' but it is not clear how the capitalization is supposed to alter the meaning of 'absolute.'

In the passage quoted above, Kong's description of "understanding the Principle of all things" and developing the nature to perfection are ambiguous enough that they could be read as at least consistent with the more explicitly metaphysical connotations that Liang imputes to them. Very likely, Liang considered his own interpretation to be in line with Kong's.

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[283] Translation from Hartman, *Han Yu*, p. 192. *Zhouyi zhushu* 周易注疏, edited with commentary by Kong Yingda in 659, *Sibu beiyao* edition, 9:2a.

[284] Hartman, *Han Yu*, pp. 192-93.

[285] Hartman, *Han Yu*, pp. 198-99.

Liang was also probably aware of the Buddhist usages of the resource. By Liang's time, Buddhists, such as the Chinese followers of Kumarajiva (344-409), had already connected *qiongli jinxing* to the *prajnaparamita*, enlightenment, and Buddhahood itself. In his "Preface to the Smaller *Prajnaparamita sutra*," Sengrui (352-436) writes: "The *Prajnaparamita sutra* is the precept of 'developing one's nature to perfection through the understanding of Principle (*li*). It is the great path through which the bodhisattva becomes Buddha." And Sengchao (384-414) asks in his commentary on the *Vimalarkirtinirdesa*, "What is Buddhahood? It is a term for one who has 'developed his nature to perfection through the understanding of Principle (*li*),' a term for the great enlightenment (*da jue*)…"[286] It is very likely that lay Buddhist scholars such as Liang Su would have been familiar with such documents and drawn inspiration from them in their interpretations of the phrase.

As Charles Hartman as so adeptly charted, Han Yu picked up Liang's more metaphysical use of this phrase and made it a cornerstone in his view of sagehood, especially in his exegetical writings on the *Analects*.[287] Before Han Yu, the discursive resource is also picked up and utilized by the Chan master Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普愿 (784-834) and by Zongmi 宗密 (780-834) in his *Yuanren lun* 原人論.[288] It is interesting to note that Zongmi claims that *qiongli jinxing* is possible *solely* in the context and practice of Buddhism, making it a contested concept and resource, a point to which I shall return later.

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[286] T. 2145.54c, T. 1775.410a. See the translations in Hartman, *Han Yu*, p. 193.

[287] Hartman, *Han Yu*, pp. 190-99.

[288] For Zongmi, see T. 1886.708a. Hartman, *Han Yu,* p. 193.

By Han Yu's time, the Buddhist connotations of the phrase had become so

commonplace that it appears in popular contexts as synonymous with enlightenment. An

anecdote found in Li Zhao's 李肇 early ninth-century *Tang guoshi bu* 唐國史補

describes a wise woman who had "developed her nature to perfection through the

understanding of Principle (*li*)."[289]

While in Liang and Han's time, the phrase had become associated more closely

with Buddhism, Hartman traces how this phrase became a key conceptual resource in

Song Neo-Confucianism with major figures such as Shao Yong, Zhang Zai, the Cheng

brothers, and Zhu Xi giving it a prominent place in their teachings.[290]

So this one phrase, *qiongli jinxing*, took on different meanings through time as

various authors used it in diverse contexts to express their views about sagehood, wisdom,

enlightenment, Buddhahood, and an integral stage along the path to Neo-Confucian

sagehood.

Another "open" term for Han Yu was *ming* 命. Disagreeing explicitly with Kong

Anguo's interpretation of *ming* in the phrase, *tian ming* 天命 ("heaven's mandate"), in

the *Analects* as referring exclusively to one's fate of success or failure, Han Yu avers that

ming instead means "to develop one's nature to perfection through the understanding of

principle (*li*) and thereby to attain to the mandate of heaven. It is not simply success or

failure."[291] That is, *ming* does not refer to the blind mechanics of fate. Rather, *ming* is an

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[289] *Tang Guoshi Bu* 唐國史補 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe 古典文學出版社, 1957), p. 24. See Hartman, *Han Yu*, pp. 193-94.

[290] Hartman, *Han Yu*, pp. 195-99.

attainable goal within our control and is intimately linked to human nature, self-cultivation, and principle.

Likewise, Li Ao also made frequent use of "open" terms as discursive resources. One such is "mind-ground" (*xindi* 心地), which occurs in the same document as the passage above by Han Yu on *tian ming*. Li specified that "mind-ground" refers to the mind as the source of reality from which springs all phenomena.[292] By the time of Li Ao, this compound had become associated with Northern Chan teachings and pointed to the transmitted Chan essence.[293] But as Timothy Barrett has pointed out, the primary source for the term was probably the widely read *Fanwang Jing* 梵網經.[294] In their teachings on *zhiguan*, both Zhiyi and Zhanran drew on this.[295] Li Hua used this compound term in his record of a Northern Chan master who "employed the mind-ground of the *Fanwang* to return to the original source."[296]

In his *Fuxing Shu* 復性書, Li Ao expounded on one of the most common "open" concepts in the history of Chinese thought—*xing* 性 ("the nature"). The views of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su on *xing* were outlined earlier. Li Ao's interpretation of the concept

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[291] Cheng Shude 程樹德, *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋 (Taipei: 鼎文書局 Dingwen shuju, 1973), 2: 1192. See also Hartman, *Han Yu*, p. 195.

[292] Cheng Shude, 2: 1179. See also Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 90.

[293] See Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 6, 49-50.

[294] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 90. *Xindi* occurs in the full title of the sutra. T. 24.1484.

[295] Zhiyi, *Mohe Zhiguan* 魔訶止觀, T. 46.1911.136c13, and Zhanran, *Zhiguan Fuxing Chuan Hongjue* 止觀輔行傳弘決 T. 46.1912.297c05.

[296] QTW 316.17b.

drew a great deal from Liang.[297] In his *Fuxing Shu*, Li declares that the sage and the

ordinary man share a common nature, "So, then, do ordinary men not have this nature?

The nature of an ordinary man is no different from that of the sage."[298] Here Li calls to

mind the famous Mencian phrases, "The sage and I are of the same kind,"[299] and "Every

man can become like the sages Yao and Shun,"[300] as well as the widespread teaching that

all sentient beings possess the Buddha nature, which by the eighth century had come to

dominate Buddhist thinking on the matter.

Another "open" concept used by Li Ao with clear Buddhist connotations is

"awakened" (*jue* 覺). Li defines the sage as he "who is the first among men to be

awakened. After awakening, he achieves brightness. If he is not awakened, he is deluded.

And if he is deluded, he is in darkness."[301] Liang Su also employed this term several

times in key texts, such as his *Tiantai Famenyi* 天台法門議 and his *Zhiguan Tongyili* 止

觀統例議.[302] Li Ao was no doubt heavily influenced by Liang's usages, in which *jue*

referred to Buddhist enlightenment and was connected to the dualities of brightness

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[297] See Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 92.

[298] *Fuxing Shu* 2.3. *Siku quanshu,* Wenyuange electronic edition. Timothy Barrett
provides probably the best translation of this text to date. I have followed his section
numbering. See Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 99.

[299] *Mencius* 6A7.

[300] *Mencius* 6B2.

[301] *Fuxing Shu* 3.1.

[302] QTW 517:14a-18b.

versus darkness and clarity versus blindness.[303] The phrase "first to be awakened" goes back as early as the *Mencius*, in which it referred to moral understanding.[304] It was also utilized in the Han to describe awareness of the original nature.[305] The various meanings and connotations of this term highlight its fluid content as a discursive resource.

Much more evidence of semantic malleability abounds in the Chinese tradition. These examples should suffice to illustrate how discursive resources can function in a similar way to Han Yu's "open concept."

Claims and Counter-Claims

The final characteristic of discursive resources is that claims and counter-claims of authority are made upon them. Whether a concept, key phrase, or term of art belonged to one or another tradition was clearly related to a contestation of power—social, political, cultural, economic, and religious. Often these discursive resources quickly became free-floating entities with murky or complicated textual histories and only faintly delineated semantic fields. They were subject to their wielders' intentions, which often clashed with one other. In many cases, such struggles were unconscious. They were the by-products of conflicting usages of "open concepts." Sometimes, however, the tug-of-war was a result of conscious co-opting or poaching of the discursive resources of another. These competing claims were usually not explicitly expressed either, but participants and knowledgeable outsiders would have detected the moves and counter-moves.

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[303] Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 101-102.

[304] *Mencius* 5A7.

[305] See Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 101.

During the Tang, a prime example of the former type of struggle, which features largely unconscious competition for discursive resources, is Li Ao's term of art, *fuxing* 復性 ("returning to one's nature"), which he chose as the title of his most famous essay. As Timothy Barrett has deftly demonstrated, Li's teaching of *fuxing* prefigures the later Neo-Confucian theories of self-cultivation.[306] Although he did not create the term, Li was very likely the first to employ the expression in a manner typical of later Neo-Confucian descriptions of the full course of self-cultivation.[307] Broadly speaking, by "returning to one's original nature," Li summed up the process of spiritual and mental self-discipline of seeing through and leaving behind the spiritual ignorance and associated negative emotions, which prevent one from realizing and attaining the spiritual and moral perfection of one's original human nature.[308]

Three centuries later, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), the most famous of all Neo-Confucians, condemned Li's use of *fuxing* as involving the eradication of emotions, an idea Zhu considered a Buddhist error.[309] In his genealogy of the intellectual lineage of Neo-Confucianism, Zhu traced the "transmission of the Way" (*daotong* 道統) from the sage-kings in early antiquity and skips from Mencius directly to Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤

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[306] Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 26-28.

[307] *Fuxing* as "returning to one's original nature" constitutes a convenient catch phrase for what Philip J. Ivanhoe and others have labeled the "recovery" model of Zhu Xi and the "discovery" model of Wang Yangming. Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self-Cultivation*, 2nd edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000).

[308] Unfortunately, a full and proper treatment of Li Ao's theory of self-cultivation lies beyond the scope of this chapter.

[309] See Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 28-29, for further discussion of the intellectual context of Zhu's rhetoric.

(1027-1073). Zhu was unequivocal in his insistence that the *dao* was recovered only by the Song Neo-Confucians and was lost during the moral dark ages between Mencius and the Song.

On first glance, the accusation of the Song Neo-Confucians, who were in their writings very hostile to Buddhist teachings, that Li Ao's *fuxing* was heterodox may be understandable. There are no occurrences of the term in the Confucian Classics. Similar expressions, such as *fanxing* 反性 (also "returning to the nature") can be found in early texts, but these are confined to Daoist sources.[310]

Nevertheless, later Neo-Confucians pointed out one passage in the *Mencius* that contains a similar idea, though the *fuxing* compound does not appear. In 7B33, Mencius states that the ancient sages Yao and Shun had it by nature but the dynastic founders, Tang and Wu, returned to it.[311] Zhu Xi took this to mean that Yao and Shun were always in touch with their morally and spiritually perfect natures, but that Tang and Wu had to return to their original, sagely natures. Zhu praised Mencius for being the first to articulate this idea.[312] The Cheng brothers utilized the term, *fuxing*, frequently.[313] They never, however, acknowledge Li Ao as a source for their ideas.[314] This is no doubt yet

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[310] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 26.

[311] *Mencius* 7B33. 堯瞬性者也；湯武反之也。

[312] Zhu Xi 朱熹, comp., ed., *Sishu Zhangju Jizhu* 四書章句集注, 2nd edition (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2006), p. 373.

[313] Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤, *Ercheng Ji* 二程集, 2 volumes, 2nd edition (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2004), p. 252, 292, 1158.

[314] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 27.

another example of the effects of a free-floating discursive resource, which makes its way into one's vocabulary and thinking without any clear origin.

In attempting to exonerate Li Ao of the charge of being too Buddhist, Barrett traces the possible sources of Li's own use of *fuxing*, starting with the standard commentaries on the Confucian Classics in the seventh century. He found that *fu* in the standard commentaries referred to the cyclical processes of the natural universe.[315] Barrett did, however, find the term in a Tang poem predating Li that describes Chan self-cultivation, suggesting that *fuxing* was already being inscribed with a meaning closer to that of Li's.[316]

Barrett's conclusion is that the term, *fuxing*, is directly derived not from these sources but from Tang commentaries on the Daoist classics. In his commentary on the *Zhuangzi*, Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. 631-650) frequently employs *fu* in such phrases as "returning to the unselfconscious (*ziran* 自然) nature," "to return to the nature of the original source," "one who returns to the original nature," and "returning to the real nature."[317] He also uses the phrase, "returning to the original nature" in his commentary on the *Laozi*.[318]

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[315] Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 90-91. See *Liji Zhushu* 禮記注疏, 24.3a, and *Shangshu Zhushu* 尚書注疏 , 6.6a. Both edited with commentary by Kong Yingda in 659, Sibu beiyao 四部備要 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1920-1933).

[316] Barrett, *Li Ao*, p. 91.

[317] Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, ed., *Zhuangzi Jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1961), p. 417 (5A), 547 (6A), 591 (6B), 782 (8A).

[318] *Daode Zhenjing Xuande Cuanshu* 道德真經玄德纂疏, compiled by Qiang Siqi 強思齊, *Daozang* 道藏, no. 711, 4.20b.

More immediate sources are Liang Su and Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759-818). Both of

them use this term in Buddhist contexts. Liang alludes to the concept of *fuxing* in the

opening lines of his Buddhist text, *Zhiguan Tongliyi*.[319] Quan Deyu, a chief examiner and

chief minister, uses the term in three early texts from 781- 787, all of which were written

in Buddhist documents or inscriptions.[320] It is reasonable to assume that both Liang and

Quan were aware of the term's earlier uses in Daoist contexts. In 806, Bai Juyi employs

this expression in comparing Chinese, autochthonous equivalents to Buddhist teachings.

Bai described the goal of "returning to human nature" (*fu renxing* 復人性) as a teaching

held in common by Daoists and Buddhists alike.[321]

The concept expressed by the term, *fuxing*, was called into service at different

times in Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist, and Neo-Confucian contexts. Li Ao's usage of it

and his place in the development of Neo-Confucianism became contentious topics when

it came time for the Neo-Confucians to define and identify themselves as a coherent

group and the walls separating orthodoxy and heresy came crashing down. Zhu Xi

distinguished between the proper, Neo-Confucian meaning and usage of *fuxing* and the

heretical, Buddhist-influenced interpretation of the term by Li Ao.[322] This contestation

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[319] QTW 517:15b-16a. For Liang's connection with Li, see Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 60-65.

[320] QTW 494:13a, 15a; 501:15a.

[321] See Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 92-93, and Kenneth K.S. Chen, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 191.

[322] *Zhuzi Yulei* 朱子語類, 8 volumes, 5th edition (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2004), 59:1391; 137:3275-76.

over the legitimate meaning of this discursive resource continued throughout later dynasties and even carried over into Tokugawa Japan.[323]

Recent research has shed light on another type of clash over discursive resources, one that involves conscious co-opting from opposing groups in non-elite social settings. Christine Mollier has offered meticulously documented examples of the contested claims between Buddhists and Daoists regarding authority, authorship, and origins. Her ultimate goal is to sort out the history of exchange and competition between Buddhists and Daoists and to revive the perennial question, "Is it Buddhist or Daoist?"[324] In her fascinating study, she adduces evidence that medieval Buddhists and Daoists not only appropriated, copied, and repackaged from each other both textual and visual materials, but also competed in a unique type of scriptural production.

While her detailed descriptions of the evidence are exemplary, her analysis could be pressed even further. Whenever one asks whether some text or visual artifact is properly identified as Buddhist or Daoist, one invokes questions of authority. Identified by whom? Buddhists? Daoists? An "objective" third party? The consensus of modern scholarship? It would be both more accurate and more illuminating to view it as a contested resource originally proposed by some person or group but now up for grabs and available to the most capable challenger. Such an approach would facilitate the description of the processes of contention without engaging in evaluations of legitimacy.

Despite the high level of integration, assimilation, and borrowing between religious traditions, exemplified in the thought of such figures as Liang Su, religion in

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[323] Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 29-32.

[324] Mollier, p. 22.

medieval China was not devoid of considerations of patronage and money. Struggles for

power—social, economic, and political—were endemic to the Tang religious world.[325]

Polemics over the legend of the "conversion of the barbarians" (*huahu* 化胡) that

continued for over a thousand years probably started as an attempt to account for the

appearance in China of the foreign religion of Buddhism. Daoists soon thereafter realized

its political potential and used it to buttress their legitimacy as a tradition. The debate

over the legend helped to engender canonical apologetic literature from the Buddhists, as

well as Buddhist apocrypha.[326] These struggles for dominance also carried over into the

formal context of the imperial court, which held a series of debates between the Three

Teachings of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, conducted by famous

representatives of the traditions.[327]

Such disputes were symptomatic of the struggle between the three traditions at the

more elite strata for the level of legitimacy that would ultimately lead to greater political

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[325] For other excellent examples of fine-grained micro-level studies of religious and
cultural mixing in medieval China, see Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese
Buddhism: A Reading of the* Treasure Store Treatise (Honolulu: University of Hawaii
Press, Kuroda Institute, 2002); Stanley K. Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 2002); James Robson, "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System:
A Case Study of the Southern Marchmount," in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and
Chinese Society* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), pp. 341-383; Stephen
F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
1988); and Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries
AD)," *Artibus Asiae* 47 (1986): 263-352.

[326] See Erik Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: the spread and adaptation of
Buddhism in early medieval China*, 2 volumes, 2nd edition, revised (Leiden: E.J. Brill,
1972/1959), pp. 288-320; Livia Kohn, *Laughing at the Tao: Debates among Buddhists
and Taoists in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Kristofer
Schipper, "Purity and Strangers: Shifting Boundaries in Medieval China." *T'oung Pao*
80(1994): 61-81, especially 65n.10; and Mollier, pp. 7-9.

[327] See Kohn.

and economic support. Yet, as seen in the lives of such scholar-elites as Li Hua and Liang Su, disagreement over such practical issues often did not affect spiritual and philosophical allegiances. They could consider themselves adherents simultaneously of Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist teachings.

Often, this meant that discursive resources whose provenance could be traced to one tradition would be unreflectively picked up and employed in the context of another tradition by people whose religious lives did not respect strict sectarian boundaries. Even in the case of those who deliberately set out to "plagiarize" from another tradition, they are in most cases drawing on a competitive resource obtainable by whomever can lay the strongest claim upon it.

This was often the case in Mollier's examples of inter-tradition appropriation and plagiarism. For instance, in her examination of the tradition of the Heavenly Kitchens (*tianchu* 天廚), she tries to uncover whether it was the Daoists or Buddhists who originally propounded the psychophysical techniques and practices in that tradition. In the process, she exposes a great deal of evidence for both sides of the debate.[328] She also shows how understanding the Buddhist versions of the texts can shed light on the Daoists versions and vice versa.[329] In tracing the origins of the various elements involved in the Heavenly Kitchens tradition, her work helps to highlight the universal and ubiquitous occurrences of the main components involved. Recitations of incantations, invocations to deities, and meditation to harmonize the physical and mental are prime examples of concepts that are available for use by any religion. These more general, common

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[328] Mollier, chapter 1.

[329] Mollier, p. 52.

elements serve as resources and lie behind the precise wording of the texts. Mollier's own

analysis turned up potential Buddhist equivalences for specifically Daoist elements.[330]

That they probably had their origins in Daoist contexts or that they were of "obvious

Taoist flavor"[331] ought not blind us to their nature as contestable religious resources over

which Buddhists and others can lay claim and make their own. The process by which this

occurs is highly variable and can be of great interest. The very fact that another religion

picks up such elements at all, however, should not surprise us.

Second, Mollier's treatment of the key term, *gu* 蠱 ("a special kind of deadly

poison"), which "continuously brought a reign of intrigue and blackmail in Chinese

society," is another excellent example of a disputable discursive resource.[332] The use of

gu is best understood within the context of sorcery and sorcerers in China. Both sides,

Buddhist and Daoist, contained some components of the common sorcery repertoire,

which originated apart from either tradition. These components included symbolic

representations, such as images, effigies, and talismans, as well as verbal formulae, such

as incantations, dharanis, prayers, injunctions, and imprecations.[333] Mollier examines the

use of these elements on both sides and how they responded to the other. In this way, she

unearths further discursive resources. The overarching concept of anti-sorcery looms

large in Buddhist and Daoist perspectives. Neutralizing witchcraft, exorcising the

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[330] Mollier, pp. 41-45.

[331] Mollier, p. 35.

[332] Mollier, p. 55.

[333] Mollier, p. 82.

bewitched, and using anti-sorcery to combat sorcery all constitute contested, conceptual resources.

Third, in her treatment of the Daoist version of the bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音, Jiuku Tianzun 救苦天尊, Mollier covers several different types of discursive resources, including the name of deities, magic spells, incantations, dharanis, mantras, and visual symbols such as talismans and mandalas.[334] Notice that it is not the content of these resources—the exact names, the words or language of the verbal formulae, or the shape or design of the visual symbols—that are held in common. Rather, it is their form and the associated function. For instance, both Buddhism and Daoism exploit "the power of the name" such that the verbal invocation of the deity's name guarantees infallible assistance.[335] They also both make plentiful use of the power of spells and images. There is also the very concept of a universally accessible savior deity offering instant relief from suffering.[336]

Mollier's conclusion is that religious actors were keen to make explicit their religious affiliations and to affirm strong commitment to their sectarian identities.[337] She claims that this was as true at the popular, folk level as it was at the elite level. I contend that the reason for this was that the texts and rituals she investigates contain a great number of discursive resources—concepts, terms, phrases, images, practices—which were available for the taking and susceptible to claims and counter-claims of ownership,

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[334] Mollier, chapter 4.

[335] Mollier, pp. 190-91.

[336] Mollier, p. 190.

[337] Mollier, p. 209.

authority, and legitimacy. Whether the utilization of these inter-religious resources were largely unconscious, as in the case of Liang Su and Li Hua, or conscious, as in some of Mollier's examples, they all involved the active appropriation and manipulation of these resources within cultural and religious repertoires.

Conclusions

Moving beyond the thought of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su, and into a consideration of the next generation of *guwen* scholar-elites, particularly Li Ao and Han Yu, as well as texts and images at a more folk level of Buddhism and Daoism, this chapter has explored the hermeneutical range of 'discursive resources' as an analytical category for treating cases in which religions subtly borrow or even outright plagiarize from one another. Instead of approaching the issue from an evaluative standpoint, trying to get at the objective origins or at a conclusive judgment for one side or another, a more constructive method is to regard the various concepts, terms, phrases, images, and practices as discursive resources operating within disputed discursive arenas. Actors within these arenas draw on these resources to fill out their cultural and religious repertoires. They also impute meaning and content into the conceptual resources. And they lay claims and counter-claims of authority over these resources.

An interesting implication arising from the application of this category to the inter-tradition interplay at the popular, folk level is that interpreting religious interaction in terms of 'discursive resources' can be heuristically valuable outside the elite social class of the intellectual and religious professional. It can apply just as well to the lower social classes and settings. It also helps to analyze more accurately the power dynamics

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involved in clashes over non-textual material, such as images and artifacts. The

category's broad scope and explanatory power is able to account for much of its appeal.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

In the thought of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su, the supposed conflicts and boundaries between their Buddhist and Confucian sides appear upon closer examination to be a great deal harder to pinpoint than one would expect. These eighth-century figures certainly did not advocate any kind of sharp break between Buddhist devotion and Confucian training. In their writings, such dividing lines as you would anticipate finding from scholar-officials who purportedly compartmentalized their lives seem, in the final analysis, almost undetectable and imperceptible.

Forming an informal lineage of sorts, joined by close personal, mentor-mentee connections, Li, Dugu, and Liang shared a common background as career officials interested in socio-political change, but also more significantly, contributing in key ways to the emerging discourse on the moral transformation of the individual. One of their main sources of inspiration was Buddhism, specifically the Tiantai Buddhism of Zhanran, whose life spanned much of the century and who was a common thread in the thought of these three figures.

While all three thinkers composed a great amount of Buddhist occasional writing, including several stele inscriptions of historical significance, they also produced

documents in which they addressed not just Confucian concerns about writing and culture

(*wenxue* 文學) but also Buddhist doctrine, history, and practice. Very likely, their

Buddhist education on such key concepts as the Buddha mind, *dao*, the Buddha nature,

and principle (*li*) informed their thinking about classical literature and culture. Taking

their Buddhist background into account can help explain why this century of scholars in

particular questioned the primacy of *wen*. No doubt the socio-cultural upheaval resulting

from the An Lushan rebellion galvanized the elite into questioning their previously held

cultural values. This event may have thrown the elite into a cultural crisis of sorts, but it

fails to explain why the elite chose to respond in that particular way.

To scholars such as Peter Bol, their reaction requires explanation. Bol concludes:

> By treating wen as merely the embellishment on the language one wished
> to speak and supposing that one's moral purpose or will should determine what
> one had to say, Li Hua and his successors in effect separated morality and culture.
> This separation was foreign to the early T'ang, when it was held that in its
> inception and through its continuation the cultural tradition reproduced the
> constant patterns of the cosmos. Liang Su is extreme because he accepts the
> possible conclusion that since the cultural tradition is separate from the basis for
> morality it can be connected to it only incidentally; thus any morally valid wen-
> hsueh and wen-chang require thinking grounded in an ultimate source of moral
> ideas existing outside tradition.[338]

In his account of this shift from the early Tang views of the primacy of *wen*, Bol appeals

to a long-term desire on the part of scholar-elites to "show how literary writing could

guide social behavior," and argues that in doing so, "they admitted that it did not."[339]

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[338] Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 121-22.

[339] Bol, p. 121.

Apparently, for over three centuries, scholar-elites were attempting to demonstrate how *wen* can make society more moral, and it was only after the cultural crisis ensuing from the An Lushan rebellion that they finally started to abandon the project and look to other sources of inspiration. But why would scholars like Liang Su separate the project of literary culture (*wen*) from that of attaining the *dao*, and why would they give the highest priority to *dao* and its cultivation?

As noted, one of the most striking commonalities among these innovative eighth century thinkers is their extensive involvement and extraordinary interest in Buddhist teachers and teachings. The Buddhist tradition was concerned with issues and concepts that were more "metaphysical," such as the Buddha mind, the Buddha nature, principle, and the *dao*, and engaged in a great deal of rhetoric against ornate composition (*wenzhang* 文章). It would thus seem natural for Li, Dugu, and Liang to draw upon Buddhism as a primary source of inspiration for formulating answers to societal problems. Their emphasis on *dao* over *wen* makes a great deal of sense in light of their copious writings related to Buddhism.

The significance of this Buddhist background should not be overlooked as it helps to explain the general contours of thought in the later Neo-Confucian tradition. The concepts of Buddha mind, Buddha nature, principle as a kind of metaphysical absolute, and a metaphysical *dao* identical to the universal nature are all substantially shaped and informed by Buddhist doctrine. Han Yu and Li Ao, from whom the Cheng brothers and other Song Neo-Confucians liberally drew, adopted many of these eighth century views of the nature, mind, principle, and *dao*. On several points, then, these eighth century scholars anticipated some of the major teachings of Song Neo-Confucianism. In this way,

the careers and writings of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su constituted a pivotal turning point in Chinese intellectual and religious history.

Clearly, in approaching the thought of these eighth century thinkers, one must collapse the polarities between Buddhist and Confucian. As an analytical category and evaluative framework, the old paradigm of 'syncretism' would no longer do. Perhaps the most pressing problem with the term is its long history of negative connotations, which it has been unable to elude. Its associations with missionary expansion and colonial churches placed it firmly within contexts that derided religious or cultural mixture as impure, incomplete, and incoherent. The history of the term highlights its use as an expression of socio-political power.

Another problem was the connection between 'syncretism' and the quest for origins. Locating the causes of an event or phenomena, or tracing the trajectory of an idea over time can be legitimate and valuable scholarly enterprises. Often, however, the search for origins carries a hidden agenda with a normative or teleological purpose.

Finally, 'syncretism' was rejected because it involved essentialist notions of religion. Studies of the mixing of two or more religions assume that the religions were separate and discrete entities, with an identifiable essence or core, predating the mixture. This presupposition of "pure" and "ideal" religions greatly distorts the historical reality.

The essentialism, origins, and pejorative term objections to syncretism motivated a search for alternative approaches. In interpreting Tang religious history, I used what I argued was a more effective framework that involved treating the various terms, phrases, concepts, images, artifacts, and other such elements as resources that can compose

129

repertoires, which people employ to help them meet the vicissitudes of life and to make sense of the world.

Using the categories of 'resource' and 'repertoire' to approach the thought of Li, Dugu, and Liang, I focused on the discursive resources of *dao*, mind (*xin*), principle (*li*), and inherent nature (*xing*). For these three thinkers, moral cultivation leading to social harmony requires a kind of personal transformation, starting with stimulating the mind and continuing with understanding, according with, and extending principle. Then one will be able to rectify and recover our inherent, original nature, which we all hold in common. This in turn equips us to live in harmony with the *dao* and enables our cultivation of the *dao*. Cultivating the *dao* and rectifying the inherent nature work in tandem, feeding into one another.

There is an implicit theory here of two natures—the current, common, imperfect nature and the pure, original, universal nature—a theory whose dual structure was common in the Buddhism of the time and was picked up by the Neo-Confucians centuries later. This dual nature theory has a parallel in an implicit theory of two minds—the current, common, imperfect mind and the pure, original, universal mind—and was also structurally similar to prevailing Buddhist doctrine at the time, as well as later Neo-Confucianism.

The cyclical nature of the cultivation means that as one stimulates the current mind, one begins on the path to accessing and retrieving the universal mind. As one grasps, follows, and applies one's knowledge of principle to an increasing number of situations, one progresses further toward recovering the universal mind, as well as the universal nature. The more one exercises the mind and extends principle, the closer one

gets to rectifying the current, imperfect nature and recovering the pure, original nature. And as one rectifies the inherent nature, one begins to embody the *dao*, naturally living life in accordance with it, and aligning one's inherent nature in a harmonious manner with the *dao.*

This account of self-cultivation is an amalgam of the theories of Li, Dugu, and Liang, and clearly evinces how they drew a great deal from the discourse on mind and nature in Chan and especially Tiantai circles during the Tang. Their common link in Zhanran is evident. In its emphasis on extending principle, activating the universal mind, recovering the inherent nature, and according with the *dao*, this model of self-cultivation also anticipates in broad strokes the general, commonly accepted position on moral self-cultivation held by the Neo-Confucians in the Song and later.

Looking beyond Liang Su's generation to the more widely known precursors of Neo-Confucianism, Han Yu and Li Ao, I further demonstrated the hermeneutical value of the interpretive scheme of discursive resources and repertoires. Discursive resources do not exist in a vacuum. When a resource is proposed in a discursive arena, it is vulnerable to claims and counter-claims of authority. Any participant can appropriate that element into a repertoire, which may differ from the original source in its sectarian or lineal affiliations. These resources are subject to such power dynamics because they are part of a social practice. Thus, even if, for example, those who identify themselves as "Daoists" were the first to propose a concept, if those who self-identify as "Buddhists" were to mount an effective campaign in the discursive arena enabling them to claim ownership over that concept, then there is a significant sense in which that concept is Buddhist and

not Daoist. This sense of a resource "belonging" to a repertoire reveals most starkly the socio-political, intellectual, and cultural dynamics at play.

Since they operate in contested spaces, people are free to draw on these discursive resources in forming their own repertoires. The historical provenance of the resource becomes rapidly irrelevant to the power dynamics involved. Unfortunately, modern scholars sometimes fall into the trap of searching for the "original source," hoping that establishing a touchstone of fidelity will allow them to determine whether a particular resource is truly Buddhist, Daoist, or some other religion. Too often this veers into a rhetoric of unacknowledged apologetics. Searching for this elusive standard usually results in a distortion of the historical reality, in which discursive resources are "up for grabs" and the identity of the origins mainly "beside the point." For as discussed in the earlier treatment of essentialism in 'syncretism,' the encounter or clash is not between two clearly demarcated religions, but among individuals and their unique, though at points shared and overlapping, repertoires. These discursive resources are not automatically the sole preserve of the repertoires of their originators, but rather, are contestable components.

Many of these discursive resources were also what Han Yu labeled, "open concepts" (*xu wei*) into which people imputed content. Not only, then, are such resources contestable, they are also semantically malleable. Han Yu's category of "open concepts" demonstrates that Tang Chinese were also aware of this phenomenon and self-consciously applied this knowledge. Among the examples of "open concepts" considered were *dao*, *de*, inherent nature (*xing*), *qiongli jinxing* (exhaustively comprehend principle and fulfill the inherent nature), *ming*, "mind-ground" (*xindi*), and "awakened" (*jue*).

While Han Yu self-consciously applied the distinction of "open concepts" and "fixed terms," many instances in which new content was imputed to a resource appear largely unconscious. They were the products of historical happenstance as conflicting usages of the terms went unnoticed. However, sometimes this co-opting or poaching was explicit, open, and conscious. Such was the case with Li Ao's term of art, *fuxing*, which was claimed by Confucians, Buddhists, Daoists, Li Ao himself, and later Neo-Confucians.

Such was also the case with Mollier's study of the conflicting claims of Buddhists and Daoists over the techniques and practices of the Heavenly Kitchens, the sorcery resources associated with the *gu* poison, and the form and function of the resources associated with the Jiuku Tianzun and the bodhisattva Guanyin. While Mollier concludes that Tang religious actors were very concerned about their "sectarian" affiliations and identities, a better explanation is that the resources she examines existed in a discursive arena and were thus available to actors in that arena as tools for legitimacy and authority. These concepts, terms, phrases, images, and practices evinced active appropriation and deployment by discursive agents for their cultural and religious repertoires. Mollier's examples also show that this paradigm of resources and repertoires can be usefully applied not just to elite thought but also to textual and visual materials originating from and dominating the religious lives of the lower socio-economic classes.

In sum, this dissertation has helped to collapse the false dichotomy between Buddhism and Confucianism in the thought of Tang dynasty scholar-officials and sought to develop a hermeneutical framework of 'discursive resources' and 'repertoires' with with which to interpret the primary sources. Considering and then rejecting the category

of 'syncretism,' I drew inspiration from the work of sociologists and theorists of religion on repertoires and resources. This theoretical approach proved fruitful in examining first, the thought of Li Hua, Dugu Ji, and Liang Su, and then the thought of Han Yu, Li Ao, and even cases of conscious co-opting of discursive resources in Tang popular religion.

An important implication of this research is that while the practicalities of academic research often require scholars to specialize in one or another tradition, this artifical bifurcation of, for example, Tang thought into Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist, or folk religion does not do justice to the rich and tightly interwoven fabric of Chinese intellectual and religious culture.

Apart from the practical problems of mastering more than one tradition, there is still the problem of a tendency to project a clear division between putatively public and private spheres among the Tang scholars and to effect a stark separation between what they perceive to be the religious and the secular. A full treatment of this tantalizing topic is beyond the scope of this dissertation. To a limited degree, a kind of public-private partition exists in Tang intellectual culture. However, in several significant respects, the public-private and religious-secular polarities represent false dichotomies that often prevent scholars from seeing the deep connections between the developments and complex interactions occurring in all these traditions and at different socio-economic classes. But such subjects must await further study.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Sectarianism and Lineage

An important implication of my study of the thought of these Tang figures is that the boundaries between traditions and sects were much more flexible and porous than the standard narratives depict. This is especially so in the case of Buddhism.

An integral aspect of the textbook narrative of Chinese Buddhist history is a focus on the progression of various sects. This master narrative depicts the arrival of Kumārajīva, Bodhiruci, Paramārtha, and other Indian and Central Asian Buddhist monks and translators as enabling the rise of Chinese versions of Indian exegetical sects, such as the Sanlun, Dilun, and Shelun, which continued to evolve during the Northern and Southern Dynasties. The Sui-Tang, the supposed "Golden Age" of Chinese Buddhism, saw the rise of the truly indigenous Chinese schools of Buddhism.[340] Later in the mid-Tang, Indian Vajrayana Buddhism gained the support of the court and became a

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[340] Not only is this account found in the standard survey histories of Chinese Buddhism cited in the earlier section, it is also followed in the general collections of primary documents in Chinese history and philosophy, such as Wing-tsit Chan, trans. & ed., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), which begins its coverage of Buddhism with a section entitled, "Seven Early Buddhist Schools." Also see Wm. Theodore de Bary & Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume One*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), which divides its coverage into "Schools of Buddhist Doctrine" and "Schools of Buddhist Practice."

dominant school among the elite. Although the Sui-Tang is considered the high period of

Chinese Buddhism, it also witnessed the devastating anti-Buddhist persecution of 842-

846 (Huichang reign period) and the Huang Chao rebellion of 875-884, which Stanley

Weinstein credits for the ultimate decline of the Tiantai and Huayan, schools that were

heavily dependent on textual exegesis. Perhaps the most deleterious effect of the anti-

Buddhist measures ordered by Wuzong in the Huichang purges was the destruction of

scriptures, which Weinstein sees as gravely crippling the textually oriented Buddhist

schools in particular. The Huang Chao persecutions prevented the textually oriented

schools from ever fully recovering. And the incessant warfare, massacres, and pillaging

of villages, towns, and monasteries aggravated the condition of Buddhist institutions in

general.[341]

    Recent scholarship has argued cogently that the boundaries separating these

schools were much more blurred than the standard account draws them. Not only were

the lines between Buddhist sects unclear, but so were those between Chan and Neo-

Confucianism, the elite and the popular, and folk religion and Tantra.[342] Moreover, at

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[341] Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 146-150.

[342] In addition to the present dissertation, see also the excellent essays by Ari Borrell, Daniel A. Getz Jr., Chi-chiang Huang, Albert F. Welter in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 1999). For other studies on inter-sectarian and inter-religious relations in the Sung, see Robert Gimello, "Mārga and Culture: Learning, Letters, and Liberation in Northern Sung Ch'an," in Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello, eds., *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 1992), pp. 371-437; Koichi Shinohara, "Ta-hui's Instructions to Tseng K'ai: Buddhist 'Freedom' in the Neo-Confucian Context," in Irene Bloom and Joshua Fogel, eds., *Meeting of Minds: Intellectual and Religious Interaction in East Asian Traditions of*

least until the end of the Tang, most of these so-called Buddhist sects never existed as self-conscious institutional entities or movements in China. In reaction to this, some scholars have advocated turning our attention away from the clerical elite and toward the folk level, where we are supposed to see the melding and assimilation of Buddhist doctrine and practice into the amorphous entity of Chinese indigenous folk religion.[343]

However, that sectarian lines are unclear does not entail the abandonment of studies of elite Buddhism and a wholesale retreat to the folk or popular levels. Writings on Chinese popular religion constantly underscore the great extent to which there is religious and cultural borrowing and integration, but this sort of mixing can also be found at the elite level. Pre-modern Chinese Buddhist elite of different lineages, sects, and

Thought (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 175-208; and Mark Halperin, "Pieties and Responsibilities: Buddhism and the Chinese Literati (780-1280*)*," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Berkeley, 1997). For studies of earlier periods, see Livia Kohn, *Laughing at the Tao: Debates Among Buddhists and Taoists in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree: The Lingbao Attempt to Replace Buddhism in China and Our Attempt to Place Lingbao Taoism"; Erik Zurcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence," *T'oung Pao* 66 (1980): 84-147; and Julia Ching, "The Encounter of Ch'an with Confucianism." For studies on the Tang, see Timothy H. Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); John Jorgensen, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch'an's Search for Legitimation in the Mid-T'ang Dynasty," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 35 (March 1987): 89-133.

[343] Recent studies of the relationship between Chinese popular religions and Buddhism have been in fashion for many years now, largely spurred by access to the Dunhuang manuscripts. For representative works, see Daniel Overmyer, "Buddhism in the Trenches: Attitudes toward Popular Religion in Chinese Scriptures Found at Tun-huang," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 50.1 (1990): 197-222; Teiser, *Ghost Festival* and Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 1994); and Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001). Also see Erik Zurcher, "Perspectives in the Study of Chinese Buddhism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1982): 161-176.

traditions often lived and practiced on the same mountain sites, and sometimes even in the same temples, monasteries, or retreat locations. They also often shared a relatively similar monastic code, mode of dress, and liturgical and ritual practice.[344]

This over-emphasis on sectarianism in the standard account can be traced to the overwhelming influence of Japanese scholarship on modern studies of Chinese Buddhism. Sectarian struggles and polemics had a much stronger influence on the history of Japanese Buddhism. Buddhist establishments in Japan were subject to a far greater degree of state control than they were in pre-modern China, and they regularly contended with one another over state and aristocratic patronage. Often Japanese scholars of Chinese Buddhism, whose work is generally marked by a high degree of philological sophistication and textual mastery, tend to bring implicit assumptions reflecting the nature of Japanese Buddhism that sometimes distort the historical realities of the Chinese situation.[345]

These problems with the sectarianism framework should not blind us to the fact that among the medieval Chinese Buddhist elite, there actually were some divisions, however minor, between what are commonly called 'sects.' If 'sect' is understood as meaning a separately organized religious body with its own discrete places of religious practice,[346] then the Chinese word usually translated as 'sect,' *zong* 宗, would be more

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[344] A particularly lucid study of this phenomenon during the Tang is Timothy H. Barrett, "Devil's Valley to Omega Point: Reflections on the Emergence of a Theme from the *Nō*," *The Buddhist Forum* (London SOAS), 2 (1991): 1-12.

[345] Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, pp. 8-9.

[346] Cf., "Sect" in the *Oxford English Dictionary, Online Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), definition 4c.

accurately translated as 'lineage' or 'ancestral line.' As with many other religious

traditions, familial terminology had been employed almost from the inception of

Buddhism in China. Masters were called *zu* 祖 (patriarch) and disciples *dizi* 弟子

(younger brother/son).[347] In the early Tang, the traditional Chinese sense of *zong* as

'ancestral lineage' became a common part of Chinese Buddhist vocabulary.[348] Thus,

'lineage,' rather than 'sect,' would perhaps be a better way of conceptualizing the

divisions between the Chinese Buddhist elite.

At times, lineal differences take on extreme importance as the court decides what

kind of Buddhism to support or demote, and lineal distinctiveness is especially evident in

these patterns of imperial patronage. Political concerns had a direct bearing upon the

sequence in which these Buddhist lineages achieved dominance, as well as upon the

consequent vicissitudes they experienced. The rise to prominence of the Tiantai lineage

during the Sui and its subsequent decline in the early Tang has been ascribed to the

extremely close connections between Zhiyi and Sui Yangdi's imperial house and the

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[347] Jorgenson, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism," p. 96.

[348] Jorgenson, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism," p. 109. Sensitivity to matters of ancestral lineage was ubiquitous in Sui-Tang China. Cf., Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 32-75; Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.2 (1982): 365-442; Patricia B. Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts'ui Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977); David Johnson, "The Last Years of a Great Clan: The Li Family of Chao Chun in the Late T'ang and Early Sung," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.1 (1977): 5-102; Denis C. Twitchett, "The Composition of the T'ang Ruling Class: New Evidence from Tunhuang," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 47-85.

Tang imperial family's desire to establish legitimacy as the new dynastic line.[349] The

rise of the Faxiang is intimately linked to the role of Xuan Zang, who attracted great

interest in the capitals upon his return from India. Emperor Taizong initially tried to

enlist Xuan Zang simply as an expert in foreign affairs, but later seemed to evince a

sincere interest in Buddhist teachings and eventually looked to Xuan Zang as his

religious guide. Both Emperors Taizong and Gaozong lavished Xuan Zang with

unprecedented levels of material and human support for his prodigious translation and

teaching activities.[350] When Empress Wu took power in the second half of the seventh

century, and as many before her, she sought to disassociate herself with the Buddhist

lineages that her predecessors supported. As early as 670, Empress Wu became

interested in the Huayan teachings of Fazang, who enjoyed her patronage for almost the

entire duration of his religious career. Empress Wu eventually lent her full support to the

Huayan, which was politically untainted by previous associations, and it quickly gained

distinction among the clerical elite.[351] In addition, Empress Wu invited at least eight

Chan masters to the court, including the illustrious Shenxiu in 701. After the celebrated

meeting between Empress Wu and Shenxiu, during which the Empress paid obeisance to

the Chan master, Shenxiu and his Chan teachings gained an enormous following in the

capitals that included many important scholar-elites.[352] The Chan lineage of Shenxiu fell

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[349] Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage," pp. 290-291.

[350] Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 24-31; Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage,"
pp. 291-297.

[351] Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage," pp. 297-305; Weinstein, *Buddhism*, pp. 46-47.

[352] Weinstein, *Buddhism*, pp. 45-46.

out of favor by the end of the eighth century, partly because its primary identity had become too closely tied to its former successes at the court, and its public image had ossified around this memory, and partly because of the effective rhetorical strategies of the "Southern" teachings of Shenhui.[353] Tracing the fortunes of each of these and other lineages through the rest of the Tang is well beyond the scope of this paper.

That Sui-Tang imperial patrons were able to single out and then support or demote the individual heads or representatives of different lineages implies that the court and the elite were able to distinguish between these groups. Since rulers tended to support individual Buddhist masters, what they were picking out were not whole sects as much as individuals and their lineages. Thus, rather than seeing this as evidence of sectarian distinctiveness, one should recognize that imperial patronage patterns underscore the crucial role of the lineage. Perceived differences between lineages were important enough to be at least partly responsible for the rise and fall of various Chinese Buddhist lineages.[354]

Political concerns can affect doctrinal developments as well. For instance, Tiantai Zhiyi's mature teaching can be viewed as an attempt to harmonize the divergent approaches to Buddhism in the Nanbei Chao commonly expressed in the antithesis between northern meditation and southern exegesis. Politically motivated classification schemes also highlight the ongoing challenges of forging a lineal identity. Zhiyi sought

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[353] John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 242-243. Also, see the next paragraph below.

[354] See also Jorgenson, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism."

to reconcile conflicting classifications of doctrine, of which he counted no less than ten during his time.[355]

While the concept of 'lineage' can better elucidate the social realities of elite Buddhists, for the sake of convenience, it would be helpful to have a category to refer to different lineages within a broader group, such as the different lineages within Chan Buddhism. For this reason, it may behoove us to resuscitate the terms, 'sect' or 'school.' We could take a broader definition of 'sect,' in which the term means something like "a body of persons who unite in holding certain views differing from those of others who are accounted to be of the same religion."[356] This more general definition requires no separate institutional identity or setting. An example of such a usage would be the "sects" of premillenialists, amillenialists, and postmillennialists within Protestant Christianity.[357] One could find adherents of each of these views on the membership rolls of the same church. Each group unites in holding a view of eschatology that differs from the others, but they consider themselves members of the same religion.

This broader definition of 'sect' can lend analytical precision in discussions of inter-sectarian conflicts, such as those between Sanlun, Faxiang, Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan. These disputes, which can take the form of polemical writings and competing

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[355] Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of T'ang Buddhism," in Arthur Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 283-284. Cf., Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-I (538-597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk* (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1980), pp. 214-229.

[356] "Sect" in the *Oxford English Dictionary, Online Edition*, definition 4b.

[357] This example is inspired by the citation in the OED under definition 4b of J. Jackson, *True Evang. T.* I. 69 (1641) "The Millenaries, a sect of learned, and criticall Christians, who expect in the last thousand years of the Church, the cream of all militant perfection."

panjiao schemes, demonstrate that at least some Buddhists thought sectarian, and not just lineal, differences were important.

The value of this more general definition of 'sect' can also be seen in discussions of intra-sectarian conflict. Intra-sectarian conflict, often between different lineages, was a determining factor in sectarian struggles for prominence. In this regard, the early history of the Chan school is quite well documented.[358] Using sources from the Dunhuang caves, modern scholars have been able to reconstruct the early history of Chinese Chan and deconstruct the rhetoric of gradualism versus subitism, North versus South, and claims to lineage identity and history. Most modern scholars now concur that in his campaign against the dominant version of Chan led by Shenxiu, Shenhui fabricated the pejorative and polemical label of "Northern school" (or "Northern lineage") and applied it to Shenxiu and his disciples. Shenhui's descriptions of the teachings of the "Northern School" distorted the doctrines of Shenxiu and his disciples, but Shenhui's rhetoric prevailed and eventually witnessed the fading of Shenxiu's Chan lineage. High stakes intra-sectarian battles imply that differences (or imaginatively invented differences) between contending lineages could carry strong polemical associations with far-reaching consequences, including which lineage (or lineages) prevails as the dominant force and principal representative of the sect.[359]

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[358] Almost all Chinese Buddhist "sects" experienced some form of intra-sectarian conflict. For example, on the Home-Mountain/Off-Mountain (*shanjia/shanwai*) controversy, see Chi-wah Chan, "Chih-li (960-1028) and the Crisis of T'ien-t'ai in the Early Sung," in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press and the Kuroda Institute, 1999), pp. 409-441; and Brook Ziporyn, "What is the Buddha Looking At? The Importance of Intersubjectivity in the T'ien-t'ai Tradition as Understood by Chih-li," in Gregory and Getz, pp. 442-476.

359 See, for instance, Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of Chan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, trans., Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); John McRae, *The Northern School*; McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003). The work of Western scholars builds on earlier work by Japanese scholars, including the immense corpus of writings produced by Sekiguchi Shindai and especially Yanagida Seizan.

Appendix 2

Translations

The reasoning behind presenting the translations in this section is to provide non-specialists and others unable to read Tang literary prose, which would likely comprise the majority of my readers, with a more extended taste of the general flavor of the sources from which I drew. Liang Su is the focus here because his thought was my initial inspiration and provided the guiding framework for the primary source analyses. I chose to leave out those documents that were heavily laden with Buddhist or Daoist references. These selections are not meant to be thoroughly annotated pieces. There are plenty of allusions in these writings that do not aid one's understanding of the meanings of the texts. Where hermeneutically significant references or allusions occur, I endeavour to point those out for the reader. Rather than acting as stand-alone, perfectly annotated documents, these translations instead function as rough guides for general readers who wish to see longer sections of the primary sources.

Tiantai Zhiguan Tongliyi

QTW 517:15b-18b, T. 49.2035.0438c27-440a24.

"The Overall Meaning of Tiantai Cessation and Contemplation"[360]

By Tang dynasty Hanlin scholar Liang Su

Now what is the function of "cessation and contemplation" (*zhiguan*)? It is what guides the [particularized] principles (*li*) of the myriad dharmas (*fa*) and returns one to "reality" (*shiji*). What is "reality"? It is the root of inherent nature. The reason material things are unable to return [to the original nature] is because they move in darkness. To shine light on the darkness is called illumination (*ming*). To halt movement is called quiescence (*jing*). Illumination and quiescence is the substance (*ti*) of "cessation and contemplation" (*zhiguan*). The cause is called *zhiguan*. The effect is called wisdom and stillness (*zhiding*). The cause is called practice (*xing*). The effect is called completion (*cheng*). To practice is to practice this [*zhiguan*]. To complete it is to demonstrate this [*zhiding*—wisdom and stillness] as evidence [that one has carried out *zhiguan* successfully].

At a former time, the Buddha saw sights that gave him doubts that harmed his resolve and moved him sufficiently to lose his direction. Thereupon, he ceased and contemplated it (i.e., the truth), quieted and understood it, which caused him to move and [still] be quiet, to be quiet and understand. Thus, being interdependent, these become

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[360] This treatise is the preface to Liang Su's abridged version of Zhiyi's *Mohe Zhiguan*, which is no longer extant. Liang's intended audience appears to have been non-Buddhist scholar-officials, so he probably meant for this document to function as a kind of apologetic text.

dharmas, and their dual opposition illuminates the original [nature]… The most profound is to fulfill the nature (*jin xing*). The most abstruse is to embody the spirit (*ti shen*). If we say that they (nature and spirit) are near, then [even] the smallest bit of goodness [allows us] to reach them. If we say that they are far, then [it is as if] we see them through gates of heavy darkness.[361] Use the most complete to complete it, then things will have no incompleteness. Use the most real to realize it, then things will have no falsity… To be free and soften it will cause oneself to seek it. To draft and discuss it will cause one to reach it. These are the origins of "cessation and contemplation."

What are the Three Truths (*sandi*)? They are called one. What are "empty," "provisional," and "middle"? They are viewed as one. Empty and provisional have opposite meanings. The middle way is the name of attaining unity. This is an expression of a concept and is not intended to reach unity. To reach the one is to reach the three. To reach the three is to reach the one. It is not that they are included in one another. And it is not that they give rise to one another. It is not that there are many meanings. It is not that they are forced to name them. They are the principle of nature. What is said and handed down are traces. The principle is what is called root. The trace is what is called branches. The root is the place that Buddha reached. The branches are the teachings put into practice by the Buddha. To go from the root down to the branches is to have small and big, universal and differentiated, gradual and sudden, manifest and hidden, provisional constructs and the real, and fixed and non-fixed. To follow the branches to return to the roots is to become one, great, complete, full, non-abiding, the middle, marvelous, and to be first. This is the encapsulation of the three in one.

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361 Following the Taisho version.

It is called empty when considered from the perspective of having seen through the myriad dharmas. It is called provisional when considered from the perspective of having set in place the myriad dharmas. It is called middle when considered from the perspective of seeing truly the myriad dharmas. To destroy all doubts, nothing is better than the empty [perspective]. To construct all dharmas, nothing is better than the provisional [perspective]. To investigate thoroughly the nature, nothing is better than the middle [perspective]. As for the middle, there is no way that it cannot be middle. As for the provisional, how can it not be provisional?[362] As for the empty, how can it not be emptied?

To become these is what are called the three virtues (*san de*). To cultivate these is what are called the three views. Essentially speaking, did the Buddha almost completely investigate the saying of fully exploring principle and fulfilling the nature (*qiongli jinxing*)? The foolish were made to understand. The confused were made to comprehend. When they comprehended, they were enlightened. When they were enlightened, they attained [the goal]. When they attained [the goal], they were constant. When they were constant, they fully explored [principle], and that is all. When they understood, they were illuminated. When they were illuminated, they were transformed. When they were transformed, they were complete. When they were complete, they became one, and that is all.

The Buddha uses the all-encompassing myriad dharmas and does not lack. [He uses] the diverse range of myriad kalpas and omits nothing. [He uses] the all-covering sands of the Ganges and does not possess. [He] returns to having nothing and does not

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362 Following the QTW version.

have nothing. Naming him figuratively, we call him, "Buddha." Forced to bestow a title, we call him, "Enlightened." In examining his aim, is his liberation in itself nothing more than the extremely marvelous virtue?[363]

As for the three truths, those who are successful are this way.[364] What is called complete and sudden is not admitting of gradations and not unsettled, which is the meaning of the ten chapters. The ten chapters are the gate to completely explaining from beginning to end, leading one through. The five abbreviated discourses are the great guiding principles that act as the crossing over the river dam. The ten realms are the crucial points that stimulate one [to arrive at] the truth that establishes discernment. The ten vehicles are marvelous at using that which cultivates and are the entryway to move one to practice. Stopping at the correct view and ending at discernment of the realms, the meaning is fully contained herein. Seeing the rest is thus not essential to cultivation.

What is the 'vehicle' [in the 'ten vehicles']? It is what carries things and transports them. What is the 'ten'? It completes the task of carrying. To know the subtlety of the realms and to not strive yet reach them, these are the highest of virtue. The vehicle is one, and that is all. What need is there then of the other nine? The nine are not other [than the one]. They were mutually engendered doctrines.[365] They are practiced by those who have not yet attained. Therefore, those who arouse their minds, arouse what cannot be aroused. Those who calm their minds, calm what cannot be calmed. In

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[363] Following QTW version.

[364] This section is a concise summary of the chapters of Zhiyi's *Mohe Zhiguan*.

[365] Following Taisho version.

[dispelling] partial views are views that cannot be dispelled.366 Hence, the extra vehicles all must be explained.

Also, there is an outline divided into chapters and sections. Expand and enlarge it, and it is not too numerous. Summarize and condense it, and it is not too little. It is like a linked chain that cannot be broken. It is like a precious pearl that cannot be defiled. It is like a hanging mirror that cannot be covered.367 It is like a flowing river that cannot be stemmed. There are many schools of interpretation but there is no quarrelling. The cases and scriptures evince the meaning; they are not empty sayings. There is a reason for distinguishing the shallow and deep in the "Tiantai four stages." Completing one "phenomenon" of "causes and conditions," there is no "principle" that is left out. Is not *Zhiguan* a book that saves the world and illumines the way? If not for sagely wisdom surpassing the highest point alone, who could have created it? If not for the deep intelligence reaching the concepts while forgetting the form,[368] who could have come to know it? People today still especially use elaborate writing and cultured words to explain it. Oh, what detrimental carelessness…

How can the state of the sage (*sheng*) and the state of the ordinary man (*fan*) be so vastly separated and cut off from one another? There is only one nature. To attain it is called awakening; to lose it is called delusion. There is only one principle (*li*). To be ignorant of it is to be an ordinary man. To realize it is to be a sage. The deluded separate

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366 Following Taisho version.

367 Following Taisho version.

368 This phrase (*deyi wangxiang*) also appears in Wang Bi's commentary to the *Yi Jing*. See Richard Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the "I Ching" as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994).

themselves from it; principle does not separate from them. Those who lose touch with the nature lose it by themselves; the nature does not cause one to lose it.

The function of *zhiguan* is to distinguish between differences and similarities and examine sages and spirits; it causes the host of beings "to rectify their natures and accord with *li*" (*zhengxing shunli* 正性順理). To rectify one's nature and accord with *li* is how one walks the path of awakening and reaches profound understanding…

○止观统例议

夫止观何为也，导万法之理，而 复於实际者也。实际者何也？性之本也，物之所以不能复者，昏与动使之然也。照昏者谓之明，驻动者谓之静。明与静，止观之体也。在因谓之止观，在果谓之智 定。因谓之行，果谓之成。行者，行此者也；成者，证此者也。原夫圣人有以见惑、足以丧志，动足以失方，於是乎止而观之，静而明之。使其动而能静，静而能 明，因相待以成法，即绝待以照本。。。至微以尽性，至赜以体神。语其近，则一毫之善可通也；语 其远，则重元之门可窥也。用至圆以圆之，物无偏也；用至实以实之，物无妄也。。。优而柔之，使自求之；拟而议之，使 自至之。此止观所由作也。夫三谛者何也？一之谓也，空、假、中者何也？一之目也。空、假者相对之义，中道者得一之名。此思议之说，非至一之旨也。至一即 三，至三即一。非相含而然也，非相生而然也；非数义也，非强名也，自然之理也。言而传之者迹也，理谓之本，迹谓之末。本也者，圣人所至之地也；末也者，圣 人所示之教也。由本以垂迹，则为小为大，为通为别，为顿为渐，为显为秘，为权为实，为定为不定。循迹以返本，则为一为大，为圆为

152

实，为无住为中，为妙为第一义。是三一之蕴也。所谓空也者，通万法而为言者也，假也者，立万法而为言者也；中也者，妙万法而为言者也。破一切惑，莫盛乎空；建一切法，莫盛乎假；究竟一切性，莫大乎中。举中则无法非中，举假则何法非假，举空则无法不空。成之谓之三德，修之谓之三观。举其要，则圣人极深研几穷理尽性之说乎？昧者使明，塞者使通，通则悟，悟则至，至则常，常则尽矣；明则照，照则化，化则成，成则一矣。圣人有以弥纶万法而不差，磅礴万劫而不遗，橐载恒沙而不有，复归无物而不无。寓名之曰"佛"，经号之曰"觉"。究其旨，其解脱自在莫大极妙之德乎？夫三观成功者如此，所谓圆顿者，非渐次、非不定指论十章之义也。十章者，恢演始末通道之矣也；五略者，举其宏纲截流之津也；十境者，发动之机，立观之谛也；十乘者，妙用所修，发行之门也。止於正观而终於见境者，义备故也。阙其馀者，非所修之要故也。乘者何也？载物而运者也。十者何也？成载之事者也。知其境之妙不行而至者，德之上也。乘一而已矣，岂藉夫九哉？九者非他，相生之说。未至者之所践也。故发心者发无所发，安心者安无所安，偏破者偏无所破。爱至馀乘，皆不得已而说也。至於别其义例，判为章目，推而广之不为繁，统而简之不为少，如连环不可解也，如贯珠不可杂也，如悬镜不可弃也，如通川不可遏也。议家多门，非诤论也；按经证义，非虚说也；辨四教浅深，事有源也；成一事因缘，理无遗也。噫！止观其救世明道之书乎？非夫圣智超绝，卓尔独立，其孰能为乎？非夫聪明深达，得意忘象，其孰能知乎？今之人乃专用章句文字，从而释之，又何疏漏耶？。。凡所为上圣之域，岂隔阔辽夐，与凡境杳绝欤？是惟一性而已，得之为悟，失之为迷；一理而已，迷而为凡，悟而为圣。述者自隔，理不隔也；失者自失，性不失也。止观之作，所

以辨异同而究圣神，使群生正性而顺理者也。正性顺理，所以行觉路而至妙境也。。。

Preface to a Poem on Traveling to Yunmen (Cloud Gate) Temple

QTW 518.11a

游雲門寺詩序[369]

With the highest virtue and great waters as companions, at ease without river or sea, and next, to have *ren* (humaneness) and *zhi* (wisdom) following behind, having mountains and water as [one's] joy. So, united in will with a common direction, the worthies have the hidden [place] of mulberry branches. Travelers take pleasure in common. We are those who meet at Yunmen (Cloud Gate). Our direction of travel is the same. When we first met on that day, the monk loudly proclaimed…my friends and I, …desiring to cast off the restraints and restrictions of the world of men, to examine thoroughly the mysteries of the secluded places, and thereupon to abandon the boat in the clear waves, to oppose the schemes of the sources of leisure, to pass through the far and deep and to go through the rugged mountaintops, to enter the deep emerald and float in winding circles, and thereupon, to reach Yunmen. Viewing the mountain ranges one on top of the other, viewing them as if pulling them out one by one, five precipitous peaks, the ravines extend deep down, the mountain ridges touch the blue sky, their sides lead into the Diamond Realm (*jin gang jie*).[370] At the base, the streams of a hundred springs converge and deposit into a clear pool, fill up the deep mirror-like emptiness, and the surging rapids clash like jade. Their clamorous sound joins the earth's music in a chorus.

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[369] This is a lyrical piece that weaves together Confucian virtues, Daoist themes, and Buddhist elements.

[370] This is a reference to the Vajradhātu.

Not waiting for the pipe or chime, the five notes sound forth in succession. It is not enough to listen from a distance. One becomes lost in deep thought and rests there. Suddenly, one suspects that all the towers of heaven are looking down and are very close. In the alleys by the courtyards, there is only the light of the sun and moon. Then, walking into the realm of truth (*zhen jing*), one listens to the dharma proclaimed…

○游云门寺诗序

上德与汗漫为友，无江海而间；其次则仁智相从，有山水为乐。故合志同方，贤者有柴桑之隐；游道同趣，吾徒为云门之会，其造适一也。先会一日，沙门释去喧命我友，相与探玉笥，上会稽，然後溯若耶，过凤林而南。意欲脱人世之羁靮，穷林泉之遐奥。於是舍舟清澜，反策间 原；递杳霭而历岖嵚，入深翠以泛回环，遂至於云门。观其群山叠翠，秦望拔起；五峰巉巉，列壑沈沈，上摩碧落，旁涌金界。其下则百泉会流。蓄为澄潭，涵 虚镜彻，激濑玉漱。泠泠之声，与地籁唱和，不待笙磬，而五音迭作。眺听不足，则凝思宴息，恍焉疑诸天楼观，列在咫尺。庭衢之中，别有日月。既而动步真境， 静聆法音。。。

Record of the Zhiguan Courtyard of Jian'an Temple in Changzhou

常州建安寺止觀院記

QTW 519.6a-b

The Buddhist monk, Fayu,[371] founded the hall in the northwest corner of Jian'an Temple. He and the monks all exhorted and invited Tiantai Master Zhanran to transmit the dharma to them there. To respect the *dao* of Tiantai and to guide students, they called this hall, "Zhiguan." It began with the Southern Marchmount Master receiving instruction from the Chan Master Huiwen. [The Southern Marchmount Master] taught Master Zhiyi. Thereafter, there was the dharma gate of *zhiguan*. The main idea is that '*zhi*' (stop) was defined as '*ding*' (calm). And '*guan*' (to view) was defined as '*hui*' (wisdom). This developed into the two virtues, which enveloped the myriad practices. From the deluded thinking of ordinary people to the 'wisdom realm' of all buddhas, one takes the profound sayings written in the scriptures and expands on the origin and development of sentient beings, rectifying them so that they can return [to the *zhiguan*]. Only after they perfectly understand [*zhiguan*] are they able to perfectly practice. Only after they perfectly practice are they able to perfectly manifest [the results of the practice]. This is the basic point. From Master Zhiyi through five generations, it was passed down to the present. When the Great Master elaborated on his teaching in this world, causing laymen to do away with their evil and turn back to rectitude, [all were taught] just as the great clouds rain down and all the grass and trees are watered. Those who go up to his hall are many. Those who

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[371] Nothing much is known about this monk except that he was a disciple of Zhanran.

understood his teachings were no more than ten or so people. Fayu was one of them. I thought there was the doctrine of the three views. I then asked about them in this hall. That there is no karma that does not come to fruition is [what is meant by] emptiness. To take up a view because it is useful is [what is meant by] provisional. Neither wide nor narrow, neither extravagant nor stingy, this is [what is meant by] the middle… Following one's heart's purity, all in the environment is pure. Building this [*zhiguan* courtyard] and having people view it will accumulate numerous merit.

○常州建安寺止观院记

沙门释法禹，启精舍於建安寺西北隅，与比邱众劝请天台湛然大师转法轮於其间。尊天台之道，以导後学，故署其堂曰"止观"。初南岳祖师受於惠文禅师，以授 智者大师，於是乎有止观法门。大旨"止"谓之定，"观"谓之慧。演是二德，摄持万行。自凡夫妄想，讫诸佛智地，以契经微言，括其源流，正其所归。圆解然後能圆修，圆修然後能圆证，此其略也。自智者五叶传至今，大师当像法之中，诇敷其教，使在家之徒，拨邪反正，如大云降雨，无草木不润。升其堂者甚众，其後进入室，不十数人，法禹与居一焉。予以为法门有三观，遂徵之此堂：盖非缘不成，空也；有之以为利，假也；不广不狭不奢不陋，中也。。。 随其心净，则一切境净，作一物而观者获数善焉。。。

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