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Foreword

PART I

Another milestone. After ten years in Hong Kong the time has come for IR Bulletin to move house. During the first ten years of its life, it was hosted by the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture and edited by James Heisig. Then it moved to the Christian Study Centre in Hong Kong at which point yours truly assumed the mantle of editor. After ten years and twenty issues in HK, it was time for one of the other centres in the Inter-Religio Network to take a turn. As things turned out, the editor himself received a new posting to Taiwan in his other life, so the Taipei Ricci Centre, which organized the most recent Inter-Religio conference so well, stepped into the breach and graciously agreed to host the IR Bulletin (for the next ten years, if we are to maintain the present tradition). The hosting centre has changed but the editor remains the same, for the near future, at least.

I would like to thank Benoit for his immediate and generous offer to host the Bulletin and I thank him too for the nice words of welcome he offers in Part II of the foreword.

*Brian Lawless
Editor*

PART II

Brian Lawless, the tireless liaison man of the Inter-religio network has moved to Taiwan, to the sorrow of his Hong Kong friends and the joy of the old and new acquaintances that he has on the neighboring island. He was looking for a home in which the archives and material of the Bulletin could be safely located. The Taipei Ricci Institute is happy to oblige and to serve as the contact address and meeting point of the network. We hope that meetings will not be limited to the realm of virtuality and that we will be given additional opportunities to greet friends from sister organizations. Come and visit us!

For anyone who looks at the way globalization and conflicts are shaping religious identities it is all too obvious that the goals assigned to the network by its founding members are even more relevant and pressing than was the case when it started. This should make our friendship and contacts even more vibrant and focused during the years to come. We are happy and honored to modestly help in this endeavor.

*Benoit Vermander
Taipei Ricci Institute*

A Feminine Expression Of Mysticism, Romanticism And Syncretism In *A Plaint Of Lady Wang*

YAN Jinfen

Visiting Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy, Austin College, Texas, USA

In 1996 the newly discovered Chinese classical poem *A Plaint of Lady Wang* drew the attention of many sinologists. One expert, Liu Yuqing, claimed that the newly discovered poem should now be regarded as the longest classical Chinese poem in Chinese history, though it had been previously ignored¹. According to Liu Yuqing, *A Plaint of Lady Wang* is longer than the two authoritatively accepted² longest classical poems: the Lefu poem *Kongque Dong Nan Fei* (A Peacock Flies East of South) of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE)³ and the famous lyric poem “Li Sao” in the *Chuci* (Chu Songs), which is traditionally attributed to Qu Yuan (c.340-278 BCE).⁴

Whenever I read the poem, what attracts me is not its length but its mysticism, romanticism and syncretism reflected in the feminine expression of Lady Wang. All of these permeate in a minute and exquisite narrative of a women’s struggle between *hun* (mind-heart/soul/spirit) and *po* (the body-person).

“The study of mysticism is fraught with peculiar difficulties” (Eliade, Vol.13, 1987: 87) The study of Chinese mysticism focusing on women’s experiences and their own writings not included in the classics, scriptures, and canons

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- 1 In July 1996 Liu Yuqing pointed out that all the scholars in previous historical periods ignored Lady Wang’s poem, A Plaint of Lady Wang, which was popularly diffused among the Nan Song people. It is as long as 500 sentences and consists of 2,534 Chinese characters, and is thus 749 characters longer than the *Kongque Dong Nan Fei* (A Peacock Flies East and South). It is also 57 Chinese characters longer than the celebrated longest lyric poem in the *Chuci* style, “Li Sao”.
 - 2 A Confucian scholar, Shen Deqian, of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) authoritatively stated that the longest classical Chinese poem is the Lefu poem *Kongque Dong Nan Fei*, which consists of 1785 Chinese characters. This conclusion has been widely accepted by twentieth-century Chinese experts such as Yu Pingbo, Liu Dajie, Tang Tao and Yu Guanying.
 - 3 *Kongque Dong Nan Fei*, the title of one of the Lefu style songs from a collection, *Zaquesi*. The first line of the song is “A Peacock Flies East of South”. It was a folk song of the Han dynasty Jianan period (196-219). The author of the poem was Liu Lanzhi, the wife of a humble official, Jiao Zhongqing, who was a petty clerk of Lu Jiang county.
 - 4 Qu Yuan (c.340-278 BCE) was a poet and an official of the Chu state in South China.

remains a field in need of more research. The classical Chinese narrative poem, *A Plaint of Lady Wang*, is a detailed description of Lady Wang's mystical experience and her real life. Her mystical experience is similar to Daoist Shangqing "interior visualization" and "ecstatic journeying", but she did not experience it during meditation in the "purity chamber" (Robinet 1997:114). The transmitting of the poem promotes a form of popular religious practice linked to women. Lady Wang's dream and her direct encounter with the divine beings are the main features of her mystical experience. Her encounter results in a unification with the Dao which is not only beyond ordinary experience, but also different from men's mystical experience and expressed in a feminine way.

The poem and the story about the poem weave Confucian cosmic order and its parallel order in Confucian society and Confucian family system into a woman's life and her Shangqing-like ecstatic journey. It provides a syncretic point of view for us to observe the function of women in the conflict and syncretism of Neo-Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. With a blending together of Confucian ethical and social values, Buddhist and Daoist asceticism, rituals and divination, she could not make any choice to liberate either her *hun* or her *po*.

The poem contains some Romanticist expression of feeling and emotion in the spirit of "Yuan You," "Nan Feng" of Chu Ci, and also found in Zhuang Zi - a yearning for emancipation of *hun* and *po*. Historically, this romantic feature of Chinese literature began from the Book of Songs⁵ and continued in later literature such as the poems of Li Bai and Tu Fu⁶. It is no surprise that romanticism in a poem of Mao Zedong is called by many "revolutionary romanticism."

From a feminist perspective my study focuses on the two critical terms in Chinese philosophy and religion: *hun* (heart; mind; spirit; soul) and *po* (the body-person). What I am trying to do is to explore woman's mind, clarify the separation of her body and mind, and look out for the hope of future unification or 'Oneness' of mind and body in this world and the world beyond. "Oh, my void, empty soul and body," Lady Wang sighs. But whose body is it? Who cares more about the *hun*/soul: man or woman? What will the future concept of the soul be? ..., ... These are among the topics I am concerned with.

In order to analyze the poem I would like to discuss theories about a person's body/*po* and mind/soul/*hun* in Chinese history.

5 One of the Five Confucian Classics which contains 305 poems. Few of the poems are supposed to have come from the Shang dynasty (ca. 1200-1059) and others come from Zhou dynasty (1059-221 BCE). The Five Classics are: The Book of Changes/Yi Jing, The Book of Songs/Shi Jing, the Book of History/Shang Shu, the Classic of Rites (Liji, Yili and Zhouli) and the Spring-Autumn Annals/Chunqiu.

6 Li Bai and Tufu were great poets of the Tang Dynasty (618-917).

A COMPOSITE SELF: HUN AND PO

From a conversation recorded in *Zuo Zhuan*⁷ we are informed that as early as the sixth century B.C.E. people thought every person possessed *hun* and *po*: in men's life the first transformations are called the earthly aspect of the soul (*po*). After *po* has been produced, that which is strong and positive is called the heavenly aspect of the soul (*hun*). If man has abundance in the use of material things and subtle essence, his *hun* and *po* will become strong. From this are developed essence and understanding until there are spirit and intelligence. When an ordinary man or woman dies a violent death, the *hun* and *po* are still able to keep hanging about men and do evil and malicious things.⁸ Therefore, as philosophically understood, *hun* is the spirit of man's vital force, which is expressed in man's intelligence and power of breathing, whereas *po* is the spirit of man's physical nature, which is expressed in bodily movements. (Chan 1963:12) Alternatively, in religious teachings, everyone has two souls: *hun* is upper soul, or intellectual soul, which becomes the spirit (*shen*). After death it ascends to the world above. *Po* is a lower or animal soul which becomes the ghost (*kuei*) and descends with the body into the grave." (Ching, 1993:63) Because of these teachings, in Chinese religious tradition the physical body seems graded lower than the spiritual body.

According to early Confucian teaching a person (*ren*) as self (*wo*, *ziji*) refers to the entire person: one's rational, aesthetic, moral and religious dimensions in relation to the lived body through which these cultural interests are advertised and made know. Being a human really means doing, shaping or making a human. (Ames, in Kasulis, 149-151). At the same time the gendered body received a different treatment. In the *Analects* we read that a husband should attach importance to his wife's virtue rather than her physical beauty.⁹ There a woman is regarded as a limited moral agent and it was laid down that her spiritual aspect needed more efforts aimed at improvement (*Analects* 17:25). Mencius' concepts of "the way of a woman" (*qiefu zhutao*) and "the way of a great man" (*dazhangfu zhutao*) assigned an inferior spiritual nature to women (Mencius, 3B:2), even though he considered no one to be devoid of a mind sensitive to the suffering of others, and everyone as having a mind capable of the states of compassion, shame, courtesy, modesty, and a consciousness of right and wrong. This mind is the beginning of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. (Mencius: 2A: 6) The Doctrine of the Mean laid out the spiritual dimensions of Confucian philosophy and religion. It declared that only those

7 *Zuo Zhuan*: Zuo Qiuming's commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals. Zuo Qiuming (fifth century B.C.E.)

8 *Zuo Zhuan*, "Duke Zhao", 7th year. English translation is adopted from Chan (1963:12) with a little change.

9 This translation of the first sentence of the *Analects* 1:7 differs from other translations, please see Yang Pojun, 1980:6.

who are absolutely sincere could fully develop their nature, which is imparted to them by Heaven. They can then fully develop the nature of others, and on that basis, can then fully develop the nature of things and then, assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth and thus ultimately become One with Heaven and Earth. (Doctrine of the Mean: 1 & 22) “It is the human being that broadens the Dao, not the Dao that broadens the human being.” (Analects 15:29). This is the Dao, or the Way designed for a superior man or a sage ruler; in the majority of cases they are envisaged as male, though there are some promises that “men and women of simple intelligence can share its knowledge.” (Doctrine of the Mean, 12).

The Dao discussed in the Doctrine of the Mean and the Analects is the same as the Dao in Daoist philosophy, though the Confucian Dao is more humanistic while the Daoist Dao is more natural.¹⁰ Both of them emphasize the development of the spiritual aspect while cultivating the whole personal life. The Taoist religion whose philosophy centers on Yin, Yang and wuxing in the Book of Changes as well as the Lao Zi and the Zhuang Zi, elaborated the cultivation of the physical body as potentially a “cosmic body”¹¹, becoming mystically One with the Tao. It is the crucial idiosyncratic point in Taoist thought, especially, according to Livia Kohn, in the Xi Sheng Jing (the Scripture of Western Ascension).¹² Developed from beliefs regarding the hun, the Taoist religion discusses immortality involving the experience of an immortal personality, as in the cases of Liu An and the Eight Worthies in Shenxian Zhuan (Biographies of Spirit Immortals); ascension to Heaven as immortals, as in the case of the Flower Maiden in Yongchen Jixianlu (Record of the Assembled Immortals of the Heavenly Walled City); or immortal life, as in the case of the life of the Hemp Lady, Magu described in Zengxiang Liexian Zhuan (Illustrated Immortals’ Biographies).¹³ All of these heavily depend on a Taoist body which shows people a way to the Tao while, at the same time, enabling people to overcome the confines of ordinary life in order to attain longevity and immortality. “Taoist religious thought can therefore be classified as mystical philosophy. It is a system of thought that claims to relate directly to the personal experience of Oneness with the Tao.” (Livia Kohn, 1991: 5) I intend to clarify these distinctive idiosyncratic elements in the poem of Lady Wang.

Buddhist truth, samsara, is not only compatible with the beliefs regarding the hun and po in Chinese tradition, but has also enriched the Chinese

10 See the *Analects*, 15: 29; *Dao De Jing*, 1:1, 1:5; and the comment made by Chan in Chan 1963:109. See also Waley, 1958: 141, 148.

11 See Schipper, 1993: 100-112 and Kohn, 1993: 161-188.

12 Xi Sheng Jing has survived in two Song dynasty editions. Consult Kohn, 1991.

13 About immortal personality, ascension and immortal life please consult Livia Kohn, 1993, chapter 10, 11, and 12.

concepts of Heaven and Hell, and extended the Journey of a soul vertically and horizontally in the universe.¹⁴ Unfortunately, not everyone could board the Mahayana “great vehicle” equally. In the Pure Land Sutra, a woman was subject to waiting for another rebirth as a male in order to be a Bodhisattva¹⁵. Some Mahayana sutras provided the opportunity for a woman whose virtues and merits were extraordinary and whose capability could not be ignored to become a Bodhisattva within her present life, but she would have to undergo a sexual change in the present life (Paul, 166-216). Only “an extremely small percentage of sutras” provided examples of the Bodhisattvas without sexual transformation; but either they are already in different places in the heavens, or else, in a metaphysical sense, sex is irrelevant, as in the case of the goddess in Vimalakirti. “Thus, Buddhism, like many other traditions, declares that men are really the normal human beings, while women are odd, and not full-fledged representatives of the human species.” (Gross, *Being Bodies*, 1997: 96) Buddhism certainly treats women’s body as problematic, if we are not to call this treatment out-and-out the misogynist.

THE SELF AS BODY/PO: THE BODY-PERSON AS AN OBJECT OF CULTIVATION

The story records the Poem of Lady Wang by an author whose family name was Shen and probably lived during the times of the Emperor Xiaozong (1190-1194) and Emperor Guangzong (1195-1200) of the Nan Song dynasty (1127-1279). Shen said that in the year of *jiading wuyin* (1218), when the Emperor Ningzong reigned, Shen was in the capital city. Therefore, Lady Wang possibly lived around the time of Zhu Xi’s life (1170-1200). The district Julu¹⁶ where Lady Wang and her natal family lived might have been in the area between today’s Hebei and Shandong provinces or she perhaps lived in Julu county, which is in the south of today’s Hebei province. The place has a very long history.

14 The two good examples for this are Foshuo Yulanpeng Jing, see Fan Wenlan, 1956: 567; Teiser, 1944: *The Ten Kings*, 1988: *The Ghost Festival*.

15 Gomez, 1996: 170 listed this principle. In Gomez’ book here are detailed interpretations about women’s status in the two Pure Land Sutras.

16 As the translator of the poem I want to introduce the historical background of the poem by explaining the place Julu. It was the name of an ancient prefecture in China. It was established in the twenty-fifth year of the Emperor Qinshihuang (222 B.C.E). Its administrative center was Julu County, which supervised the southern part of today’s Hebei province and the northern part of today’s Shandong. During the Jin Dynasty (265-420 CE) Julu became the name of a state. In the middle of the eighth century of the Tianbao period of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) the name of Julu prefecture was replaced by Xingzhou, which supervised the counties around Julu County. At the beginning of the Xuanhe period (1119-1124) of Northern Song this area was honored as Xingdefu. In Nan Song when Lady Wang lived, I suggest, the place was still named Julu as previously.

Prior to the time when Lady Wang lived, Neo-Confucian masters may have already selected the Great Learning as one of the Four Books.¹⁷ The practice of “cultivating oneself” was elaborated by Chu Xi (1130-1200) and other Neo-Confucian masters and became popularly understood. Versions of this practice of the Four Books designed for Women came one by one.¹⁸

In the Great Learning the body is directly linked to the moral and social project of *xiushen* (cultivating oneself): “From the Son of Heaven down to the commoner, all should take self-cultivation as their foundational concern”. Roger T. Ames argues that in classical China, in the absence of a commitment to a single-ordered world and the ontological disparities that follow from it, human realization is the fashioning and configuring of one’s entire person. Further, it is not only a practical project, but also importantly a “poietic” or productive one. It is person-making. In early Confucianism, the emphasis is on the shaping of one’s person in the context of one’s social, cultural, and importantly, one’s physical environments. (Ames, in Kasulis, 150)

Everything discussed here will help us understand how different a woman’s self-cultivation was from a man’s self-cultivation in medieval Chinese society, though recently more and more scholars have pointed out that the force of rigid precepts was undercut by a hierarchical concept of society that extended to women as well as men (Handlin, 1975:1). According to the author of the book, *Gui Dong* (Chinese Mysticism), which put the poem A Complaint of Lady Wang on record in the text of a story¹⁹, we only know that Lady Wang’s family name was Wang. She and her poor parents lived in Julu. Influenced by the way Buddhists wrote and taught sutra,²⁰ the author of the story used a few lines to tell us the story and then recorded the whole poem. Lady Wang was pretty and became a

17 14 The Four books are: the Analects, Mencius, the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean (the latter two were two chapters from the Book of Rites).

18 The four books for women (*Nu Si Shu*) are: Ban Zhao’s *Nu Jie* (Instructions for Women) of Han, *Nu Lunyu* (The Women’s Analects) of Tang, *Nei Xun* (Instructions for the Inner Quarters) of the early Ming, and *Nu Xiao Jing* (Classic of Filial Piety for Women). In the early seventeenth century, Wang Xiang substituted his mother’s book *Nu Fan Jie Lu* (A Record of Rules for Women) for *Nu Xiao Jing*. Liu Xiang’s *Lie Nu Zhuan* (Biographies of Model Women) of Han was popular and mentioned with *Nu Jie* frequently. While all of these books were for upper-class women readers, Lu Kun’s *Gui Fan* (Regulations for the Women’s Quarters) of Ming dynasty was for every woman, the poor as well as the rich. Consult *Qin Ding Si Ku Quan Shu Zi Bu* (*Nei Xun*); Handlin in Wolf, ed. 1975; Kelleher in Sharma, 1987.

19 This poem is contained in the Twelfth Volume of a *Zhibuzuzhai* series, *Guidong* (Chinese Mysticism). A few lines short story itself serves as a background introduction before the poem. It has been ignored, I think, mainly because that it is in a non-Confucian-classic book.

20 When Buddhist priests taught dharma they told stories from the sutras and chanted poems occasionally to attract an audience. In medieval China it became a style of Chinese literature, especially, for Buddhist sutras or popular stories. For details please see Zhou Ruchang in Li Baochu et al, 1993.

concubine of a gentry family. She survived a plot of the jealous wife to murder her and she became a Taoist nun. She addressed the poem to her husband in his dream and the next morning he found it beside his pillow. The appreciation of the poem spread rapidly.

The whole poem exhibits the distinct conflict of ideas among the Chinese people following the introduction and acceptance of Buddhism. In this poem it is the conflict between Confucian teaching which tortures Lady Wang's body and mind in this world, and Taoist teaching which emancipates her body and soul in the other world. Buddhism plays the role of revealing the teachings of karma, making her unable to choose either to live or to die. Literally, the title of the poem Jie Boming Tan means a sigh of a woman for her preordained fate. The poem begins from the moment she awakes from "death", having been tied and thrown off a cliff:

Rugged, oh, rugged,
the rough meandering trail I am struggling to put my "three-inch lotus" feet
on²¹.
Wailing, oh, wailing,
the sad wind is shaking and breaking the withered trees.

From the very opening of the poem we are shown one thing about Lady Wang's physical body - her bound feet

Foot binding was an alteration of the body that changed everything about a woman's physical being. She would move about less, sitting rather than standing, staying home rather than going out. With less exercise, she would be softer, more languid. From poetry we know of men's attraction to languid women, especially unhappy beauties longing for absent men. (Ebrey 1993: 40)

Therefore a woman in a rich family usually hires a servant to carry her move around.²² It is needless to mention objectification and commodification of Women's bodies when the diminutive size of their "golden lilies" feet were important criteria of their beauty in the period of economic growth from Song to Ming dynasty. (Ko 1994: 263)

With suitable small feet and a suitable education in music, chess-playing, poetry, calligraphy and painting, a young woman could change her situation through marriage: becoming a wife, a concubine or a prostitute. The growing market for concubines in the Song period is explained by the increasing numbers of men from gentry families who could afford them (Ebrey 1993: 42) In the poem Lady Wang tells us that she was good at composing verses and

21 By now it seems well established that the practice of foot-binding in China began in Song times. As a concubine of a gentry family Lady Wang's feet would have to be bound. The three-inch golden lotus (*san-cun-jin-lian*) is an idealized image of a woman's foot. Consult Fan Hong, 1997.

22 On page 118 of Jackson 1977 there is a picture illustrates this practice.

playing the music instrument zheng and at blowing the instrument sheng²³ when she was very young.

Her virtue in san cong (the three obedience) and side (the four virtues) is reflected in the events recounted in the poem: she followed her parents' will and became a concubine; then while following her husband's will, she was almost murdered by his other wives and concubines (qunchong), who put poison in her cup, but she did not complain to him and showed no jealousy to others so as to keep up the "harmony" of the regulated family. According to a parallel with Confucian cosmology, the husband is the Heaven of the family while the wife the Earth. The share allotted to Lady Wang might be the lowest part of the Earth, or hell.

Chastity was one of the norms which was most repressive of women. Lady Wang kept her unstained body for her husband only. The poem, absurdly, shows Lady Wang as both a sex object and a moral teacher of her husband! She repeatedly shows her "true love" for her husband by her chastity and tells him to follow the Confucian principles of self-cultivation in order to achieve a great social accomplishment. This dual function of women Dorothy Ko has discussed in detail. (Ko 1994:264) It seems that we are lucky to have this first-hand account of women's role by a woman rather than, as has more commonly been the case, by male scholar.

Having been nearly murdered and banished, the first question Lady Wang asks is about her body-person:

Tell me, father and mother,
Why was I born?

THE SELF AS MIND-SOUL: MYSTICISM, ROMANTICISM, AND SYNCRETISM

The struggle of Lady Wang's soul made her question her fate (ming), which was imparted by Heaven according to Confucian tradition.

First, she consulted the Confucian Goddess Banji,²⁴ who was the foremost Chinese woman scholar during her life time (c. 49 - c. 120) and was also called Ban Zhao or Cao Dajia. She was deified as a goddess later in Confucian temples and was famous for her Instructions for Woman (Nu Jie). In the poem we read:

Cold and hungry, I am tightening my clothes,
I do not know where to warm and feed my stiff body.

23 zheng, a 21- or 25-stringed plucked instrument, similar to the zither. Sheng, a reed pipewind instrument.

24 Banji (also called Ban Zhao or Caodajia), the most famous women scholar and educator in the Han dynasty about her please consult Swann, 1932.

Tottering along, I run into the Temple of Banji.
Reviewing her Instruction for Women in mind,
My chastity, virtue and obedience can match
those of the Woman Exemplars (Lie Nu),²⁵
Though they lived in different times.
Keep silence! I warn myself,
Who will listen to me?

Then, with the question about her preordained fate, she consulted a Buddhist nun. The nun performed a divination for her and taught her the principle of karma. The story tells us that in the end the first wife died naturally and Lady Wang returned to her husband. In this way Buddhism tries to defend its truths and to compromise with Confucianism: retaining her virtue and chastity will bring good fortune, and suicide will not help her escape the samsara. It is well known that the Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi (1130-1200), when he was the magistrate of Zhangzhou, issued a public letter which urged Taoist nuns to consider their responsibility to bear children and go back to their homes; from the following day, no woman could be accepted by Buddhist Temples or Taoist Shrines without special permission. (“Quan Nutao Huansu Bang”, Chapter 100 in *Huian xiansheng Zhuwengong Wenji*). From this we can imagine the keenness with which women appreciated being a nun in the Nan Song period. Taoism attracted women for its “female worship” and its reverence of Yin. (See Zhan, 1988). Lady Wang becoming one of them shows us the reason behind this.

After that, with the same question about her preordained fate, Lady Wang encountered Lishan Laomu²⁶, a female Taoist immortal described by Li Quan of the Tang dynasty. This is the beginning of Lady Wang’s mystical experiences, and the mysticism of this poem is expressed in two descriptions of encounters by Lady Wang with the Queen Mother of the West and other goddesses and her experience of the unification with the One/Tao. Before I go further, let me clarify the two terms: “mystical experience” and “mysticism”.

Mysticism “is used to describe anything from an encounter resulting in unification with the divine to any experience slightly out of ordinary”; “basic to all types of mystical experience is an encounter with the divine or the sacred. Mystical experience in this sense is not confined to any particular religious tradition.” (Stewart, 1992: 7) The four characteristics which entitle any state to be called mystic, according to William James, are Ineffability which is more like a state of feeling; a Noetic quality, which means that this state of feeling for

25 Admirable women celebrated as exemplars in ancient China for their virtue, chastity, obedience and etc. please consult O’Hara, 1971.

26 Lishan Laomu, a woman immortal according to Taoist legend. See the preface of *Huandi Yinfulingxu* by Li Quan of Tang Dynasty.

those who experience it is felt to be also a state of knowledge; Transiency, the fact that the experience cannot be sustained for long; and Passivity. (W. James, 1961 edition of 1902). Lady Wang's experience exactly fits this four-fold description. In addition, it closely resembles a Taoist Shangqing mystical experience.

Under Lady Wang's request, the immortal Lishan Laomu, performed a divination for her according to the Yi Jing (The book of Changes). Her fortune is manifested by the hexagram 41, Sun, which is composed by two trigrams: the top one is a mountain (kan) and beneath it is a marsh (dui). This symbolism shows that if there be sincerity in one who employs it, there will be great good fortune (The Book of Changes: 41). Using a metaphor the woman immortal granted her some gifts, one of them a gourd²⁷ which is full of fresh air. We read,

In the first inhalation, I breath in the air in the gourd,
Suddenly, I cast off my old bones and take on new ones.
In the second inhalation, I draw in the air in the gourd again,
Spontaneously, my five orbs are cleaned.
Standing on my knees I want you to be my master,
Oh, where are you?
My eyes could only see the sky bright.

Now with a "cosmic body"(Kohn, 1993: 163-165), Lady Wang start to experience "Shouyi - preserving the One" (Robinet, 1993: 123-124). Her body and her soul are totally emancipated. This is articulated by her cheerful feminine actions:

Facing the morning sun
Pleasantly I gather the wild fruit of zhuyelian,²⁸
When it is twilight
Merrily I collect water-plants in a stream.

She tells us that she climbs the high mountains to pick herb and pluck flowers. She use them as fragrance to perfume her skin, skirt, and hair. She decorates herself using the jade flowers of fairy-land. She has found herself, with full self-admiration:

Using lotus and cotton-rose hibiscus,
I made my garment, dress and skirts.
Singing and dancing like a light whirlwind,
Oh, I am so young and pretty
Holding in both hands the clear spring-water,

27 The Chinese people used dried gourds as containers for medicine or wine. In a very popular symbolism, one of the Eight Taoist Immortals, Li Tie Guai, always carries a medicine gourd (Ho, 1990: 25).

28 zhuyelian (*pollia japonica*): a kind of lotus plant.

Let me wash my face and my heart.
Oh, I am so pure and clean,
No any mortal selfish stains on me!

This is the Mystical Romantic part in the poem. It is a state of ecstatic feelings and emotions such as William James described. Romanticism as a way of poetic and literary expression appeared in Chinese history as early as in the Book of Odes. It was also appeared in poems by Qu Yuan, Bai Juyi and Li Bai. Poets use Romanticism to display earnest pursuit of the ideal realm and to pose a sharp contrast with the realistic world. Imagination, passion, and enthusiasm, unrestrained, and completely free, are features of Romanticism in Chinese poetry and prose. When all of these reach the ultimate summit, mysticism is born. The mystical Romanticism in Lady Wang's poem is similar to that in Chu Ci (Chu Songs). Those poems are traditionally attributed to Qu Yuan (c.340-278 B.C.E.), a conscientious minister of Chu²⁹, who, was slandered and banished from the court. Despairing at the corruptness of the world, he drowned himself into the Milo River. In his poem we find the same expression as in A Plaint of Lady Wang:

Pacing with restlessness, I yearn to get away,
Confused and close to madness, I long for the eternal.
My mind goes wild, strays off without control;
My heart melancholy, I am ever sadder.
Suddenly my spirit, off, never to come back,
My body, like a withered tree, left behind alone.
(The Far-off Journey)³⁰

The mystical Romanticism in Lady Wang's poem is also similar to that in Chuang Zi, Xiaoyao You, though it lacks the "male passion" on a grand scale, bold, and lofty in quality. In Xiaoyao You the divine beings "with skin as pure as ice and snow" make excursion beyond the four seas with clouds as vehicles and flying dragons as their steeds. What a state of mind Zhuang Zi has! Does Lady Wang's poem perhaps expresses the feature of "feminine mystical Romanticism"?

The power of Confucian rites and teachings binds Lady Wang at every moment. From the towering peak of passion her soul falls back into a profound abyss. She yearns for the limited love her husband gave her and an ideal family containing only one wife. She blames herself and wants him to understand her. She asks:

29 A kingdom on the Yangtze River that was the southernmost of the states of northern China.

30 The English translation is from Kolm, 1993:252, with a slight modification. Please see also P. W. Kroll in Lopez, 1996:158.

Everyone has the same body,
why are their happiness and suffering so different?

We can understand her cry for equality and challenge to concubinage and polygamy, which could (in different social circumstances) lead to a demand for equality between men and women. But this suggestion in the poem is weak enough to enable her contemporary readers to count it to her credit. She uses almost one-third of the poem to express how eager she is to see her husband and explain all that has befallen her; she repeats the contents of the Great Learning so as to fulfill the function of a moral teacher for her husband while at the same time guiding her own self-cultivation. When feeling hopeless, she is determined to commit suicide; but the trees and grass hold back the knife and she is unable to do it. She cuts her arm and uses her blood to write this poem to her husband. The main contents of the poem, as I mentioned, are the essence of the Great Learning and how she would serve her husband according to the Instructions for Women. In her dream she gave him the poem. When he tries to hold her hand, she wakes up. She sighs: "Oh, my empty body and soul!" This is Lady Wang's self-image in real life.

Whose body? The Confucian value system made her feel that without her husband and family she was not a person at all. In *The Second Sex* (1953) de Beauvoir argues that a women's problem is her need for men to complete her "being". It is not strange that Lady Wang has this idea. She did not show any criticism of the social system, nor did she say one word of complaint against anyone around her. A perfect woman, Ban Zhao taught, should understand that "to win the love of one man is the crown of a woman's life; to lose the love of one man is her eternal disgrace" (Nujie:4). But she did not tell women how to win the love of one man if that one man has more than one woman. Ban Zhao taught, "The way of husband and wife is the great principle of Heaven and Earth, and the great basis of human relationships." (Nujie:2) The social practice of Lady Wang's time was that men such as her husband forgot the great principle of Heaven and Earth! Women's self-cultivation had to fall in with men's will.

Despairing in this world Lady Wang starts a new search in the other world. This time her journey is similar to the Taoist Shangqing "interior vision" or "ecstatic journey". It is said that "During the year 364 to 370, Yang Xi, a medium employed by a southern gentry family, began to receive visits from a group of deities descended from the Heaven of Highest Clarity (Shangqing)." (Bokenkamp, in Lopez, ed. 166-167) Thanks to Yang's literary skill, a corpus of the poetic and prose transcripts of his visions and many of the scriptures he received from the deities came to be treasured by a group of southern Chinese families. This initiated the Shangqing-Maoshan movement, which was theorized by Tao Hongjing (456-536) and enriched by legendary immortals,

local saints, such as the Mao brothers³¹, and gods or spirits unknown until that time, such as Wei Huacun (521-3340). According to Robinet, this movement retained most of the elements of Ge Hong's tradition; borrowed certain features, like "the purity chamber" from the Celestial Masters; and, for the first time in Taoism, adopted Buddhist practices. The Shangqing school emphasized interiorization during meditation, drastically modified alchemical procedures, stressed the deification and "cosmicization" of the adept, and valued the visualizing of images and ecstatic wandering. (Robinet 1997:114, 121-24)

Around the time of Lady Wang, new revelations emanated from Maoshan³². The forty-fifth patriarch of the school Liu Dabin (fl. 1317-1328), wrote a massive account of this mountain. (Robinet 1997:120). Therefore, it is natural that in the mountain wilderness Lady Wang encountered the Queen Mother of the West (Xi Wangmu), and the female immortals the Hemp Lady (Magu), the Weaving Maid (Zhinu) and the Moon Lady (Chang O).

Lady Wang met the fairy Hemp lady during her wandering journey in the east heaven. She was invited to play chases with her. She was so happy that she forgot all her mortal misery. In the west in the Konglun Mountains, she entertained Xi Wangmu by playing the seven-string music instrument. Her music was so plaintive that Xi Wangmu was deeply moved and could not wait for her to finish her piece. Medieval Taoists considered Xi Wangmu to be "regal, female, and associated with the west. As a ruler she controlled creation, transcendence and divine passion. As a woman she was mother, teacher and lover." (Cahill 1993:3) She could be both threatening and compassionate. Her nurturing side functioned in relation to the women she protected. They are women who do not fit into the traditional Confucian family pattern. But in Lady Wang's case, in this poem, Xi Wangmu does not give her much help to change her situation. This reveals the nature of man-made Xi Wangmu, especially, from Confucian perspective. Wangmu is a euhemerized title "conferred on female ancestors in the father's line. ... Defining the queen mother in kingship terms in the context of the ancestral cult shows an attempt to incorporate her into the predominating view of the structure of the world." (Cahill 1993:18)

In addition to this, in the south heaven Lady Wang met the woman immortal Lingfei. She was shown Cao O's tombstone inscriptions from the Eastern Han dynasty, which expressed admiration for Cao O's filial piety and chastity.³³ In the north heaven she wandered among the Gushe mountains and

31 Mao brothers, the three brothers of the Mao family, who, in the first century B. C. E., retreated to the mountain that subsequently was named after them – Maoshan.

32 The Eighth Taoist Cave Heaven (*diba dongtian*) in the southwest of today's Jiangsu province. The three Mao brothers practiced there.

33 Cao O, a filial daughter, an exemplar woman of the Eastern Han Dynasty. Dushang erected a tombstone for her. But it was no longer there in Lady Wang's time.

met the immortal sisters³⁴. Not much help was offered, so she dried her tears and traveled to the Silver River where the Weaving Maid³⁵ weaving untiringly on a loom told her that she will forever keep her love for the Oxherd (Nulang) who was left behind with two babies on earth. Her journey brought her to the Palace of Guanghan in the Moon where Chang O³⁶ offered her the elixir of immortality. But she did not want to be an immortal alone - the first thought in her mind was how to present the elixir to her husband! So the supremely valued ultimate goal of the Taoists - immortality - immediately dimmed in the face of Lady Wang's true mortal love for her husband on the one hand, and the power of Confucian teachings on a woman's duty to her family on the other hand. The Confucian order of Heaven paralleled the order prevailing on Earth and dominated the Queen mother, the goddesses, and the immortal sisters in the poem. Where could Lady Wang go? The Buddhist teaching on the principle of karma does still manage to imply that she received the elixir of immortality, a reward perhaps, for her chastity and filial piety and following the Confucian line, she returned back to her family. All aspects of Confucian teaching for women were enhanced though Lady Wang's mystical journey. Confucianism won the ultimate victory here.

CONCLUSION

Historically, as I said before, Lady Wang probably lived shortly before the 1190-1224 period of the Nan Song dynasty, in the area of today's Hebei and Shandong provinces, in Northern part of China - not very near to Maoshan. During the Song dynasty Daoist practitioners benefited from the support of Song emperors, especially Zhenzong (r. 997-1022), who claimed a Daoist deity among his ancestors. A Daoist Canon (Daozang) was published in 1019 on imperial orders at the beginning of Song dynasty, and after that efforts were made to compile a complete collection of Daoist scriptures, the present Daozang, compiled in 1444-45. Moreover, from Zhu Xi's public letter calling on Daoist nuns to go back to their homes and family duties we could be well assured that Lady Wang's reading ability and poetic training could help her to use popular knowledge from Daoist teachings, and ancient mythology, and her imagination to write the poem. Footbinding, widow chastity, concubinage, polygamy practices and intense family conflicts could make a woman like her opt to become a Daoist nun.

34 The immortals described in Zhuangzi. Xiaoyao You. See Watson, 1968:29-35.

35 Zhinu (weaving maid) and Nu Lang (cowherd): allegedly Zhinu, the youngest daughter of the kitchen god, fell in love with a mortal Nu Lang, given only one reunion a year with him. She meets him on a bridge of magpies over the Milk Way on July 7 of Chinese lunar calendar.

36 Chang O: the Moon Lady who stole the elixir of immortality from her husband and took it, then she flew to the Moon. (*Huai Nan Zi*).

In a recently published book *Under Confucian Eyes* the Daoist female saint Wang Fengxian of the mid-ninth century attracted my attention (Mann & Cheng, 2001: 17-29). The biography of Wang Fengxian is similar to that of the Northern Daoist female saint Sun Puer (Wong, 1990). The stories of both of them supported my previously mentioned popular religious practice of women in medieval China. Lady Wang was not the only special case at that time. The only difference may be that Wang Fengxian and Sun Puer were consciously and conscientiously doing spiritual self-cultivation while Lady Wang was in a transition of her spiritual struggle.

The 1786 edition of the book which recorded the poem was published in July of the year of bingwu under the rule of the Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). Therefore, scholars have reason to argue that it is actually a writing of Qing dynasty. During that period Neo-Confucianism was instrumental in regulating public morals and separating “Chinese” from “non-Chinese” practices. Chastity was still an important topic for women. More and more female images appeared in the art forms of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including novels and poems. In contrast to later teachings for woman, such as Lu Kun’s *Guifan* (Ayscough, 1937: 267-303; Wolf 1975:13-38), Li Yu’s *Rou Putuan* (the Carnal Prayer Mat) provided images of women whose physical bodies were driven by sexual desires which were acted upon in various extremely exaggerated ways. Their actions criticized and satirized Confucian rites and teachings and emancipated the female bodies in a lustful way. Unfortunately, women again played the role of sexual instruments for gratifying men’s desires. The story itself provides a profound Buddhist lesson, using carnal to destroy carnal. As victims women’s bodies paved a path for one Confucian scholar’s enlightenment. Lady Wang’s poem describes the confined female body and mind and is different from the later writings.

Lady Wang’s poem makes us consider a topic familiar in women’s studies. Typically, Lady Wang understood her morality and her virtue in terms of her love, an outlook very widespread in Confucian teachings. Only during her ecstatic journey could she emancipate herself completely. Theoretically, in a traditional Chinese family, the wife is a female form of the master of the family. Her duty was to preserve the harmony of the family, and so she had to be a moral example for all of the family members. This made the love between husband and wife became rigid and lacking in mutual-attraction. The concubine as an instrument fulfilled men’s desire and, sometimes continued the line of the family if the wife did not produce a son. Lady Wang has only one man in her life and thinks that her virtue and chastity will make her husband love her, and that she must wholeheartedly embrace her share of his love.

Finally, “the personal is political” is a phrase coined by Carol Hanisch in 1970 and published in *Note From the Second Year* (see Hanisch, 1971) which

became a main slogan of 1970s feminism. In this regard Lady Wang's poem is a feminist one, though I argued before that it is a feminine writing rather than a feminist one, as the whole poem lacks any feminist consciousness of a right to equality as between men and women. The truth she told us about herself reveals the psychology of patriarchal oppression in this world and the world beyond, and points up the direct relation between subjectivity, sociality and the artificial structure of cosmology, so that to know the story of her personal life as it is recounted is to know the "politics" of the situation of women in the Chinese history. This account is keeping with what some feminists have written (see Catharine MacKinnon, 1979).

Some feminists argue, "Any woman who tells the truth about herself is a feminist." (Alice Munro, Sharma & Young ed., 1999: front page 6) This radical statement is not accurate. Logically, according to this statement: 1) No man can be a feminist; 2) Only a feminist can tell the truth about herself, others cannot; 3) A woman who only tells the truth about others is not a feminist. If we use this criterion to judge Lady Wang, she will be a feminist. But I suppose she would not be a feminist even though she questioned her life and fate and her complaint, in fact, is a criticism of society. She lived in about the tenth or eleventh century and she lacked the basic feminist consciousness of demanding equality between men and women. As I mentioned before, her poem is a feminine poem focusing on a typical female topic in medieval China. It is interesting that in twentieth century China, "a woman who tells the truth about herself," and whose writing has been regarded by Westernized scholars as "China's first feminist novel", herself denies that she is a feminist – "she writes on all manner of themes"! (Yang, in Zhang 1989: preface P. 2)

Related to this I want to say that the suffering experienced by Lady Wang is not limited to only women or to only early past historical periods. In Ha Jin's novel *Waiting*, from the last quarter of the twentieth-century China, a man waited for seventeen years to get approval from the government to divorce his bound-feet wife, needless to mention his wife's unlucky fate (Ha, 1999). The format of men's domination could be used by women against women. It was the first wife who attempted to murder Lady Wang, not her husband. Similarly, in Chang Eileen's *The Golden Canque*, it was the unhappy mother who directly destroyed her daughter's love and her daughter-in-law's inner-chamber happiness (Chang 1993). Those who have power control those who don't, no matter how limited the power is. A discussion of the *Plaint* may lead us indeed to link together issues of power, existential suffering and spiritual purification.

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Contemplation: Practice, Doctrine and Wisdom in the Teaching of Zhiyi (538-597)

Hans-Rudolf KANTOR

Dept. Of Philosophy, Huaan University, Taipei County, Taiwan

INTRODUCTION

It is not easy to define the type of experience initiated by practice and cultivation in Tiantai Buddhism. There are manifold methods of practice and cultivation in Tiantai Buddhism, but all of them are predominantly linked with the Chinese term for contemplation (*guan*). The terminological roots of the Chinese expression *guan* originate in Indian Buddhism, where it is called *vipasyana* and means examine, contemplate, consider illusion and discern illusion, contemplate and mentally enter into truth.¹ It is a fundamental concept of all Buddhist schools, but Tiantai Buddhists elevate it to a distinct doctrine. It would go beyond the frame of this paper to give a comprehensive survey of contemplation throughout various Buddhist schools.² What I intend to do here is to show how “Contemplation” works as a self-sufficient concept, wisdom and practice that allows one to live a spiritual experience without having to narrate or to represent it. This in turn might help us to identify species of spiritual traditions determined by varying relationships to the categories of narration and contemplation.

The inaugurator of the scholastic system of Tiantai doctrines, Zhiyi (538-597) explicitly dedicated several works to the doctrine of contemplation. His most important thoughts about this doctrine are expounded in the *Cidi chan men* (*Gate of the Gradual Meditation*), the *Liu miao men* (*Gate of the Six Subtleties*) and the *Mohe zhiguan* (=MHZG *Great Calming and Contemplation*). But in his other important works like the *Fahua xuanyi* (=FHXY *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus*), *Fahua wenju* (*A Textual Commentary on the Lotus*), *Weimo Lueshu* (*An*

1 This term frequently occurs in the binom *samatha vipasyana* (*zhiguan*) in Buddhist texts. Zhiyi's famous work *Mohe zhiguan* (*The Great Calming and Contemplation*) also stresses the indivisibility of both concepts during the practitioner's course of cultivation. Calming emphasizes the achievements that the practitioner obtains through concentration like the ending of desires etc. Contemplation represents the insight that the practitioner has achieved. But Zhiyi also employs the sole expression of *guanxin* (contemplating the mind). See W.F. Soothill, *A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*, Taipei 1976, p. 489.

2 See the Japanese study of Sekiguuchi Shindai, *Shikan no Kenkyuu*, Tokyou 1975.

Abbreviated Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra), it is equally as important as it is in the afore mentioned works too.³

The immanent approach to understanding its structure, content, relevance and systematical position within Zhiyi's scholastic system of doctrines requires an outline of its terminological interrelation with other crucial concepts expressing the core of Tiantai thoughts. The most fundamental sources of this doctrine will be found in the three major works of Tiantai (*San dabu*): *Mohe zhiguan*, *Fahua xuanyi* and *Fahua wenju*.⁴ I will follow the immanent approach according to the subsequent issues:

The first question concerns the type of experience intended by contemplation. The focus of awareness in contemplation is the action of contemplative awareness itself, expressed by the Chinese term "mental activity" (*xin*). Mental activity is regarded as the source shaping things in the way they appear to the mind, because the presence of all things cannot be separated from the awareness of consciousness. Any object of consciousness is regarded as a thing. The appearance of things is understood as the result of mental activity, and mental activity's appearance itself cannot be but a thing because its presence is not beyond the awareness of consciousness.⁵ Contemplative awareness is mental activity contemplating itself. Contemplative awareness simultaneously is actor (*neng*) and object being acted upon (*suo*)⁶. The content of its experience is the introspection of mental activity (*guanxin*). If the appearance of all things is a product of mental activity and mental activity's appearance is nothing but a thing, then its true nature becomes evident by a deconstructing that is shaped by mental activity. The objects of deconstruction are the false views about things appearing to be outside to mental activity. Therefore, Zhiyi says that introspection is the deconstruction (*po*) of that appears to be outside by means of contemplation, in order to see mental activity from inside.⁷ In the section *Universal Deconstruction of Dharmas* from the *Great Calming and*

3 For a comprehensive survey on Zhiyi's development and system of the doctrine *zhiguan*, its influence from his master's (Nanyue Huisi 515-577) teaching about the Lotus-sutra and its later development by Jingqi Zhanran (711-782) and Siming Zhili (960-1028), see the Japanese study of Toshio Andou, *Tendaigaku*, Kyouto 1968.

4 See *Taishou shinshuu daizokyou* = T. T 46, 1911; T 33,1716; T 34, 1718. These works are records of Zhiyi's sermons from 587 to 593 compiled by his disciple Guanding (561-632).

5 See Zhiyi, *Sinianchu* T 46.578a. In this section, Zhiyi explains the non-duality between wisdom and its object, between mental-activity and material form (*sexin buer*). Mental activity is understood as consciousness and material form as its object acted upon.

6 Ibid. see also Jingqi Zhanran's (711-782) short treatise *Shi buer men* (*The Gate of Ten Non-Dualities*), T 46, 1929. For an English translation of it, see Ra Lang-Eun, *The T'ien-t'ai Philosophy of Non-Duality: A Study in Chan-jan and Chih-li*. Ph.D. temple Univ. 1988.

7 See Zhiyi *Sinianchu* T 46.578c.

Contemplation (Mohe zhiguan), Zhiyi explains in detail what deconstruction in virtue of contemplation means.⁸ Deconstruction in virtue of contemplation consists of a refutation of all possible ontological propositions about the origin and being of mental activity. This detailed refutation is based on rationalistic arguments showing that each of the propositions contains contradictions. Its structure is subdivided according to the scheme of the four alternatives (*siji*) encompassing the assertion of the proposition, its negation, the synthesis of the two, and the transcendence of the two.⁹ Experience of introspection caused by this type of contemplation can hardly be defined as religious experience. The question of how to define the experience intended by contemplation will be one of the issues of this paper.

The second question concerns the manner in which it is expounded in the above mentioned Tiantai texts. Generally, terminology in Tiantai-Buddhist texts from Zhiyi and Guanding (561-632)¹⁰ appears to be like an organism consisting of interrelated concepts. Tiantai concepts establish a systematic combination and continuity between doctrinal speculation, methods for practice, cultivation, concentration and its resulting experience of introspection.

The crucial concept of contemplation combines the three important contents of Tiantai-teaching: theoretical reflection in terms of doctrinal articulation, practice in terms of methods of cultivation and concentration, and experience in terms of introspection. The way in which its complexity is expounded in the major Tiantai-text cannot be described as narrative. The concept of contemplation appears as a highly speculative notion within these strictly and systematically subdivided texts of Tiantai-teaching, though simultaneously articulating practical instructions for all diverse kinds of sentient beings in order to achieve the final merits in terms of salvation (*jietuo*). Contemplation is represented as both a speculative and instructive concept in Tiantai-texts, thus combining practical experience and theoretical reflection.

The third point concerns its final purpose within Zhiyi's teaching. Its final purpose is said to be commonly shared by all sentient beings as their universal salvation (*du zhongsheng*) and relief from suffering that is supposed to be an indivisible part of their existence prior to this salvation.

8 See MHZG T 46.59b-85a.

9 The scheme of four alternatives (*catuskoti, siji*) is a common pattern of arranging all possible propositions in respect to a topic discussed in Buddhist texts. See, Hans Sturm, *Weder Sein noch Nichtsein – Der Urteilsvierkant und seine Korollarien im östlichen und westlichen Denken*, Augsburg 1995.

10 Guanding was the disciple of Zhiyi who recorded Zhiyi's sermons and compiled it to the FHXV, FHWJ and MHZG; these so called *Three Major Works of Tiantai* were Zhiyi's sermons between 578-593.

Contemplation neither indicates sole subjectivity of spiritual experience nor mystical experience nor ecstasy.¹¹ It does not even denote a path leading the practitioner to the experience of some transcendental sphere beyond the immediate concreteness of existence, although its object is described by words like inconceivable, ineffable (*bukeshuo*, *bukeshiyi*) etc..¹²

Its ultimate purpose rather is the entire salvation of all sentient beings realized through the practitioner's universal and simultaneously concrete wisdom (*yiqie zhongzhi*). Cultivation and realization of universal wisdom consist of these acts of contemplation, initiated by the single person's practice. Practice of contemplation and cultivation for one's own person is supposed to be capable of initiating a process of transformation extending to others. Universal salvation of all sentient beings initiated by the single person's practice accords with the idea of entelechy that initiating practice contains the potency of fulfilling the entire process of universal transformation: transformation of sentient beings is caused through transformation of the single person that in turn is caused by this single person's own practice. Fundamentally, Tiantai teaching deals with the idea of entelechy that transformation of others is based on one's own transformation, the two poles of one's own transformation and that of others are indivisible within this process of universal salvation. Viewed from the standpoint of ultimate contemplation and its highest achievement, Zhiyi says that there is no distinction between self and others.¹³ Human nature seems to be understood through this common process of general transformation. Based on the *Avatamsaka-sutra*, Zhiyi stresses the non-distinction of one's own actual moment of awareness, the state of ignorant mind of sentient beings and the awakened mind of the Buddha.¹⁴ Fundamentally, the essence of mental activity, — no matter whether it is viewed from the standpoint of the self or that of others, from the standpoint of the unenlightened or the enlightened, — essentially remains unchangeable, its distinct courses of manifestation only express the alternating degree of achievement in transformation. Each single sentient being is involved in this common process of universal transformation, because its nature of mental activity is its property for transformation. Perception of suffering is the common mark of all sentient beings, it is the most fundamental mark of mental activity in general, it initiates the impulse to strive for relief from suffering, that in turn

11 See N. Donner, *Chih-i's meditation on Evil*, In: *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society*, D.W. Chappell (ed.) 1987, 49-64. In his article, Donner associates contemplation with mysticism and intuition.

12 See MHZG T 46.55b.

13 See MHZG T 46.80b16-25.

14 See MHZG T 46.9a and *Avatamsaka-sutra* T 9.465a

is the basis for transformation.¹⁵ The diversity of sentient beings is understood as a manifestation of different degrees of transformation within this universal process, determined by sentient beings' quality of mental activity.

Zhiyi's teaching tries to outline the order, sections and functions of this universal transformation encompassing all sentient beings but initiated by one's own conduct of cultivation. The experience of one's own transformation does not only prove the transformation of human being in general, (that is the transformation of others too), but also qualifies the practitioner's ability for transformation of others.

FOUNDATION OF CONTEMPLATION

Zhiyi's teaching deals with contemplation leading to universal wisdom in virtue of mental-activity's property of transformation. It simultaneously comprises both the theoretical reflection about this property of transformation and its instructive exploration of how to realize it. In fact, thus his teaching has been already becoming the very act of contemplation of mental activity itself. His teaching itself must be understood as being nothing but the immediate embodiment of the self reflecting act of contemplation of mental activity. It embodies the concrete and immediate expression of mental-activity's innate nature, its property of transformation, experienced and embodied through the introspective act of transforming contemplation. Therefore, comprehension of and comprehension through his teaching is introspection of mental activity by itself leading to the wholesome fruits of Buddhist wisdom.

For this reason, Zhiyi says that mental activity is the source of teaching (*jiào*), contemplation (*guān*) and wisdom (*zhì*).¹⁶ On the other hand, teaching is the gate for contemplation, which in turn is the gate for wisdom, that in turn explores and illuminates the inner nature of mental activity, its property of transformation that has been being source of teaching, contemplation and wisdom.¹⁷ Mental activity's property of transformation is more commonly expressed as the "buddhanature" (*fóxìng*) of all sentient beings. The designation of buddhanature denotes this property of transformation within mental activity. Sentient beings are sentient beings because of obtaining mental activity, predominantly marked by perception of suffering; this in turn causes sentient beings to strive for release from suffering and to initiate

15 Zhiyi identifies the *dharmakaya* (*fáshēn*, =the incarnation of the Buddhadharma) with the perception of suffering in the FHX Y T 33.686a.

16 See FHX Y T 33.685c and T 33.778c.

17 See MHZG T 46.59b.

a process of transformation. Zhiyi says that any sentient being is gifted with buddhanature and thus is able to obtain the wisdom of a Buddha that is the presupposition for his ideal of universal salvation.¹⁸ Transformation based on teaching is nothing but introspection initiated by mental activity, leading to the wholesome fruit of universal salvation. Zhiyi's idea of teaching and transformation (*jiaohua*) concisely expressed as "striving for the higher, in order to save the lower" (*qiushang juxia*) is regarded as mental activity's innate nature realized through its introspection.¹⁹

The gate of teaching (*jiaomen*) expresses the doctrinal level of theoretical reflection, represented by the entire bulk of Buddhist classical literature. The gate of contemplation (*guanmen*) realizes the practical path and its experience of concentration and introspection like the practice of *samadhi* (*sanmeidi*) and *dhyana* (*chan*). Within the level of wisdom (*zhimen*) the preceding levels of teaching and contemplation are indivisibly melted together.²⁰ Viewed from that standpoint, Zhiyi says that contemplation and teaching are the two wings of one bird or the two wheels of one vehicle.²¹ This expresses the non-duality of theoretical reflection and practical experience in Zhiyi's concept of wisdom. Theoretical reflection itself is one part of this diversified type of practice considered as this process of universal transformation. The universal principle of practice reflects itself through the articulation of teaching, that is, the doctrinal level of theoretical reflection. Practice of speculative thinking is the theoretically reflective part of contemplation.

The foundation of contemplation is the above mentioned Chinese term *xin* or "mental activity", from which accomplishment of universal wisdom realized through its acts of contemplation arises and proceeds. Mental activity is a very complex and fundamental concept comprising all diverse kinds of activity belonging to the consciousness, like perception, thought, feeling, desire and will. Mental activity is regarded as fundamental, because things that seem to exist in the way of how they appear are causally linked with that consciousness to which they appear in that way. Viewed from that standpoint, Zhiyi concludes, due to the *Avatamsaka-sutra* and the *Treatise of Great Wisdom*, that any object has to be predominantly regarded as a phenomenon of consciousness.²²

The opposite term of contemplation and wisdom is fundamental ignorance (*genben wuming*), the fundamental cause for all sentient beings'

18 See FHX Y T 33.744a-b.

19 See MHZG T 46.19a.

20 See MHZG T 46.59c.

21 See Zhiyi, *Xiuxi zhiguan zichan fayao* T 46.462b.

22 See MHZG T 46.52a10-52b1 and T 9.465a.

condition of suffering (*ku*).²³ Suffering is the result of an inversion into illusion (*diandao xuwang*): originally non-abiding (*buzhu*) existence of empirical objects appears to be like an abiding or fixed object, to which the deluded mind is attached through its habitual tendencies. In virtue of these habitual tendencies (*xiqi*) originally non-abiding content of one's perceptions, thoughts, desires etc. has been recognized, marked, distinguished, hypostasized and substantialized into a discrete entity, but its abidingness contradicts its authentic or original mode of non-abidingness. This hypostasis is an illusory inversion from non-abidingness into abidingness, from its original or authentic mode (*zhendi*) into its conventional mode (*sudi*), from real (*shi*) to unreal (*xu*). Distinctive marks always denote the condition of ignorance. The attached mind constantly has to experience the loss of that it tries to hold in vain, thus sentient beings' life is inevitably marked by suffering. The root of suffering is the deluded state of mind called ignorance.

But mental activity is fundamental for both contemplative wisdom as well as ignorance, wisdom is transformation of ignorance, and transformation is annihilation of inversion, which means deconstruction of illusions.²⁴ The unwholesome state of sentient being's existence is overshadowed by ignorance, whereas ultimate wisdom is linked with universal salvation. Fundamentally, both wisdom as well as ignorance are mental activity, accordingly the unwholesome state of sentient beings' existence (*samsara*) is essentially not different from the wholesome conditions of universal salvation (*nirvana*).²⁵ Distinction (*fenbie*) is a mark of ignorance only, and non-duality (*buer*) is a mark of wisdom.

Due to the *Prajnaparamita-sutras* Zhiyi also says that the real mark (*zhufa shixiang*) of all *dharmas*, that is the real mark of all things and all rules, is devoid of any distinctive marks (*wuxiang*), that is nothing but the only mark (*yixiang*), the nature of all *dharmas* (*faxing*).²⁶ Epistemologically, dharmanature devoid of distinctions is the opposite of ignorance producing distinctions. Ontologically, dharmanature and ignorance are not different but identical in terms of their essence, because "there is no duality between *samsara* and *nirvana*", as Zhiyi frequently quotes it from the *Mulamadhyamika-karika*.²⁷

Their paradoxical identification, frequently found in Tiantai texts, denotes the twofold and opposite tendencies for both illusion and wisdom in

23 The concept of fundamental ignorance is a term frequently used by Nanyue Huisi (515-577), the teacher of Zhiyi.

24 See MHZG, the section of *Universal Deconstruction of Dharmas* T 46.59b-84a.

25 See *Mulamadhyamika-karika* (*Zhonglun*) T 30.36a and *Dazhidu lun* T 25.752a10-12.

26 There are several locations of this quotation throughout all works of Zhiyi.

27 See T 30.36a.

mental activity. Zhiyi develops the paradoxical relationship between the ontological and epistemological viewpoint one step further, expressed by the phrase: “the one moment of mental-activity consisting of dharmanature and ignorance” (*yinian wuminigfaxing xin*).²⁸ The immediate moment of non-abiding existence, simultaneously experienced as and experienced by the one moment of mental-activity (*yinian xin*) itself, is authentic or true (*zhen*) in its dynamic mode during its immediate presence only, but its distinct content is illusory by its very nature, because distinctions are considered as illusory results of fundamental ignorance. Since being recognized as a distinctive thing the object of perception, thought etc. is hypostasized into an abiding entity, contradicting its originally non-abiding existence. The immediate act of any moment of thought, perception etc. is real but its content, the distinct object of that moment of consciousness is necessarily illusory. But there is no moment of mental activity not being related to a distinct object overshadowed by ignorance. In the same way there is no appearance of objects beyond mental activity that is real in terms of its dynamic and immediate presence only. In its original and dynamic mode it is not the phenomenon of a perceived object. Its immediacy is beyond articulation and conception, it is inconceivable (*bukesiyi*).²⁹ Paradoxically, this inconceivable realm of dharmanature, which is the ground of immediate presence of existing things, must include its inversion into ignorance producing all kinds of distinctions, the marks of the conceivable realm. The ground of diversity and the ground of immediate presence of existence are dialectically unified within each moment of mental activity.

THE THREEFOLD CONTEMPLATION

From a Buddhist viewpoint, impermanent entities of the empirical world are supposed to be devoid of an abiding substance. Buddhists understand abidingness or permanence of being as self-nature or self-being (*svabhava, zixing*) on which an object’s existence is based. An object’s existence conditioned by its nature is supposed to be an entity containing permanent self-being and thus contradicting to the impermanence of the empirical world. Absence of permanent self-being (*wuzixing*) in empirical entities is called emptiness (*kong*). Emptiness only denies self-being of empirical entities but not their impermanent and provisional existence (*jiayou*). For this reason, existence of empirical entities is said not to be based on their self-being nature, their existence arises through conditioned co-arising (*yuanyi*), but their conditions are in the same way empty or devoid of self-being.

28 Zhiyi, *Sinianchu* T 46.578c.

29 See MHZG T 46.55b.

Fundamentally, conditioned co-arising means ultimate emptiness (*bijing kong*). It only denies self-being but not existence, it does not express nothingness. Empirical objects provisionally designated (*jiaming*) as such, are nothing but ultimate emptiness. On the other hand, provisional existence of conditioned co-arising identified with emptiness does not include non-existence. In order to emphasize its ontological status of “nor self-being neither non-existence” (*feiyou feiwu*), Zhiyi stresses the middle way (*zhong dao*) transcending self-being (*you*) and non-existence (*wu*) due to the *Mulamadhyanika-karika* and the *Dazhidu Lun* (*The Treatise of Great Wisdom*).³⁰

In Tiantai-Buddhism, the middle way does not only denote the transcendence of the two opposite extremes of self-being and non-existence in conditioned co-arising. It rather stresses the synthesis of provisional existence (*you*) and non (self)-being (*wu*), the mutual identity of the provisional (*jia*) and emptiness (*kong*).³¹ The three aspects of the middle, provisional and emptiness are perfectly integrated, which is called “perfectly integrated threefold truth” (*yuanrong sandi*)³²: there is no middle way, not simultaneously being provisional and emptiness; no emptiness, not simultaneously being provisional and middle way; no provisional not simultaneously being the middle way and emptiness. Since all of the three components pervade each other, Zhiyi also speaks of the threefold unity and the united threefoldness (*sanyi yisan*).³³ This principle is valid for all discrete entities and notions holding an epistemic-propositional status in verbal articulation.

The threefold truth could be considered as the central concept of Tiantai doctrines, its content combines different levels: firstly, it expresses the relativistic standpoint in respect to ontological speculation; secondly, it accounts as a paradigm of truth for all doctrines holding an epistemic-propositional status, in this function it becomes the fundamental hermeneutical principle, on which the classification of doctrines and the periodization of *sutras* are based due to the Tiantai view; thirdly, it is the crucial concept that combines theory and practice.

30 See T 30.33b and T 25.147c

31 See MHZG T 46.55b, FHXY T 33.781b, 693b9-25, *Sijiao yi* T 46.728a. For a study about the ambiguity of the Chinese terms *you* and *wu*, see P. Swanson, *The Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy. The Flowering of the Two Truths in Chinese Buddhism*, 1989.

32 See FHXY T 33.705a5-7

33 Ibid.

Spoken in terms of practice it is called threefold contemplation (*sanguan*)³⁴ encompassing the “contemplation about entering emptiness from [unwholesome] provisional” (*cong jia ru kong guan*), “contemplation about entering [wholesome] provisional from emptiness” (*cong kong ru jia guan*), “contemplation of the middle” (*zhongdao guan*).³⁵ Threefold contemplation most skillfully conducted is the simultaneous application of the three modes of contemplation within one moment of mental activity. Zhiyi calls it the “threefold contemplation within one moment of mental activity” (*yixin sanguan*).³⁶ This type of contemplation is the highest level of all kinds of contemplation, expressed through the highest level of doctrinal articulation, called perfect teaching (*yuanjiao*). It also expresses the totality and unity of the infinite ways distinctively fitting to various conditions and thus leading to salvation. For, a person being able to realize this contemplation has accomplished the “universal and particular wisdom” (*yiqie zhongzhi*) ascribed to the Buddha only.³⁷ Universal wisdom (*yiqie zhi*) relates to ultimate emptiness of any object; this is the first mode of contemplation. It deconstructs (*po*) the unwholesome provisional illusorily considered as discrete entity that in turn is based on the false view of self-nature. Particular wisdom (*dao zhong zhi*) relates to the diversity of sentient beings that has to follow distinct paths of salvation because of their distinct faculties; this wisdom corresponds to the second mode of contemplation.³⁸ It establishes (*li*) the wholesome provisional in terms of expedient means, like doctrinal articulation of various *buddhadharmas* fitting to different sentient beings. The third mode combines the universality of ultimate emptiness with the particularity of the wholesome provisional considered as expedient means and distinctively fitting to the concrete and changing conditions of salvation. This third mode of contemplation pervades each moment of the practitioner’s course of acting due to the path of universal salvation for himself and others. It is neither exclusively deconstructing nor exclusively establishing, it is well aware of both the wholesome and unwholesome character of the provisional. Based on the contemplation of emptiness, it avoids unwholesome provisionality; based on the contemplation of wholesome provisionality, it avoids nothingness. It simultaneously applies the two modes of contemplation, without being attached to one of them

34 Originally this expression occurs in the apocryphical sutra *Yingluo jing* for the first time, see T 24.1014b19-23. A concise explanation of this concept from Zhiyi, see MHZG T 46.24b-c.

35 See MHZG T 46.24b-c and T 46.62b-83a.

36 See MHZG T 46.55b.

37 This expression is borrowed from the *Treatise of Great Wisdom*, it is one par of the threefold wisdom, see t 25.259a21-25.

38 Zhiyi matches together the concept of threefold wisdom from the *Treatise of Great Wisdom* and that of threefold contemplation from the *Yingluo jing*, see MHZG T 46.56c

exclusively, in this way it is the contemplation of the middle way, not exclusively contemplating either emptiness or the provisional but integrating both of them simultaneously. It is most fundamental because it contemplates the origin of phenomena shaped through mental activity. Its object of contemplation is the twofold nature of mental activity, firstly that ignorance originally is dharmanature, and secondly that there is no dharmanature beyond ignorance.³⁹

In virtue of this contemplation the indivisibility of dharmanature and ignorance becomes evident; the two are related to one another like emptiness and provisional existence too. Nature of all things [=dharma] is ultimate emptiness paradoxically not being beyond the provisional that in turn is a product of ignorance, because it cannot be but perceived as a distinctive entity. Ignorance originally is dharmanature, and dharmanature is not beyond ignorance.⁴⁰ The attempt to escape the world of illusion and reach a transcendental sphere of dharmanature is based on an illusion caused through ignorance too. To understand illusion as illusion and to respond to it constantly in a proper way accords with this mode of contemplation. Even the distinction between the salvation of oneself and that of others is in the same way illusory. For that reason, Zhiyi says that it is contemplation neither for the exclusive benefit of oneself nor for exclusive benefit of others⁴¹, it is absolute contemplation (*juedui guan*) devoid of establishing fixed relations between distinct entities.⁴² Therefore, it is for the benefit of oneself and of others simultaneously, it contemplates the totality of universal transformation. Accordingly, it encompasses all infinite ways of properly responding to any kind of conditions.

The transformation of sentient beings' existence into their universal salvation through one's achievements of ultimate and universal wisdom consists of a process that involves transformation of one's own mental activity and that of others simultaneously.⁴³ Finally, one's own personal purpose of salvation and universally that of all sentient beings are indivisible from each other. This leads to another important link stressed in Zhiyi's idea of universal salvation. Compassion (*cibei*) is as much indispensable as wisdom too.⁴⁴ Zhiyi often emphasizes that compassion lacking wisdom is no

39 There are many examples throughout the works from Zhiyi, particularly see MHZG T 46.55c, 56b-c, 21b-c.

40 Ibid.

41 See MHZG T 46.80b16-80b25.

42 See MHZG T 46.22a.

43 See MHZG T 46.80b.

44 See MHZG T 46.81a7-a28.

compassion, and wisdom lacking compassion is no wisdom.⁴⁵ When he explains the contemplation of the middle, he says that the Buddha's compassion is the universal ocean into which the rivers of all dharmas flow.⁴⁶ Viewed from Zhiyi's standpoint, the indivisibility of the two necessarily belongs into the context of universal salvation.

THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CONTEMPLATION AND THE SCHEME OF CLASSIFICATION

Based on the mode of contemplating the middle, Zhiyi speaks about the "threefold contemplation within one moment of mental activity (*yixin sanguan*)."⁴⁷ It expresses an immediate and proper responding to the needs for universal salvation during constantly changing conditions. The purpose of universal salvation permanently and ultimately remains the same, but its concrete expression has to be readjusted constantly due to the constant changing of conditions immediately.

Just for the same reason the Buddha had to preach the Buddhadharmas (*fofa*) according to different levels of doctrines, in order to adjust it to the need of the diversity of sentient beings. His teaching has to be understood in terms of a classification of doctrines, but in its ultimate purpose the Buddhadharmas is the only one vehicle of universal salvation (*yisheng jiao*), as Zhiyi quotes it from the *Lotus-sutra*. Zhiyi evaluates the sermon of the *Lotus-sutra* as the Buddha's most authentic way of preaching the Buddhadharmas and expressing its ultimate wisdom. According to his interpretation of Buddhist *sutras*, the *Lotus-sutra* preaches the unity of the ultimate purpose of all different doctrines and simultaneously pronounces the indispensability of the diversity of expedient means. Its teaching is regarded to be different from other *sutras*, because it "reveals the real by exploring the tentative" (*kaiquan xianshi, faji xianben*).⁴⁸

Accordingly, the third contemplation of the middle reveals the real truth of things by considering them as neither self-being nor non-existence, but as being both emptiness and provisional, whereas the two preceding modes are expedient means only, because of their bias to one side exclusively. But without the one sided expedient means the contemplation of the middle and the perfectly integrated threefold contemplation would be impossible. When Zhiyi says that ultimate wisdom means neither perfect nor one sided⁴⁹, he

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 See MHZG T 46.55b.

48 See FHX Y T 33.700b22-28, 713a25-28.

49 See MHZG T 46.61c.

wants to express that this wisdom is revealed in the exploration of the shortcomings marking the preceding one sided modes of contemplation.

The same structure of mutual dependence between the real and the tentative, the provisional and ultimate, the one sided and the perfect is expressed by his classification of doctrines. According to this scheme, all Buddhist doctrines can be considered from four levels, expressing four paradigms of truth: the teaching of the small vehicle (*sanjang jiao*), the common teaching of the small and great vehicle (*tongjiao*), the distinct teaching for the great vehicle (*biejiao*) and the perfect teaching (*yuanjiao*) establishing the preceding three and simultaneously transcending their shortcomings.⁵⁰ The small vehicle considers the arising and extinguishing within conditioned co-arising as real; the common teaching says that discrete entities of conditioned co-arising as such are empty and unreal, because they are compositions of impermanent conditions that in turn must be empty too. Even their arising and extinguishing is nothing but ultimate emptiness; the distinct teaching says that their non-existence is as unreal as their self-being, paradoxically ultimate emptiness is indivisible from provisional existence, it stresses the provisional in terms of the infinity of expedient means; the perfect teaching integrates all preceding three views but simultaneously transcends there one sidedness, it emphasizes the middle mutually being identical with conditioned co-arising, emptiness and the provisional.⁵¹ The perfect teaching expresses the unity and totality of the whole classification. This scheme is an extension of the threefold truth within the context of doctrinal classification, it follows the same principle of “revealing the one [perfect teaching] by exploring the three [preceding levels]” (*kaisan xianyi*).⁵² All fundamental Buddhist doctrines are viewed through this scheme of classification. From that standpoint they appear as a graduation of degrees in the achievement of practice. The doctrines of the four noble truths, the conditioned co-arising or the two truths are viewed differently from each of the four standpoints, yet expressing a graduation of degrees within one process.

This scheme matches the course of practice too. The teaching of the small vehicle and the common teaching corresponds to the “contemplation about entering emptiness from [unwholesome] provisional”; the distinct teaching corresponds to the “contemplation about entering the wholesome

50 Zhiyi's classification of doctrines occurs in all of his works. He particularly wrote one work about his scheme of classification, *The Meaning of the Four Doctrines*, *Sijiao yi* T 46, 1929; see also T 46.721a-722b, MHZG T 46.5b14-15, FHXY T 33.700c-701c

51 See MHZG T 46.55b

52 See FHXY T 33.770b-c.

provisional from emptiness”; the perfect teaching corresponds to the contemplation of the middle in terms of threefold contemplation. The subdivision of doctrinal classification stands in accordance with the graduation of contemplation, thus expressing Zhiyi’s idea of the unity of teaching and contemplation, theory and practice.

The threefold contemplation within one moment of mental activity denotes the single and concrete act of salvation comprising the virtual totality of the infinity of all expedient means. In the same way, the perfect teaching encompasses the preceding three standpoints, thus expressing the diversity and unity of the buddhadharma. Viewed from its ultimate purpose, the single and concrete act of salvation is essentially unchanging, but its manifestations are constantly changing. Its unchanging essence cannot be different from its manifestations; it is nothing but the totality of its infinite manifestations. The single and concrete act of universal salvation conducted due to the spirit of threefold contemplation could be described as the totality virtually encompassing all paths of salvation. Its realization due to the distinct conditions has always to occur in the mode of immediacy, because it never lacks any element necessary in the course of universal salvation, during its activity of responding to any kind of condition. Zhiyi calls this perfect act of universal salvation “perfect and immediate contemplation” (*yuandun guan*).

THE ABSOLUTE VALUE OF EXISTENCE

In terms of concrete practice, merits and achievements of universal wisdom mean skillfulness and virtuosity in respect to the realization of universal salvation. A person obtaining this wisdom is skilled in appropriately responding to the diverse kinds of affairs within sentient being’s life, in that concrete perception, thought, feeling, desire and acting of them are always involved. Finally, it is the skillful mastering of all the variously single moments of life, each of them experienced by each of the countless sentient beings. Originally, perception and experience of sentient beings are contaminated by ignorance, inverting non-abidingness into abidingness, real into unreal, the authentic mode into the conventional mode. Since existing things are not separate from sentient being’s perception being contaminated by ignorance, the manner in which an existing thing appears reflects the quality and degree of one’s contaminated perception. If perceived things reflect the degree and quality of one’s contaminated perception, the way to clean up this contamination becomes possible. By this way, every entity becomes an inversed indication of how to uproot the source of one’s illusions and suffering produced by fundamental ignorance.

Viewed from that standpoint, each of these moments manifests the perfect condition of universal salvation uniquely and differently in an inversed way. The single and particular moment itself is the state of universal salvation in an inversed way. Paradoxically, it thus becomes the virtual totality encompassing the infinite paths of universal salvation too. Zhiyi frequently expresses this thought by paradoxical articulation. When he comes to speak about the perfect teaching, it is always described by paradoxical identifications between *samsara* and *nirvana*, buddhanature and conditioned co-arising, wisdom and ignorance, dharmanature and ignorance etc., the middle way is the most general expression for all kinds of paradoxical identity.⁵³ The paradox between the partial singleness of one moment and the virtual totality of the infinity of all paths for sentient beings is expressed by his famous doctrine of “one moment of thought encompasses the totality of all things” (*yinian sanqian*). This doctrine firstly stresses the property of transformation within mental activity shared by all sentient beings; secondly, it includes the insight that transformation of oneself is indivisibly linked with that of others; thirdly, one moment of mental activity in its dynamic reality is dharmanature, the ground of immediate existence of all things, simultaneously, it is ignorance because of its distinctive content, thus it is the ground for the diversity of existing things.⁵⁴

As an inversion of universal salvation, each moment of existence manifests a particular way to realize universal salvation that in turn is the incarnation of the totality of all paths. This instructive component of each moment of existence makes it unique and absolutely valuable. Spoken in terms of totality this value is both indestructible and unproduced (*wuzo*), because it is originally linked with each moment of existence within the infinite course of conditioned co-arising. In contrast to impermanence, suffering, non-substance, impurity (*buchang, ku, wuwo, bujing*) marking discrete entities in the *samsaric* realm, it is marked with the virtues of *nirvana*: permanence, bliss, self and purity, although it is not beyond these discrete entities. Viewed from the perfect teaching, this absolute value of existence cannot be but paradoxically expressed.⁵⁵

The teaching (*jiao*) aims at the unobstructed, and insofar pure comprehension of the absolute value of salvation within each concrete moment of existence, perceived by sentient beings. This perception is

53 See FHX Y T 33.701b5-8.

54 See MHZG T 46.54a.

55 This thought and expression originally occurs in the *Mahaparinirvana-sutra* T 12.395b28. Zhiyi employs it in his theory of Buddhanature, see *Jingguangning xuanyi* (*The Profound Meaning of the Goldshine Sutra*) T 39.2a5-13.

supposed to be combined with the immediately proper acting and wholesome transformation caused through this comprehension. Contemplation is both the methodologically explored principle of evidence and the act of evidence within this kind of universal wisdom.

CONCLUSION

Ultimate wisdom is linked with universal salvation, because it firstly transforms unwholesome conditions into wholesome conditions, and secondly transformation of oneself is involved with transformation of others. Therefore salvation in terms of relief from suffering (*jietuo*) is also explained as the transformation of mental activity (*zhuanbian*) from ignorance into wisdom. The property of Mental activity of being both able to transform as well as being able to undergo transformation is the reason why Zhiyi makes it to the focus and main target of his teaching of universal wisdom resulting in universal relief of suffering. Contemplation of mental activity (*guanxin*) means introspection comprising all of the important aspects for the ultimate purpose of universal salvation within this teaching.

Universal salvation (*du zhongsheng*) is based on the idea of transforming others by transformation of oneself. This idea involves the concept of entelechy. We can find similar thoughts of entelechy in earlier Chinese texts of the Confucian school according to which one's own transformation based on cultivation is linked with transformation of others, thus constituting one common process of transformation. The most eminent example would be one of the initial phrases from the *Daxue*, emphasizing that social order has to be initiated by self-cultivation (*xiu shen*). The whole course from self-cultivation to peace in the world (*tianxia ping*) starts with investigation of things (*gewu*), followed by the succeeding links of knowing its utmost (*zhizhi*), trustworthiness of one's intentions (*yicheng*), straightforwardness of one's mind (*xinzheng*), self-cultivation (*xiushen*), order in one's family (*qiqia*), order in the state (*guozhu*) and as a final result peace in the world.⁵⁶ Even Confucius' ideal of humanity (*ren*), the ultimate of human virtue, encompasses a process initiated by one's filial piety (*xiao*) and resulting in social order.⁵⁷ In the *Analects* we find the phrase, "erecting oneself means erecting man" (*lijì liren*)⁵⁸, that explicitly express this idea.

Contemplation in Zhiyi's thoughts holds a position similar to the one of filial piety and self-cultivation in terms of Confucian traditions. Filial piety and self-cultivation is the initial virtue leading to general social order,

56 See *Sishu Duben Daxue*, Taipei 1999, p.2.

57 Ibid. *Lunyu*, p. 61.

58 Ibid. p. 82.

contemplation is the initial practice leading to universal salvation of sentient beings. Like in the case of practicing filial piety, the subsequent transformation initiated by contemplation is based on a certain kind of experience, which can be called as a comprehension of fundamental values. In terms of filial piety this experience consists of the comprehension of social-ethical values; in terms of contemplation it consists of a comprehension of the absolute value of existence in general. It might be no wonder that both traditions give very little room indeed to narrative interplay in the expression of their beliefs and principles.

Reports from the Centres

NANZAN INSTITUTE FOR
RELIGION & CULTURE
Nanzan University
18 Yamazato-cho, Showa-ku
Nagoya 466, Japan
tel: (81)52-832-3111
fax: (81)52-833-6157
e-mail: nirc@ic.nanzan-u.ac.jp
Director: Paul L. Swanson

RECENT EVENTS

Watanabe Manabu serves as coordinator and chair of the “Forum: Creativity in the 21st Century”, with Nobel Prize-winners Ôe Kenzaburô and Amartya Sen as invited speakers on the topic “The Independent Mind and the Reconstruction of Morality: For the Sake of Human Dignity.” Sponsored by Yomiuri Shinbun, NHK, and Nanzan University.

From 23 to 25 May, Jim Heisig attended a meeting in Barcelona sponsored by UNESCO on Mystical Traditions and Interreligious Dialogue. He prepared a paper “The Place of Mysticism in Japan’s Buddhist-Christian Dialogue.”

The 14th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for Catholic Theology was held at Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan on 23 September 2002. Jim Heisig participated in a special panel on “Dialogue with Contemporary Society” with a paper on “Fundamentalism in Dialogue.”

PUBLICATIONS:

「宗教と社会問題の〈あいだ〉——カルト問題を考える」, the proceedings of the 11th Nanzan Symposium on “Religion and social problems,” is published by Seikyusha.

The Fall issue of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* is a special topical issue on “Tracing Shinto in the History of Kami Worship.”

The Institute has inaugurated the publication of the journal of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, 「東西宗教」. The first issue (2002) contains the papers from the 2001 annual meeting of the Society.

NEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Gereon Kopf of Luther College arrived at the Nanzan Institute in September, 2002 for a two-year research project to continue his research on Nishida Kitaro.

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NCC CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF JAPANESE RELIGIONS
Karasuma-Shimodaciuri
Kamikyo-ku, Kyoto 602, Japan
tel/fax: (81)75-432-1945
studycen@mbox.kyoto-inet.or.jp
Director: Dr. Yuki Hideo
New website at
<http://www.japanese-religions.org>

RECENT EVENTS

In September we organized a seminar in English. The topic was “Christianity

in Kyoto – Continuations of History”. We visited Christian institutions in Kyoto and invited people involved in Christian education, social work, worship and aesthetics to discuss the present and future situation of Christianity. 15 participants.

In October we had a seminar in Japanese. The title was “Learning from Rennyo, the reformer of True Pure Land Buddhism”. We stayed at Nishi Honganji Yamashina Betsuin temple, and had thoughtful lectures on the methods Rennyo used back in 1450s to rejuvenate and organize a lay-Buddhist movement that eventually became and still is the biggest Buddhist group in Japan. 25 participants.

Lectures by professor in New Testament Yagi Seiichi, Tokyo. Professor Yagi aims at developing a formal description of Christian and Buddhist teachings that will facilitate further dialogue among them. He was invited as part of the inauguration of the ISJP, see below, and gave a lecture in German for the students, and one in Japanese for the public.

ONGOING PROGRAMS OR EVENTS

Interreligious Studies in Japan Program (ISJP) was inaugurated on November 8. At the request of the Evangelisches Missionswerk in Southwest Germany (EMS), Martin Repp has been preparing this new program since spring, and two students enrolled for the autumn term. The idea is, briefly speaking, that theological students and future teachers of religion in Europe will benefit from the Japanese Christians

experience in a multi-religious situation. ISJP is organized as a balanced mixture of formal education by specialists in Shinto, New Religions, Christianity, various Buddhist sects, and first hand experience through fieldtrips. Part of the program is organized together with Tomisaka Christian Center in Tokyo. Because the teachers are from well-established universities the aim is to have European universities to credit grades obtained here.

We anticipate more students in the future. Those who are with us now, a Korean Protestant and a German Catholic are happy with the program.

The “Manga and Religion” study group meets regularly, and is preparing some of the presentations for publication in Japanese.

The study group on “Ancestor Worship – Funeral and Memorial Service” has a long history, and is now preparing a book of contributions.

The NCC Center has been instrumental in starting a group which aims at establishing a exhibition and resource center on Christianity and Christian Culture in Kyoto. Kyoto is renowned as a city of religion and history, yet Christianity is almost absent from any ordinary presentation of or tour in the city. Since the first church was established here over four hundred years ago, we think the gap needs to be filled.

PUBLICATIONS

Our journal *Japanese Religions* vol. 27 no. 2 (July 2002) has four articles that mirrors the religious situation of Japan

in the late 1800s. One is concerned with Bible translation, one describes the early missionaries contempt for the local culture, one portrays a Shingon Buddhist monk's encounter with the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago 1893, while the last reveals a secretive group within the True Pure Land Buddhism.

The forthcoming issue of *JR* will focus on religion and (popular) culture.

NEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS

On December 1, a friend of the NCC Center, professor Schau-wecker, will lead a performance of "*Titus Ukondonus* – a late baroque drama on early Japanese Christianity in Kyoto area". It as a play written in Europe and performed in the 1770s in European monasteries. Now, for the first time in 230 years and for the first time ever in Japan will it be performed here.

Thanks to a grant for studying for pastors in Norway, we regularly can welcome visiting researchers from that country. Between September and December, a pastor Skutlaberg, former missionary in Japan, has researched on Biblical Education in Japanese Protestant churches. He finds that post-baptism education is weak, and accounts partly for lacking commitment among lay members. His research also shows a much variety in quality and effort the individual church bodies put into their Biblical education. He also finds reasons for missionaries, mission organizations, and local churches to reconsider their work in this respect.

Among other guests we have seen Hans Martin Barth (Germany), Roald

Kristensen (Norway) and Yagi Seiichi (Tokyo).

Obituary: Professor Take Kuniyasu, Associate Director of the NCC Center for many years died in July, at the age of 68. He was a dedicated scholar at Doshisha Women's College and a very active pastor in the United Church of Christ. His field of speciality was the sociology of religion. He also worked as editor of *Kirisuto Shimbun*, a Christian weekly, and was actively involved in many other areas. We miss him.

§ § §

INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN CULTURE/ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

Sophia University, 7 Kioi-cho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan

Tel: 81-3-3238-3190

Fax: 81-3-3238-4145

Director: Koji Matsuoka S.J.

EVENTS

From June 6th to 7th 2002, the director Koji Matsuoka S.J. attended at the Liaison Conference of the Institute of Christian Culture in Japan Catholic Universities, which was held at Kyoto Notre Dame University.

Now he is also the chairman of this conference (until June 2003).

On Oct.12, Matsuoka attended at EGSID meeting at Oriens Institute for Religious Research in Tokyo.

OPEN LECTURE SERIES

The Main Theme will be “Spatiotemporal Order between Secularism and Clericalism and Cosmology; Sacred Places (Holy Ground, Hallowed Ground and Pilgrimage)” Date: June 29th and 30th, 2002

Speaker and Theme:

“Wasteland and Monastic Life, Pilgrimage”—Bun’ichi Asakura / Professor of Notre Dame Seishin University

“What ‘Saint’ M. Garndy was Aiming at”—Keiichi Miyamoto / Professor of Kokugakuin University

“Temples at Mountains and Cosmology of Heart”—Kokan Fujita / Professor of Koya-san University

“Thought of Paradise and the Holy Ground, Jerusalem”—Shun’ichi Takayanagi / Honorary Professor of Sophia University

“Pilgrimage: Religion in Travel ” —Toshikazu Shin’no / Professor of Tsukuba University

OPEN LECTURE

Date: Nov. 11th, 2002

Theme: “Contemporary Literary Approaches to the Bible”

Speaker: Harold W. Attridge / Professor of Yale University Divinity School

THE BIBLE SEMINAR

Main Theme:

“This will be written down for the future generations (Psalms102:19); The World of the Minor Prophets and the Letters of John and Peter”

Date: Nov.16th, 17th, 2002

Speaker and Theme:

“As The Legend of Suffering, Crying and Hope”: Bishop Kazuhiro Mori

“Amos and Hosea; The Prophets in the Kingdom of North Israel” : Fr. Saizo Okazaki SVD / Professor of Nanzan University

“About the First Letter of Peter”: Fr. Ken Egawa SVD / Professor of Nanzan University

“About the Letter of John”: Fr. Minoru Kobayashi S.J. / Professor of Sophia University

“Jonah; The Prophet in the form of the Narrative”: Fr. Shun’ichi Takayanagi S.J. / Honorary Professor of Sophia University

PUBLICATIONS

The Monographs: *The Old Testament in The New Testament*, 2002, Lithon, Tokyo.

INTERRELIGIO SYMPOSIUM 2003

(NAGOYA, JAPAN)

Religion and Popular Culture in East Asia Today.

The interplay of religion and culture, a perennial subject in the study of religion, is attracting increasing attention today as we become more aware of the consequences of globalization and the new expressions of religiosity that it has helped to encourage. Popular culture more and

more reflects influences from all over the globe, enhancing both religious pluralism and syncretic borrowing from various religious traditions, contributing to the formation of a religious open market and the fabrication of new religious expressions, the revival of older, native religious forms, or the virtualization of religion in cyberspace. Contemporary cultural studies have also highlighted indications of an implicit religion, evidence that the religious impulse will find new expressions as institutional forms of religion continue to decline in many cultural areas. Indeed, apathy towards traditional religious forms is often accompanied by a search on the part of many for new religious expressions, mediated by popular culture. The symposium will seek to explore these trends in East Asia, as well as to provide some indications of what they mean for interreligious dialogue in the region.

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CHRISTIAN STUDY CENTRE ON
CHRISTIAN RELIGION & CULTURE

G/F Theology Building

Chung Chi College

Sha Tin, New Territories

Hong Kong

tel: (856)2770-3310

fax: (856)2782-6869

e-mail: cscrc@yahoo.com.hk

Hon. Director: Prof. Lo Lung-kwok

Assoc. Director: Dr. Chow Wai-yin

STAFF NEWS

In January 2003, Prof. Lo Lung-kwok will take up the position of honorary

director of the Centre. He is the Division Head of Theology Division, Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Prof. Lai Chi-tim is still one of the board members of the Centre.

PUBLICATIONS

Year 2002 was a year of harvest for the Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture (CSCCRC). Our colleagues are happy to have completed and published of several research projects on Chinese Christianity, Chinese Religions and Culture, and Inter-religious Dialogue between Christianity and Asian Religions during the year. Now available from the Centre is *Interpretations of Hope in Chinese Religions and Christianity*, edited by Daniel Overmyer and Chi-tim Lai. This book is the fruit of an outstanding study by group of Asian and Western scholars on the notion of "hope" in Chinese Religions, namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, as well as in Christianity. It aims at setting a platform for the dialogue between Chinese and Western Religions, and widening the reader's horizon to understand the human quest of hope from different historical, and cultural perspectives. Those who are interested, please send a e-mail to us to purchase.

Ching Feng 2001 and 2002 will be published in December 2002. *Ching Feng* 2001 is a special issue on Christian-Confucian Dialogue about the issue of "Life Ethics."

The theme issue of *Ching Feng* 2003 will be on **Religions and Identity**.

Contributors can send their paper to Executive Editor, Ching Feng, G/F., Theology Building, Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong Kong, by 30 April 2003.

§ § §

TAIPEI RICCI INSTITUTE

Hsin-hai Road, Section 1, No. 22, 3 Fl

Taipei 100 Taiwan, roc

tel: (886)2-368-99-68

fax: (886)2-365-45-08

e-mail: riccitpe@tpts4.secd.net.tw

Director: Rev. B. Vermander S.J.

The Taipei Ricci Institute is presently preparing the launch of a Chinese monthly of culture, social concerns and theology, which should start publication in 2004. Further details in next issue!

The Institute has recently published two new volumes in its “Varietes Sinologiques-New Series” Collection : Claire Shen, “L’encre et l’ecran” (in French), on Chinese cinema aesthetics.

Frederic Weingartner, “Diacritics in Early Tayal Manuals”, a study of Tayal language and its teaching material, the Tayals being one of the aboriginal groups of Taiwan.

Benoit Vermander has published a book on Chinese religions today, “Les mandariniens de la riviere Huai” (in French, available at www.descledebroauer.com)

FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS
CONFERENCES-OFFICE OF
ECUMENICAL AND
INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
(FABC-OEIA)

122/6-7 Soi Naaksuwan

10120, Thailand

tel: (662)681-5421

fax: (662)681-5422

Executive & Interreligious Secretary:

Br. Edmund Chia, fsc

e-mail: edchia@pc.jaring.my

NEWS

The CCA-FABC Second Joint Ecumenical Formation (JEF II) was held from 2 - 13 September 2002 at Hualien, Taiwan. The program not only provided an opportunity for the FABC to collaborate with the Christian Conference of Asia but also marked a new way of how ecumenical formation ought to be done. Specifically, the thrust that ecumenical formation should be done ecumenically was central to the decision to run the JEF series. Coming from 15 countries, the participants of JEF II were sent on a two-day exposure program upon their arrival in Taiwan so as to experience first-hand the contextual realities of the country. With this common experience the participants then spent two days at analyzing the contextual realities. Subsequently, they engaged in theological reflections and realized that “just as we, in twenty-first century Asia, experience situations of injustice and discrimination, so Jesus of Nazareth, who lived in first century Palestine, was also a witness to similar situations of dehumanization.”

It was only after the participants had

placed the JEF II within the context and realities of Asia that they began to explore the issue of inter-Church relationships. This showed that ecumenism has, as its foundation, the joys and sorrows of the peoples of our lands. They drew inspiration from the renewal currents of the Church, which found their contextual expressions in the Christian Conference of Asia and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Specifically, they were inspired by the theology of communion, which invites us to be accepting of unity in diversity.

Likewise, they were challenged to discover new forms of partnership so that our Christian witness can respond more meaningfully to Jesus' prayer "that they may be one" (Jn. 17: 11).

INTER-RELIGIO, a Network of Christian Organizations for Inter-religious Encounter in East Asia, publishes its bulletin twice annually, in summer and winter, and will send it free of charge upon request. A donation to cover the cost of printing and mailing two issues per year (US\$10) would be greatly appreciated.

Please address inquiries regarding the bulletin to:

*Inter-Religio Editor
TAIPEI RICCI INSTITUTE
Hsin-hai Road, Section 1, No. 22, 3 Fl
Taipei 100 Taiwan, R.O.C.
tel: (886)2-368-99-68 fax: (886)2-365-45-08
e-mail: riccitpe@seed.net.tw*

All other inquiries concerning the Inter-Religio Network, membership etc. should be addressed to the secretariat at:

*Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture
Nanzan University
18 Yamazato-cho, Showa-ku
Nagoya 466, Japan
tel: (81)52-832-3111 fax:(81)52-833-6157
e-mail: nirc@ic.nanzan-u.ac.jp*

INTER-RELIGIO Home Page:

<http://www.riccibase.com/index-ir.htm>

Back-issues are available for download in PDF format from the above links, or on CDROM from the Editor: