

Chinese Philosophy's Hybrid Identity

John Makeham, La Trobe University

From medieval times onward, Chinese philosophy—both Sinitic Buddhist and Neo-Confucian—has been fundamentally shaped by ideas and constructs derived from Indian Buddhism. Nodal developments in Chinese philosophy from the Six Dynasties through to the Song dynasty and beyond have drawn on these constructs for inspiration and renewal, even as these constructs became naturalized/Sinicized/Sinified and their Indian “genetic markers” became effaced (but not erased) over time.

This legacy has provided Chinese philosophy (and indeed East Asian philosophy) with a wealth of sophisticated ideas about such fundamental metaphysical topics as identity and difference, constancy and change, transcendence and immanence, one and many, and monism and dualism. More often than not, their real value as comparative philosophical resources, lies in the particular sets of assumptions that lie behind them.¹ This paper is a modest attempt to describe one of these topics: how the *ti-yong* paradigm was used to convey the concept of immanent transcendence. The paper further seeks to problematize the identity of “Chinese” philosophy, arguing that key elements of mainstream Chinese philosophical discourse have long been hybrid in their intellectual constitution. In doing so, this paper implicitly questions the still prevalent assumption that Chinese philosophy is a hermetically sealed tradition or set of traditions that can be understood and adjudicated only by reference to its own “internal” norms and premises. It will become increasingly necessary to acknowledge and, indeed, to celebrate and to enhance the hybrid qualities of Chinese philosophy, and its rich legacies, if Chinese philosophy is to thrive in a rapidly globalizing world.

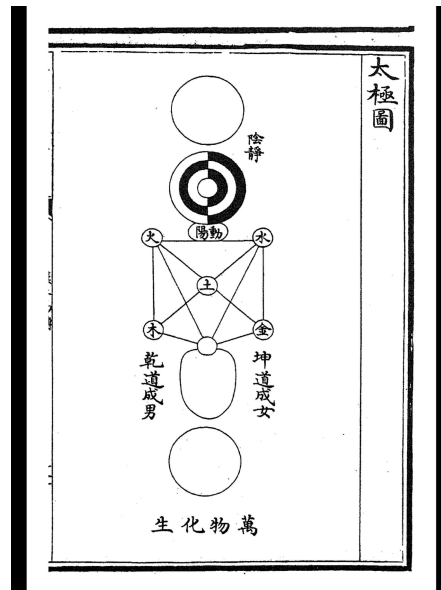
The first part of this paper describes a key conceptual structure that I argue is common to the writings of the twelfth-century Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and to a sixth-century Sinitic Buddhist text, the *Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論). I propose that this shared conceptual structure bears the hallmarks of a common descent lineage. I further propose that the shared conceptual structure is a homology. Unlike analogous structures, which are functionally similar but share no common ancestral character, homologous structures are modified descendants of a common ancestor. The second part of this paper seeks to identify their common ancestor. In the *Awakening of*


Faith, the genetic signature of this ancestor featured centrally in the development of Sinitic Buddhist philosophy over the course of the Tang and Northern Song periods, and subsequently became reinscribed by Zhu Xi to become a defining feature of his metaphysics. I argue that this ancestor can be traced to developments in Southern Chinese Buddhist circles during the latter half of the fifth century. This ancestor is very much a hybrid, a unique product of the fecund engagement with Buddhist constructs derived from both the Indian and Chinese traditions. Its Sinified or Sinicized aspect is the *ti-yong* 體用 polarity; its Indianized aspect is the appropriation of the *ti-yong* polarity to serve as a vehicle to express the idea of immanent transcendence, with specific reference to the unconditioned and the conditioned. I also identify what I believe is the central philosophical problem that this hybrid structure was devised to address.

I will first identify and describe the core conceptual structure of Zhu's metaphysics: the relation between Taiji 太極, *li* 理 and *qi* 氣. This will provide the basis for comparison with the One Mind Two Gateways model of the *Awakening Faith* in 1.2.

1.1 Taiji, *li* and *qi*

Zhu articulated his conception of the *li-qi* relationship by drawing on Zhou Dunyi's 周敦頤 (1017-1073) Supreme Axis Diagram (Taiji tu 太極圖) and its accompanying essay "Essay on the Supreme Axis" (Taiji shuo 太極說). Whereas Zhou Dunyi presents the Diagram as a process of cosmogenesis, Zhu explicitly denied this, instead understanding the Diagram to represent an ontology that grounded the nature or human nature in principle/pattern.



Taiji (Supreme Axis) on the upper level is represented by . It is beyond characterization, hence the blank circle. Taiji is the basis of all phenomenal reality. Taiji is principle (*li* 理), is intrinsic reality (*benti* 本體). Zhu characterizes Taiji or principle as being above form, in contrast to that which has phenomenal form (*qi* 氣, *yin yang* 陰陽, *qi* 器).³ Despite this clear-cut distinction, Zhu both underscores the inseparability of what is above form and what is within form, even though Taiji is not in any way “intermixed” with *yin* and *yang*:

Although [Taiji] is the intrinsic reality by means of which there is *yang* in movement and *yin* in stillness, it is not possible for it to be separate from *yin* and *yang*. It is precisely in *yin* and *yang* that their intrinsic reality is pointed to. That is to say, intrinsic reality is not intermixed with *yin* and *yang*.

所以動而陽、靜而陰之本體，然非有以離乎陰陽也。即陰陽而指其本體。不雜乎陰陽而為言耳。⁴

The second level of the diagram represents the interfusion of *li* and *qi*. The dynamism of activity and stillness represents the phenomenal world:

Master Zhou referred to [Taiji (Supreme Axis)] as “Wuji 無極” (Ultimateless) precisely because it has no location or shape. [Taiji] is taken to come before there were things, and yet it is not established after things [already exist]. Although it is taken to exist beyond *yin* and *yang*, it has always operated within *yin* and *yang*. Although it is taken to interconnect with the whole [of phenomenal existence] and to exist everywhere, it is devoid of any sound, scent, shadow or echo that can be spoken of.

周子所以謂之無極，正以其無方所，無形狀。以為在無物之前，而未嘗不立于有物之後，以為在陰陽之外，而未嘗不行乎陰陽之中。以為通貫全體，無乎不在，則又初無聲臭影響之可言也。⁵

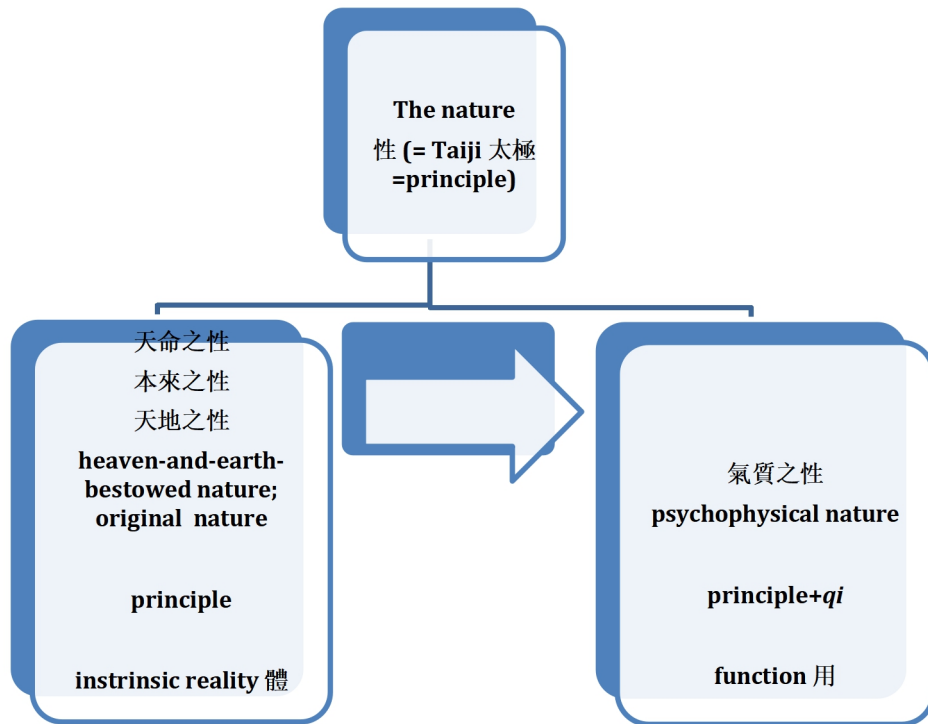
Although Taiji is transcendent, simultaneously it inheres in phenomenal reality.

Elsewhere, Zhu comments on this relationship in terms of the *ti-yong* 體用 dyad. *Ti* 體 means intrinsic reality—the constitutive identity of something. *Yong* 用 or function refers to the activity or functioning of that intrinsic reality. *Ti* or intrinsic reality does not exist without function—even if a particular function is yet to be activated—otherwise it would not be intrinsic reality. Although Taiji is transcendent, simultaneously it inheres in phenomenal reality. Taiji in its transcendent aspect is always already imbued with the principle (*li*) of all phenomena, even before any particular phenomenon yet exists. Conversely, any determinate phenomenon exists by virtue of being endowed with principle. This is *li* or Taiji in its immanent aspect

Moreover, principle/Taiji is simultaneously transcendent and immanent. Let’s call this immanent transcendence. Immanent transcendence is a realist metaphysical view (i.e. not a nominalism). It describes how, on the one hand, the referent wholly lies within the boundaries of a specifiable domain yet, on the other hand, it simultaneously extends beyond the boundaries of that domain.⁶ Viewed from its transcendent aspect, *li* is intrinsic reality and its expression in phenomena is its functioning. Crucially, intrinsic reality does not exist without function—even if a particular function is yet to be activated—otherwise it would not be intrinsic reality. Conversely, any determinate phenomenon exists only by virtue of being endowed with *li*. This is *li* in its immanent aspect. The immanent and the transcendent aspects are two poles of a single whole. *Li* provides the ontological ground for *qi* qua phenomena to exist; *qi* provides the phenomenological ground for principle to be experienced, realized.

The nature

The relationship between *li*/principle and *qi*/phenomena was not only central to Zhu Xi's polar-monist ontology—it was also central to his account of the nature (*xing* 性). Like Taiji, the nature is both transcendent and immanent. (Indeed, *xing* in its transcendent aspect is identical with Taiji in its transcendent aspect.) As with Cheng Yi and Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077) before him, Zhu distinguished the psychophysical nature (*qizhi zhi xing* 氣質之性) and the “heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature” (*tiandi zhi xing* 天地之性). Whereas Zhang Zai and Cheng Yi used the distinction to demarcate two different kinds of nature, Zhu used the distinction to refer to the same nature in two different modes. The “heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature” is pure principle, and the “psychophysical nature” is principle as it is manifest in and through *qi*. This distinction represents the nature in its fundamental aspect and in its manifest aspect.



What is the relation between *li* and the nature? Before being endowed in individual humans, the nature is nothing but *li*. Unified *li* (= Taiji) always already includes all differentiated principles and so we can talk about principle without having to refer to any particular principle. As soon as we speak of humans, however, the nature is necessarily a conjoining of *li* and *qi*. The nature consists of *li*, ordained by heaven. The nature also consists of an endowment of *qi*. Importantly, it is in the very conjoining of *li* and *qi* as human nature, in the field of form, that the conditions making badness possible are able to arise.

These conditions concern the purity or impurity of *qi* and the extent to which impure or turbid *qi* covers over and obscures one's capacity to discern the *li* inherent in one's nature. If one is endowed with pure and clear *qi*, then these *li* will readily be manifested as one's nature; if the defilements of turbid *qi* (濁氣) are intense, however, *li* become obscured, providing the conditions for selfish desires to predominate and badness to arise. As for our *qi*-endowment, it is a function of natural and cosmic processes beyond our control. It is a simply a given.

The mind

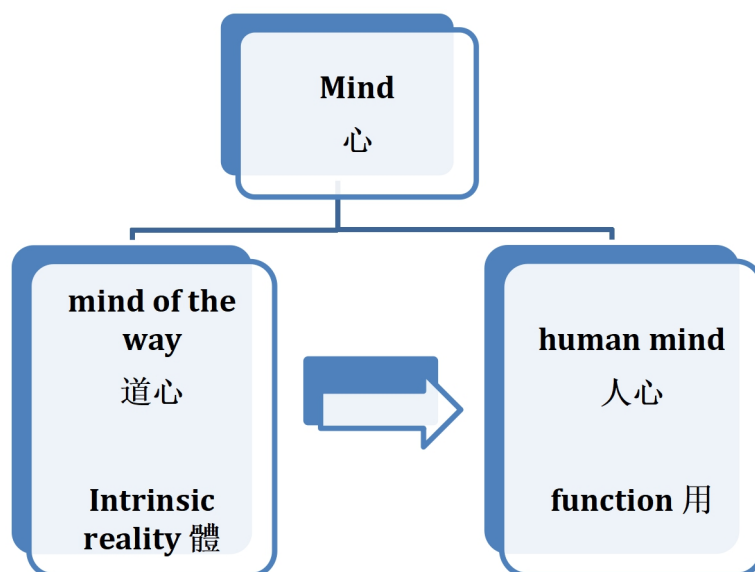
For Zhu Xi, the mind is the seat of cognitive activity and of our capacity for moral decision-making, enabling us to discern the *li* inherent in our nature, as well as those in the world in which we live and in the cosmos more generally.

The mind is one. If it is held fast and preserved then the normative principles will be evident and this is called the mind of the way. If it is let hold of and lost then the desire for things will be unbridled and this is called the mind of humans.

心一也。操而存, 則義理明而謂之道心; 舍而亡, 則物欲肆而謂之人心。⁷

The crucial issue determining the “mind of heaven”- “mind of humans” distinction is whether our cognitive choices are impacted by selfish desires. Badness arises due to the constitution of the psychophysical nature, in which *qi* obscures *li*. It is a consequence of indulging selfish desires. Our proclivity to do so is directly affected by the extent to which turbid *qi* obscures awareness of the normative principles inherent in our nature. Badness does not arise from the heavenly endowed nature. Badness is not generated by Taiji or *li*.

It is, however, the mind, in particular, that determines whether badness is realized and the extent to which it is realized, through awareness of that with which we are innately endowed. It becomes real when the “mind of the way” is ignored and the “mind of humans” is given free rein. There is only one mind but it has two aspects: being aware of this mind or not being aware of it. The mind of the way is replete with the myriad *li*, which are immediately accessible through their endowment in our human nature. The human mind, by contrast, is the failure to be aware of these *li*. The relationship between the mind of the way and the human mind is a *ti-yong* relationship. This is because it is only through dealing with the human mind, controlling the human mind, ensuring that it does not succumb to selfish desires, that the mind of the way is encountered.



1.2 The primary model of the *Awakening of Faith*

As a system of thought that blossomed in China between the fifth and seventh centuries, the Tathāgatagarbha tradition within Mahāyāna Buddhism is particularly associated with a cluster of texts in which the *tathāgatagarbha* (如來藏) doctrine is central. *Tathāgatagarbha* means the womb of a buddha.⁸ The *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine is the idea that buddha-nature exists within all sentient beings but is concealed due to ignorance.

One of the texts in this tradition is the *Awakening of Faith*. It purports to be a translation of an Indian text but the weight of modern scholarly opinion is that it is a work of Chinese not Indian provenance. Dating from sixth-century China, its doctrines give expression to traditional Chinese metaphysics and cosmology, as well as to a wealth of ideas imported from India and interpreted through the perspective of Chinese understandings of the world. Conceptual paradigms derived from the *Awakening of Faith* became a shared resource for East Asian philosophers and religious theorists over the course of centuries.

The *Awakening of Faith* presents the mind or the One Mind as the ultimate source of reality. The One Mind has two modes or aspects, which the text calls gateways, and these contain all dharmas, conditioned (existence that is subject to determination by the laws of cause and effect) and unconditioned. The gateway of the mind as suchness⁹ (心真如門) is the true mind—unchanging, eternal, and pure. It is identified as the *tathāgatabarbha*, the womb of the buddhas, or buddha-nature. The gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing (心生滅門) is cyclic existence (*samsāra*) in which the mind's propensity to awaken struggles against the mental and physical behaviors that arise from the mind's defilement by ignorance. It is identified with the eighth or storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*; 阿賴耶識).¹⁰ Both the

mind of suchness and the mind of cyclic existence are ultimately the One Mind but, because ignorance obscures realization of the One Mind, deluded beings create false perceptions and so become mired in suffering. The mind of arising and ceasing then generates misguided perceptual distinctions, which in turn provide new conditions for the ongoing defilement of the mind and for the suffering caused by taking the wrong sorts of actions.

Yet even though suchness somehow comes to be habituated (熏習) by ignorance, the *Awakening of Faith* explains that this is really suchness adapting to phenomenal conditions (隨緣) and, in fact, suchness only appears to be habituated. The famous analogy of the wind and the ocean is used to explain this. Even though the wind stirs up the phenomenal appearance of waves and motion, the wet nature of the ocean is not affected and does not change, whether the wind blows or does not blow:

This is because [the inherently awakened nature of mind] is like the water of the ocean, which is moved in waves by wind. The characteristics of water and the characteristics of wind are not separate from one another. It is not in the nature of water to move; and if the wind stops the characteristic of motion ceases, but the wetness is not destroyed.

如大海水因風波動，水相風相不相捨離，而水非動性，若風止滅動相則滅，濕性不壞故。¹¹

In the centuries that followed, commentators presented this central idea of suchness adapting to, according with conditions (ignorance, phenomenal reality), in terms of *li* 理 and *shi* 事 (phenomena), the forerunner of Zhu Xi's *li* and *qi*. From the Tang to the Northern Song, discussions of *li* and *shi*, in both Tiantai and Huayan, evidence a sustained fascination with the problem of how the unconditioned inheres in the conditioned. Elsewhere, I have traced key contours in this discourse in some detail and will not rehearse my findings here.¹²

Just as the One Mind has two aspects or gateways, so too, the gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing—the *ālayavijñāna*—has two aspects: awakening and non-awakening:

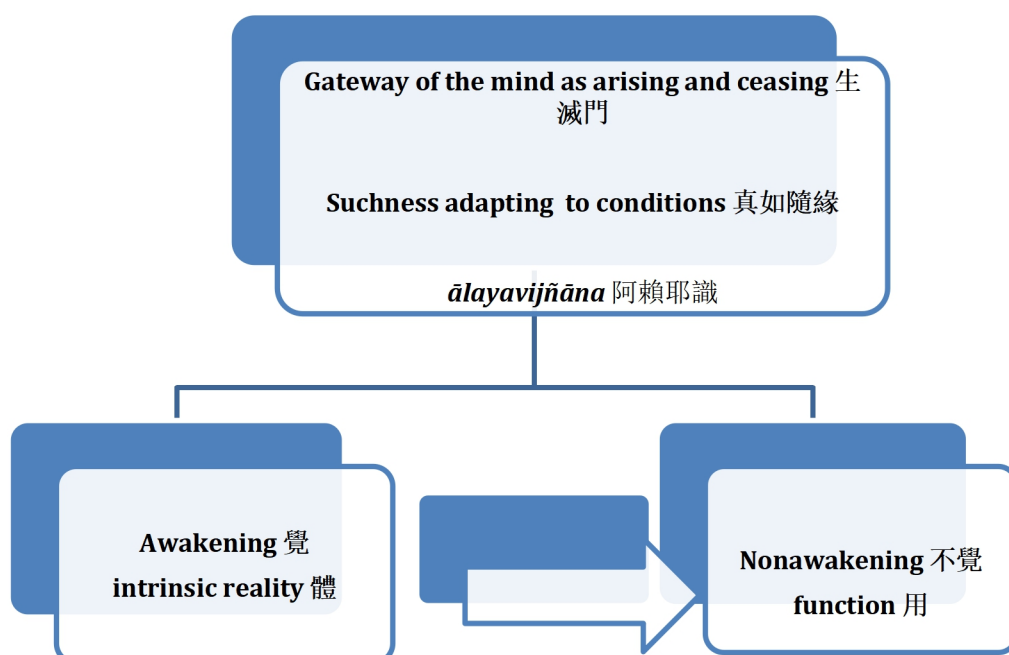
Non-arising and non-ceasing combine with arising and ceasing: they are neither the same nor different. This is called “*ālaya* consciousness.” As the collector and producer of all dharmas, this consciousness has two senses. What are they? The first is awakening. The second is non-awakening. “Awakening” means that the mind itself

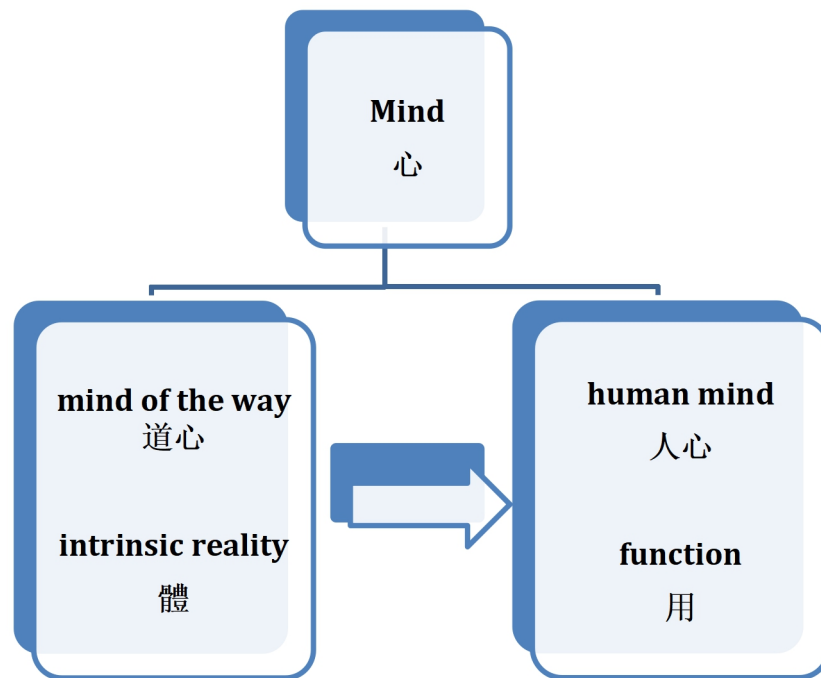
is free from [erroneous] thoughts. The characteristic of being free from [erroneous] thoughts is identical to the realm of space: it is all-pervading.

所謂不生不滅與生滅和合，非一非異，名為阿梨耶識。此識有二種義，能攝一切法、生一切法。云何為二？一者、覺義，二者、不覺義。所言覺義者，謂心體離念。離念相者，等虛空界無所不遍。¹³

The intrinsic reality of the mind is suchness (*tathātā*)—reality as it is without any conceptual overlay. Only ignorance prevents us from realizing the intrinsic reality of the mind. The distinction between awakening and non-awakening is a replication of the core thesis that the unconditioned—intrinsic reality, suchness—is connected with the conditioned yet simultaneously also extends beyond the conditioned. This seemingly paradoxical formula is used to convey the idea of immanent transcendence.

Zhu’s “mind of the way” - “mind of humans” distinction and the *Awakening of Faith*’s “awakening mind” - “nonawakening mind” distinction are isomorphic. For Zhu Xi, the mind is a cognitive capacity that enables us to discern the nature. There is only one mind but it has two aspects: being aware of this mind or not being aware of it. The mind of the way is replete with the myriad principles, which are immediately accessible through their endowment in our human nature. The human mind, by contrast, is the failure to be aware of this.





As described above, Zhu Xi characterized the relationship between *li* (or Taiji) and *qi* (or *yin* and *yang*) in terms of the *ti-yong* polarity. *Ti* and *yong* also feature centrally in the *Awakening of Faith*:

In general terms, there are two aspects of Mahāyāna. What are they? The first is “dharma.”¹⁴ The second is the meanings. “Dharma” refers to the mind of sentient beings. This mind thus includes all mundane and supramundane dharmas. The meaning of Mahāyāna is revealed through this mind. Why? Because the suchness aspect of this mind directly reveals the intrinsic reality (*ti*) of Mahāyāna; and because the arising and ceasing aspect of this mind [responding to] causes and conditions reveals Mahāyāna’s own intrinsic reality (*zi ti*), characteristics (*xiang*), and function (*yong*).

摩訶衍者，總說有二種。云何為二？一者、法，二者、義。所言法者，謂眾生心，是心則攝一切世間法、出世間法。依於此心顯示摩訶衍義。何以故？是心真如相，即示摩訶衍體故；是心生滅因緣相，能示摩訶衍自體相用故。¹⁵

This anticipates the two aspects or gateways of the One Mind that feature later in the text: the aspect of the mind of suchness; and the aspect of the mind of arising and ceasing. The first aspect concerns intrinsic reality (*ti*) as supramundane dharma; the second aspect concerns intrinsic reality and function (*yong*) as mundane dharma. In its aspect as the mind of suchness, the intrinsic reality of the mind of sentient beings is realized. This intrinsic reality, also known as the One Mind, is the focus of Mahāyāna as a teaching. The aspect of the mind of arising and ceasing is nothing other than the second aspect of the One Mind, the mind of sentient beings. In this aspect, One Mind conjoins with phenomena. One Mind is intrinsic reality, is suchness. When suchness adapts to and accords with phenomenal reality, the functioning of One Mind is revealed.

Although the above passage distinguishes between *ti* 體, *xiang* 相 and *yong* 用, characteristics (*xiang*) and function (*yong*) both occupy a similar position in what remains essentially a polarity of unconditioned awareness and conditioned ignorance, with *xiang* and *yong* associated with the mind of arising and ceasing, and *ti* adapting to causes and conditions even as it simultaneously extends beyond to provide the ontological ground for phenomenal arising and ceasing. *Xiang* is analogous to the waves on the surface of the ocean; *yong* to their movement, stirred up by the wind; and *ti* to the unchanging wetness of the ocean.

1.3 A Common Conceptual Structure: Analogy or Homology?

On the basis of above analysis, it can be concluded that Zhu Xi's account of the relationship between “*li* and *qi*” and the *Awakening of Faith*'s account of the relationship between “the gateway of the mind as suchness, and the gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing” share a common conceptual structure. In both cases, the unconditioned (suchness, *tathāgatabarbha*, Taiji, principle, the “heaven-and-earth-bestowed nature” [天地之性], mind of the way) is somehow able to conjoin with the conditioned (the *ālayavijñāna*, *qi*, the psychophysical nature [氣質之性], mind of humans) yet simultaneously also extend beyond the conditioned; and the relation between the unconditioned and the conditioned is expressed in terms of the *ti-yong* polarity. I would further argue that the real significance of the intriguing isomorphism between Zhu's “mind of the way—mind of humans” distinction, and the *Awakening of Faith*'s “awakening mind—nonawakening mind” distinction, is that it replicates the common conceptual structure described in the previous sentence. This replication diminishes the possibility that this isomorphism is merely contingent.

Without an identifiable common ancestor, however, we have no homology. This, in itself, would not diminish the isomorphic fit between the conceptual structures I have identified in Zhu Xi's metaphysics and in the *Awakening of Faith's* One Mind Two Gateways model; nor would it undermine the hypothesis that Zhu's structure is in a descent lineage that can be traced to the structure in the *Awakening of Faith*. If, however, the two did share a common ancestor, then this might enable us to identify more precisely a core philosophical problem that the structures are addressing. To this end, the second half of this essay seeks to identify such an ancestor.

2. Down the Rabbit Hole: Searching for a Common Ancestor

2.1 Li Ao and Liang Shu

Whereas Mencius' theory of the virtues rests on a development model, Zhu Xi advanced a disclosure or recovery model in which the cardinal virtues have been transformed into principles innate in the nature. Antecedents of this model can be found in Li Ao's 李翱 (772-841) essay, *Fuxing shu* 復性書 (Returning to the Nature). In his discussion of the term *fuxing* 復性 (and the related term *fanxing* 反性), Tim Barrett describes it as "a process of spiritual or mental self-discipline aimed at the recovery or realization of an innate state of perfection."¹⁶ He emphasizes that the idea of *fanxing* 反性 is explicitly found only in texts of Daoist inspiration and is connected with currents in Tang Daoist and (to a lesser extent) Buddhist thought.¹⁷

My own sense is that Barrett may have underestimated the significance of the Buddhist connections. As he notes, Li Ao was familiar with Liang Su's 梁肅 (753-793) *Zhiguan tongli* 止觀統例 (Calming and Contemplation Guidelines; c. 857), a work on Tiantai meditation practice.¹⁸ Of particular relevance is the following passage from that work:

What is calming and contemplation [*śamatha-vipaśyanā*]? It is to guide the principle of the myriad transformations such that one returns (復) to the ultimate realm (實際). What is the ultimate realm? The root of the nature (性). The reason things cannot return is due to benightedness (昏) and movement (動). That which illuminates benightedness is called clarity (明). That which stops movement is

called stillness (靜). Clarity and stillness are the intrinsic reality of calming and contemplation.

夫止觀何為也。導萬化之理而復於實際者也。實際者何也。性之本也。物之所以不能復者。昏與動使之然也。照昏者謂之明。駐動者謂之靜。明與靜止觀之體也。¹⁹

There is ground for suspecting that this passage was, in part at least, an elaboration of views Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (r. 502-549) had expressed in his “Rhapsody on Pure Activities” (Jingye fu 淨業賦). In this poetic exposition, Emperor Wu cites the following lines from the “Yueji 樂記” chapter of *Liji* and then comments on the cited passage:

The [*Book of*] *Rites* says, “When people are born they are still—this is their nature [as ordained] by heaven. In response to things there is movement—these are the nature’s desires.” When there is movement then the mind becomes defiled. When there is stillness then the mind becomes pure. When movement outside has ceased then the mind within also becomes clear. When self-awakening begins then impediments have nowhere whence to arise....If one cultivates oneself, removed from desiring and detesting, then there will be no hindrances to the mind. When impediments are removed, hindrances are also cleansed [from the mind]. It is like water in which [sand] has long settled, like a newly polished mirror.... Adventitious defilements having been removed, one returns to self-nature.

《禮》云：「人生而靜，天之性也；感物而動，性之欲也。」有動則心垢，有靜則心淨。外動既止，內心亦明。始自覺悟，患累無所由生也。... 離欲惡而自修，故無障於精神。患累已除，障礙亦淨，如久澄水，如新磨鏡。... 既除客塵，反還自性。²⁰

Although the polished mirror and clear water metaphors have antecedents in early Chinese sources such as *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi*, *Huainanzi*²¹ they were deployed as metaphors for the mind. Emperor Wu’s “Rhapsody on Pure Activities” continues to employ these as metaphors for the mind, but additionally introduces the distinctly Buddhist idea of returning to the nature by removing adventitious defilements (客塵; *āgantukakleśa*).²² The idea here is that of returning to the intrinsic nature of the mind.

Thus whereas earlier, pre-Buddhist Chinese uses of the metaphors of water and mirror being obscured by turbidity and dust were used to convey the idea of the mind's being impeded in its ability to perceive the world as it really is, as Paul Demiéville noted seventy years ago, this is never "spoken of as man encountering within himself a purity properly 'spiritual,' an interior absolute."²³ With the introduction of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine into China, the paradigm was decisively changed.

2.2 Disclosure vs. Development

Michael Zimmermann has shown that in India the *tathāgatagarbha* or buddha-nature doctrine was understood in two different ways. The first is a disclosure or recovery model, according to which sentient beings innately possess perfect buddhahood and that this perfect Buddhahood requires no refinement or further development. Being obscured or hidden by adventitious defilements, however, sentient beings are unaware of it.²⁴ "Once these defilements have been cleared away, the buddha-nature can unfold its full potency, and a being that has realized this stage would be called a buddha in the full and unrestricted sense of the word." The second is a development model, according to which buddhahood is a potential that needs to be developed before it can be realized.²⁵

Both models are evident in a number of the texts associated with the Tathāgatagarbha tradition as it developed between the fourth and sixth centuries in China. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, in particular, played a seminal role in the development and propagation of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. A composite text, it presents both the disclosure and development models of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. The section of the text that features an extended treatment of the topic has been dated to the second century.²⁶ The disclosure model is illustrated by analogies such as a poor woman who was unaware of the gold hidden in her house until informed by a stranger, and a strong man who was unaware of the precious pearl embedded in the space between his eyebrows until informed by a doctor.²⁷ The developmental model is illustrated by analogies such as milk transforming into curd, in which two kinds of cause are distinguished: necessary (正因) and contributory (緣因):

Necessary cause (正因) is like the way milk produces curd; contributory causes (緣因) are like enzymes and warmth. Because [curd] is produced from milk, therefore it is said that there is curd-nature in milk [but milk is not curd].... The buddha-nature of

sentient beings is also of two kinds, necessary and contributory. Necessary cause refers to sentient beings; contributory cause refers to the six perfections (*pāramitās*). 正因者如乳生酪。緣因者如醪煖等。從乳生故故言乳中而有酪性。... 衆生佛性亦二種因。一者正因。二者緣因。正因者謂諸衆生。緣因者謂六波羅蜜。²⁸

In other words, buddha-nature (necessary cause) is possessed by all sentient beings but they need to practice the six perfections²⁹ (contributory cause) to realize buddhahood, just as making curd from milk requires enzymes and warmth.

2.3 The intrinsically pure mind and fundamental ignorance

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* also has a connection with Emperor Wu's account of the intrinsically pure mind (自性清淨心; *prakṛtipariśuddhacitta*)—a term that is functionally equivalent to “buddha-nature”—and the defilements that obscure realization of the luminous intrinsic nature of mind. In his essay, “On the Attainment of Buddhahood by Consciousness” (神明成佛義記), which includes an important preface and interlinear commentary by his contemporary, Shen Ji 沈績, Emperor Wu presents the mind or consciousness (神明) as having an enlightened (明) mode and a benighted (無明) mode. As Shen Ji explains, the mind has a propensity to become deluded when defiled by external, sensory objects. Removing those defilements reveals the luminous intrinsic nature of the mind,³⁰ which Shen Ji implicitly identifies as buddha-nature (佛性).³¹ As Michael Radich has shown, Emperor Wu develops these views in response to the following passage in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*:

If we say that conditioned things have ignorance as their cause and condition, then ordinary people, hearing this, will falsely imagine the concept of a duality between “illumination” (明) and “non-illumination” (無明) [i.e. ignorance]. The wise, however, understand that their nature is non-dual, and that this non-dual nature is precisely their real nature.

若言無明因緣諸行，凡夫之人聞已分別生二法想明與無明。智者了達其性無二。無二之性即是實性。³²

Emperor Wu's and Shen Ji's comments are as follows:

Upon the intrinsic reality (體) of ignorance there is arising and ceasing. Arising and ceasing are its changing functions (用). The character of the mind as ignorance, however, does not alter. (Shen Ji: Since there is intrinsic reality then there is function. Function is not intrinsic reality and intrinsic reality is not function. With function there is arising and ceasing. With intrinsic reality there is no arising and ceasing.) Concerned that when [people] see this changing function they will maintain that the mind ceases together with its cognitive objects, (Shen Ji: The confused are deluded about [the nature of] intrinsic reality and function and so never cease to guess about them. How does this come about? Intrinsic reality and function are neither separate nor identical. Separated from intrinsic reality there is no function, hence it is said that they are not separate. The referent of “function” is not intrinsic reality and so it is said that they are not identical. Seeing that they are not separate, they are deluded about their not being identical. Being deluded about their not being identical they maintain that the mind ceases together with its cognitive objects.) the term *zhudi* 住地 is added after the word “ignorance.” This highlights that ignorance is identical with consciousness and that the nature of consciousness is unchanging.

無明體上有生有滅。生滅是其異用。無明心義不改。（臣績曰。既有其體便有其用。語用非體。論體非用。用有興廢。體無生滅。）將恐見其用異，便謂心隨境滅。（臣績曰。惑者迷其體用故不斷猜。何者？夫體之與用，不離不即，離體無用，故云不離。用義非體，故云不即。見其不離，而迷其不即。迷其不即便謂心隨境滅也。）故繼無明名下，加以住地之目。此顯無明，即是神明。神明性不遷也。³³

Emperor's Wu's characterization of mind or consciousness (神明) in terms of ignorance is striking. This, however, needs to be understood against the background of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* passage it is elaborating upon. The term *wuming zhudi* 無明住地 (*avidyāvāsabhūmi*) has the sense of “ignorance as the ground of the latent tendencies of existence.”³⁴ As Emperor Wu points out, this concept is invoked to “highlight that ignorance is identical with consciousness and that the nature of consciousness is unchanging.” In other words, ignorance is an inalienable feature of human existence. Each moment of mind ceases as soon as it arises, providing an opportunity to become aware of our afflictions. What is

much harder to discern, however, is fundamental ignorance (無明住地), which is the basis for momentary mental afflictions, and is itself not momentary but rather unchanging and unconditioned. Fundamental ignorance, which is intrinsic reality (*ti*), is the basis that enables afflictions to arise. Non-illumination (ignorance) and illumination are the functioning (*yong*) of mind or consciousness. Precisely because they are functions of the same fundamental reality (*ti*), they do not have two different natures.

2.4 *Ti* and *yong* as ancestor

Both Emperor Wu and Shen Ji use the *ti-yong* polarity to describe the relationship between the unchanging nature of mind/consciousness and the appearance in cognition of phenomenal arising and ceasing (function), between the unconditioned and the conditioned.³⁵ Although Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249) had already invoked *ti* and *yong*, the sense in which the relationship came to embody the idea of being “neither the same nor different” was a philosophical enhancement developed substantially in the context of Madyamaka-inspired discourse in China during the fifth and sixth centuries. In the first part of this paper I presented evidence suggesting that Zhu Xi’s understanding of “principle” and “*qi*” and in the *Awakening of Faith*’s account of “the gateway of the mind as suchness” and “the gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing” is more than analogous—they bear the hallmark of a common descent lineage. Here I will present evidence to support my hypothesis that the shared conceptual structure is a homology, and that the “ancestor” component needed to complete the homology is a particular conception of the *ti-yong* polarity: one used to convey the relationship of the unconditioned to the conditioned as one of immanent transcendence.

To establish this hypothesis, in what follows I will focus on two of the earliest examples of *ti-yong* in Chinese Buddhist discourse. The first example is a passage attributed to the monk Baoliang 寶亮 (444-509) by the Paekche monk Junzheng 均正 (alt. Huijun/Hyegyun 慧均, fl. 574):³⁶

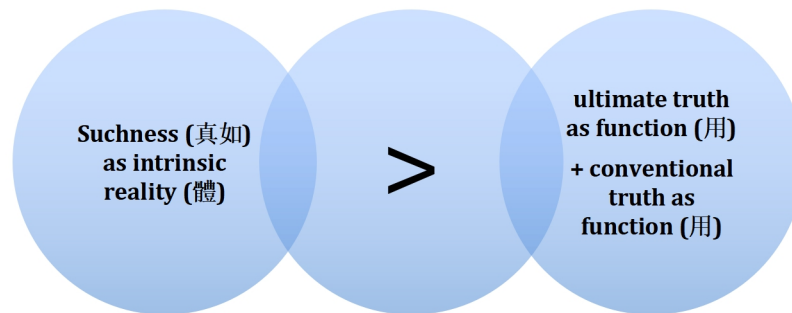
For sentient beings, ultimate truth and conventional truth jointly constitute the principle (理) of suchness, which is the necessary cause. Why? There cannot be just the mind alone. For there to be the mind there must be suchness upon which it arises. True suchness, the necessary cause [of buddhahood], is intrinsic reality (體).

Suffering and impermanence are conventional truths and it is precisely emptiness that

is the ultimate truth. The ultimate and conventional truths function (用) on the [basis] of true suchness. Hence suchness extends beyond the two truths.

真俗共成眾生真如性理為正因體。何者？不有心而已，有心則有真如性上生故。平正真如正因為體。苦無常為俗諦，即空為真諦。此之真俗於平正真如上用。故真如出二諦外。³⁷

For Baoliang, suchness is not to be equated with ultimate truth. Ultimate truth and conventional truth together constitute the principle whereby suchness is revealed. They are the function (用) of suchness; suchness is intrinsic reality (體) and its function is both ultimate and conventional truth.



And even though suchness extends beyond the two truths (出二諦外), it never ceases to ground them. This is a startlingly explicit expression of immanent transcendence, in which the unconditioned (suchness) as intrinsic reality transcends—extends beyond—ultimate and conventional truths, yet at the same time it is not separate from those truths—conditioned reality—because they are the function of suchness.

This is explained more fully by Baoliang himself, in commenting on the *Nirvana Sutra*:

“Although buddha-nature is in *skandhas*, *dhātus*, and *āyatanas*,³⁸ it is not subsumed within them.”³⁹ Ultimate truth and conventional truth jointly constitute the dharma of consciousness. Conventional truth is always in *skandhas*, *dhātus*, and *āyatanas*. The intrinsic reality of ultimate truth is always unconditioned. Because the intrinsic reality of ultimate truth is unconditioned, even though it is in *skandhas*, *dhātus*, and *āyatanas*, it is not subsumed within them. Although the nature of intrinsic reality does not move, its function is never deficient. Because its function is not deficient, intrinsic reality is

taken to be the necessary cause. If god-like function did not have ineffable, intrinsic reality as its root then the *sūtra* would not state, “Although buddha-nature is in *skandhas*, *āyatanas*, and *dhātus*, it is not subsumed within them.”

佛性雖在陰界入中，而非陰所攝者。真俗兩諦乃是共成一神明法，而俗邊恆陰界入，真體恆無為也。以真體無為故，雖在陰而非陰所攝也。體性不動而用無暫虧。以用無虧故，取為正因。若無此妙體為神用之本者，則不應言雖在陰入界中而非陰入所攝也。⁴⁰

“The intrinsic reality of ultimate truth” is referring to the intrinsic reality that ultimate truth signifies. This intrinsic reality is buddha-nature and buddha-nature is unconditioned. Conventional truth is concerned with the workings of the conditioned—the *skandhas*, *dhātus*, and *āyatanas* through which we construct and experience conventional reality. “Ultimate truth and conventional truth jointly constitute the dharma of consciousness” means that consciousness is the locus where the unconditioned (buddha-nature) and the conditioned (*skandhas*, *dhātus*, and *āyatanas*) integrate or conjoin. Intrinsic reality (體) is the necessary cause for the functioning (用) of consciousness,⁴¹ and consciousness is where the conditioned and unconditioned conjoin. In this model, consciousness can be seen to anticipate the *Awakening of Faith*’s gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing, the *ālaya* consciousness—the locus where suchness adapts to phenomenal conditions—and also more distantly, to Zhu Xi’s conception of human nature in which *li* and *qi* are conjoined.

Conclusion

I have proposed that Zhu Xi’s understanding of “principle” and “*qi*” and the *Awakening of Faith*’s account of “the gateway of the mind as suchness” and “the gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing” are a homology: modified descendants of a common ancestor. I have further argued that the “ancestor” component of this homology is a particular conception of the *ti-yong* polarity: one used to convey the relationship of the unconditioned to the conditioned as one of immanent transcendence. I have shown that this ancestor can be traced to developments in Southern Chinese Buddhist circles during the latter half of the fifth century. This ancestor is very much a hybrid, a unique product of the fecund engagement of Buddhist constructs derived from both the Indian and Chinese traditions, or to use Chen-kuo Lin’s felicitous phrase, “the result of a dialectical interplay between Sinification and Indianization.”⁴² Its Sinified or Sinicized aspect is the *ti-yong* polarity; its Indianized aspect is

the appropriation of the *ti-yong* polarity as a vehicle to express the idea of immanent transcendence, with specific reference to the unconditioned and the conditioned. The central philosophical problem that this hybrid structure addresses is, “How can the unconditioned (the absolute, suchness, principle) be realized if our cognitive awareness is circumscribed by the conditioned nature of human existence?” In the *Awakening of Faith*, the genetic signature of this ancestor featured centrally in the development of Sinitic Buddhist philosophy over the course of the Tang and Northern Song periods, and subsequently became reinscribed by Zhu Xi to become a defining feature of his metaphysics. Eight hundred years after Zhu Xi, the same genetic signature continues to exercise its imprint on key New Confucian philosophical paradigms. But that is another story.⁴³

¹ This issue is taken up briefly in my response to Professor Miller raises in his comments on my paper.

² Zhu Zhen 朱震 (1072-1138), *Hanshang Yizhuan* 漢上易傳 (Zhu Zhen’s Commentary to the *Book of Change*), <<http://archive.org/stream/06075171.cn#page/n20/mode/2up>>.

³ Zhu Xi, “Taiji tushu jie 太極圖說解” (Explanation of the Taiji Diagram Essay), *Zhouzi quanshu* 周子全書 (Complete Writings of Zhou Dunyi), *Guoxue jiben congshu* 國學基本叢書 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1964), p. 7.

⁴ Zhu Xi, “Taiji tujie 太極圖解” (Explanation of the Taiji Diagram), *Zhouzi quanshu*, p. 2.

⁵ Zhu Xi, “Da Lu Zijing 答陸子靜 (4)” (Reply to Lu Zijing #4), *Zhu Xi ji* 朱熹集 (The Collected Writings of Zhu Xi) edition, (Chengdu: Sichuan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), 10 vols., *juan* 36, pp. 1575-1576.

⁶ Robert Cummings Neville defines transcendence as “that to which reference can be made, in any sense of reference, only by denying that the referent lies within the boundaries of a specifiable domain, whatever else is supposed or said about the referent.” *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World* (Albany: SUNY, 2000), p. 151. For a recent defence of the idea of immanent transcendence in the Chinese philosophical context, see Karl-Heinz Pohl, “‘Immanent Transcendence’ in the Chinese Tradition: Remarks on a Chinese (and Sinological) Controversy,” in eds. Nahum Brown and William Franke *Transcendence, Immanence, and Intercultural Philosophy*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁷ Zhu Xu, “Da Xu Shun 答許順 (19)” (Reply to Xu Shun #19), *Zhu Xi ji*, *juan* 39, p. 1786.

⁸ See also Peter D. Herschok’s discussion of this concept in his chapter in this volume.

⁹ *Zhenru* 真如; *tathatā*: reality as it truly is.

¹⁰ This consciousness (one of eight or nine identified by Buddhists) retains the impressions of past experiences and “perfumes” new experiences on the basis of that previous conditioning.

¹¹ T32n1666_p0576c11-13.

¹² “Monism and the Problem of the Ignorance and Badness in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism,” in ed. John Makeham, *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi’s Philosophical Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press), in press.

¹³ T32n1666_p0576b08-13.

¹⁴ Here “dharma” includes everything within the dharma-realm (*dharma-dhātu*), that is, the sum total of all that is or is thought.

¹⁵ T32n1666_p0575c23-25.

¹⁶ Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist or Neo-Confucian?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 26-27.

¹⁷ Barrett, *Li Ao*, pp. 26-27, 90-93 *passim*.

¹⁸ Barrett, *Lo Ao*, pp. 63-64, 101-102.

¹⁹ Liang Su, *Zhiguan tongli*, X55n0915_p0691a06-9.

²⁰ *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (Expanded Collection on the Propagation and Elucidation [of Buddhism]), *juan* 29, T52n2103_p0336b09-12, p0336c15-17.

²¹ See Erin M. Cline, “Mirrors, Minds, and Metaphors,” *Philosophy East and West* 58.3(2008): 337-357; Paul Demiéville, “The Mirror of the Mind,” (originally published in 1947), trans. Neal Donner, in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1987), pp. 13-40.

²² The term *chen* 塵 literally means dust, and thus serendipitously also alludes to the mirror metaphor.

²³ Paul Demiéville, “The Mirror of the Mind,” p. 22.

²⁴ The doctrine that “consciousness is intrinsically pure but defiled by adventitious defilements” goes back to early Buddhist groups such as the Mahāsāṅghika. ^[SEP]

²⁵ Zimmermann, “The Process of Awakening in Early Texts on Buddha-Nature in India,” in Chen-kuo Lin and Michael Radich, *A Distant Mirror: Articulating Indic Ideas in Sixth and Seventh Century Chinese Buddhism*, (Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, 2014), pp. 515-517.

²⁶ Michael Radich, *The Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra and the Emergence of Tathāgatagarbha Doctrine*, (Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, 2015), p. 99.

²⁷ *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, T12n0374_p0407b12-407b24; T12n0374_p0408a10-408b11.

²⁸ *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, T12n0374_p0530b28; T12n0374_p0530c16-17.

²⁹ Giving, observing the precepts, forbearance, perseverance, meditative concentration and wisdom.

³⁰ *Shenming cheng fo yiji* 神明成佛義記 (On Consciousness Achieving Buddhahood, Annotated), in *Hongming ji* 弘明集 (Collection on the Propagation and Elucidation [of Buddhism]), T52n2102_p0054b26-54c01; T52n2102_p0054b21. 明為本性，所以應明。識染外塵故，內不免惑。... 塵穢，本識則明。

³¹ Shen Ji, comments in *Shenming cheng fo yiji*, T52n2102_p0054a22-23.

³² T12n0374_p0410c20-23. Radich, “‘Consciousness’ in Debates on the ‘Survival of the Spirit’,” in Lin and Radich, *A Distant Mirror*, p. 492 mod.

³³ T52n2102_p0054c01-07.

³⁴ Translation of 無明住地 adapted from Radich, “‘Consciousness’ in Debates on the ‘Survival of the Spirit’,” p. 488, and Karl Brunnholzl, *When the Clouds Part: The Uttaratantra and Its Meditative Tradition as a Bridge between Sutra and Tantra* (Boston: Snow Lion, 2015), pp. 14-15.

³⁵ Earlier in the text, T52n2102_p0054b19, Emperor Wu uses the related pairing of root (本) and function (用): “Mind is the root of function. The root is singular but its functions are differentiated. Naturally, differentiated functions arise and cease whereas the nature of the single root does not change... The single root is mind/consciousness *qua* ignorance.” 夫心為用本，本一而用殊。殊用自有興廢，一本之性不移... 一本者即無明神明也。

³⁶ Wudi composed a preface for a subcommentary he had instructed Baoliang to write on the *Nirvana Sutra* (*Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*) (which Baoliang completed in 509). Although not

extant, Baoliang's comments that are cited in his other major work, a collected commentary on the *Nirvana Sutra*, *Dabanniepan jing ji jie* 大般涅槃經集解, are likely to closely reflect Baoliang's original ideas. See Funayama Toru 船山徹, "Taiyō shōkō 體用小考" (On *Ti-yong*), in *Rikuchō Zui Tō seishinshi no kenkyū* 六朝隋唐精神史の研究 (Studies on the Psycho-Spiritual History in the Six Dynasties, Sui and Tang Periods), edited by Usami Bunri 宇佐美文理, A Report of Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Kyoto, 2005), p. 127. I am grateful to Professor Funayama for generously providing a copy of this insightful report.

³⁷ Junzheng, *Dasheng si lun xuan yi* 大乘四論玄義 (Profound Meaning of Four Treatises of the Great Vehicle), X46n0784_p0601b16-19.

³⁸ The five *skandhas*, or aggregates, are used to explain the contingent, compositional nature of human existence, and to highlight its lack of intrinsic essence or selfness. The eighteen *dhātus* and twelve *āyatanas* are used to explain how the sense and mental consciousnesses arise out of the interaction of the six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) and their specific sense-objects. The *āyatanas* are the six sense organs and their objects, whereas the *dhātus* includes the six consciousnesses produced from their interaction.

³⁹ *Nirvana Sutra*, T12n0374_p0414a26-27.

⁴⁰ Baoliang, *Dabanniepan jing jijie* 大般涅槃經集解 (Collected Commentaries on the *Nirvana Sutra*), T37n1763_p0465a10-16.

⁴¹ Elsewhere in his commentary to the *Nirvana Sutra*, Baoliang writes:

[The *Nirvana Sutra*, T12n0374_p0411b28 says] "Buddha-nature is not a conditioned dharma." This means that as the necessary cause, buddha-nature is not affected by good or bad, so how could it be created? Thus it is known that, *au fond*, the intrinsic reality of consciousness has dharma-nature as its source.

佛性非是作法者，謂正因佛性非善惡所感，云何可造？故知神明之體，根本有此法性為源。(T37n1763_p0462a25-27.)

Dharma-nature (**dharmatā*) (synonymous with suchness) and consciousness are bound in a *ti-yong* relationship.

⁴² Chen-kuo Lin, "Epistemology and Cultivation in Jingying Huiyuan's 'Essay on the Three Means of Valid Cognition,'" in Lin and Radich, *A Distant Mirror*, p. 82.

⁴³ See, for example, my essay "Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in *Ming xin pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind; 1959)," in *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, forthcoming.