# Reenchanting Buddhism via modernizing magic: Guru Wuguang of Taiwan's philosophy and science of 'superstition'

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# Chapter 3

## Wuguang's Magical *Prajñā*

*Related to the emphasis on doctrinal studies as the best way to approach Buddhism is the repudiation of "magic," a concept that was introduced to Japan with Western scholarship, especially that of Weber, in the modern period and that played a role in constructing a picture of Temple Buddhism as moribund or degenerate.*

~Stephen Covell[335]

In the first two chapters of this dissertation, we saw that early East Asian architects of Buddhist modernism preferred to reconcile their religion with modernity by intentionally and actively disenchanting it. In the previous chapter, we saw that despite these disenchanting efforts that entailed temple destruction, doctrinal criticism, sectarian recategorization and orthopraxic reinvention, Wuguang grew up and lived in a world that remained enchanted. In this chapter, we will look at how Wuguang sophisticated magic in order to save it from the category of 'superstition.'

In order to understand Wuguang's sophistication of magic, we must understand how he perceived it. Although Wuguang did write a book that solely deals with magic, *Zhenyan/Shingon and the Art of Mediumship* 真言密教與巫術, it was never published, and its handwritten manuscript is either carefully guarded, or has in fact been stolen and is therefore unavailable to us.[336] In the absence of this focused treatise, we must peruse Wuguang's works in search of examples that exemplify Covell's definition of magic, "the utilization of supernatural entities or

[335] Stephen G. Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism*, 12.

[336] This book is listed as one of Wuguang's compositions on the MSBL's website, http://www.kmkt.org.tw/kmktchinese/CP.aspx?TabID=245 (accessed Apr. 8, 2017). In a private correspondence on Feb. 8, 2015 one of my informants related to me: "The following story could be a scandal. Last Sunday (2/1) during the meeting of our Study Group, I heard…that the material (maybe the manuscript) about the witchcraft locked in [name deleted]'s room…was gone while the locker was still in one piece. It is believed that the theif [sic] is an insider knowing everything in the temple." This story is believable because theft does in fact seem to be a problem at the monastery. Every time I have spent the night there I have been cautioned—multiple times—to not bring any valuables with me.

powers to bring about an effect, or the belief systems associated with such acts"[337] and extrapolate their taxonomical ramifications.

By applying our definition of 'magic,' we can see that the Western-influenced Meiji-era intelligentsia separated it from 'religion' in the following passage written by Inoue Enryō:

> In this world there are two aspects the material [*busshitsu* 物質] and the spiritual [*seishin* 精神]. The transformations of the material world are controlled by physical laws [*butsuri no kisoku* 物理の規則]. Natural calamities and diseases originate in this area [the material world]. Therefore, if one wants to avoid natural calamities and diseases, there is no way other than through the control obtained from scientific research…. Therefore, neither the Buddhas nor kamis nor religion have control over the material world. Instead it must be observed that [religion] commands the foundations of the spiritual world.[338]

Here Inoue posits a dualism between matter 物質 and spirit 精神 (also 'consciousness') and asserts that these two substances are governed by separate laws. By doing so, he excludes any possibility of wonder working or magic since the material world cannot be affected by anything except for other material phenomena. Thus, the material/secular world and the spiritual/religious world are entirely separate and do not overlap. The former is the realm of science while the latter is the realm of religion. As 'magic' entails "the utilization of supernatural entities or powers to bring about an effect," there is no room for magic in the 'secular' or 'religious' realms. Consequently, 'magic' is exiled to 'superstition.'

In opposition to this we find Wuguang's stance on the relationship between science and religion:

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[337] See this dissertation's Introduction, "Magic."

[338] Inoue Enryō, "*Meishin to shūkyō* 迷信と宗教 [Superstition and Religion]," in *Yōkaigaku zenshū* 妖怪学全集 [Complete works of Mystery Studies], by Inoue Enryō (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shoten, 1916), 267, as quoted and translated in Josephson, "How Buddhism Became a 'Religion,'" 156.

> Religion entails consciousness ('spirit') controlling matter, science entails matter controlling consciousness. In fact the power of consciousness is great…[339]

Here, both Wuguang's terminology and subject matter directly mirror those of Inoue above, the subject being the roles and realms of secular science and religion. Inoue placed the physical world wholly within the realm of science, thereby excluding religion as a means of affecting or even understanding the natural world. Wuguang, on the other hand, shows that religion is a source of techniques for the human mind to 'control' the material world. This term, control 支配 (Chn. *zhipei*, Jpn. *shihai*) also has the sense of 'dominate' and 'to arrange.' It is a term favored by Wuguang to articulate how metaphysical forces shape phenomena. This passage thus contains a radical definition of religion. According to Wuguang, religion *is* magic. Ergo, magic is not 'superstition.'

Now that we understand that Wuguang believed magic was inseparable from—and actually synonymous with—religion, let us discover how he defined and categorized magic in order to save it from the typological deathtrap of 'superstition.'

[339] Wuguang, *Shengsi zhi dao* 生死之道 [The Path of Life and Death]. Online: http://www.mantrabright.org/ index.php?option=com_lyftenbloggie&view=entry&id=3&Itemid=30 (accessed Jan. 25, 2016). Original text: "宗教家是精神去支配物質的，科學家是物質去支配精神的，其實精神力量才是大…"

## Section I: Wuguang's Magical Taxonomy

*Mundane and pragmatic magical outcomes like locating lost or stolen objects, inflicting harm on a neighbor, or seeking short-term financial gain, personal power, or sexual prowess are very much examples of the "low" magic tradition associated with folk-magic spells, acts of bewitchment, and medieval Goetic rituals. Hermetic "high" magic, on the other hand, is essentially transformative rather than results-driven and ultimately reflects a spiritual quest for gnosis.*

~Lynne Hume and Nevill Drury[340]

Wuguang's magical taxonomy represents a harmonization of Chinese folk religion, Daoist, Mahāyāna, Zhenyan/Shingon and Karma Kagyu Buddhist beliefs and practices with modern scientific and philosophical concepts as well as Japanese ideological categories and sectarian boundaries. This taxonomy was constructed as a dual-layered set of binaries. The first distinguished between soteriologically transformative and worldly-oriented practices which were respectively placed into 'high' and 'low' categories reminiscent of Western occult taxonomies. The second differentiated between 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' forms of magic based upon where the practitioner believed his powers originated. As this schema is based on the intent and belief of the magical practitioner, it was all-inclusive and applicable to all forms of magic regardless of their cultural or denominational context. In order to understand Wuguang's taxonomy, we must first have a working comprehension of the different practices he categorized as well as the preexisting typologies that he used.

The majority of practices that Wuguang was concerned with were those that he had encountered throughout his spiritual quest. Within a Chinese religious context, phenomena that can be placed within the bounds of 'magic' are often denoted by the terms *wushu* 巫術, *shentong* 神通 and *lingtong* 靈通 (alternatively *tongling* 通靈). The first term's meaning is contextually

[340] Lynne Hume and Nevill Drury, *The Varieties of Magical Experience: Indigenous, Medieval, and Modern Magic* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 128.

independent as it consistently refers to spirit-mediumship and is usually translated as 'sorcery.' The latter two terms are often translated as 'preternatural powers' or 'numinous abilities' and have different connotations within Daoist, Buddhist and folk religious contexts. Within Chinese folk religion, *shentong* and *lingtong* are similarly used in reference to practices involving wielding power from noncoporeal entities such as ghosts or gods. This fact is reflected in the characters of which they are composed, respectively *shen* 神 for 'god' and *ling* 靈 meaning 'spirit' which are both coupled with the character *tong* 通 meaning 'pervasion.' This linguistic construct alludes to the belief that the person wielding magical powers is doing so through the aid of a spirit. The difference between these two terms is one of focus. *Shentong* refers to the magical powers granted via *lingtong* whereas *lingtong* is the human-spirit coupling. The presence of a non-corporeal entity within one's body that occurs during *lingtong* is referred to in Chinese as *fushen* 附身. This term is usually translated as 'spiritual possession' and can refer to unintentional and intentional forms of spirit possession. Unintentional—sometimes nonconsensual—spirit hosting is closer to the meaning of the English word 'possession,' while intentionally inviting such a spirit is referred to as 'invocation.' In English, 'invocation' is contrasted with 'evocation': the former involving internally hosting an entity and the latter meaning to exercise one's influence over an externally existing entity.[341] According to this usage, all forms of intentional *fushen* are invocation, while unintentional ones are possession.[342]

[341] The distinction between invocation and evocation is an emic one used in English-speaking occult circles. This usage was first established by Eliphas Levi, (born Alphonse Louis Constant; 1810-1875), the influential French occultist. It was later adapted by Peter J. Carroll (b. 1953) the modern architect of the occult discipline referred to as 'Chaos Magic.' See Jason Mankey, "An Interview with Peter J. Carroll," Online: http://www.patheos.com/blogs/ panmankey/2014/03/an-interview-with-peter-j-carroll/ (accessed Oct 7, 2015). Despite his self-acknowledged role in canonizing this phrase—due to its widespread popular usage—Carroll refers to it as an "old axiom" in his later work, *The Octavo: A Sorcerer-Scientist's Grimoire* (Oxford: Mandrake of Oxford, 2011), 115.

[342] Spirits within the popular Chinese pantheon inhabit three primary typological categories: ancestors 祖先, ghosts 鬼 and gods 神, which are in addition to two secondary categories that transverse the ghost-ancestor and

As there is no Chinese lexical distinction between these two I will consistently leave the term *fushen* untranslated. Practices found in East Asia that can be classified as evocation include 'raising a baby ghost' 養鬼仔 in which where through rituals and apotropaic technology an individual keeps a ghost around to increase his luck.[343]

This same usages of *shentong* and *lingtong* are found in folk forms of Daoism and Buddhism. This is in stark contrast to their canonical traditions, in which these terms refer to specific magical abilities that are natural outcrops of religious cultivation not to be sought after in their own right.[344]

ghost-god categories. This typology is based on Chinese beliefs about the afterlife and frames each of these types of beings (with only a few exceptions) as having once lived as human beings. After death, they immediately become ghosts. However, ghostliness is a liminal—and negative—position from which one hopes to escape and become an ancestor or god. Becoming an ancestor requires one to be the focus of devotional activities performed by their survivors while being a god requires substantial positive merit accumulated through meritorious deeds which result in popular esteem. This merit and esteem combine to elevate one from the ghost → ancestor and possibly → god status. In Chinese Buddhism, entities who fall into both the ancestor and ghost categories are usually seen as hungry ghosts (Skt. *pretas*). See Robert P. Weller, "Bandits, Beggars, and Ghosts: The Failure of State Control over Religious Interpretation in Taiwan," *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 1 (1985): 47; Yu Kuang-hong, "Making a Malefactor a Benefactor: Ghost Worship in Taiwan," *Bulletin of the Institute of Academia Sinica* 7 (1990): 40. The liminality of ghosts reflects their marginality and dual potentiality to act as malefactors or benefactors for the living. In Taiwan, ghosts are both respected and feared—the latter more so than gods. So much so that rather than saying the word 'ghost' 鬼, people utter the euphemism 'good brother' 好兄弟 in case a maleficent, rather than beneficent, ghost is in earshot. For more information see Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 6.

[343] See Chan Hui Ting, "The Magic of Modernity: Fengshui in Hong Kong" (MA thesis, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2011), 60.

[344] These powers come in lists of five or six and include: the ability to perform miracles 神足通 (Skt. *ṛddhividhi-jñāna),* clairaudience 天耳 (*divya-śrotra*), clairvoyance 天眼 (*divya-cakṣus*), mentalism 他心通 (*paracitta-jñāna*), past-life recollection 宿命通 (*pūrvanivāsânusmṛti-jñāna*) and the power to eliminate the causes of rebirth 漏盡通 (*āsrava-kṣaya-vijñāna*). See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 161; Louis Komjathy, *The Daoist Tradition: An Introduction* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 97-98; Richard R. McBride II, "Dhāraṇī and Spells in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 90; Zhiru Ng, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 41. For a corrective analysis on how Indian magical terminology was received in China that is outside the scope of this work, see Ryan R. Overbey, "On the Appearance of Siddhis in Chinese Texts," in *Yoga Powers: Extraordinary Capacities Attained through Meditation and Concentration*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen, Brill's Indological Library, 37 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 127-144.

Within Shingon Buddhism, magical categories are often evoked as sectarian boundary markers. In addition to the categories of exoteric and esoteric Buddhism, the latter is additionally bifurcated between miscellaneous esotericism 雜密 (literally 'mixed esotericism') and pure esotericism 純密.[345] Rituals aimed at achieving worldly goals are considered part of the former, lower category while rituals with soteriological aims are assigned to the latter—i.e. pure Shingon.[346] Thus, this distinction is a sectarian one as non-Shingon forms of magic are considered 'miscellaneous' and Shingon practices are labeled as 'pure.'[347]

Within each of the above contexts, the actual performance of all kinds of magic are often referred to as *adhiṣṭhāna* 加持 (Chn. *jiachi*, Jpn. *kaji*). The Sanskrit term *adhiṣṭhāna* along with its Sino-Japanese translation is usually rendered into English as 'empowerment' or poignantly by Robert Sharf as 'sympathetic magic.'[348] Within Shingon, *adhiṣṭhāna* has a particularly transformative connotation that can be described as "the soteriological transformation of the

[345] Miscellaneous esotericism can also be rendered 雜部密教 while pure esotericism can also be rendered as 正純密教. Japanese Shingon exegetes applied the heterodox category of 'miscellaneous esotericism' to these religious technologies found in Chinese religion that closely resembled their own in order to show that, despite their similarities—which posed a threat to Shingon monopolizing claims of orthodoxy due to the Chinese provenance of their transmission—they are inferior as their transmission's provenance lies outside the bounds of the orthodox transmission chain. For the development of these terms and see Fabio Rambelli, "True Words, Silence, and the Adamantine Dance: On Japanese Mikkyō and the Formation of the Shingon Discourse," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21 (1994): 373-405. I am intentionally not categorizing these terms within the larger framework of the *kenmitsui taisei* 顯密顯密体制 system due to issues raised by Rambelli in the aforementioned article. Also see Mikael Bauer, "Monastic Lineages and Ritual Participation: A Proposed Revision of Kuroda Toshio's Kenmitsu Taisei," *Pacific World Journal* 13 (2011): 45-65; Sueki Fumihiko, "A Reexamination of the Kenmitsu Taisei Theory," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, nos. 3-4 (1996): 449-466; Taira Masayuki, "Kuroda Toshio and the Kenmitsu Taisei Theory," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23 (1996): 427-448.

[346] Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 153.

[347] In Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism*, Hermeneutics, studies in the history of religions (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), passim, demonstrates that worldly and soteriological aims were largely considered synonymous in Tang Dynasty esoteric Buddhist circles.

[348] Robert H. Sharf, "Visualization and Maṇḍala in Shingon Buddhism," in *Living images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, eds. Robert Sharf and Elizabeth H. Sharf, Asian Religions and Cultures (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 196.

practitioner's body into a Buddha body."[349] In Chinese Buddhism, folk religion and Daoism *adhiṣṭhāna* is a commonplace term for the performance of ritual blessings, empowerments and healing—i.e. what Shingon labels as miscellaneous esotericism.

Wuguang applied the Shingon distinction between 'pure' and 'miscellaneous' forms of esotericism to categorize *all* forms of magic. He placed the majority of magic into an inferior, mundane category and *adhiṣṭhāna*—as defined as the transformation of oneself into a Buddha—into a superior, soteriological category. He articulated this distinction in a speech he gave in 1995 at the opening of the MSBL's Hong Kong branch temple:

> Some people think after they have converted to Zhenyan/Shingon they can recite mantras and perform mediumship, but this is entirely incorrect! Once you come to Zhenyan/Shingon, you must cultivate *prajñā*…this is how you become a Buddha! If you want to ride the wind like Liezi, who I doubt could even ride the wind, as if he could I think it would be inconvenient, [for] if you wanted to travel from here [Hong Kong] to Taiwan, you would have to wait until the Northerly Wind blew! So we do not need to believe in these sorts of myths…As practitioners of Zhenyan/Shingon, we do not perform mediumship, so what do we practice? If you want to practice mediumship, you should go study with the Samoans for their mediumship is truly amazing, they can all cast curses. If you go to South East Asia, go amongst the Samoans and see, you will then know…[but] is that the way to become a Buddha? No![350]

From this, we see that Wuguang validated the existence of various forms of magic and categorized them according to their soteriological/mundane aims. This confirmation and distinction are articulated by referencing classical Chinese literature concerning Liezi 列子 (c. fifth century BCE) who is mythically remembered for his ability to ride the wind.[351] Despite his

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[349] Fabio Rambelli, *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics: Signs, Ontology, and Salvation in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 146.

[350] Wuguang, *Wuguang shangshi 1995 nian yu xianggang daocheng de kaishi*. Original text: "有人認為皈依真言宗，念咒可以作巫術，根本不是！來真言宗，是要修智慧…這樣便可成佛啦！乘風而行便似列子，列子根本沒有乘風而行，假使他是會，我看那也很不方便。如果從這裡去台灣，要等吹北風才可以來的！故此我們不用相信這些傳說…我們修真言宗不是為了做巫術，那麼修來做什麼事？如果要做巫術，那麼要跟薩摩族學。薩摩族的巫術是很厲害的，他們都會放蠱毒。如你去南洋，到薩摩族中看看，你便知道…這樣會不會成佛呢？不會成佛！"

[351] Liezi, (a.k.a. Lie Yukou 列禦寇) is traditionally attributed with authoring the important philosophical work entitled *The Authentic Scripture on the Ultimate Virtue of Unfathomable Emptiness* 沖虛至德真經 commonly

expressing a certain amount of skepticism, Wuguang refuses to refute the possibility of Liezi's wind-riding and then makes a remarkable claim that Samoan magical practices are more potent than the Chinese ones available to his Han Chinese followers.[352] Regardless of the mundane magical potency of wind-riding and Samoan religion, Wuguang asserts that they are not appropriate for his followers to engage in due to their lacking soteriological efficacy. This is thus an articulation of Wuguang's application of the high/low magic distinction based on a practice's soteriological or mundane aims.

Wuguang went a step further by utilizing this soteriological/mundane binary to categorize specific magical practices by additionally employing Meiji-era ideological typologies. This articulation is found in a speech he delivered in 1999—one year before his death—at a Buddha-bathing 浴佛 ceremony:

> We are currently in the third dimension. After death people live in the fourth dimension. All examples of spirit-permeation that people are capable of in this world come from *fushen* of spirits in the fourth dimension…these forms of spirit communication predate Śākyamuni Buddha—in India there were many such sects. "Prajñā" is the reasioning of Śākyamuni, outside of this everything is mixed—we call them 'heterodoxy.' Heterodox religion looks outside of the mind—every religion whose orientation is external to the mind is heterodox…Daoism comes from Zhang Daoling's studying Laozi's non-action ideology. He transcribed the reasoning of this ideology and created mantras. Examples include the Mantra of Oral Purification, Speaking of the Cinnabar, Transcendent Breath Practices, Spirit Mediumship, Nourishing the Spirit etc.—[i.e.] practices involving internal alchemy and mantra recitation…[353]

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referred to as *The Liezi* 列子. For the significance and partial translation of this work see A. C. Graham, *The Book of Lieh-tzŭ: A Classic of the Tao* (New York: Columbia University Press, Morningside Edition; 1990).

[352] The reader should recall that in Chapter 2, Section II, hypothesized that Wuguang encountered Samoan religion while working as a merchant sailor. For more information on the term I am translating as 'curse' in the above passage, gudu 蠱毒, see Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 95.

[353] Wuguang, *Wuguang shangshi 1999 nian benshan yufo jie kaishi jiexuan*. Original text (converted from Simplified to Traditional Chinese): "我們現在是第三次元，人死了所處的世界是第四次元，現在的人所謂能通靈，全是第四次元的附身和通靈…釋迦佛以前都已經有，有這種通靈，印度有很多宗派，"智慧"是釋迦佛所講的道理，以外拉拉雜雜的信仰，我們稱為外道，外道是指心以外的信仰，心以外的信仰全是外道…道教是張道陵去學老子，學他的無為思想，籍這無為思想的道理做咒，譬如做什麼的淨口咒，講丹子、吐納、通靈，養神等，把練功當做咒來念…"

This short passage exemplifies the hybrid nature of the Wuguang's magical typology. First, he states that the magical powers resultant of spirit-permeation come from *fushen* with beings residing outside of our three-dimensional universe. He then proceeds to set up two magical categories—'prajñāic'[354] *zhihui* 智慧 (Jpn. *chie*) and 'heterodox' *waidao* 外道 (literally 'external path'; Jpn. *gedō*). 'Heterodox' is contrasted with 'orthodox' *neidao* 內道 (literally 'internal path'), a dichotomy based upon the same inner *nei* 內 and outer *wai* 外 dichotomy we already encountered in regards to Daoist cultivation.[355] Buddhist and Daoist authors employ these terms to differentiate between the doctrines, practices and texts of their co-religionists from those of other faiths. In these contexts orthodoxy and heterodoxy are based upon the provenance of one's religion. To walk a heretical, 'external path' entails performing practices that originated outside of the 'internal' orthodoxy.[356]

Wuguang reinterprets the directional orientation of the *neidao*/*waidao* dichotomy through a play on words. Rather than 'internal' referring to a practice's provenance, it refers to the practitioner's belief regarding the origin of the power harnessed through the practices he is performing. Orthodoxy entails being endowed with *prajñā*—an endowment that manifests itself as the realization that magical powers originate within one's self. To be heterodox—which

[354] Anglicization of the Sanskrit word *prajñā* into a neutered adjective is taken from Shi Cheng Kuan, *The Dharmic Treasure Altar-Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Taipei: Neo-Carefree Garden Buddhist Canon Translation Institute, 2011), 8.

[355] See Chapter 2.

[356] The *neidao*/*waidao* dichotomy has a long lexical history and multiple usages. Since the Han Dynasty, the inner/outer-path dichotomy has been used by writers to distinguish their own ideology from others through 'othering' them. See Shi Zhiru, "Contextualizing Buddhist Approaches to Religious Diversity: When and How Buddhist Intellectuals Address Confucianism and Daoism (3rd-9th c)," in *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*, eds. Perry Schmidt-Leukel and Joachim Gentz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 83. In early Buddhist scriptures *waidao* functioned as a translation of the Sanskrit *tīrthika* referring to Jain and Brahmannical practitioners, but later was used by both Buddhists and Daoists as either an inclusive term for all 'not-Buddhist' or 'not-Daoist' faiths or more pejoratively as an equivalent to the English words 'heterodox.' See Eugène Burnouf, *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, trans. Katia Buffetrille and Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 184.

Wuguang also refers to as 'mixed'—the pejorative term used in Shingon literature to refer to esoteric Buddhist practices that circulate outside of the Zhenyan/Shingon chain of Dharma-transmission—is to lack this *prajñā*ic realization and mistakenly attribute the source of magic to an external being such as a spirit living outside of our three-dimensional universe. Thus, whether a practice is considered heterodox or not depends on the practitioner's perception of that power's origins, not the power itself nor the rituals associated with its acquisition. Simply stated, Wuguang reoriented the directional orientation of these two 'paths' of *neidao*/*waidao* as he states that they do not refer to where the practices come *from*, but where one looks *to* when performing them in pursuit of magical power.

This reinterpretation of the *neidao*/*waidao* dichotomy—although not explicitly stated—is undeniably built upon another sectarian binary with which we are already familiar—self/other-power 自力/他力. This dichotomy is a sectarian distinction related to Pure Land Buddhism that was used in Meiji-era Japan and Taiwan to distinguish 'religion' from 'superstition' and later by Wuguang to articulate his attempt to understand the nature of the magical healing powers that he had acquired.[357] Here, we see Wuguang using this exact distinction to categorize magic. What renders magic prajñāic—i.e. wise and consequently orthodox—is cognizance of the fact that the power flows from within and is an example of self-power. This demonstrates his reliance on the typological categories and sectarian distinctions propagated in Taiwan by Japanese Buddhist missionaries.

Wuguang's magical taxonomy is a radical reinterpretation of the *neidao/waidao* dichotomy that cuts across sectarian lines and religious boundaries. These boundaries came into play in the chronology of Daoist practices Wuguang offers above. He states that Daoist practices

[357] See Chapter 2.

originated in Zhang Daoling's 張道陵 (second century) ritualizing the *reasoning* of Laozi. Zhang is seen as the founder and first patriarch of the Daoist lineage known as the Celestial Masters 天師. Celestial Masters Daoism (a.k.a. Orthodox Unity Daoism 正一道) is one of two main schools of Daoism.[358] The origination myth of Celestial Masters Daoism states that Zhang received prophetic revelation from the deified form of Laozi, Laojun 老君.[359] Wuguang's assertion that "Daoism comes from Zhang Daoling's studying Laozi's non-action ideology. He transcribed the logic of this ideology and created mantras" is directly referencing this story while interpreting it through his own magical taxonomy. This taxonomic interpretation manifests itself in Wuguang's use of the word 'reasoning' *daoli* 道理, which can also be translated as 'rationality.' In the context of Zhang's ritualizing Laozi's non-action ideology, 'rationality's' function is akin to that of 'prajñā' in Wuguang's heterodox/orthodox distinction. Consequently, Buddhists, Daoists—and all religionists—are practitioners of either a universal orthodoxy or heterodoxy that transverses religious and denominational distinctions. The exact practices he mentions here, Mantra of Oral Purification 淨口咒,[360] Speaking of the Elixir 講丹子,

[358] The other major school, Quanzhen Daoism was discussed in Marui's article concerning Taiwanese religion in Chapter 2.

[359] The deification of Laozi is the topic of Livia Kohn, *God of the Dao: Lord Lao in History and Myth* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

[360] The mantra to which Wuguang is referring, also written 'Divine Oral Purifying Mantra' 淨口神咒, is a Daoist liturgical formula related to the practice of 'transformation' detailed in the previous chapter. My translation of the text: "The Cinnabar of the divine mouth expels filth and clears the atmosphere. The divine tongue speaks truth, permeating fate and nourishing the spirit. The net of the divine teeth expels evil and safeguards truth. The throat of the god is strong and true, the divine breath draws my saliva. The divine heart is the elixiric center, rendering me truly permeated. The divine mind induces my saliva, the breath of the Dao is ever present. So let it be." Original text: "丹朱口神, 吐穢除氛. 舌神正倫, 通命養神. 羅千齒神, 卻邪衛真. 喉神虎賁, 氣神引津. 心神丹元, 令我通真. 思神鍊液, 道氣常存. 急急如律令." It can be found alongside four other purification mantras, the Purifying Mind Mantra 淨心神咒, Purifying Body Mantra 淨身神咒, Harmonizing Earth Mantra 安土地神咒 and Purifying Heaven Mantra 淨天地神咒. See Paul A. Jackson, "These Are Not Just Words: Religious Language of Daoist Temples in Taiwan" (PhD diss, Arizona State University, 2015), 200, 516 and 530.

Transcendent Breath Practices 吐納[361] and Nourishing the Spirit 養神 are all Daoist bodily practices aimed at achieving longevity, immortality and transcendence.[362] As we know Wuguang practiced these throughout his life, he clearly did not consider them heterodox. Rather, their heterodox or orthodox character was determined by whether or not the practitioner was endowed with *prajñā*/logic as manifest in the realization that these practices harness self, rather than other-power.

In addition to utilizing the Shingon and Meiji-era Zen classifiers of miscellaneous/pure esotericism and self/other power, Wuguang is also deploying the secular-religion-superstition trinary. As pointed out by Jacob Josephson, during the Meiji period, the typological category of 'superstition' mirrored the pre-modern category of 'heresy' 邪教 (Chn. *xiejiao*, Jpn. *jakyō*).[363] The same substitution of 'superstition' for the topological role traditionally occupied by 'heresy' similarly took place in Qing China.[364] The inescapable shared semiotic value of 'heterodox' and 'heresy' speak to the fact that for Wuguang, 'superstitious,' 'heterodox,' and 'heretical' referred to the same category, oppositional to 'prajñāic,' 'logical,' and 'orthodox.' Thus, while classifying magic, Wuguang is also redeeming it from the category of 'superstition' by placing it within the realm of orthodox religion. This is made abundantly clear when this typology is applied to Wuguang words quoted in this chapter's introduction, "Religion entails consciousness controlling matter" which could be rephrased in light of his taxonomy as "orthodoxy entails

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[361] The term *tuna* 吐納 (literally 'spitting and absorbing') is an abbreviation for *tugu naxin* 吐故納新 ('expelling the old and absorbing the new') which is an umbrella term for Daoist breathing practices aimed at achieving immortality and longevity. These practices involve expelling impure *qi* and inhaling purer *qi* in order to transform one's body into a transcendent being. See Catherine Despeux "*tuna*," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008); Thomas Michael, *In the Shadows of the Dao: Laozi, the Sage, and the Daodejing* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2015), 118.

[362] For more information see Michael, *In the Shadows of the Dao*, 109.

[363] Josephson, *The Invention of Religion*, 30.

[364] Timothy Brook, "The Politics of Religion: Late-Imperial Origins of the Regulatory State," in *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, eds. Yoshiko Ashiwa et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 38.

knowing that it is *one's own* consciousness that controls matter through the performance religious techniques."

## Magical Conclusion

In this section, we extrapolated Wuguang's magical taxonomy and demonstrated its hybrid nature. I argued that he categorized magic along a high/low binary based on a practitioner's soteriological/mundane ends as well as orthodox/heterodox based on the practitioner's perception that magic was self/other-power. As these taxonomical boundaries are based on the aim and belief of the practitioner rather than provenance, I asserted that a religion's orthodox or heterodox nature is irrelevant to a practice's religious or cultural context. This last assertion is attested to in Wuguang's other writings. Based on his understanding of the self/other-power distinction, Wuguang was a staunch anti-theist. He referred to theism 神教 as "a great superstition" 大迷信[365] and said that praying to Buddhist deities was heresy 邪教.[366]

From these nuances, it is clear that Wuguang defined 'superstition' and its semiotic brethren based solely on the belief of a religious practitioner. In Chinese, the word 'belief' 信 is the second character in the word 'superstition' 迷信 that literally translates as 'deluded' or 'mistaken belief.' This shows that—just as with the case of the directional orientation of the *neidao*/*waidao* dichotomy—Wuguang's taxonomy was linguistically based. For one's magic to not be 'superstitious' requires one to correctly 'believe' that the power originates in his own mind.

[365] Wuguang, *Chande jianghua* 禪的講話 [Speaking of Chan/Zen] (Jiayi: Wuzhishan guangmingwang si jiayi daochang, 1991), 27.

[366] Wuguang, *Amituo.*

Belief's role in Wuguang's religious classification system demonstrates the polemical nature of his teachings. If one believes magic to be 'superstitious' based on the misconception that those who wield magic do so by drawing upon forces originating in an external source, then one is attacking a strawman argument. As magic originates within and entails "consciousness controlling matter," labeling magic as 'superstitious' is to inappropriately apply the category of 'superstition.' Thus, the Japanese and Chinese Buddhist modernists who attacked Daoism and folk religion were chasing phantasms produced by their own imaginations. What they *imagined* they were attacking—even according to Wuguang—deserved to be labeled as 'superstitious.' However, if one practices magic with the realization that the powers come from within—a prajñāic realization open to followers of every faith—then the modernist critique is entirely unwarranted. This reveals Wuguang's reenchanted reaction to the disenchanting hermeneutic of early Buddhist modernism. He did not reject the notion that magic could be superstitious. Rather, he rejected a 'broadsword-like' application of the concept of 'superstition.' In order to save magic from the category of 'superstition,' Wuguang nuanced the typological category itself so that it could be wielded in a more 'scalpel-like' fashion.

This polemical quality rings even clearer when scrutinizing Wuguang's definition of '*prajñā*.' The logical/prajñāic realization that magic is self-power was not a simple intellectual awareness, but the product of advanced spiritual maturity. In order to understand what, exactly, this prajñāic cognizance entailed we must analyze Wuguang's epistemology, for this is the field of inquiry where his notion of *prajñā* naturally falls. To this end, our discussion in the next section analyzes Wuguang's epistemology while uncovering what Wuguang believed attaining this logical/prajñāic realization entailed.

## Section II: Mystical Empiricism

Wuguang's epistemological position can be described as an example of 'mystical empiricism.' Mystical empiricism is a term that was coined by F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1854),[367] a German philosopher whose works influenced Inoue Enryō.[368] According to both Schelling and Wuguang, there are two levels of epistemological empiricism. The lower form is limited to data gained through the five senses while the higher, mystical form is able to transcend sensorial limitations and access data suprasensorially.[369]

The classical—'lower'—empiricist epistemological position is encapsulated in the Latin phrase *"Nihil in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu.*"[370] Known as the Peripatetic axiom, it means "There is nothing in the intellect that was not previously in the senses." This dictum encapsulates the classical empiricist's stance on what constitutes knowledge and where it comes from. According to this empirical position, all knowledge comes from sensory data—without which the mind would be devoid of mentation as the human mind comes into this world as a

[367] Schelling described his mystical empiricism thusly: "The lowest level of empiricism is one in which all knowledge is limited to experience through the senses, in which everything supersensible is either denied as such or as a possible object of knowledge. If one accepts philosophical empiricism in this sense, then it does not even share positive philosophy's opposition to rationalism. For positive philosophy merely denies that the supersensible is knowable only in a rational manner, whereas empiricism maintains that it is not knowable in this or any other way, and that ultimately it does not even exist. A higher level of philosophical empiricism, however, is one that maintains that the supersensible can become an actual object of experience, whereby it goes without saying that this experience cannot be of the merely sensuous type but must have something about it that is inherently mysterious, mystical, and for which reason we can call the doctrines of this type doctrines of a mystical empiricism." See Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, tr. Bruce Matthews (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), 171.

[368] Takemura Makio, "On the Philosophy of Inoue Enryo," *International Inoue Enryo Research* 1 (2013): 3-24. Online: https://www.toyo.ac.jp/uploaded/attachment/12697.pdf (accessed Feb. 7, 2016).

[369] In Buddhist literature there is an additional, sixth sense referred to as 'mentation' 意 (Skt. *manas*), which is the cognitive faculty that perceives phenomena. See Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih lun* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 55. Wuguang did speak of this mental faculty, but he did not discuss it as frequently as he did the other five senses or the suprasense.

[370] This is the wording used by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). See P. F. Cranefield, "On the Origin of the Phrase '*nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*,'" *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 25, no. 1 (1970): 77-80.

*tabula rasa* (blank slate). Similar to a slate, experiences and external input make impressions upon the mind. These impressions then form what we refer to as 'knowledge' and enable 'thinking.'

Wuguang was a self-proclaimed empiricist. He believed that without external sensory input our minds would be devoid of mentation. This can be seen in the following passage:

> Generally speaking, our capacity for comprehension is delimited by what we have received from society, read in books or what we [have observed] on the earth. We are limited to thinking within this small range. Were it not for the existence of these [epistemic sources] we would be empty of thought, if these [epistemic sources] do exist, we have sensory perception data. Sensory perception data includes everything within this limited range [as outlined here].[371]

Here Wuguang echoes the Peripatetic axiom by stating that a lack of external epistemic sources would render humans "empty of thought." This thus places Wuguang squarely within the empiricist camp, as he believed sensory input was the only source of knowledge and even mental activity. However, Wuguang did not trust sensory input. This can be seen when comparing the above passage with others that deal with sensory perception and the five *skandhas*. Wuguang equated the five senses with the five *skandhas* yet declared them entirely unreliable:

> The five *skandhas* are form, sound, scent, taste and sight, referring to hearing a sound, seeing forms, eating fragrances and flavors and sensations in the physical body.[372]
>
> All of the five *skandhas* are fake. Solidified, the five *skandhas* form this 'soul,' possession of which causes us to be reborn into the six paths, having the five *skandhas* enables mentation…[373]

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[371] Wuguang, *Zhaolun: Wuguang shangshi shiyi* 肇論 - 悟光金剛上師釋義 [Guru Wuguang's Commentary to the Zhaolun], 4 vols. (2015), 2.4. Online: http://www.kmkt.org.tw/kmktchinese/images/kmkt2.pdf (accessed Jan. 23, 2016). Original text: "一般所能理解到的，只是我們在社會上或書上所看範圍，或是地球上的知識而已，我們僅在這極小的範圍內去思想。若沒有那些事就是空想，若有那些事物，就是見聞覺知，見聞覺知包括了所有的範圍是有限的."

[372] Wuguang, *Amituo*. Original text: "五蘊是色、聲、香、味觸，聽到的是聲音，看到的是色彩，食到的是香味，接觸身體的是感覺."

[373] Wuguang, *Yizhen faju qianshuo* 一真法句淺說 [Elementary Explanation of 'One True Dharma Sentence'] in *Xinbian zheng fayan zang* 新編正法眼藏 [New Perspective on the Treasure of the True Dharma Eye], by Wuguang (Forms Publications: Hong Kong, 2014), 190. Original text: "所有的五蘊是假的，這五蘊堅固就是世間所云之靈魂，有這靈魂就要輪迴六趣了，有五蘊就有能思…"

Wuguang thus sets up an epistemological problem. Since our only epistemically accessible source is untrustworthy it is impossible to believe that anything is true! This, however, is only the case when speaking "generally" 一般, rather then definitively or universally. In fact, Wuguang believed that there is a higher form of knowledge that is not reliant upon sensory perception that can only be gained via suprasensorial channels.

Wuguang referred to these suprasensorial channels as different kinds of 'eyes' 眼. The 'physical eye' 肉眼 is a term he used to encapsulate the five senses with which we are all born and grant us access to "fake" data. Juxtaposed to this is the suprasense that Wuguang referred to as the 'Buddha-eye' 佛眼 or 'Void-eye' 虛空眼 and was the source for trustworthy data. Between these two levels Wuguang posited others that are listed and explained in the following:

> The unenlightened only have 'physical eyes.' Through cultivation that they can obtain 'void-eyes' to see the true reality of things. Step by step one sees the things in the *dharmadhātu* as his inner mind's perception, reception and outlook are uniquely transformed [by obtaining] 'Heaven-eyes,' 'Dharma-eyes,' 'Wisdom-eyes' and 'Buddha-eyes.' Having practiced to [the point where] all dharmas are pure, one has then attained 'Heaven-eyes.' When you see the equanimity of all things, you have attained 'Dharma-eyes.' When you thoroughly comprehend the principle within everything, and see the equanimity of all things, then you have attained 'Wisdom-eyes.'[374]

The taxonomy articulated here is taken from canonical Buddhist sources that list different forms of sight. The vast majority of texts list these different 'eyes' (Skt. *cakṣus*) individually, but over time they started to be listed together as Wuguang does here.[375] In addition to the terms 'Buddha-

[374] Wuguang. *Zhaolun*, 1.17. Online: http://www.kmkt.org.tw/kmktchinese/images/kmkt.pdf (accessed Jan. 23, 2015). Original text: "凡夫只是肉眼，修行後就有個虛空眼能看到實相，甚至有個天眼、法眼、慧眼和佛眼，一步一步的看到法界的事物、你內心的感想、感受及看法就會有不同的轉變。修到諸法清淨，就得到天眼。你看到諸法平等，就得到法眼。你對一切諸法洞徹其中的理，一切諸法平等，你就得到慧眼。"

[375] These levels of sight include: 'physical eyes' (*mâṃsa-cakṣus*), 'Celestial eyes' (*divya-cakṣus*), 'Dharma-eyes' (*dharma-cakṣus*), '*Prajñā*-eyes' (*prajñā-cakṣus*) and 'Buddha-eyes' (*buddha-cakṣus*). See Étienne Lamotte, *The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom of Nāgārjuna (Mahāprajñāpārami-tāśāstra)*, Vol. V, Chapters XLIX-LII and Chapter XX, tr. Gelongma Karma Migme Chödrön (Unpublished manuscript, 2007), 1869. Online: https://archive.org/stream/MahaPrajnaparamitaSastraFullByNagarjuna/Maha%20prajnaparamita%20sastra%20-%20Vol.5%20by%20Nagarjuna#page/n5/mode/2up (accessed Mar. 11, 2016).

eye' and 'Void-eye,' elsewhere Wuguang refers to suprasensorial faculties as the 'mind-eye' 心眼. This term is found throughout the Buddhist canon. Liturgically, it refers to the cognitive capability to visualize imagery. In Shingon literature it can additionally refer to the attainment of Buddha-hood.[376] Wuguang combined its ritualistic and soteriological connotations and added an epistemological nuance to this term by likening the mind-eye to an omniscient X-Ray that can rend the veil and peer into the true nature of things.[377]

In addition to articulating his mystical empiricism in established Buddhist terminology, Wuguang also rooted it in classical Buddhist phenomenology that drew a distinction between mundane and higher forms of knowledge. This distinction has been eloquently explained by Fabio Rambelli:

> Buddhism recognizes the existence of two radically different cognitive modalities corresponding to two different kinds of semiotics…Ordinary knowledge (in Sanskrit *jñāna*) is considered fallacious because it mistakes a presumed ontological reality of the universe with ordinary psycho-mental phenomena and processes (modalities and functions of mind) creating such a reality. In contrast, true, absolute knowledge, called *prajñā* or Bodhi, is the product of the performance of religious practices (meditative, devotional, and ritual practices in general), resulting in non-ordinary states of bodhi-mind-language.[378]

Wuguang's mystical empiricism closely resembles the semiotic taxonomy and cognitive transformation as detailed by Rambelli. Wuguang's epistemology included a distinction between *jñāna*—which he qualified as 'general'—and *prajñā*.[379] For Wuguang, *jñāna* represented a 'general' cognitive function where one's epistemic range is limited to secondhand data collected

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[376] Adrian Snodgrass, *The Matrix and Diamond World Mandalas in Shingon Buddhism*, 2 vols., Sata-Pitaka Series, 354 (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988), 34.

[377] Wuguang, *Banruo liqujing jiangji* 般若理趣經講記 [Notes from Talks on the *Prajñāpāramitā-naya-śatapañcaśatikā*], 2 vols. (Kaohsiung: Yimin Chubanshe, 2011), 1.34.

[378] Fabio Rambelli, *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics*, 17.

[379] The terms *jñāna* and *prajñā* are built around the Sanskrit root *jña* signifying cognitive potentiality. It is a cognate with the Greek word *gnosis*, the Latin (co)*gnito* as well as the English word 'know.' To this is attached the prefix *pra-* of *prajñā* which has the sense of 'heightening' or 'intensification.' See Oliver Leaman, *Eastern Philosophy: Key Readings* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 243-244; William Waldron, *The Buddhist Unconscious: The Alaya-vijñana in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought*, RoutledgeCurzon Critical Studies in Buddhism (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 20.

through the five senses. *Prajñā*, on the other hand, refers to a higher cognitive modality where one's epistemic range included data inaccessible via the five senses.

In addition to detailing the different epistemological sources upon which these two cognitive modalities are based, Wuguang also detailed the differences between the modalities themselves:

> The reasoning of all things known by unenlightened people is relative and in no way [penetrates] the equality of things, [this level] of human knowledge cannot transcend these limitations. Buddhas, because of *prajñā*, can surpass the world, therefore they are remarkable. This aspect is translated as 'great *prajñā*,' therefore it is called *mahāprajña*, 'great *prajñā*' is [just a translation], not its actual name. '*Prajñā*' transforms everything into wisdom, hence its name. It can enable all the masses to understand, this is translated as 'remarkable, expansive, unlimited wisdom,' this is Buddha wisdom. Unenlightened wisdom is accumulated after one is born via interpersonal relationships with parents and siblings, teachers, community and friends—it is entirely imprecise.[380]

Here, the exact differences between *jñāna* and *prajñā* are detailed in terms of higher and lower forms of epistemology. Normal, unenlightened cognition is limited, relative and imprecise. In contrast, enlightened cognition is transcendent, universal and precise. Again, we see Wuguang directly referencing the secondhand nature of knowledge according to the classical empiricist position. The prevalence of this concept in his writings shows that he was familiar with classical empiricism—a knowledge likely gained while studying at Zhuxi Temple under Yanjing. It should be noted that Wuguang never once refutes this claim but instead continuously affirms it. This affirmation, however, is stated in order to present his mystical empiricism as superior as it

[380] Wuguang, *Xinjing sixiang jice* 心經思想蠡測 [Summary of the Ideology of the Heart Sutra]. Online: http://www.china2551.org/Article/tmwh/tmzl/201007/11646.html (accessed Jan. 23, 2016). Original text: "凡夫所知的道理有深淺廣狹多少並不是絕對平等，人智都不能超越界限，佛因為其智慧超越世間，所以是殊勝。此方名大般若是意譯，故稱摩訶般若，不名大般若。"般若"一般都翻做智慧，是以定慧來樹名的，為使大眾普遍容易了解，就譯成殊勝廣大無限的智慧，這就是佛智。凡夫的智慧是出生以後，受父母兄弟、學校老師、社會朋友的人際關係中得來的收藏品，都不盡正確。"

breaks the bounds erected by classical empiricism by positing the belief in suprasensorial capabilities.

Unlocking the prajñāic ability to access suprasensorial data does not come naturally, but requires performing religious rituals. As we can see in the following passage, Wuguang believed that the goal of ritual performance was to initiate mystical visionary experiences and that these experiences are what allow us to tap into our suprasensorial capabilities:

> Zhenyan/Shingon calls this direct, mystical visionary method the 'Yogic method' or '*Samādhi* method.' Via the experiences induced by this method one can directly grasp the disposition of the life of the true self and its movement through birth after birth, as well as all the mysteries of the universe. Ordinary beings can attain Buddhahood in their present bodies. As Amoghavajra said, "Only with this Zhenyan method can one become a Buddha in this body, therefore it is said that this *samādhi* method is missing from the writings of the other teachings." This Yogic or *Samādhi* method is called 'the method of direct mystical vision…'[381]

In this passage, Wuguang roots his mystical empiricism in the Buddhist canon in an effort to portray it as being consistent with orthodox Buddhism. Particularly significant is the fact that he referenced Amoghavajra, one of the key patriarchs of Zhenyan/Shingon. Here Wuguang proclaims that achieving direct mystical visionary experiences is the goal of Zhenyan/Shingon practice. This reveals just how important Wuguang believed these visions to be. They were not a secondary outcrop of religious practice, but the singular point of engaging in religious practice.

As visionless religionists are limited to sensory data, which is untrustworthy, in order to gain a true understanding of the universe one must engage in practices that initiate mystical visionary experiences to access suprasensorial data. This claim's subtext asserts that anyone who

[381] Wuguang, *Sanmodi zhi Miguan* 三摩地之秘觀 [The Mystical Vision of *Samādhi*], ND. Posted to the blog of a Hong Kong devotee's blog entitled the '*Guangming bianzhao* blog' 光明遍照的博客 on Dec. 31, 2010. I have included this source due to its consistency with Wuguang's other works (see next note). Online: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_63a661210100npyr.html (accessed Jan. 21, 2016). Original text: "其直觀神秘方法，真言密教曰瑜珈法或三摩地法。依此故能直接把握真我之活生生的動的姿態，亦能體會到全一的宇宙之神秘。通此個體的肉身能實現真我之活動，凡夫當體可以成佛了。而不空三藏云：「只於真言法中即身成佛故說此三摩地之法，餘教之中闕書之。」說之。 瑜珈法或三摩地法所稱之神秘直觀方法是…"

has not had mystical visions is essentially ignorant of the truth. The fact that this is what Wuguang is implying can be seen in the following passage where he disparages 'general' epistemologists:

> General epistemologists all integrate the true self into the relativity of emptiness and suchness through abstraction or particularity, comparing or contrasting things. This is nothing but relative, localized analytical observations of forms and qualities of the very outer layer of phenomena...this sort of epistemoligst will never be able to harmonize with the original essense of true Buddhahood...so what sort of method should one use to be able to firmly experience the the true character of the true self of the true Buddha?...Outside of this mystical, direct visionary method, there is no way to even gain a glimpse of the true self's character. [382]

Here, Wuguang concretely articulates the fact that he is joining the discursive context of modern philosophy by openly challenging 'general epistemologists' 認識者, who he asserts are incapable of making justifiable truth-claims as "outside of this mystical, direct visionary method, there is no way to even gain a glimpse of the true self's character." Those caught in the crosshairs of this attack include Buddhist modernists who downplay the importance of mystical visions. This shows us that when Wuguang articulated his epistemology he was doing so polemically. Were this not the case he would not have contrasted his position with 'general epistemologists' nor claimed that his method—and those that resemble it—are the *only* way.

In addition to illuminating Wuguang's epistemological position as well as its orthopraxic and polemical implications, in this section we have come closer to understanding Wuguang's interpretation of the secular-religious-superstitious trinary. We now know that when Wuguang defined orthodoxy as prajñāic, he was referring to a cognitive modality based upon data gathered

[382] Wuguang, *Mijiao sixiang yu shenghuo*, 271-272. Original text: "一般之認識論者, 都是將真我當體嵌入事空之對立中, 將其拍象化或各別化, 把他和他物比較或對照. 這不外是相對性地, 局部性地, 分析性地明瞭其形體或形質, 僅於其事物的表皮面上…這種認識者,永遠無法同契真佛之本體….那麼用甚麼方法,才能把握體驗此真佛的真正自我之真相呢?...除此神秘的直觀方法外, 其他方法均無法窺知真我之姿." There is a paralell passage in text quoted in the previous note that states: "所謂普通一般之認識者，即以事物在時間、或集於空間去比對他物而已…且機械的以死物來觀察而已。 然用什麼方法才能把握體認此真佛的真我的真相…直觀之方法外都沒有辦法。"

from suprasensorial perception that is only accessible via mystical visionary experiences. We also know that Wuguang believed that the only way to access this level of cognition and gather trustworthy data was through religious rituals. As this prajñāic realization bestowed one with cognizance of the fact that magical power lies within, we can determine that this cognizance is not a simple intellectual affirmation, but a realization regarding self-power. Were this not the case, mystical visions would not be a prajñāic requirement. This point alludes to the fact that the epistemological position articulated in Wuguang's mystical empiricism was part of a soteriological process. Wuguang's understanding of this process was based upon Shingon phenomenology, which itself was built upon earlier Yogācāra cognitive-mapping. In order to understand *what* this prajñāic realization regarding self-power entailed, let us now analyze how Wuguang described this soteriological process.

## Section III: Soteriological Phenomenology

Classical Yogācāra phenomenology posited a cognitive map featuring eight aspects of human cognition[383] (Skt. *vijñāna*, also translated as 'consciousness'). The five outer cognitive capabilities correspond to the five senses. Underlying these are two intermediary facets that interact with the deeper recesses of the mind while receiving input from the five sensorial cognitions. The most primordial cavern of the mind, the 'storehouse-cognition' (Skt. *ālaya-vijñāna*) is a mental substratum that contains karmic impressions referred to as 'seeds' (*bīja*) from past incarnations. These 'seeds' are the karmic potentialities born out of our activities. Wholesome activities plant positive seeds while unwholesome activities plant negative seeds.

[383] I have consistently translated the Sanskrit term *vijñāna* and its Chinese equivilent *shi* as 'cognition' rather than the more common rendering 'consciousness' to make a clear distinction between the phenomenological issues discussed in this section and the ontological issues surrounding 'consciousness' *jingshen* 精神 brielfy mentioned above, and discussed at great length in Chapter 4.

The character of the storehouse-cognition is not static, but is mutable and affected by the wholesome or unwholesome nature of the seeds that we deposit into it. The nature of these seeds in turn 'perfume' (*vāsanā*) the storehouse-cognition, flavoring what mental phenomena it produces. The function to store and later give rise to karmic potentialities rendered the storehouse-cognition the agent of rebirth, liberation and karma.[384]

East Asian Yogācāra later added an additional ninth cognitive level that was said to be purely undefiled—the 'undefiled-cognition' (Skt. *amala-vijñāna*).[385] Unlike the storehouse-cognition whose purity is determined by the nature of the seeds contained therein, the undefiled-cognition is statically wholesome. Later, Shingon phenomenology went even further and posited the existence of a tenth cognitive level more sublime than the undefiled-cognition. Kūkai referred to this level as the 'individuation-cognition' 一一識心.[386] Unlocking this cognitive modality is the mental manifestation of becoming a buddha.[387]

Wuguang openly references these cognitive maps while mentioning Kūkai's individuated-cognition by name:

> Exoteric Chan/Zen only states that *tathātā* is the source of the myriad phenomena, [meaning that] the myriad *dharmas* are transformations of *tathātā*. Chan/Zen's utility can only teach to this point. [However], we can analyze deeper. Yogācāra speaks of the six cognitions and further adds a seventh and eighth—without which there would be no

[384] Johannes Bronkhorst, *Buddhist Teaching in India* (Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2009), 142.

[385] This term has yet to be found in extant Sanskrit sources. Its coinage is often attributed to Paramārtha (499-569), one of the four great translators in Chinese Buddhist history. See Diana Y. Paul, *Philosophy of Mind in Sixth-century China: Paramārtha's "Evolution of Consciousness"* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 121.

[386] T. 2427, 77.0378b04.

[387] Kūkai also speculated that there were in fact infinite levels. These levels should not be confused with Kūkai's 'Ten Stages of the Mind' 十住心 which is a doctrinal classification, rather than a cognitive-map. See Taikō Yamasaki, *Shingon: Japanese Esoteric Buddhism*, trs. Richard and Cynthia Peterson (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1988), 90-95. Wuguang was aware of both of these ten-tiered schemes and conscious of their differences as evidenced by his explanation of Kūkai's Ten Stages of the Mind in Wuguang, *Mijiao sixiang yu shenghuo*, 158-160.

> *saṃsāra*. Mahāyāna sūtras speak of the ninth cognition. Zhenyan/Shingon is able to touch upon the tenth cognition whose name is 'individuation-cognition.'[388]

In this passage Wuguang presents the Zhenyan/Shingon cognitive map as a more complete—and therefore superior—version than those used by other forms of Buddhism. It is thus a polemical statement aimed at demonstrating the superiority of Zhenyan/Shingon over other forms of Buddhism. He refers to the ninth, undefiled-cognition as *tathātā* ('suchness'), a confluence commonplace in Mahāyāna literature.[389] From this we see that Wuguang employed the Shingon cognitive map to articulate his epistemological position.

These phenomenological dynamics of Buddhist cognitive-mapping contain soteriological implications. According to the Shingon map, unenlightened sentient beings are directed through the nine channels of *saṃsāra* based upon the seeds deposited into the storehouse-cognition. While in *saṃsāra*, their cognitive capabilities are limited to the first nine levels of cognition. Most beings are only able to access the first eight while a bodhisattva—who chooses to remain in *saṃsāra*—can access the ninth. In order to escape *saṃsāra* one must unlock the tenth level of cognition: individuation-cognition. Doing so requires a supra-mundane cognitive modality whose mechanics are beyond the function of the lower nine. Because of this, unlocking the tenth cognition requires an additional apparatus. This apparatus is composed of five pure cognitive functions referred to as the 'five wisdoms' (Skt. *pañca-jñāna*) 五智. The five wisdoms represent an esoteric Buddhist doctrine built upon earlier Yogācāra ideas regarding cognitive modalities.[390]

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[388] Wuguang, *Zhaolun*, 1.4. Original text: "顯教禪宗只說到萬物的源頭是真如，真如生萬物萬法；萬法是真如變的，禪宗的功能只說到此。我們還可以再分析到裡面，唯識學說到六識，應再加上七識、八識，否則不能輪迴。大乘經典談到九識，真言宗則可論及到十識，稱之「一一心識」。"

[389] *Tathātā*—along with *dharmakāya* ('Buddha-body') and *dharmadhātu* ('phenomenal realm')—are ontological constructs that present the original state of the universe as pure and undefiled. In Mahāyāna these were later conflated with the soteriological notion of the *tathāgatagarbha* ('womb of the Buddha'). All of these concepts were late conflated with the undefiled-cognition. See Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, 8.

[390] Buswell et al., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 245.

Rather than being distinct from the lower nine levels of cognition, they are higher functions thereof. The relationships between the five wisdoms, the cognitive map and realms of rebirth are detailed in the following chart (see figure 10).

| Cognitive Map | | Epistemic Source | Five Wisdoms | Realm |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | visual-cognition *cakṣur-vijñāna* | Five Senses | unrestricted activity *kṛtyānuṣṭhāna-jñāna* | Hell |
| **2** | auditory-cognition *śrota-vijñāna* | | | Hungry Ghost |
| **3** | olfactory-cognition *ghrāṇa-vijñāna* | | | Animal |
| **4** | gustatory-cognition *jihvā-vijñāna* | | | Asura |
| **5** | tactile-cognition *kāya-vijñāna* | | | Human |
| **6** | mentation-cognition *mano-vijñāna* | Three Early Yogācāra Mental Cognitions | marvelous observing *pratyavekṣaṇā-jñāna* | Deva |
| **7** | defiled mental-cognition *kliṣṭa-mano-vijñāna* | | equality of all things *samatā-jñāna* | Śrāvaka |
| **8** | storehouse cognition *ālaya-vijñāna* | | great mirror *ādarśa-jñāna* | Pratyekabuddha |
| **9** | undefiled cognition *amala-vijñāna* | Additional Soteriological Cognition | nature of the *dharmadhātu dharmadhātu-prakṛti-jñāna* | Bodhisattva |
| | | | | |
| **10** | individuation-cognition 一一心識 | Additional Shingon Cognition | All Five | Buddha |

**Figure 10:** Wuguang's Understanding of the Shingon Cognitive Map

The soteriological process of cognitive transformation detailed here is encapsulated in the phrase 'transforming cognition into wisdom' 轉識成智 that embodies the soteriological goal of Buddhism according Yogācāra thought.[391] It was this exact process that Wuguang is referring to when drawing a distinction between *jñāna* and *prajñā*. Through the practice of rituals one attains

[391] See J. C. Cleary, *A Tune Beyond the Clouds: Zen Teachings from Old China* (Fremont, CA: Jain Publishing, 1990), 33.

mystical visions. These mystical visions then unlock the higher functions of the lower nine cognitive functions granting us suprasensorial capabilities. Having this capability—which enables a practitioner to see the true nature of reality—is what having *prajñā* means. It is thus an epistemo-soteriological condition.

The fact that this is exactly what Wuguang is saying is openly articulated in his writings. True to his inclusive and anti-sectarian stance, Wuguang taught that Zhenyan/Shingon rituals were not the only way to achieve this transformation. In the following passage, Wuguang asserts that Chan/Zen meditation equally has this potential:

> If one sits in Chan/Zen meditation unto the point of emptiness this is the realm of Mahāvairocana. Pure Land people or people who sit in Chan/Zen meditation, when they sit in Chan/Zen and see buddhas or other phenomena, all of this is the activity of the mind—the activity of the five wisdoms, the activity of the internal body of Mahāvairocana.[392]

Wuguang asserts that the visions of "Buddhas or other phenomena" one may experience during these practices are the activity of the mind, five wisdoms and internal body of Mahāvairocana. As this is a mystical vision, the "mind" of which Wuguang speaks is undoubtedly the aspect which has access to the supra-sense. This supra-sense is symptomatic of "the activity of the five wisdoms" which Wuguang further equates with the "internal body of Mahāvairocana." Mahāvairocana is the core deity of Shingon Buddhism. He is believed to be the totality of the entire universe itself and the true identity of all its inhabitants. Thus, the Shingon universe is a cosmotheistic one composed *of* Mahāvairocana and inhabited *by* his countless manifestations. As Wuguang already told us that mystical visions enable us to see the true nature of reality in an

[392] Wuguang, *Amituo mishi*. Original text: "坐禪至本性空，這境界即是遍照如來。淨土的人或坐禪的人，於坐禪期間見到佛或其他現象，皆是心的活動——五智的活動，即是大日如來的內體的活動。"

entirely unobscured fashion, from this passage we can deduce that this entails seeing the "internal body of Mahāvairocana."

The fact that the five wisdoms are higher functions of the nine cognitions means that even though unenlightened beings are limited to sensorial data, they are innately endowed with suprasensorial capabilities. Wuguang confirms this and explains that we lose this capability through negative 'genes' 基因. Throughout Wuguang's writings he uses the term 'genes' to explain the mechanics of karmic retribution. Similar to how our DNA is based upon the genetic makeup of our parents, our present capabilities are determined by our karma's 'genetic makeup' as determined by previous actions. Wuguang explains how this happens in a passage from his commentary to the Heart Sūtra:

> Becoming a buddha means transforming cognition into wisdom, [which is done by] transforming the five cognitions into the five wisdoms. 'Cognition' is the mentality of the world of delusion, 'wisdom' is the the true, certain path of original wisdom. Unenlightened people originally have the five wisdoms, but as they have been led astray by negative genetic qualities, and thus have become lost within phenomena—[meaning] that their wisdom has been transformed into cognition. If one [first] relies on the '*prajñā* of words and letters,' then on the '*prajñā* of contemplation,' then the '*prajñā* of the characteristics of reality,' one has thus become a buddha.[393]

Wuguang references the process of 'transforming cognition into wisdom' cited above and reverses into 'wisdom transferring into cognition' in order to explain the negative karmic consequences rooted in past life activity. These "negative genes" phenomenologically function the same as the 'seeds' that 'perfume' the storehouse-cognition in earlier Yogācāra thought. This results in one's epistemological range being limited to sensorial data. Wuguang defines

[393] Wuguang, *Xinjing*. Original text: "成佛是轉識成智，將五識轉成五智。識是迷界之心理，智是達道正確的本有智德。凡夫本來就具足五智，因為被惡的基因德性所支使，以致迷於現象，智變成了識，若依"文字般若"去做"觀照般若"，以"觀照般若"去證"實相 般若"，即成佛。"

becoming a Buddha as the attainment of *prajñā* that happens by retransforming one's cognitive function from the five senses *back* to the five wisdoms.[394]

From all of these references we have a clear understanding of Wuguang's epistemology as well as its soteriological implications. Becoming a buddha—the stated goal of Zhenyan/Shingon—is nothing other than the acquisition of *prajñā* brought about by transforming one's cognitive mode *back* to its original suprasensorially capable state. This is achieved through the performance of religious rituals that initiate mystical visionary experiences. Without these visions, this goal is unattainable. Although these visions are the entire point of performing Zhenyan/Shingon rituals, more common Buddhist practices such as Chan/Zen meditation and chanting Amitābha's name can also produce the same results. This transformation, however, does not entail producing a new cognitive modality but reviving an original one that has been lost. Again, mirroring Wuguang's anti-sectarian stance and reinterpretation of the divide between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, this transformation is open to all human beings regardless of their religious affiliation. If one's religious practices produce mystical visions that awaken the suprasensorial five wisdoms, then one's faith is orthodox. If one's religious practice does not—even if those practices are entirely Buddhist—his faith is heterodox.

## Epistemological Conclusion

Wuguang's magical taxonomy and soteriological epistemology are highly polemical. In light of the fact that *prajñā*—orthodoxy—requires mystical visionary experiences, non-

[394] The prajñāic trinary detailed by Wuguang here was not his own invention. These three kinds of *prajñā (tri-prajñā)* are one prajñāic taxonomy found in classical Buddhist literature. The lowest form, '*prajñā* of words and letters' entails studying Buddhist literature. The second, '*prajñā* of contemplation' requires meditative practices. The latter, and highest form of these, '*prajñā* of the characteristics of reality,' is the essential *prajñā* inherent in all sentient beings that one attains through transforming their cognition to *prajñā*. See James M. Shields, *Critical Buddhism: Engaging with Modern Japanese Buddhist Thought* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 89-90.

experiential forms of religion are by default heterodox and practitioners of this universal heterodoxy are automatically ignorant.

The implications of this are directly related to Wuguang's views of magic. According to Wuguang, if one believes magic to be 'superstitious' based on the misconception that those who wield magic do so by drawing upon forces originating in an external source that is because one's views are heterodox and based on limited information. As magic originates within and entails "consciousness controlling matter," labeling magic as 'superstitious' is a logically fallacious strawman. Thus, the Japanese and Chinese Buddhist modernists who attacked Daoism and folk religion were chasing phantasms produced by their own imaginations. What they *imagined* they were attacking—even according to Wuguang—deserved to be labeled as 'superstitious.' However, if one practices magic with the realization that the powers come from within—a prajñāic realization open to followers of every faith—then the modernist critique is entirely unwarranted. From this we see that Wuguang did not reject the notion that magic could be superstitious. Rather, he rejected applying the concept of 'superstition' too broadly. In order to save magic from the category of 'superstition,' Wuguang nuanced the typological category itself.

# Conclusion

In addition to fashioning his own typology and adding nuance to the category of 'superstition,' Wuguang redeemed magic by painting a picture of the world as he saw it. As to be expected, this world was an enchanted one that is permeated with magical energy.

Despite the fact that we now understand that when Wuguang considered a magical practice to be prajñāic, it meant that one's understanding thereof was built upon suprasensorial input collected through mystical visions, we have yet to see what, *exactly*, one saw during those

visions. In his commentary to the *Heart Sūtra* Wuguang said, "Viewing the world through the mind's eye transforms [it] into Śākyamuni's Pure Land."[395] However, Wuguang's description of this Pure Land bears little resemblance to its Buddhist precedents and was much more akin to something out of science fiction. This is because Wuguang constructed his magical world by drawing upon Daoist and Buddhist ontology, modern philosophy and thermodynamics.

In the next chapter, we will explore Wuguang's world while discussing both how and why he constructed it in the way he did.

[395] Wuguang, *Xinjing.* Original text: "安心眼前就變成了釋迦淨土."