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

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Chapter 4

Wuguang's Electric Universe

Suddenly, I stood involuntarily motionless. The intellectual effort to which I had been stimulated had subconsciously gone further than I realized, and I had suddenly been led to a new point, as yet untrodden. The difficulty – indeed, the impossibility – of the dualism and parallelism of matter and energy had intensified in my head...to such an extent that I gasped for air intellectually, so to speak, and grasped at another solution. How would it be if energy alone had primary existence and matter were only a secondary product of energy, a complex of different energies held together by definite causes...[that thought] had the effect on me of a lightning-like illumination. I experienced a physical sensation in my brain comparable to an umbrella's turning inside out in a heavy wind. My total consciousness suddenly snapped over into a different, more stable position of equilibrium, out of the earlier position of relative equilibrium of my thinking, which had been satisfied with the parallelism of matter and energy. Here energy was definitely accorded the leading and decisive position: mass and weight, the chief properties of "matter," were viewed as factors, or partial quantities, of certain kinds of energy.

~ Friedrich Wilhelm Ostwald³⁹⁶

After confirming the existence of magic, redeeming it from the category of 'superstition' and equating it with 'religion,' Wuguang went a step further and explained it in terms of 'secular science.' He accomplished this by fashioning a metaphysical ontology that reconciled Buddhist and Daoist ontologies, Chinese folk religious practices, esoteric Buddhist soteriology and scientific theories that had been popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Following in the footsteps of his Buddhist modernist predecessors, he articulated his new ontology and related metaphysics in the language of modern philosophy.

Just like his magical taxonomy and epistemology, Wuguang's onto-metaphysical doctrines represent a polemical response to disenchanting Buddhist modernism. This fact is

³⁹⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Ostwald, *Lebenslinien: Eine Selbstbiographie*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Klassing & Co., 1926-1927), 2.155-157 as translated and quoted in R. J. Deltete, "Wilhelm Ostwald's Energetics 1: Origins and Motivations," *Foundations of Chemistry* 9, no. 3 (2007): 31-32.

attested to by the particular religious practices that his ontology redeemed from the category of ‘superstition’ and the exact philosophical and scientific concepts that he utilized to do so. The practices that Wuguang explained were related to funerary practices, spirit-mediumship, demonic possession, and astrology. The philosophical and scientific rubrics that Wuguang employed revolved around the duality of mind and matter. These ritual and philosophical subjects were central foci of disenchanted Buddhist modernism.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first discusses Wuguang’s ontology while highlighting his reliance on the philosophical and scientific issues utilized by his Buddhist predecessors and the ways in which this ontology harmonized Buddhism, Daoism, philosophy and science. The second section is focused on the metaphysical ramifications of Wuguang’s ontology and showcases his attempt to scientifically explain religious practices that had been deemed ‘superstitious’ due to their inexplicability. The third and final section presents Wuguang’s radical prediction regarding the future of Asian—and global—religiosity.

Section I: Energetic Ontology

Nineteenth-early twentieth century East Asian Buddhist engagements with modern philosophy were dominated by overly simplistic interpretations of epistemological and ontological arguments. These oversimplifications focused on the divide between material and mental phenomena.³⁹⁷ This division has both ontological and phenomenological applications. Despite the fact that ontological applications have phenomenological ramifications and vice versa, due to the fact that they are different philosophical fields of inquiry they produce different philosophical positions that I will now explain.

³⁹⁷ Erik J. Hammerstrom, “The Expression ‘The Myriad Dharmas are Only Consciousness’ in Early 20th Century Chinese Buddhism,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 23 (2010): 83.

Ontologically, the material/mental binary functions as the foundation of materialism and idealism. In Japanese and Chinese these were respectively translated as ‘matter-only ideology’ 唯物論 (also 唯物主義) and ‘mind-only ideology’ 唯心論 (also 唯心主義). The distinction between these positions is an issue of primacy. Materialism asserts that mental phenomena—commonly referred to as ‘consciousness’ or ‘mind’—are secondary outcrops of matter while idealism maintains the exact opposite. According to both, if one were to deconstruct any ‘thing’ to its most primitive ingredient—whatever that ‘thing’ may be—a single, universal substance would be revealed. Their point of contention is whether that underlying substance would be material or mental. As both materialist and idealist ontologies posit that the entire universe is composed of the same underlying ‘stuff,’ they are both examples of ‘monism’—a term that was rendered into Japanese and Chinese as ‘single-basis ideology’ 一元論 (also 一元主義).

The phenomenological application of the matter/consciousness divide is oftentimes very different. While the ontological applications just discussed were cases of ‘either or,’ phenomenologically it can be ‘both and.’ This difference is easily explained by using the ontological and phenomenological positions articulated by René Descartes (1596-1650) as an example. Rather than arguing that all worldly phenomena are composed of a single substance, he maintained that material phenomena are composed entirely of matter while mental phenomena are composed entirely of consciousness. Thus, rather than articulating a monistic ontology akin to either materialism or idealism, he formulated a form of ‘dualism’—a term that was translated into Japanese and Chinese as ‘double-basis ideology’ 二元論 (also 二元主義). This dualistic ontology had phenomenological ramifications. Based on a strict division between matter and consciousness, Descartes argued for a strict division between mind and body. This strict division

is commonly referred to as ‘Cartesian dualism’—which is a phenomenological, rather than ontological position as it concerns human experience.

East Asian Buddhist modernists tended to portray all Western philosophical positions as either strictly materialist or idealist.³⁹⁸ This enabled them to proclaim that Buddhism contained philosophical positions that transcended this debate.

The material/mental binary served as Inoue Enryō’s discursive point of entry in his engagements with modern philosophy.³⁹⁹ This can be seen in the passage quoted in the previous chapter where he segregated religion from science based on the division between matter and consciousness.⁴⁰⁰ His use of this distinction to proclaim that Western thought was limited to these two positions can be seen in the following:

Since antiquity, verification has been sought for the idealist and materialist poles. It was assumed that either materialism or idealism provided the correct worldview. However, an outside observer

³⁹⁸ Hammerstrom—who has contributed much to our understanding of early Chinese Buddhist engagements with modern philosophy—unknowingly conflates these ontological and philosophical issues throughout his work. In his “Myriad Dharmas” he states that the Chinese Buddhists were fashioning a Buddhist ontology that would transcend the materialist/idealist binary. However, the article primarily deals with phenomenology—not ontology—and the few ontological opinions he does detail are entirely idealist despite his claim that they transcend the materialist/idealist dichotomy. This is problematic, since the article’s key argument is that the Buddhists transformed a classical Yogācāra phenomenological doctrine into an ontological one that transcended this binary. This misunderstanding is again found in his chapter, “Yogācāra and Modern Science in the 1920s: The Wuchang School’s Approach to Modern Mind Science,” in *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China*, ed. John Makeham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 175 where his confounding these issues is manifested in his characterizing these philosophical musings as “onto-epistemological.” This same misunderstanding is again echoed in his book, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism: Early Twentieth-Century Engagements*, Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 105, where he states, “By the second half of the nineteenth century, the opposition between materialism and idealism in European philosophy had resulted in serious philosophical battles and even in the brief popularity of monism as a way to reconcile the two.” This is simply not correct as ontological materialism and idealism are forms of monism and thus are in no way ‘reconciled’ through monism. Hammerstrom did an absolutely amazing job of giving a very detailed account of how Chinese Buddhists adapted Yogācāra phenomenology to construct a modern Buddhist epistemology and refute ontological materialism. However, he did not explain how they applied these phenomenological doctrines ontologically to transcend the materialist/idealist dichotomy.

³⁹⁹ Kopf, “Modern Buddhism,” 32.

⁴⁰⁰ See page 141.

understands that each position highlights one aspect of reality and that both constitute different perspectives of the same reality.⁴⁰¹

The philosophical positions that Inoue details and rejects in this passage are the materialist and idealist ontologies. In place of these he posits a dual-aspect monism. This position differs from materialism and idealism—as well as ontological dualism—in the fact that it asserts that the material and mental characteristics that phenomena exude are secondary qualities of a more primordial substratum. As ‘material’ and ‘mental’ are secondary attributes, the substratum is made of an underlying substance that is neither material nor mental.

Wuguang’s use of the materialist/idealist binary mirrored that of Inoue’s in multiple ways. Like Inoue, he reduced Western philosophy to a monolithic struggle between these two positions and rejected them both in favor of a dual-aspect monism:

The essential path to the gate of Chan is one simple road... the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* refers to this as the ‘non-dual *dharma* gate,’ philosophy calls it ‘monism’... The body and mind are not two means that the body and consciousness are two aspects of a single material... Anthropologists have concluded that humans have been on the earth for 250,000 years. Throughout this entire time they have been misled by the notion that the mind and body are separate, delighting in strange, unexamined accounts of absurd monsters. This has given birth to suffering and the plight of humanity’s woes. Standard Buddhism says “form and mind are not two”... meaning that matter and consciousness are the same substance.⁴⁰²

Here, Wuguang states that the entire history of human intellectual inquiry has been polarized between the materialist and idealist positions and asserts that the correct paradigm entails a dual-

⁴⁰¹ Inoue Enryō, “*Yo no uchū-kan* 余の宇宙観 [A View of the Cosmos],” in *Funtō tetsugaku* 奮闘哲學 [Philosophical Struggle], by Inoue Enryō (Tōkyō: Tōadō Shobō, 1917), 237-238. Translation adapted from that presented in Kopf, “‘Modern Buddhism,’” 35, citing the translation by Gerard C. Godart in, *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, eds. James W. Heisig et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), 625. Original text: “すなわち両極の合して一となることが、古来の唯物論、唯心論によりて明らかに証明せられている。あるいは唯物論が真理である、あるいは唯心論が真理であるなどというのは、いずれも偏見にして、局外より観察すれば、この二者全く一物の両端、一体の両面に過ぎぬことが分かる。” Online: http://www.ircp.jp/enryo_senshu/text/INOUE02/02-04_funtoutetsugaku.txt (accessed Jan. 26, 2016).

⁴⁰² Wuguang, *Chande jianghua*, 12. Original text: “禪門的要道是單純的一條路...維摩經曰「不二法門」，哲學家曰「一元論...身心不二，即是我們的身體與精神是同一物之兩方面...據人類學者研究的結果，人類在地球上出現大約有二十五萬年之久，至今還迷惑於身心別體的觀念，喜歡著奇妖怪談荒唐不稽的幻覺，由此生出苦惱，乃是人類悲哀的事情，普佛教說色心不二...故色心不二是物質與精神是同一體。”

aspect monism. Thus, his diagnosis of and prescribed remedy for widespread human misunderstanding are the same as Inoue's. To bolster his ontological claim, Wuguang cites Buddhist scripture and applies it phenomenologically to reject Cartesian Dualism, conflating the phenomenological and ontological issues described above. Wuguang also blames people's 'superstitious' belief in tales of fantastical creatures—beliefs targeted by Inoue in his *Preternatural Studies*—on dualism.

In addition to the similarities between Inoue and Wuguang's rejection of materialism and idealism in favor of dual-aspect monism, both concluded that the 'neither material nor mental' substratum underlying all phenomena consists of energy. This energetic monism, referred to as 'energeticism' 唯力一論/唯力論 ('energy-only monism'), is an ontology that was popular in European and East Asian intellectual circles during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Energeticism is most often associated with the German chemist, Freidrich Wilhelm Ostwald (1853-1932; 1919 Nobel Prize for Chemistry). Energeticism is an energy-based monism that presents energy as a "veritable ontological being."⁴⁰³ According to energeticism, phenomenal diversity—including material and mental characteristics—is nothing more than the manifestation of energetic fluctuations and exchanges.⁴⁰⁴ Although now largely forgotten, energeticism was an influential idea in its heyday. It influenced the automobile pioneer Henry Ford (1863-1947), the Scientific Management of Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) and even the work of Albert Einstein (1879-1955).⁴⁰⁵ It was also popular within Russian—and later

⁴⁰³ Émile Meyerson, *Explanation in the Sciences* (Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 401.

⁴⁰⁴ Frederick Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 285.

⁴⁰⁵ Ostwald's influence on Ford and Taylor is noted in Edgar Herbst, *Der Taylorismus Als Hilfe in Unserer Wirtschaftsnot* (Leipzig: Anzengruber, 1920) as cited in Gerd Spittler, "Beginnings of the Anthropology of Work: Nineteenth-Century Social Scientists and their Influence on Ethnography" in *Work in a Modern Society: The*

Soviet—circles, so much so that Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) dedicated large sections of his writings in order to denounce it.⁴⁰⁶

Energeticism was also popular in Meiji intellectual circles. The Japanese chemist famous for discovering the flavor umami うま味, Ikeda Kikunae 池田菊苗 (1846-1936) reinterpreted the line from the *Heart Sūtra* that states “Form is emptiness, emptiness is form” in energetic terms by rendering it, “‘Universe is energy, Energy is universe,’ and that means energetic monism.”⁴⁰⁷ Ikeda studied with Ostwald in Germany after hearing of his energetic theories in Japan. His energetic reinterpretation of Buddhism was based on what he saw as a consistency between the energetic substratum and Mahāyāna Buddhist ontology that I will now explain.⁴⁰⁸

Identifying a particular substratum of the universe as a basis for a dual-aspect monism is particularly challenging from a Mahāyāna Buddhist perspective. This difficulty is born out of Mahāyāna understandings of impermanence (Skt. *anitya*) and emptiness (*śūnyatā*) that present all phenomena as being devoid of a permanent self-existence. Simply stated, there is no essential ‘thing’ that constitutes a phenomena’s fundamental core as its present existence is nothing but a composite of interdependent, ephemeral causes and conditions (*nidāna*). This makes substance-based ontologies—such as materialism and idealism or even dualism—problematic from a

German Historical Experience in Comparative Perspective, ed. Jürgen Kocka (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2010), 44.

⁴⁰⁶ Kenneth M. Stokes, *Paradigm Lost: A Cultural and Systems Theoretical Critique of Political Economy* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 171-172.

⁴⁰⁷ Ikeda Kikunae, “*Enerrugii to kū*,” *Gendai no Kagaku* 3, no. 6 (1915): 368. As quoted and translated in Yoshiyuki Kikuchi, “Wilhelm Ostwald and the Japanese Chemists,” in *Wilhelm Ostwald at the Crossroads between Chemistry, Media and Culture*, eds. Britta Görs et al., *Leipziger Schriften zur Philosophie*, 12 ([Leipzig]: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2005), 111.

⁴⁰⁸ Kikuchi, “Wilhelm Ostwald,” 101-113.

Mahāyāna standpoint.⁴⁰⁹ Energy, which is devoid of any permanent form and is always in a state of flux, was believed by Ikeda to sidestep the issues of impermanence and emptiness.

Inoue agreed. Underlying the different forms of phenomena he asserted that behind their material and mental characteristics is a substratum that was composed of energy:

Matter and mind are phenomena. Suchness is the essence. Energy [力] develops out of the Suchness of matter and mind. [...] With the energy possessed by its essence, Suchness evolves freely, independently, and naturally, and through natural selection discloses the two realms of matter and mind, giving birth to the myriad of phenomena and their transformations.⁴¹⁰

In order to claim that Buddhism was not only harmonious with, but superior to, science, Inoue additionally equated energy with the *tathātā* to demonstrate that science was only now discovering something that Buddhists had known for millennia.⁴¹¹

The use of energeticism to fashion an ontology that transcended the materialist/idealist binary while harmonizing science and Buddhism was also popular in China and Tibet. However, multiple scholars have misinterpreted the Chinese and Tibetan textual examples and mistakenly

⁴⁰⁹ See Siddheswar Rameshwar Bhatt and Anu Mehrotra, *Buddhist Epistemology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood: 2000), 1.

⁴¹⁰ Inoue Enryō, *Bukkyō katsuron joron* 佛教活論序論 [Prolegomena to a Living Discourse on Buddhism] (Tōkyō: Tetsugaku Shoin, 1888), 368. As quoted and translated in Kōda Retsu, “The Structure of the ‘True Mystery’ in the Philosophy of Inoue Enryō,” *International Inoue Enryō Research* 2 (2014): 107. Online: <https://www.toyo.ac.jp/uploaded/attachment/12860.pdf> (accessed Jan. 26, 2016). Original text: “物心は象なり、真如は体なり、物心の真如より開発するは力なり...けだし真如はその自体に有するところの力をもって、自存、自立、自然にして進化し、自然にして淘汰して物心両境を開き、万象万化を生ずるものなり。” Online: http://www.ircp.jp/enryo_senshu/text/INOUE03/03-04_bukkyoukatsuronjoron.txt (accessed Jan. 26, 2016).

⁴¹¹ See Kōda, “Structure of the ‘True Mystery,’” 107. For more examples of scholarly discussions regarding Inoue’s embracing energeticism see Christopher Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School and Co-prosperity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 47 and “The Way of Revering the Emperor: Imperial Philosophy and Bushidō in Modern Japan,” in *The Emperors of Modern Japan*, ed. Ben-Ami Shillony (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 32, n.29. Also see Gino K. Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1994: A Survey* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 34; Gerard C. Godart, “‘Philosophy’ or ‘‘Religion’’?: The Confrontation with Foreign Categories in Late Nineteenth Century Japan,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 1 (2008): 86; Yamazaki Masakazu and Sumie Saito, “Modern Japan and its Philosophical Development,” *Revue Internationale De Philosophie* 28, no. 107-108 (1974): 46 and the sources cited there.

postulated that their authors' were referring to Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity as expressed in the equation $E=mc^2$.⁴¹²

Wuguang also embraced energeticism and taught that the underlying substratum consists of energy. His terminology differed somewhat in the fact that he never mentioned 'energeticism' by name and referred to 'energy' as 'luminosity' 光 (Chn. *guang*, Jpn. *hikari*)—the second character of his name, Wuguang—rather than the term 'force' 力 (Chn. *li*, Jpn. *chikara*) as his predecessors had done, and employed the term 'force' to explain the metaphysical ramifications

⁴¹² Taixu mentions energeticism by name and even expresses fondness for it in "*Fofa yu kexue* 佛法與科學 [The Buddha-dharma and Science]," *Haichaoyin* 海潮音 4, no.8 (1923), (MFQ 157.15). Taixu's usage of the term 'energy only' 唯力 in this instance is noted by Erik Hammerstrom who states that the fondness Taixu expressed for this theory—which Hammerstrom misidentified as Einstein's Special Relativity—was revoked two years later in an article Taixu wrote (under the pseudonym Meian 昧盒) entitled "*Ai'ensitan xianguilun yu weishilun* 愛恩斯坦相對論與唯識論 [Einstein's Theory of Relativity and Consciousness-only Ideology]," *Haichaoyin* 8, no. 9 (1927): 247-249, (MFQ 168.365-367). This reading is problematic for a number of reasons. First, Taixu's earlier article—that mentions energeticism by name—does not mention Einstein or relativity. Second, the later article—on Einstein—does not mention energeticism. I conclude that this is because Taixu was in fact referring to two entirely different theories, one propagated by Ostwald and the other by Einstein. My conclusion finds strength in an earlier article written by Taixu—not quoted by Hammerstrom—entitled "*Ping zhuqian zhi junde xuwu zhuyi* 評朱謙之君的虛無主義 [Assessment of Zhu Qian the King of Nihilism]," *Haichaoyin* 1, no. 2 (1920?): 7-11, (MFQ 147.271-275), that references energeticism by name alongside other ontological positions without referencing Einstein's relativity. In light of all of this, it is impossible not to conclude that when Taixu referenced 'energy only' he was in fact not referring to Einstein's Special Relativity, but to energeticism. Additionally, Special Relativity shows that matter and energy are *interchangeable* rather than asserting that matter is *reducible to* energy—as implied in the name 'energy only' that was first used in Japan. Hammerstrom's confusing these two is understandable with the voluminous nature of the Chinese sources he was working with which prevented him from sufficiently tracing the Western ideas they were utilizing through their Japanese provenance. See Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*, 96-97. Hammerstrom may not be the only scholar to mistake energeticism for Special Relativity. In Thupten Jinpa's work on the Tibetan intellectual and modernist Gendün Chöphel (1903-1951), he speculates that Gendün Chöphel was utilizing Special Relativity to harmonize Mahāyāna conceptions of *śūnyatā* with science. As this was exactly how energeticism functioned in earlier Japanese Buddhist circles, it is probable that this was the theory Gendün Chöphel was using. See Thupten Jinpa, "Science as an Ally or a Rival Philosophy? Tibetan Buddhist Thinkers' Engagement with Modern Science," in *Buddhism & Science: Breaking New Ground*, ed. B. Allan Wallace (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003; First Indian Edition, Delhi, 2004), 73. Another possible case of mistaken Tibetan usage of energeticism can be found in Donald S. Lopez Jr., *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Buddhism and Modernity (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 119-120. I speculate that the reason Buddhist Studies scholars so often overlook energeticism is due to the fame of Special Relativity and a number of widespread misunderstandings regarding the history of science. Energeticism is popularly believed to be antithetical to the existence of atoms and was therefore left dead in the water after the existence of atoms was proven. However, despite the fact that Ostwald passionately denied the existence of atoms for much of his career, after they were successfully proven to exist, Ostwald himself asserted that an energetic universe could still be an atomic one. It is perhaps these forgotten facets of scientific history that led Buddhist Studies scholars to consistently confuse energeticism for Special Relativity. See Gerald Holton, *The Scientific Imagination: Case Studies* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1993), 82.

of his energetic ontology. Despite these minor terminological difference, *guang* functioned in the same way for Wuguang as ‘force’ had for earlier Buddhist modernists and ‘energy’ did for the energeticists. We can see this when comparing two passages, one written by Ostwald and the other by Wuguang, in light of that from Inoue above:

When, for instance, we say that we feel a material thing, as we put our hand upon a book or a desk, it is really the experience of some changed form of our organism which we feel, and which is due to the manifestation of the energy induced by the grasp of the hand.⁴¹³

The original nature of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata is *guang*. This was said in antiquity when religion began to advance. Later, sciences concerning change have developed and [obtained] this knowledge—but [science] has lost the original principle. Every tiny atom shines upon inspection, each particle has energy—it has electricity. If your hand physically comes into contact with something electricity is emitted—any sort of physical contact produces electricity. There is no copulation that does not emit *guang*.⁴¹⁴

Here Wuguang tells us in no uncertain terms that he believed that substratum of the universe is composed of *guang*. This is articulated in terms of Zhenyan/Shingon cosmotheism that sees Mahāvairocana as the universe itself.⁴¹⁵ As Inoue had already asserted that *tathātā* is composed of energy and Mahāvairocana is considered *tathātā*, their ontologies are consistent with one another. The fact that Wuguang’s *guang* 光 referred to the term ‘force’ 力 Inoue and others had used to denote the ‘energy’ of energeticism is further demonstrated by the similarity between Ostwald’s statement and the latter half of the above passage written by Wuguang. The parallel ways Ostwald and Wuguang respectively used ‘energy’ and ‘*guang*’ to explain that the physical sensation of a hand coming into contact with another body makes it all but undeniable that Wuguang had read Ostwald’s words in some form or another.

⁴¹³ This text is taken from a series of lectures entitled *Naturphilosophie* that Ostwald delivered in Leipzig during the summer of 1901 as translated and quoted in John G. Hibben, “The Theory of Energetics and its Philosophical Bearings,” *The Monist* 13 (1903): 322.

⁴¹⁴ Wuguang, *Wuguang shangshi 1999 nian yufo*. Original text: “大日如來本性實是光，初期的進步精華宗教學說，以後的變化科學發達也知道，但迷失原則。微細的原子，每個檢照起來每粒都有光有電，手碰便發出電，有接觸才有電，沒有交配便不發出光。”

⁴¹⁵ See Rambelli, *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics*, xvii.

Like Ikeda and Inoue, Wuguang concluded that energeticism was compatible with Buddhist ontology due to the fact that it is reconcilable with Mahāyāna notions of emptiness. This is revealed in his commentary to the *Zhaolun* 肇論 written by Sengzhao 僧肇 (384-414?). Sengzhao was a student of the renowned translator and exegete Kumārajīva (344–413), and a student of Daoism before turning to Buddhism. He applied Daoist ontological concepts related to ‘being’ 有 and ‘non-being’ 無 to explain Buddhist perceptions of ‘form’ and ‘emptiness’ in Chinese terms. This can readily be seen in the opening line of his *Treasure Store Treatise* 寶藏論 that states “Emptiness that can be deemed empty is not true emptiness. Being that can be deemed being is not true being,”⁴¹⁶ which is a Buddhist rearticulation of the opening of the *Daode jing*. In interpreting this same axiom in the *Zhaolun*, Wuguang explains that:

“Being is not true being.” ‘Not true being’ assumes form once it has been mysteriously arranged and organized, this is why it can be called ‘mysterious being.’ Take for example a television and electromagnetic waves. When the television has yet to be turned on it does not receive a signal. Once turned on, it receives a signal, as [the electromagnetic waves] have been arranged. This is therefore it is called ‘mysterious.’ Electric waves are formed by the vibrations of electrons, if a television’s signal is not correctly calibrated then it will display a blurry, snowy picture since the electric particles within it are scattered. If the [television’s] frequency is tuned to that of the particles, the picture projected will be very clear. Originally non-being [coalesces] into the image of being, but being will also become non-being because it is just the transmission of mysterious being.⁴¹⁷

“It is not true emptiness”...because within true emptiness there is raw material, it is tiny and cannot be seen, like electrons, atoms, molecules...it is impossible to see. Its ‘being’ is nothing more than a light-wave...‘being’ rises out of ‘emptiness,’ ‘emptiness’ becomes ‘mysterious being,’ ‘being’ will once again revert to ‘emptiness.’ It comes and goes within the three realms like an unending circle.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ Translation adapted from Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 2.

⁴¹⁷ Wuguang, *Zhaolun*, 1.2. Original text: “有是假有，假有是經過微妙的設計與組織才形成的，故又可稱為妙有。例如電視和電磁波，電視未開就收視不到，一但打開就能收到，這就是組織的，所以叫做妙，電波是電子振動而成的，電視的頻率不合收視就會像雪花模糊，因為電磁波中的粒子散開了。倘若使粒子的頻率相符，放映出來的相就會很清晰，原本沒有影像會有，但有也會變成沒有，因為那只是傳真來的妙有。”

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 1.3. Original text: “「不真空」...由於真空裡面是有原料的，它微細得無法看見，像電子、原子、分子.....是沒辦法看到的，有的還只是光波而已...「有」從「空」生，「空」變成「妙有」，「有」再回歸到「空」，如環無端，在三界虛中出沒。”

Here, Wuguang demonstrates his energetic explanation of emptiness by invoking the Mahāyāna doctrine ‘true emptiness is mysterious being’ 真空妙有 that asserts “true emptiness is mysteriously existing: truly empty, or immaterial, yet transcendently existing.”⁴¹⁹ Wuguang identified the mysterious existence/being as energy.

In addition to articulating his energetic ontology in such overt terms, Wuguang communicated this belief covertly. He hid this reference in plain sight by embedding it within his monk’s style and Dharma-name. When the second character of the former, *guang* 光 and the first character of the latter, *quan* 全 are put side by side they read *quanguang* 全光 meaning ‘everything is luminosity’ or in energetic terms ‘everything is energy.’ The relationship between Wuguang’s name and his ideology was also noted by Shinzen Young who stated, “Wuguang was really big on the whole light thing (as his name indicates). I remember him saying something like ‘I’ve transformed it all into light.’”⁴²⁰ Thus, energeticism was so central to Wuguang’s religiosity that he seems to have named himself after it.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ Bongkil Chung, *The Dharma Master Chongsan of Wŏn Buddhism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012), 298.

⁴²⁰ Shinzen Young, personal correspondence, Feb. 6, 2015.

⁴²¹ In the introduction I discussed how Dharma-transmission provenance is supported by lineage charts in order to validate the master-disciple transmission chain of religious figures and thereby strengthen their legitimacy. These claims are further strengthened by what are referred to as ‘lineage poems’ 派詩. Lineage poems are used by both Buddhist and Daoist sects in East Asia as a way to designate members’ sectarian affiliation and generation within their sect. Each Chinese character within these poems corresponds to a generation within a particular lineage. New lineage members are given a Dharma-name 法號 composed of two characters; one chosen by the officiating master and one drawn from the lineage poem corresponding to the individual’s generation within that lineage referred to as a generation-character 輩字. The generation-character within the Dharma-name of the lineage’s founder will be the poem’s first character while those of his students will be the poem’s second character and so on. If the devotee eventually becomes a monk, he is awarded yet another two-character Dharma-name referred to as a monk’s style 字 which also has a poetically generated generation-character, but one drawn from a different poem than the one used to create the Dharma-name. When then Dharma-name and style are put side by side, they form the monk’s full, four character Buddhist name. The character not drawn from the poem is often chosen by the devotee, which leads me to conclude that Wuguang’s name was an intentional articulation of his belief in energeticism. The entire lineage poem from which the generational character of Wuguang’s style—*wu* 悟—was taken from is recorded in CBETA X86 1603. The poem that was the source for the generational character in Wuguang’s Dharma-name—*miao* 妙—can be found in in Shi Hui-yen 釋慧嚴, “The Interaction of Fukien’s and Taiwanese Buddhism in Late

My assertion that Wuguang’s ontology was an energetic one finds additional textual support from his other writings—which we will see shortly—and even the writings of his former disciple, Guru Chesheng 徹聖上師 (secular name Chen Shenghua 陳聖華; b. 1938). Chesheng obtained *abhiṣeka* from Wuguang before breaking away from the MSBL and founding his own lineage, the Samantabhadra Lineage 真言宗普賢流.⁴²² He states that he broke away from the MSBL because Wuguang taught that ‘everything is *guang*’ and wielded this concept in order explain the mechanics of magic.⁴²³

Given Wuguang’s reliance on his Buddhist predecessors, his energetic ontology and energeticism’s popularity amongst Buddhist modernists in Japan and China, it is logical to conclude that his energetic Mahāvairocana was based on the worldview propagated by Ostwald. There is yet another worldview that he drew upon to understand the magical world he lived in. This was the worldview which he had been brought up and educated in—Daoism.

The Dao of Electric Mahāvairocana

Wuguang’s energeticism had a final essential ingredient—Daoist cosmology. His assertion that the substratum of the universe is composed of energy was predicated upon a marriage that he performed between Shingon cosmotheistic notions of Mahāvairocana and Daoist conceptions of the Dao 道. Notwithstanding the Dao’s ineffable nature, in Daoist cosmology it has a palpable ontological function similar to that of Mahāvairocana.⁴²⁴ In the

Ming and Early Ch’ing Dynasty 明末清初閩台佛教的互動,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 9 (1996): 230. For more information on lineage poems in general see Stephen Jones, *In Search of the Folk Daoists of North China* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 11 and 69.

⁴²² Chesheng and his Samantabhadra Lineage are discussed at great length in Chapter 6.

⁴²³ Chesheng, *Shengyi xinyao azi yi* 勝義心要阿字義 [Explanation of the A-seed Syllable] (Taichung: Zhenyanzong Puxianliu Foxuehui, ND), 12.

⁴²⁴ To define the Dao—which is not the same as discerning how it functions as an ontological construct—would be a fool’s errand. The first words of the archetypal text of Daoism, the *Daode jing* 道德經 state, “The Dao

words of Thomas Michael, “Ultimately, of course, everything is the Dao...The imposition of borders on phenomenal reality is essentially the imposition of borders on the Dao itself, insofar as phenomenal reality is one primary field of the being of the Dao.”⁴²⁵ The fact that both the Dao and Mahāvairocana are portrayed as the embodiments of the universe undoubtedly inspired Wuguang to pen the following:

Mahāvairocana is the Dao, the Dao is the principle behind the production of all phenomena, [thus] certainly all phenomena are the Dao’s body.⁴²⁶

These words unequivocally equate Mahāvairocana and the Dao. They also reveal that Wuguang equated them based on the similar ontological role each played as the totality of the universe I explained above.

There are more profound qualities Mahāvairocana and the Dao share that Wuguang based this equation on.

The ontological character of the Dao is monistic. It is singularly composed of a substance referred to as *qi* 氣 (Jpn. *ki*). *Qi* is widely understood as a tangible energy.⁴²⁷ As the Dao is the totality of the universe and is composed entirely of a single energetic substance, Wuguang interpreted Daoist *qi*-based ontology in light of modern notions of energy. This conflation directly relates to Wuguang’s interpretation of Mahāvairocana’s energetic composition. Based on the name ‘Mahāvairocana’—which is formed from the Sanskrit words *mahā* meaning ‘great’ and

that can be expressed is not the Dao, the name that can be named, is not the name,” which testifies to the unfathomable and inexpressible quality of the Dao as well as the futility of attempting to explain it.

⁴²⁵ Thomas Michael, *The Pristine Dao: Metaphysics in Early Daoist Discourse*, SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 71.

⁴²⁶ Wuguang, *Yizhen fajū qianshuo*, 176. Original text: “這毘盧即是道，道即是創造萬物的原理，當然萬物即是道體。”

⁴²⁷ See Helen Farley, “Falun Gong and Science: Origins, Pseudoscience, and China's Scientific Establishment,” in *Handbook of Religion and the Authority of Science*, eds. James R. Lewis and Olav Hammer, Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion 3 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 141-163.

vairocana meaning ‘illuminator’—Wuguang believed that both Daoist and Zhenyan/Shingon cosmologies were energy-based. We can see this by comparing the line from the lengthier passage quoted above that reads, “The original nature of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata is *guang*,” with another he wrote elsewhere about the Dao:

The fundamental origin of the universe’s entire body is *guang*, *guang* is the Dao.”⁴²⁸

Here Wuguang says that the Dao is the origin of the universe and synonymous with *guang*—claims we already saw him make about Mahāvairocana. This tells us that, from Wuguang’s ontological vantage point, the Dao and Mahāvairocana are not only thematically similar, but their elemental compositions are fundamentally identical. That composition, of course, was singularly composed of energy.

Wuguang’s equating the Dao and Mahāvairocana—in his eyes—simultaneously rescued Daoist and esoteric Buddhist practices from the category of ‘superstition’ as they were explained within a scientific worldview that had been championed by the Nobel Prize-winning chemist, Ostwald. As Wuguang was a practitioner of both Daoism and Zhenyan/Shingon, his motivations for doing so are obvious.

Interlude

Wuguang is not the only—or even first or last—intellectual figure to interpret *qi* in scientific terms.⁴²⁹ Thus, just as energeticism had been used by Inoue Enryō to harmonize

⁴²⁸Wuguang, *Mijiao zhi guang yu dao* 密教之光與道 [The Luminosity and Path of Esoteric Buddhism]. Unpublished speech, 1988. Online: <http://www.kmkt.org.tw/kmktchinese/Modules/Articles/ArticleView.aspx?TabID=199&guid=9df04062-3ecd-4fea-abe6-6d4344aa9106> (accessed Jan. 28, 2016). Original text: “宇宙全體乃光為根源，光即道也。”

⁴²⁹ This is in fact a very popular interpretation among scientifically oriented scholars and practitioners. For scientific examples see Farley, “Falun Gong and Science,” 141-163. Livia Kohn has also equated energy and *qi* by stating, “There are many conceptual and practical overlaps between Daoism and modern science. The world of Dao and its material energy *qi* closely matches that of quantum physics.” See Livia Kohn, “Introduction: Mental Health in Daoism and Modern Science,” in *Living Authentically: Daoist Contributions to Modern Psychology*, ed. Livia

Buddhist ontology and science, Chinese Buddhist modernists had already used *qi* to do the same thing.⁴³⁰ Although I am not aware of any other Buddhist figures using Ostwald's paradigm to explain magic as Wuguang did, energeticism was extremely popular among Western occultists who used it to for the very same purpose,⁴³¹ and even deployed by Ostwald himself to explain telepathy.⁴³² Nevertheless, Wuguang's teachings stand out for their being based on Zhenyan/Shingon and wielded to explain the mechanics of practices other Buddhist modernists had deemed 'superstitious.'

Let us now turn our attentions to the exact practices that Wuguang sophisticated by explaining them in terms of energy.

Section II: The Metaphysics of Magic

As already noted, the practices that Wuguang used his energetic ontology to explain in scientific terms were related to funerary practices, spirit-mediumship, demonic possession, and

Kohn (Dunedin, FL: Three Pines Press, 2011), 1. To the best of my knowledge, the most complete treatment of this phenomenon remains Xun Liu, "In Search of Immortality: Daoist Inner Alchemy in Early Twentieth Century China" (PhD diss, University of Southern California, 2001).

⁴³⁰ In the waning years of the Qing Dynasty, equating *qi* with electricity was used to fashion a scientifically sound Buddhist worldview. One example is the Buddhist reformer Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-1898) who asserted that the universe was permeated by an electric 'ether' 以太 composed entirely of *qi*. See Erik J. Hammerstrom, "Yogācāra and Modern Science," 186; Scott Pacey, "Tan Sitong's 'Great Unity': Mental Processes and Yogācāra in An Exposition of Benevolence," in *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China*, ed. John Makeham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 110; David Wright, "Tan Sitong and the Ether Reconsidered," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57, no. 3 (1994): 551-575 and *Translating Science: The Transmission of Western Chemistry into Late Imperial China, 1840-1900* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 2000), 271-389.

⁴³¹ Energeticism was particularly influential on an occult-inclined part of the Russian intelligentsia. Such figures included Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), the founder of Socialist Realism, Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunacharsky (1875-1933) the first Soviet Commissar of Enlightenment—as well as member of the Theosophical Society—and the neurologist Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev (1857-1927) after whom Bekhterev Disease is named. These and similar thinkers embraced many of the implications of Ostwald's energeticism for its consistency with both science and the occult. See Mikhail Agursky, "An Occult Source of Socialist Realism: Gorky and Theories of Thought Transference," in *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, ed. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 249; John Gray, *The Immortalization Commission: Science and the Strange Quest to Cheat Death* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011).

⁴³² Mark S. Morrison, *Modern Alchemy, Occultism and the Emergence of the Atomic Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 109.

astrology. Influential Buddhist modernists in Japan, China and Taiwan had consistently criticized these practices. It cannot be a coincidence that these are the same practices that Wuguang attempted to explain.

Wuguang's metaphysical redemption of magic is based on his energetic ontology, Buddhist notions of karma, Chinese metaphysics, and his understanding of thermodynamics (the scientific "study of the relationship between properties of matter, changes in these properties, and transfers of energy between matter and its surroundings that bring about these changes").⁴³³ Since he believed that everything is composed of energy, he likened karma and magical power—which he referred to by the term 'force' 力 that earlier Buddhist modernists had used for 'energy'—to energetic 'waves' 波. Consistent with his statement that magical forces originate in the mind,⁴³⁴ he taught that magical practices—and even mundane cognition—produce 'thought-waves' 念波 and 'karma-waves' 業波. Wholesome thoughts produce wholesome waves while unwholesome thoughts produce unwholesome waves. These wholesome or unwholesome qualities manifest as each wave's 'wavelength' 波長.

Wuguang applied this thermodynamic interpretation of karma to explain the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination 緣起論 (Skt. *pratīyasamutpāda*). He taught that these waves are the 'primary causes' 主因 (*hetu*) that give rise to 'conditions' 緣 (*pratyaya*) that cyclically produce and shape phenomenal reality:

⁴³³ Carl Schaschke, "Thermodynamics," *A Dictionary of Chemical Engineering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). Online: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199651450.001.0001/acref-9780199651450-e-2907> (accessed Mar. 30, 2016).

⁴³⁴ See the opening section to Chapter 3.

The karmic force of primary causes is like a wavelength from a broadcasting station. It causes the realm of the living and realm of the dead⁴³⁵ to intermingle without disorder, becoming the impetus for rebirth, and one can see the positive and negative elements that it absorbs.⁴³⁶

Buddhism advocates the Dharma-gate of non duality, not dualism. Pay attention! Buddhism is not theistic, it is the ideology of karmic-force and dependent origination.⁴³⁷

In addition to thermodynamically explaining dependent origination, we see Wuguang asserting that these waves are the agents of karmic repercussions, rebirth and ‘intermingling’ between the realm of the living and of the dead. The exact kinds of intermingling that he is talking about relate to funerary practices and spirit possession—the practices that came under fire by disenchanting Buddhist modernists—which I will now explain.

Spirit Communication

Before the birth of Buddhist modernism, the primary communal role of an East Asian Buddhist monk was to perform rituals on behalf of the deceased. This was accomplished by transferring the karmic merit gained by ritual performance and scriptural recitation to the laity as well as conducting funerary rites. These rites are intertwined with native practices related to ancestor veneration due to the fact that both aim to ensure that the dead have a positive afterlife. Disenchanting Buddhist modernists attacked these practices due to the superstitious quality of ‘transference’ and inclusion of non-Buddhist elements. As we saw in Chapter 1, this trend manifested itself in Taiwan during the campaigns to abolish the *Ullambana*.⁴³⁸ Rites related to

⁴³⁵ Throughout this text, Wuguang refers to the realm of the living and dead as the ‘two realms of shadow and light’ 冥陽兩界.

⁴³⁶ Wuguang, *Shengsi zhi dao*. Original text: “主因業力如電台之波長一樣，在冥陽兩界雖交織而不紊，成為輪迴之主要動力，視其吸收因素之勝劣”。

⁴³⁷ Wuguang, *Zhaolun*, 1.45. Original text: “佛教主張不二法門的，不是二元論。要注意！佛教不是靈魂論，是業力緣起論。”

⁴³⁸ See Chapter 1, Section II, “Cooperation and Development.” The *Ullambana* is explained in greater detail in Chapter 5.

spirit-mediumship, demonic possession and astrology were not only decentralized, but subject to governmental illegalization and Buddhist clerical condemnation.

Wuguang did not accept the distinction disenchanting Buddhist modernists had made between Buddhist funerary rites and Chinese ancestor veneration. He also rejected the decentralization of these practices and explained that they can cause the dead to visibly materialize. This materialization is accomplished through ritual performance and thought-regulation. By ‘tuning’ one’s thoughts to the same ‘frequency’ of the deceased’s one is able to communicate and even physically summon them:

To evoke the presence of a dead person and interact with it, one just needs to recall and visualize his [former] body and situation, this is the best method to make the world of the living and dead meet. Thus recalling his living form will lure the dead to tend to the living. Similar to how pricking one’s body in a certain place with a needle causes his attention to focus on that spot, the living person, by focusing the force of his visualization, can stimulate the force of the deceased’s consciousness and thus solicit a miraculous response, and interact with the spirit...this thought-wave will then match the wavelength of the deceased’s *skandha* of consciousness...it is thus easy for the imagined image of the deceased to materialize. The length of time depends on the [living practitioner’s] forces of concentration...Therefore, helping ghosts to pass over to the next incarnation, casting curses, performing incantations, necromancy and exorcism all work according to this principle....Some people do not believe in the existence of the minds of spirits or deny the existence of the intermingling between the dead and the living, but they are mistaken.⁴³⁹

If you miss your relative, you must whole heartedly think of him when he was alive and the times you had together, when you were filial to him, ceaselessly superposing your consciousness with him like water mixing with milk. If you can grasp the essence of this, you and the deceased can begin to enter a small world where your consciousnesses are living together and interacting, (this is the deep wisdom behind Buddhist practice). If you are a Chinese Buddhist, then you are able to use a beautiful memorial tablet and give him offerings, prepare nice foods and belongings from his life as offerings just like when he was alive and the two of you were together on earth.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ Wuguang, *Shengsi zhi dao*. Original text: “令死者喚起存在與覺受, 生人 僅以意識觀想其亡者處身於何境, 這是冥陽相會之最好辦法, 亦即是憶念死者生前之容貌相狀, 誘令死者的意志趨向於生者, 例如將針刺激身體某部位, 令其注意集中該處一樣, 生者用集中觀想力, 可使亡者喚起神識集中力, 其當處即可感應靈交...由此念波反應亡者的蘊識波長...即容易幻起亡者的色相幻影, 其幻影之殘留時間長短, 即視乎其專注力如何而定....所以超度亡靈, 或加持消災, 咒咀降伏, 均由此理則來發生效力.... 有人不信靈識的存在或否認冥陽的交涉關係存在乃是謬誤的。”

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. Original text: “你要是想念親人的話, 你必需一心憧憬着它生前與你一起時, 你對它的孝順情景, 不斷地與喜歡的心情相融如同水乳, 果能把握到這要義, 你就能與亡者開始進入天涯咫尺之心靈交感生活.”

Here, Wuguang equates the Chinese and Buddhist practices by framing them as an aspect of ‘Chinese Buddhism.’⁴⁴¹ He explains the mechanics of both by intermingling thermodynamic principles regarding waves with native Chinese metaphysics and the Buddhist doctrine of the five *skandhas*.

The principles related to waves are referred to as ‘interference.’ There are different forms of interference that fall into the categories of either ‘constructive interference’ or ‘destructive interference.’ Constructive interference occurs when one or more waves combine to create a wave whose strength—referred to as ‘amplitude’⁴⁴²—is stronger than those of the original waves. This form of constructive interference is called ‘superposition.’ This form of superposition occurs when waves are ‘coherent’⁴⁴³ or ‘in phase’⁴⁴⁴ with one another, which means that they have the same

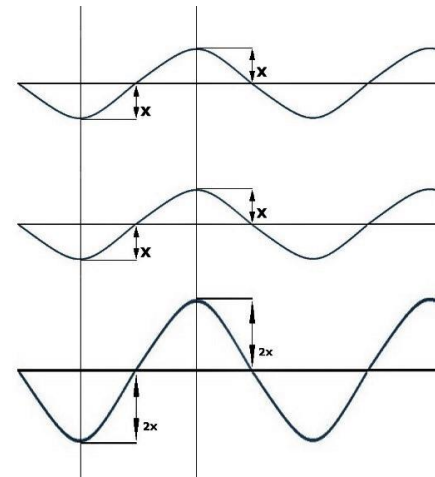


Figure 11: Superpositioning, where two waves with similar frequencies, whose amplitudes are equal to “x” superpose to form a single, doubly amplified wave with an amplification of “2x.”

(此具有甚深的佛學妙理，特別在此一提)，假如你是中國的佛教徒，能用美麗的牌位來祭祀它，妥備美味適合它生前善愛的供品來供養，宛如生前一樣地在一起。”

⁴⁴¹ The exact practice Wuguang describes here is in fact not ‘Buddhist,’ at all, in the strictest sense of the word. It is also not necessarily even ‘religious,’ but a central Chinese custom rooted in the notion of filial piety 孝. The ritual he details most usually takes place in the home in front of a familial altar adorned with elongated plaques 牌 bearing the name of one’s ancestors. On the altar one can place offerings of food, incense and various gifts to the spirit of one’s ancestors. Outside of the home one can also burn joss-paper, which is a sort of ‘spirit currency’ to financially support the spirit in the afterlife. These rites are performed by Daoists, practitioners of Chinese folk religion and Buddhists. For a full length work on these practices see William Lakos, *Chinese Ancestor Worship: A Practice and Ritual Oriented Approach to Understanding Chinese Culture* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010). For an informative overview of the Japanese version of these practices that explores their current status, see Hendrik van der Veere, “Dealing with Death and Disaster,” *The Netherlands-Japan Review* vol. 2, no. 4 (2011): 11-19.

⁴⁴² See *Britannica Academic*, s. v. “amplitude,” (2014). Online: <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/21711/amplitude> (accessed May 31, 2016).

⁴⁴³ “Coherence,” in *A Dictionary of Geology and Earth Sciences*, ed. Michael Allaby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Online: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199653065.001.0001/acref-9780199653065-e-1669> (accessed May 31, 2016).

⁴⁴⁴ *Britannica Academic*, s. v. “amplitude.”

amplitude—with their crests and troughs being nearly equal—and have similar frequencies.⁴⁴⁵ If two coherent waves cross paths, they can combine to form a wave whose amplitude is double each wave’s original one (see figure 11).⁴⁴⁶ In the above passages Wuguang explains that through concentration, one can tune the frequency of one’s thoughts to that of his deceased loved one’s. This in turn causes their thought-waves to superimpose. The double strength of this combined wave then enables the spirit to manipulate the ever present energy of which the universe is composed and visibly materialize.

This energetic explanation constitutes Wuguang’s scientific elucidation of the Chinese metaphysical principle known as ‘sympathetic resonance’ 感應 that postulates ‘categorically alike’ 同類 phenomena—regardless of spatial distance—can interact with one another. This principle is widely used to illuminate the mechanics behind the phenomenon of ‘miraculous response’ 靈感,⁴⁴⁷ explaining that through the performance of ritual, one “reestablishes the original bond between humans and gods.”⁴⁴⁸ This belief flavored Chinese understandings of Buddhism, intermingling with the notion of karmic retribution and superseding Indian beliefs in “the power or ‘grace’ of the buddha” to explain human-deity interactions.⁴⁴⁹ According to this line of reasoning, illicit acts render one categorically unlike a deity while one’s categorical

⁴⁴⁵ In addition to amplitude, ‘frequency’ and ‘wavelength’ are two measurements used to quantify the nature of energy-waves. ‘Frequency’ refers to the “number of crests that pass a given point within one second,” whereas ‘wavelength’ measures the “distance between crests.” See, “Anatomy of an Electromagnetic Wave,” *NASA, Mission: Science*. Online: http://missionscience.nasa.gov/ems/02_anatomy.html (accessed Oct. 1, 2016). Wuguang seems to have used the terms ‘frequency’ 頻率 and ‘wavelength’ 波長 interchangeably, without utilizing a term to specifically refer to ‘amplitude.’ This is despite the fact that his energetic theories involved phenomena that concern wave-amplitude.

⁴⁴⁶ Daintith, “Interference,” In *A Dictionary of Physics*. Online: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199233991.001.0001/acref-9780199233991-e-1517> (accessed May. 26, 2016).

⁴⁴⁷ This term is explained on pages 90-91.

⁴⁴⁸ See Fabrizio Pregadio, “Macrocsm and microcosm,” in *The Encyclopedia of Daoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁴⁴⁹ Buswell and Lopez, “ganying,” in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*; Sharf, *Coming to terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 119, and *passim*.

affinity can be regained or strengthened through wholesome deeds or ritual performance. Once the categorical likeness has been established, a practitioner is then able to receive a miraculous response. In the above passages, Wuguang applies this to ancestral spirits and explains miraculous response in terms of energetic waves and superpositioning, as attested to by his stating that the rituals and meditations are how one is able to “solicit a miraculous response.” He further explains this in Buddhist terms, asserting that what the necromancer is in fact interacting with is the wavelength of deceased’s ‘*skandha* of consciousness’ 蘊識—which throughout the text he asserts is what a deceased spirit actually is.

Wuguang asserts that all forms of human-spirit communication are explicable through interference/resonance when he stated that “helping ghosts to pass over to the next incarnation, casting curses, performing incantations, necromancy and exorcism all work according to this principle.” Thus, it is not surprising that Wuguang applied superpositioning and resonance response in the following passage to explain magical powers that come from *fushen*:

It is not inevitable that one will be able to perceive the world of the fourth dimension through cultivation as [that ability] is a kind of ‘other-power’ since perceiving the world of the fourth dimension requires *fushen*. The ‘fourth dimension’ refers to what will happen in the future and is not something within the mind of buddhas and bodhisattvas. For example, if a person goes to a temple to perform rituals and hears people saying that the deity enshrined within an icon has clairvoyance and clairaudience, [he may then] envily think, “How wonderful it would be if I could hear things from far off distances!” [If he then] proceeds to supplicate, “Bodhisattva! You can perceive things from far off distances, you can also see the future. If you could enable this sight within me I would be everlastingly grateful.” [Only] if it so happens that the frequency of the spirit’s [mind] inhabiting the icon and yours are congruent or linked through karma that the spirit will then *fushen* with you. This would then cause you to have a dual personality. You will then have someone else’s eyes as your eyes will be exchanged, they are not your eyes as they have become ‘*yin* eyes,’ which people commonly refer to as ‘spirit-eyes.’⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁵⁰ Wuguang, *Zhaolun*, 4.77. Original text: “然而四次元的世界不一定是修行人才能看到的, 這是一種他力, 要鬼神附在我們的身才能看到四次元的世界, 四次元的事情是未來世間要發生的事情, 並不是佛菩薩心裡面的事情. 譬如某個人去廟裡面拜拜, 聽人講廟裡的神如千里眼能看到千里以外, 順風耳能聽到千里以外, 他就很欣羨, 想: 我能看到千里外有多好! 便求, ‘菩薩! 你能看到千里外的事, 未來過去也能看到, 若能使我看到, 那真是感恩不盡.’ 恰巧鬼神附在神像的身上與你的頻率符合, 跟你有緣, 他就附到了你的身上, 附在你

Wuguang explains the mechanics of *fushen* in terms of superpositioning/resonance. According to this passage, mediums are able to communicate with spirits due to the fact that their thought-waves are in phase with a particular spirit's—which he explains in terms of 'congruent frequency' 頻率符合—thus offering a scientific explanation for Chinese beliefs concerning resonance. The magical capabilities that derive from hosting a spirit's presence are shown to be the result of superpositioning, which is an example of the deity's miraculous response. Due to the double strength of the newly formed wave—manifest as a “dual personality”—the individual is able to perform superhuman feats.⁴⁵¹ Wuguang's explanation of mediumship here is not an endorsement of this practice. This can be seen in his referring to it as other-power and asserting that it is not Buddhist.

Not all forms of spiritual thought-wave superpositioning are positive and result in magical abilities that one has prayed for. Since the unwholesome nature of each wave's frequency is determined by the thought that produced it, negative thoughts will render one's thought-waves coherent with those of malevolent spirits. Due to the negative quality of these spirits, *fushen* would be dangerous. Wuguang uses this logic to explain spirit possession:

Evil ghosts from the Ghost Realm will possess deviant, selfish peoples' bodies. In this world there are many people who have become mentally ill by being invaded by malicious spirits (evil spirits and malicious ghosts). Because the evil spirit entered into the human's body, his consciousness has been changed into a double personality. This force of consciousness agitates the cranial nerves, producing hallucinations and causing the consciousness of the living host to become hazy. In fact, however, there is no god or ghost tormenting the person, it is just that the [host's consciousness] is being mixed with the wavelength of an evil ghost, similar to the effect of a radio receiving a mixed signal. Therefore the thoughts of our consciousness are like a radio whose [signal's] modulation must be safeguarded.

的身上你就成為 雙重人格了。當你附了另一個人的眼，你就換了眼，就不是你的眼睛，就變成了陰眼，一般人稱為靈眼。”

⁴⁵¹ The clairvoyant and clairaudient abilities are ascribed to a pair of protector deities that commonly flank the main deity in Taiwanese folk religious and Daoist temples. Thus, Wuguang is describing a scenario that would be all too familiar to the Taiwanese religionist.

If you happen to come across someone suffering due to being possessed by an evil ghost, do not fear! Just visualize yourself as the *nirmāṇakāya* of Mahāvairocana⁴⁵² and emit mighty waves of compassionate light to break through his dark shadow, his dark shadows will they be harmonized with yours and the sufferer will recover and return to normal. If you approach it with a hostile mentality, there will be adverse effects.⁴⁵³

Here we see that it is only “evil people” who become possessed by evil spirits—an assertion Wuguang based on coherence/resonance. Just as coherence/resonance caused the possession to happen, it also dictates how exorcism must be performed. Since the frequency of the spirit’s thought-waves are unwholesome, “If you approach it with a hostile mentality, there will be adverse effects,” as hostility is a negative emotion and will not change the possessed person’s frequency; rather it will only serve to further solidify the human-spirit connection. For the superpositioning to stop, the exorcist must use wholesome thoughts to combat the spirit’s unwholesome thoughts, in order to ensure that they are not coherent. To do so, Wuguang tells us that one must ‘jam’ the signal being received by emitting a more powerful one that is positive. Jamming is a form of destructive interference⁴⁵⁴ that entails intentionally emitting a signal to block the reception of another.⁴⁵⁵ Jamming has largely been used as a means of avoiding radar detection and hindering communicative capabilities in times of war. Here, it is the exorcist who is instructed to jam the possessed’s reception in order to prevent him from receiving the signal emitted by the malevolent spirit. As this new signal is positive, after the jamming has been

⁴⁵² Throughout the text Wuguang uses the term ‘great spirit’ 大靈 to refer to Mahāvairocana.

⁴⁵³ Wuguang, *Shengci zhi dao*. Original text: “靈界之惡靈是會憑依邪見自私的人身的，世間上多被惡靈（邪靈惡鬼）入侵變成神經病，因其惡靈入人體之意識變成雙重人格，精神動力發動腦神經，起了幻覺，精神恍惚，其實沒有什麼一個神或鬼的個體在作弄，只是惡靈波長雜交，如收音機不正常收入雜波一樣的結果，所以吾人的精神思想像收音機要保持真善美正常才行你若遇到被惡靈侵犯的患者，作不要怕，要觀想你自己是大靈之化身，放出強烈的慈光加以沖破其黑影，其黑影就被你同化，其患者就會回復正常，若果以敵視的心理去對待反會副作用。”

⁴⁵⁴ For the technical aspects of constructive and destructive interference, see John H. Avison, *The World of Physics* (Cheltenham: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1989), 476.

⁴⁵⁵ Martin H. Weik, *Communications Standard Dictionary* (New York: Springer Science & Business Media; 3rd rev. ed., 2012), 485.

successfully accomplished the exorcist's thought-waves will cause those of the exorcised to return to normal.

Astrology

Just as with spirit communication, Wuguang used his definition of karmic, identification of magical forces as energy-waves and the principle of wave-coherence/resonance to explain astrology.

Wuguang believed that the celestial bodies act as agents of karmic repercussions. These celestial bodies had a special role in Wuguang's energetic universe due to the fact that they emit high amounts of energy. In explaining their exact place in the universe, Wuguang depicted Mahāvairocana as a living organism:

Recognize that the universe is the greatest sole bodied entity of the living *dharmakāya* that encompasses all of the heavenly bodies. The sun, moon and all celestial bodies are cells of the *tathāgata*.⁴⁵⁶

The astrological auspiciousness or inauspiciousness of our nativity determines the genes of our bodies' illness, calamity and short lifespan. Due to previous positive and negative karma, according to the principle of mutual affinity and categorical resonance, an evil person is not coherent with the frequency of an astrologically auspicious [nativity], therefore it is impossible for him to be born during an [astrologically] auspicious time, and will thus be born during an astrologically inauspicious time...⁴⁵⁷

These passages are notable for a number of reasons. First, they confirm Wuguang's belief that celestial bodies exert influence over our lives. One's health—or more precisely, genetic makeup—is determined by the time and location of one's nativity. Notable is the fact that this confirms, rather than contradicts, the laws of karma since the astrological auspiciousness of

⁴⁵⁶ Wuguang, *Mijiao zhi guang yu dao*. Original Text: “認識宇宙是活生生的法身佛之獨一體的最大人格，森羅萬象以及所有天體之日月星辰皆是如來之細胞。”

⁴⁵⁷ Wuguang, *Fojiao zhenyanzong*, 110-111. Original text: “吾人出生之星度好壞，即成吾人身體之病禍壽夭之基因，因為宿業之好壞，依同類相翕之原則壞者遇星度之真善美頻率不和，故不能生於真善美之時候，會生於壞的星度時間...”

one's nativity is determined by karma, which Wuguang explicitly equates with sympathetic resonance. The astrological forces at work are not the cause for one's genetic makeup, they are merely the karmically consequential conditions through which the effects of previous karma are physically transferred from one life to the next. As karma is an energy-wave and celestial bodies produce and reflect light, Wuguang naturally saw them as exceptionally potent karmic mediums. The ways in which celestial bodies transfer karma is depicted as a mechanical process solely governed by karmic laws of cause and effect that render it "impossible" for one to be born at a spatiotemporal point whose frequency is not coherent with one's karmic baggage. These karmic laws are explained through Wuguang's scientific coherence/resonance doctrine.

Building upon Wuguang's explanation, the current head of the MSBL, Huiding 徽定⁴⁵⁸

(b. 1956) explained this exact process as Wuguang taught him:

In the beginning stage of rebirth...one receives influence from the position of the celestial bodies. The human body absorbs the quality of the *qi* out of which we are made that is differentiated according to strong and weak, good and evil. This forms the body's genetic makeup that then ceaselessly metabolizes within the celestial bodies and breathes the atmosphere allelopathically in accordance with the moment.⁴⁵⁹

Here, the energetic universe is portrayed as the womb from which we are born. Within the celestial cells of Mahāvairocana's cosmic body our previous karma is processed based upon its positivity and negativity. This positivity and negativity then determines the exact moment which we will be born. Auspicious and inauspicious moments are explained energetically, astrologically, and in terms of *qi*. Based on the alignment of the energy-emitting stars and planets, each spatiotemporal location has a unique quality. This quality itself is wholly dependent

⁴⁵⁸ Huiding is discussed at great length in Chapter 5.

⁴⁵⁹ Huiding, *Rangxing fahui jishao* [Explanation on the Star Ritual], (ND). Online: <http://www.kmkt.org.tw/kmktchinese/CP.aspx?TabID=249> (accessed Jan. 29, 2016). Original text: “當地宇宙星體週期率性之氣體影響，人身稟受之氣質乃有強弱好惡之異，其所形成之身體基因，於不斷代謝之中與宇宙星體吐納之氣體往來交配，有相生相剋之週期率。”

upon the energy being emitted at that spatiotemporal point, which is itself dictated by planetary and stellar alignments. Then, we are born into a specific spatiotemporal point where the astrologically determined “quality of the *qi*” is coherent with our karma. As we are born, our cells absorb this *qi*, whose strength and weakness at that particular time and place is encoded within our genetic makeup and determines our health and longevity. The quality and constitution of our genetic makeup is thus determined by previous karma.

This process is entirely mechanistic and—as Wuguang saw it—governed by natural laws that are scientifically explicable. These natural laws are karmic and astrological, with the former being primary and the second being merely the former’s agent.

Interlude

The reader may have already noticed that the scientific principles that Wuguang based his sophistication of ‘superstitious’ forms of spirit communication and astrology are all related to thermodynamic principles of energy and transmission technology. The reason for this a twofold one whose folds overlap with one another. In Chapter 2 we saw that Wuguang characterized his religious quest as one in search of “unseen forces, invisible to the naked eye” and had memories of predicting future scientific innovations—namely the propagation of television and the handheld radio—as a child. As thermodynamics deals with invisible forces, this was the discipline that Wuguang believed he could understand—scientifically—the magical forces he had always been seeking. Additionally, as the mechanics of both television and radio broadcasts relate to thermodynamics, it is understandable that his lifelong interest in broadcasting technology would inevitably draw him to this particular scientific discipline.

Another thread that links all of these together is death and the afterlife. Wuguang’s writings concerning spirit communication are primarily taken from one of his very first works,

The Path of Life and Death 生死之道. While this is not the case for the astrological material, his astrological explanation was focused on rebirth—which is what happens after death. Thus, while his scientific interests were thermodynamic, his religious ones were necromantic. To understand this, the reader should recall that in Chapter 2, we saw that Wuguang was a well-known exorcist and even performed ‘ghost-busting.’ Consequently, one must read Wuguang’s writings regarding spirit communication as accounts rooted in personal experience—for that is how he viewed them. This means that his explanation was the product of his attempts to come to terms with an ability he believed that he had. People perceived to be inherently endowed with a natural capability to perceive spirits are often referred to as having ‘spirit-eyes’ 靈眼. We saw Wuguang explain that spirit-eyes are merely a manifestation of coherence/resonance as resultant of one’s karma, and not a product of spiritual cultivation. This shows us that Wuguang believed he had been born with this gift.

Wuguang’s linking wave coherence with resonance response to explain magic can also be understood in light of his childhood. In Chapter 2, we saw that Wuguang stated that of the three icons in his childhood home, only the Divine Husbandman—whose wrath set Wuguang’s religious quest into motion—displayed a miraculous response. Thus, once again, we can see that his doctrines represent his attempt to rationalize his lifelong, firsthand encounters with the preternatural.

The importance Wuguang assigned to astrological influence can also be understood by evoking what he told us about his childhood. He relates that multiple fortune tellers told his parents that he would die—either by accident or suicide—by the age of thirty. He also states that he was a very sickly child. With this in mind, it becomes obvious that his teachings concerning astrological influences were how he explained these predictions and his overall lack of childhood

health. It also shows us why he practiced Daoist longevity practices throughout his life—for he was afraid he was going to die young. Thus, as was the case with spirit communication, Wuguang’s astrological doctrines represent his coming to terms with his own life.

Despite the astrologically dealt karmic potential of Wuguang’s previous lives, he lived until the age of eighty-three. Nevertheless, he still tells us that longevity is determined by the spatiotemporal location of one’s nativity. From this we can see that in Wuguang’s worldview, humans are not merely passive recipients of ghostly or astrological forces. In addition to being karmically initiated, they can also be magically manipulated. When Wuguang defined religion as “consciousness controlling matter” he was telling us that religion gives us the power to alter the predetermined conditions that have arisen out of our previous karmically producing actions. As we will see in Chapter 5, this principle—and astrological and afterlife practices—are part of the core of MSBL orthopraxis.

Before exploring how Wuguang instructed his followers to magically alter the world, we will now discuss how his energetic ontology led him to envision a perplexing future for global religiosity.

Section III: Future Soteriological Ramifications

Wuguang saw himself as living on the cusp of a global transition. He passed away during the first year of the twenty-first century and made a number of predictions about what would happen during the years to come:

We have already entered the Space Age. Advances in learning and technological developments have already led us to discover the secrets of the universe such as electrons, atoms, nuclei and genes, all of which have gradually [shown] that reality and the opinions of esoteric Buddhism [and science] are consistent with one another. We will not sink back into the depths of superstitious mysticism. Śākyamuni’s true enlightenment certainly foresaw the science of the future world. Currently, the esoteric Buddhism of this mysterious world is destined to meet the wants and needs of humanity.

The fast-approaching twenty-first century will [see the actualization of] the world of Zhenyan/Shingon.⁴⁶⁰

Here Wuguang proclaims that the truths of science were foreseen by Śākyamuni Buddha and are contained within the doctrines of esoteric Buddhism. This consistency led him to believe that Zhenyan/Shingon was the most appropriate religion for the modern era. During fieldwork, one of Wuguang's earliest disciples told me that Wuguang often said that the true future Zhenyan/Shingon lies in the West, particularly Europe and America.⁴⁶¹ Thus, Wuguang believed Zhenyan/Shingon would become a global religion. The form of Zhenyan/Shingon that he predicted would be practiced, however, is very unlike anything that has yet to come into existence, which I will now explain.

According to Wuguang's energetic ontology, underlying observable phenomenal diversity is a unified mass of energy. This diversity is thus determined by the specific frequency of each karma-wave's wavelength. Simply stated, the karmic waves we produce are broadcast throughout the universe and 'tune' the energy they come in contact with based on their frequency. This tuning results in all the different 'things' that we see, such as oranges, people, trees and demons, etc. Thus, to turn a skyscraper into a cat merely involves "consciousness controlling matter," by emitting a thought-wave whose specific frequency is tuned to a 'cat' frequency. Now, let us take for example a person whose cat has passed away. If the person had somehow figured out how to determine the cat's frequency and knew how to emit a thought-wave whose frequency matched Fluffy's, he could bring Fluffy back from the grave. Fluffy #2—

⁴⁶⁰ Wuguang, *Zhenyan mijiao yu shidai* 真言密教與時代 [The Era of Zhenyan/Shingon]. Online: <http://www.kmkt.org.tw/kmktchinese/CP.aspx?TabID=207> (accessed Jan. 30, 2016). Original text: "時代已進入太空時代，學術進步科學發展，已經發見到宇宙之秘密，如電子、原子、核子、基因都漸漸符合諸現實，已經與密教之宇宙觀相吻合，不再迷信沉溺神秘了。釋迦牟尼之証悟境界的確超越未來的科技世界，現在這個神秘世界之密教亦應運地被世界人類所渴望與需要，不久的二十一世紀就是真言密教之世界。"

⁴⁶¹ Semi-structured interview, Dec. 2014.

according to Wuguang's ontology—would not be a copy of Fluffy #1, he would *be* Fluffy #1 due to Mahāyāna understandings of the Buddhist doctrines of dependent origination, impermanence and emptiness. Both Fluffy #1 and Fluffy #2 lack a permanent, unchanging core and are nothing more than a specific wave-induced 'mysteriously-arranged' organization of energy. This energy is undifferentiated and homogeneous, thus all Fluffies are the same.

Using the logic detailed here, Wuguang made a radical prediction about the future of human religiosity:

Currently, our ability to produce copies of [material] phenomena is limited to recalibrating the vibrations of a few ionized atoms. Bigger things like human bodies currently remain exceptionally difficult to copy. Nevertheless, I believe that in the near future we will invent ways to copy these kinds of [larger] masses. This will give rise to the method of 'human bodily deconstruction.' Once that invention emerges, the world will change into a paradise devoid of the fear of birth and death. If you want to go to America or Europe, you can just wirelessly transmit your frequency. If you want to be sent to thirty seven places,⁴⁶² you can just sit in a chair, press a button, be deconstructed and be transferred there. Upon the arrival [of your frequency], your [body] will be reconstructed. So simple, you don't even need to fear aircraft accidents. [Currently], when someone gets terminal cancer and dies, he is mourned. In the future we will record his frequency, atomically deconstruct him and send his ionized atoms out into space. The next day we could reconstruct him to invite him to a meal and then send him back after the meal. If it was like this, there would be no need to grieve. We would have no need for graveyards or *sūtra* recitation. This would be best...In the future, [this kind of] technology will develop. At that time, there will be no more *kleśas*. Then, we will pass laws requiring people to retire at the age of sixty. We will then let them have fun on earth for five years. At the age of sixty-five, they will surely be deconstructed and sent into space lest the world become overpopulated. You will take your great grandparents, grandparents and elder parents to be deconstructed and send them into space as bringing them back to share a meal will be a simple matter that just requires the financial means to reconstruct them. Once a year you can invite them to eat at a restaurant, then travel with them around Taiwan and then send them back. You will no longer need to perform ancestral veneration. In the future it will be like this. That is what I say, if you even just barely open your eyes you can see that this will undoubtedly be invented.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶² Exact meaning is unclear. These thirty seven places could be a veiled reference to the thirty seven deities 三十七尊 of the *Vajradhātu-maṇḍala*, the thirty seven aids to enlightenment 三十七種菩提分法, a reference to a specific frequency, an unspecified Daoist cosmography, or specific geographical locations. For more information on the former two possibilities, respectively see Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 155 and 307.

⁴⁶³ Wuguang, *Zhaolun*, 2.2-3. Original text: “目前的傳真只做到這些，由聲的震動經電離子傳真，影像亦用電離子傳真，但較大的物質粒子要傳真仍非常為難，如人體。但我個人認為在不久的將來這種物質傳真就會發明，那就是「人體分解術」，等到這個發明出來，地球就能變成極樂世界了，就不用怕生死了。要到美國或歐洲，就用無線電一打；例如要送一個人過去，頻率調好，要送到三十七處的地方，你坐在椅子上，把鈕一按，人就分解了，從這邊傳真到那邊，到了那邊再組織起來，很簡單，不用怕飛機失事。人若患了癌症將死，死時會悲哀，所以乾脆就用電離子分解放到空間，將頻率記住，改天要請他吃飯時再將他組合，吃飽後再送他回去，這樣的話就不用傷心，不用墓地，不用唸經，這樣最好...將來科技會更發

This passage contains Wuguang's radical reenvisioning of what life and religion will be like in the future. This paradisiacal land devoid of sickness, death, mourning and airports will come to be through the invention of a machine that is remarkably similar to the 'transporter' from the *Star Trek* franchise.⁴⁶⁴

As strange as this passage may appear, it is also distinctly Buddhist. At its heart is the most basic of Buddhist doctrines, the first of the Four Noble Truths that teaches life constitutes *duḥkha* ('suffering'). Wuguang presents his transporter as a soteriological answer to four of these sufferings: aging, sickness, death, separation from what we love and being trapped within the five *skandhas*. Deconstruction and reconstruction annul these sufferings. As Buddhism is the antidote to suffering, Wuguang's transporter renders Buddhist practice obsolete.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated how Wuguang attempted to sophisticate what other Buddhist modernists had deemed 'superstitious' through the use of science. The fact that he was polemically responding to disenchanting Buddhist modernism is attested to by his reliance upon the philosophical and scientific subjects that his predecessors had—matter/mind dualism and energeticism—and rationalization of funerary practices, mediumship and astrology. This reliance

達，那時就沒有什麼煩惱，然後法律便會規定六十歲就要退休，並讓你在地球上玩五年，六十五歲就一定得改換到空間去，不然後人就太多了；把曾祖父、祖父、老爸都解析到空間去，反正回來吃飯很簡單嘛，只要有錢，把曾祖父、祖父、老爸組合好再邀過來，一次請到飯店去吃，吃完再旅遊台灣一週後再送回去。一年請一次，不用另外再祭拜。將來是會變成這樣的，這是我講的，你們僅管睜著眼去看，這種科技一定會發明。”

⁴⁶⁴ It is safe to assume that the transporter was in fact the inspiration for this idea as *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, was released in Taiwanese theatres in 1980, twenty years before Wuguang's death. See *The Internet Movie Database* (IMBD), "Star Trek: The Motion Picture, Release Info." Online: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0079945/releaseinfo> (accessed Jan. 30, 2016).

and polemical quality enable us to firmly identify Wuguang's teachings as an example of reenchanted Buddhist modernism.

Now that we have a clear and nuanced understanding of Wuguang's life, intentions and teachings, let us take a look at the Buddhist lineage that he founded, the MSBL.