Liang the Buddhist

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Chapter 3
Liang the Buddhist

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1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the early writings of Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893–1988). I speak of Liang as a "Buddhist" to capture the profound influence of Buddhism, especially that of the Yogācāra doctrine of "consciousness-only" (*weishi* 唯識, *vijñaptimātra*), on this phase of his thought. The term "Buddhist" is used in three overlapping ways. First, it highlights how Liang openly presented himself as a practicing Buddhist from 1913 to 1921. Second, it pinpoints the source of inspiration for his philosophical thinking. Third, it indicates the significance of Buddhism in his worldview.

The first sense in which Liang is a Buddhist stems from a narrative popularized by Liang himself. Since the 1930s, Liang described how he was an advocate of Western utilitarianism and pragmatism before 1913, a devout Buddhist from 1913 to 1921, and eventually a family-centered Confucian from 1921 onwards. In light of this narrative, Liang has been perceived as a proponent of Confucianism.[1] Nevertheless, his

[1] Due to Liang's promotion of Confucianism, he was first recognized as a cultural conservative (Alitto 1976, 1979). Later on, scholars, championed by Chang Hao, argued for classifying Liang as a "contemporary New Confucian" (*dangdai xinrujia* 當代新儒家) because of Liang's contribution to the modern reform of this tradition (Chang 1976; Wei 1984; Cao 1995; Lin 1996; Zheng 1999; Yang 2003; Wesołowski 2003; Gu 2008; Ma 2008; Guo and Gong 2011; Chen 2014). While many acknowledge Liang's engagement with Buddhism and Confucianism (Wang 1986; Gong 1996), the foundational role of Buddhism in Liang's philosophy has been rediscovered recently (Zhang 2001; Hanafin 2003; Meynard 2007, 2011, 2014; Lee 2015). To highlight the multifaceted nature of Liang's thought, scholars have gone beyond the Buddhist-Confucian binary to read Liang as an advocate of voluntarism (Gao 1991) or populism (Lynch 2018).

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engagement with Buddhism is admittedly more nuanced than his narrative makes it appear. During the mid-1960s, he expressed in "On the Problem of My Thought" (談我的思想問題, henceforth TWDSX) that he had always been a Buddhist since the 1910s (TWDSX: 119). In understanding Liang's standpoint, it is crucial to situate him within the socio-political climate of the early Republican era. As Liang stressed in "The Changes and Differences in My Understanding of Human Psychology" (我對人類心理認識前後轉變不同, henceforth WDRL), he dedicated his life to two problems: the "problem of China" (*zhongguo wenti* 中國問題) and the "problem of human life" (*rensheng wenti* 人生問題) (WDRL: 130). While the former centers on the particular place of China in the modern world, the latter concerns an existential crisis universally experienced by humans. Striving to develop a proposal for resolving these problems, Liang negotiated the tensions between East and West, traditional and modern, local and global, as well as personal and national.

In this process, Buddhism—especially the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness-only—provided Liang with a set of vocabulary that allowed him to enter into these negotiations. Therefore, the second sense in which Liang is a Buddhist indicates how Yogācāra served as a source of inspiration for his articulation of epistemology and metaphysics from a non-Western perspective. For Liang, the rearticulated Eastern philosophies are not only compatible with but also complementary to their Western counterparts: they remedy the existential crisis exacerbated by a version of social Darwinism inherent in Euro-American modernity. He continued to enquire into how China could deploy the Eastern wisdom preserved in Buddhism and Confucianism to draw up a modernization plan beyond Westernization. Innovatively incorporating the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness-only into his thought, Liang took a first step in rejuvenating Eastern philosophies for the universal well-being of humans and the modernization of China.

While Liang appreciated the insights of Yogācāra, he discerned a lack of systematic moral theories that made Yogācāra limited in its applicability to "this-worldly" (*shijian* 世間) matters.[2] In an effort to overcome this limitation, Liang rediscovered Confucianism. Specifically, he conceived of Confucian moral cultivation in this-worldly life as the starting point for resolving the said existential crisis. In this manner, this-worldly cultivation becomes a preparatory practice for the Buddhist pursuit of the "other-worldly" (*chushijian* 出世間) awakening. He borrowed the Bodhisattvas' vow "not to leave behind any sentient being in *saṃsāra* and thus not enter *nirvāṇa*" (不捨眾生, 不入涅槃) to illustrate non-duality as the fluid transformation of this-worldly cultivation and other-worldly liberation (DMGXZ: 1139).

[2] I use the pair of "this-worldly" and "other-worldly" to paraphrase a plethora of terms in Liang's work. For example, he writes *shunshijian* 順世間 (following the this-worldly) and *chushijian* 出世間 (the other-worldly) in "On Finding the Foundations and Resolving the Doubt" (究元決議論, henceforth JYJYL) (JYJYL: 19); *shijian* 世間 (this-worldly) and *fofa* 佛法 (Buddhist dharma) in "Buddhist Dharma and This-Worldly Realm" (佛法與世間, henceforth FFYSJ) (FFYSJ: 454); *shijian* 世間 (this-worldly) and *chushijian* 出世間 (other-worldly) in "On the Difference Between Confucianism and Buddhism" (儒佛異同論, henceforth RFYT) (RFYT: 153); and *shengsi* 生死 (*saṃsāra*) and *niepan* 涅槃 (*nirvāṇa*) in "Summary of the Recorded Interview with American Scholar Guy Alitto" (答美國學者艾愷先生訪談記錄摘要, henceforth DMGXZ) (DMGXZ: 1139).

For Liang, the Buddhist view of non-duality is not merely a theoretical project but also his life principle. In light of this principle, he moved freely from Confucian practices to Buddhist aspirations, which corresponds to the last definition of him being a Buddhist.

As this chapter argues, these three senses in which Liang is a Buddhist are not only interconnected but also mutually reinforced in his early work. Previous studies have presented the intellectual history of Liang's engagement with Buddhism in every phase of his thought (Zhang 2001; Lee 2015) and further traced the combined influence of Confucianism and Buddhism on his thinking (Wang 1986; Gong 1996; Hanafin 2003). Drawing upon these studies, I will explore the philosophical motivation behind Liang's explicit turn to Confucianism, his consistent reliance on Buddhism, and his free movements between these two traditions. In particular, I follow Thierry Meynard's outline of how Yogācāra provided Liang with the resources to redefine the notion of transcendence and rethink the interplay between this-worldly flourishing and other-worldly awakening (Meynard 2007, 2011, 2014).

This argument will unfold in three sections. Section 1 contextualizes Liang's engagement with multiple Buddhist ideas during the Yogācāra revival movement of the early Republican period and explores how the early-later distinction in Yogācāra informed his system of thought. Section 2 analyzes his philosophical thinking between 1913 and 1916. When Liang started to develop an interest in Buddhism, he was attracted to the Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* syncretism in early Yogācāra texts.[3] Espousing a Buddhist version of metaphysical idealism, Liang subordinated this-worldly matters—part of the illusory conventional reality—to the ultimate goal of eradicating suffering for the recuperation of the awakened mind. He continued to conceive of various intellectual traditions in the East and West as studies of conventional reality secondary to the Buddhist teaching of emptiness. Section 3 details Liang's turn to later Yogācāra from 1917 to 1921. Under the guidance of Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無 (1871–1943), Liang prioritized later Yogācāra treatises composed by Xuanzang 玄奘 (c. 602–664) and his disciple Kuiji 窺基 (632–682). Gradually, Liang distanced himself from metaphysical idealism. Instead, he promoted a version of correlative non-dualism that stresses the correlation of ideality and reality as the ground for the fluid transformation of ignorance and awakening. As such, this-worldly life is no longer deemed to be a non-existent illusion: it is reaffirmed as the target to be criticized, reformed, and transformed. In recognizing the value of this-worldly life, Liang discerned how Yogācāra centers on personal liberation, which gave him an incentive to promote Confucianism for a detailed account of morality at the interpersonal level. Eventually, he incorporated Yogācāra epistemology in his reformulation of the Confucian philosophy of life, from which he derived a modernization plan for China and a preparatory practice for the Buddhist pursuit of universal awakening.

[3] KENG Ching differentiates the stronger meaning of *tathāgatagarbha* as an innate quality synonymous with suchness, from the weaker meaning as a state of mind other than ignorance (Keng 2009). In this chapter, *tathāgatagarbha* is used mainly in the stronger sense, whereas the weaker one is generally referred to as "Buddha-nature."

2 The Diversity of Viewpoints in Yogācāra

In a 1980 interview about his study of Buddhism, Liang contended that he did not completely understand Yogācāra until 1917 (DMGXZ: 1149). He specified that his work prior to that year was indebted to the "old tradition of consciousness-only" (*jiu weishipai* 舊唯識派) and not the authentic teachings of consciousness established by Xuanzang's "new tradition" (*xinpai* 新派) (DMGXZ: 1149). As suggested by this interview, Liang was fully aware of how his early thinking was influenced by diverse viewpoints within Yogācāra.

As one of the major Mahāyāna traditions, Yogācāra uses the study of consciousness to argue for emptiness. The tradition is said to be founded by Maitreya in South Asia and further developed by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu toward the end of the 300 s CE. It was then transmitted to East Asia by scholar-monks, such as Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (?–537) and Paramārtha 真諦 (499–569), who translated its numerous texts into Chinese.[4] Yogācāra kept developing in South Asia. During the 500 s, Dignāga systemized Yogācāra thought through Buddhist logic and inspired another generation of Yogācāra commentators. These newly developed ideas continued to be introduced to China. Growing up in this intellectual climate, Xuanzang found it impossible to reconcile the disputes among his fellow Yogācārins. Therefore, he traveled to India to study Yogācāra. Upon his return to the Tang Empire (618–907) in 645, Xuanzang translated Sanskrit texts into Chinese under the auspices of Emperor Taizong (598–649). He had hoped that these new translations would end the multiple disputes among his fellow Yogācārins, but instead, supporters of the older translations criticized him for being disrespectful to his predecessors. Inheriting these tensions between "early preaching" (*gushuo* 古說) and "later texts" (*jinwen* 今文), Xuanzang's disciple, Kuiji, composed commentaries to defend his master (T45N1861, P247a15-16). Toward the end of the Tang dynasty, the study of Yogācāra gradually subsided. It resurged during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which in turn set the stage for the Yogācāra revival movement in the early Republican era. During this period, lost Buddhist scriptures were brought back to China, and new treatises were translated into Chinese. Acknowledging the above flow of ideas, scholars have recognized the diversity present within the interpretations of the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness-only.

Developing his interest in Buddhism during the Yogācāra revival, Liang familiarized himself with the distinction between early and later Yogācāra, which he referred to as the old-new differentiation.[5] As for early Yogācāra, its proponents were Sthiramati and Nanda in South Asia, and Paramārtha in East Asia. In contrast, the

[4] John Makeham describes the translations of Bodhiruci, Paramārtha, and Xuanzang as three consecutive waves of Yogācāra transmission in East Asia (Makeham 2014: 5–10).

[5] Contemporary scholars describe this distinction as one between early Yogācāra's "mind being truly pure" (*zhenxin* 真心) and later Yogācāra's "mind being falsely deluded" (*wangxin* 妄心). Discussions on the early-later distinction started in the early Republican era, as shown in Lü Cheng 1986 (1924); Taixu 2005 (1931); Mei Guangxi 2014 (1931); and Ouyang Jingwu 1995 (1938).

promoters of later Yogācāra were Dignāga and Dharmapāla in South Asia, and Xuanzang in East Asia. To better understand the Buddhist roots in Liang's early thinking, especially his reaffirmation of this-worldly life, I center the following discussion on how the approaches to consciousness in Yogācāra allow for dissimilar interpretations of emptiness and awakening.

Liang was first drawn to the early Yogācāra theory of consciousness. According to Paramārtha, who is considered a proponent of early Yogācāra in East Asia,[6] consciousness can be understood as a "two-part" (*erfen* 二分) relationship between the "seeing part" (*jianfen* 見分, *darśanabhāga*) *qua* the act of perceiving and the "image part" (*xiangfen* 相分, *nimittabhāga*) *qua* the perceived phenomenon (T43N1830, P320c21).[7] That is to say, consciousness is that which comes to know a phenomenon by directing itself towards it. Paramārtha proceeds to depict the interactions between the eight types of consciousness constituting the mind of a sentient being. Among them, the first five consciousnesses are the five senses that offer sense data to be processed and synthesized by the sixth consciousness. While this sixth consciousness, named *manovijñāna*, is productive in conceptual thinking, it can be interrupted in extreme states such as deep sleep, which indicates the existence of a seventh consciousness, called *manas*, which sustains the coherent self-identity of sentient beings. *Manas* further relies on the eighth *ālaya* consciousness to ensure the continuity of death and rebirth. In Paramārtha's model, *ālaya* functions in accordance with the two-part structure to bring forward the subject-object duality (T31N1587, P61c11). The subjective aspect of experience then gives rise to *manas* as the ego-producer, and the objective aspect brings about the other six consciousnesses that produce the sense of unchanging objects/*dharmas* (T31N1587, P62a-b). The subject-object duality underpins the illusion that causes sentient beings to become ignorant of the impermanent nature of things in their experiences and develop attachment to them (T31N1587, P62b20-21). In turn, these attachments animate feelings and emotions through which sentient beings internalize ignorance as a habitual way of living. Paramārtha evokes the notion of "seed" (*zhongzi* 種子, *bīja*) to capture such a habitual tendency of perceiving and living (T31N1587, P62c20-21). Described in this manner, previous ignorant views and deeds do not vanish but leave karmic imprints on the mind and remain in *ālaya* as polluted seeds that cultivate more wrongdoings and trap sentient beings in *saṃsāra*. Due to its preservation of seeds, *ālaya* is also known as the "storehouse consciousness."

Thus, if sentient beings wish to liberate themselves from ignorance, they should eradicate duality, recuperate the non-dual state of mind, and attain awakening

[6] Scholars have argued that Paramārtha incorporated his own understanding into his translations, which made them representative of his Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* syncretism (Takasaki 1975; Yinshun 1988; Lai 2006; Zhou 2006). Recently, Keng Ching argued that Paramārtha's position was closer to Xuanzang's (Keng 2009). Nevertheless, without access to Keng's insight, most intellectuals in the early Republican era followed the popular understanding of Paramārtha as the exponent of Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* syncretism.

[7] When referring to Buddhist scriptures from the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, I put the volume number, sequence number, page number, and section number inside brackets.

(T31N1587, P62b22-24). Since regular consciousness is "dualist" (*fenbie* 分別) by nature, the non-dual state of mind evolves into the ninth *amalavijñāna* (the spotless consciousness) as the "immaculate mind" (*qingjingxin* 清淨心) (T31N1616, P864a26-28). Paramārtha turns to the Yogācāra theory of three natures to associate the phenomena produced by the dualist consciousnesses with the "imagined nature" (*fenbie xing* 分別性, *parikalpitasvabhāva*), the producing consciousnesses with the "other-dependent nature" (*yita xing* 依他性, *paratantrasvabhāva*), and the non-dual state of mind with the "absolute nature" (*zhenshi xing* 真實性, *pariniṣpannasvabhāva*) (T31N1587, P63b). In this manner, *ālaya* becomes synonymous with *tathāgatagarbha* (*rulaizang* 如來藏, Buddha-matrix) as the Buddha-nature innate to all sentient beings (T30N1584, P1018c6). That is to say, the mind of all sentient beings is originally immaculate, only to then be temporarily polluted by ignorance. In its polluted state, *ālaya* serves as the origin of illusions to sustain *saṃsāra*. When the duality is removed and *nirvāṇa* is acquired, the purified *ālaya* reveals itself as the originally immaculate mind that is subsequently equated with emptiness, "suchness" (*zhenru* 真如, *tathatā*), and the pure dharma realm (T31N1616, P864c12-13). This is how the Yogācāra theory of consciousness is harmonized with the doctrine of *tathāgatagarbha* in Buddhist scriptures attributed to Paramārtha, which include *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論), *The Summary of Mahāyāna* (*She dasheng lun* 攝大乘論), *The Treatise on Three Non-Existent Natures* (*Sanwuxing lun* 三無性論), and *The Treatise on the Transforming Consciousness* (*Zhuanshi lun* 轉識論). As to be seen shortly, these texts shaped Liang's initial understanding of Yogācāra.

In early Yogācāra, nothing truly exists outside of this non-dual state of mind. Paramārtha, thus, expounds on the view that the mind is exhaustive of everything in the cosmos, which yields a version of metaphysical idealism. His Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* syncretism exerted a profound influence on the intelligentsia since the revitalization of Yogācāra in the Ming period. For example, interpreting the Daoist concept of "equalizing things" (*qiwu* 齊物), Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936) draws upon the theory of consciousness from Buddhist treatises, such as *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and *The Summary of Mahāyāna*. Applauding the Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* syncretism, Zhang criticizes Xuanzang and Kuiji's refutation of the mind as originally immaculate (Zhang 1985: 50). However, his contemporary Ouyang Jingwu—an adamant advocate of later Yogācāra and an admirable teacher for Liang—deems the harmonization of Yogācāra and *tathāgatagarbha* to be a deviation from Mahāyāna teachings.[8]

Unlike Paramārtha, Xuanzang follows the later Yogācāra master, Dharmapāla, to explain the functionality of consciousness through a "four-part" (*sifen* 四分) structure—the seeing part, the image part, the part of "self-awareness" (*zizhengfen* 自證分, *svasaṃvittibhāga*), and the "reflexive awareness of self-awareness"

[8] Their disputes fueled the debates over the authenticity of *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (Meynard 2014; Lin 2014; Aviv 2020).

(*zhengzizheng* 證自證) (T31N1585, P10b).[9] As such, consciousness is portrayed as an underlying flow of self-awareness that gives rise to the act of perceiving and the perceived phenomenon constantly; and, in this process, consciousness is always reflexively aware of its functionality. In light of this four-part structure, Xuanzang refuses to assimilate all consciousnesses into a meta-consciousness but underscores their distinctive cognitive capacities (T31N1587, P1a16). Following the four-part structure, *ālaya* gives rise to the image part of three types of phenomena: the entire "material cosmos" (*qishijian* 器世間), the "corporeal body" (*yougenshen* 有根身), and seeds. As to the seeing part, it is described as a holistic act of perceiving that constitutes the primordial bodily experience of a sentient being in every moment of *saṃsāra* (T31N1585, P10a13-19).

Directing itself toward the seeing part of *ālaya*, the seventh consciousness (*manas*) misperceives it as an unchanging *ego* and becomes attached to this immutable self-in-itself habitually (T31N1585, P22a8-10). At the same time, the other six consciousnesses direct themselves toward *ālaya*'s image part, and the sixth consciousness (*manovijñāna*) habitually objectifies the sense-data collected by the five senses. Together, *manas* and *manovijñāna* misperceive phenomena as immutable self and *dharma* and habitually become attached to them, which shows how habitual misperception animates innate (*jusheng* 俱生) attachments (T31N1585, P22a13; P7a1). Based on these habitual misperceptions, the sixth consciousness conceptually differentiates the self from other *dharmas* to produce discriminative (*fenbie*分別) attachments (T31N1585, P2a21; P7a6). These habitual and conceptual misperceptions continue to be consolidated by the "mental factors" (*xinsuo* 心所, *caitta*)—namely, the affective mental states of feeling, emotion, affliction, etc.—that entrap sentient beings in *saṃsāra*.

In Xuanzang's view, ignorance does not stem from consciousness *per se*. Rather, the functionality of consciousness furnishes each sentient being with an open possibility: misperceiving things as immutable entities or seeing things as interdependent and empty. Xuanzang uses the three natures to detail this open possibility. The imagined nature (*bianjisuozhi xing* 遍計所執性) describes misperceptions generated by *manas* and *manovijñāna*, both habitually and conceptually. As such, the existence of the imagined nature becomes "fictitiously real" (*jiayou* 假有) (T31N1585, P47a10). The absolute nature (*yuanchengshi xing* 圓成實性), which has "real existence" (*shiyou* 實有), captures the mindset of sentient beings when they are awake (T31N1585, P47c12). The other-dependent nature (*yitaqi xing* 依他起性), whose "seemingly real existence" (*xushi* 虛實) Xuanzang acknowledges (T31N1585, P46c8-9), characterizes the functionality of consciousness that makes it possible for ignorance to transform into awakening. As such, consciousness-only suggests that the mind, as a system of eight consciousnesses, serves as the condition for the possibility of various phenomena. Each mind further reaches out to other

[9] *Svasaṃvitti* is also translated as self-realization, self-cognition, or self-authenticating (Yao 2005; Meynard 2014). I am opting for self-awareness to underscore how *zizheng* is also a type of nondual, pure sensation known as *xianliang*.

minds to mutually constitute a larger shared world, a mutual constitution that is compared to how "when the lamps are on, they illuminate each other as if they were a whole" (如眾燈明, 各遍似一) (T31N1585, P10c15-16).[10] Sentient beings, as subjects of knowledge and as agents, can navigate the shared world *qua* an intersubjectively accessible reality in two opposite ways: by perpetuating ignorance or by perceiving things as they are. Instead of depicting the mind as the cosmic origin, Xuanzang expresses a version of correlative non-dualism that stresses how the transcendental ideality of (inter-)subjectivity is always correlated with conventional/empirical reality, a correlation that ensures the non-duality of ignorance and awakening.

Acknowledging intersubjective agency, Xuanzang perceives awakening as a collaborative realization of insight that corrects conceptual misperceptions and changes the habitual way of living. Far from being an innate quality, Buddha-nature becomes an ideal state to be achieved through a collaborative effort (T31N1585, P9a5-7). Only when all minds are purified from ignorance will consciousness "transform" (*zhuanyi* 轉依, *āśrayaparivṛtti*) into wisdom.[11] Thierry Meynard speaks of this transformation as the realization of "a universal Buddhist awakening" (Meynard 2011: 70). By then, the realm of suffering evolves into the pure *dharma* realm—an ideal world free from mental defilement (T45N1861, P372b). Emptiness is not tantamount to, but becomes the true nature of, the purified mind and the pure *dharma* realm (T43N1830, P546a3-5). Later Yogācāra's depiction of *zhuanyi* proposes a more nuanced view of transcendence than that in early Yogācāra. While this-worldly *saṃsāra* and other-worldly *nirvāṇa* remain different in quality, later Yogācārins acknowledge the value and worth of this-worldly life. *Saṃsāra* is not renounced as an undesirably nonexistent illusion but retains as a fictitiously real world to be criticized, reformed, and transformed for the realization of *nirvāṇa*. The way in which *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* complement, not contradict, each other suggests their non-duality.

Envisioning Buddha-nature as an ideal, Xuanzang problematizes the view of the mind as both originally immaculate and temporarily polluted. If the mind is originally immaculate, *ālaya* will store only pure seeds that generate correct views and actions to ensure this sentient being's awakening, which makes it impossible for an originally pure mind to be polluted (T31N1585, P8c24). Conversely, if the mind is already polluted, a sentient being will have only impure seeds in *ālaya* and remain incapable of correcting misperceptions (T31N1585, P8c26). As explicated by Kuiji, for sentient beings who have no pure seeds in their minds, the compassionate

[10] Liang relays this quote to make a case for reading Yogācāra as a philosophy that centers on personal experience (WSSY: 304). Since the late-Ming dynasty, scholar-monks have focussed on this quote in their debate on whether Yogācāra thought is solipsist (Chien 2017).

[11] For Xuanzang, such transformation is realized through the "five stages of consciousness-only" (*weishi wuwei* 唯識五位) (T31N1585, P48b15-20). While the Yogācāra formulation of the Bodhisattvas' practice does not seem to capture Liang's attention, Liang turns to Confucianism to derive a proposal for eradicating misperceptions as the preparation for the Buddhist pursuit of universal awakening.

Bodhisattvas will help them regain the capacity of removing misperception (T45N1831, P610c2-8). Known as the first ones who have acquired wisdom, the Bodhisattvas comprehend the interconnectedness of all minds and thus find it imperative to collaborate with others for realizing universal awakening. It is in line with this understanding of the mind that Ouyang Jingwu places grave doubt on the Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* harmonization (Aviv 2020: 89–90).[12] Following Ouyang's promotion of later Yogācāra, Liang is convinced of the importance of the Bodhisattvas' practice. Nevertheless, he does not locate the mechanics of such compassionate practice inside Yogācāra, insofar as he turns to Confucianism for a systematic account of morality, a process which I will examine in the next two sections.

3 The First Period (1913–1916): "Other-Worldly Teaching for Saving All Sentient Beings"

Liang grew up in a time when people from all walks of life were concerned with rebuilding China into a prosperous modern nation. Prior to his turn to Buddhism, he actively engaged in discussion on China's modernization. As documented in "The Short History of My Self-Learning" (我的自學小史, henceforth WDZX), Liang followed Western utilitarianism and pragmatism piously, in the conviction that the natural human desire for happiness should function as the engine of social progress (WDZX: 680). Like many of his contemporaries, Liang perceived social Darwinism as the gist of Westernization that would facilitate China's nation-building. However, the Beiyang government's unsuccessful reforms smashed his faith (WDZX: 680). Reflecting on the limitation of Westernization, he elucidated the impossibility of social Darwinism to guarantee universal happiness and prosperity (WDZX: 689). Indeed, the natural human desire nourished social progress and injustice alike—while humans were instinctively motivated to ameliorate their life through competition, they were also inclined to exploit others, exacerbating egocentrism and aggregating suffering (WDZX: 689). Temporarily, Liang endorsed socialism in order to bring about a prosperous society without private ownership of property (WDZX: 691). Yet, he soon changed his mind. Suffering was an integral part of an overall existential crisis inherently experienced by sentient beings, which could not be cured through the abundance of material goods or anything from the exterior world (WDZX: 691). Hence, he decided to take refuge in Buddhism.

At that time, the revival of Yogācāra garnered a growing level of intellectual attention. With access to numerous Buddhist texts and secondary literature, Liang credited Zhang Taiyan as a major source of inspiration (WDZX: 695). Stemming from the viewpoint that nothing exists but the non-dual state of mind, Liang advocated the "other-worldly teaching for saving all sentient beings" (出世間法, 救拔一

[12] It should be noted, as detailed by Eyal Aviv, that Ouyang revised his critique of Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* harmonization later on (Aviv 2020: 145–150).

切眾生) in a 1914 letter entitled "On Buddhism" (談佛, henceforth TF) (TF: 489). This pronouncement encapsulates Liang's twofold project. On the explicative level, the "other-worldly teaching" of emptiness expounds on the nature of reality and the cause of suffering; and on the prescriptive level, "saving all sentient beings" is the goal of prescribing a remedy for universal suffering and a plan for China's modernization.

Liang's project matured in his 1916 article entitled "On Finding the Foundations and Resolving the Doubt." Liang first explains how emptiness epitomizes the ultimate nature of reality. In his 1914 letter, he had borrowed the Buddhist vocabulary of the "conventional" (*quan* 權) and the "ultimate" (*shi* 實) to outline the interplay between the illusory this-worldly life and the other-worldly emptiness (TF: 489). The prioritization of emptiness is systematized by Liang in his 1916 article, with extensive reference to Buddhist scriptures, especially those in favor of Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* syncretism, like *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and *The Treatise on Three Non-Existent Natures*. In parallel with his previous juxtaposition of ultimate emptiness with conventional illusions, he introduces the distinction between "the school of nature" (*xingzong* 性宗) and "the school of characteristics" (*xiangzong* 相宗) (JYJYL: 4). This distinction was popularized by masters of the Huayan (華嚴) school of Buddhism who enriched Paramārtha's viewpoint.[13] While schools of nature, such as Huayan and Tiantai (天台), explain how emptiness serves as the origin of illusory phenomena, the school of characteristics, like Yogācāra, focuses on illusions to elucidate how characteristics are manifestations of the ultimate nature of reality *qua* emptiness. Following Huayan masters, Liang ranks the school of characteristics below the school of nature (JYJYL: 9).

In unpacking his viewpoint, Liang presents *ālaya*—the eighth consciousness—as synonymous with the *tathāgatagarbha* (JYJYL: 6). Drawing upon *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, Liang relays the view that the mind is originally pure and only polluted temporarily by ignorance. As the "mind being truly pure" (*zhenxin* 真心), *ālaya* amounts to emptiness that is not determined by this-worldly laws of causality (JYJYL: 7). Then, in its polluted state, *ālaya* becomes dichotomized and gives rise to illusions in the material cosmos under the causal chain (JYJYL: 7). Upon declaring emptiness as the ultimate nature of reality, Liang uses the three non-existent natures to explain how illusions manifest emptiness: the so-called immutable self and *dharmas* are nothing but false imaginations. The imagined nature of illusion reveals the "non-existent nature of manifested images" (*xiang wuxing* 相無性) (JYJYL: 8). Indeed, illusory images arise on the basis of subject-object duality as the result of the functionality of consciousness. This then illustrates the other-dependent nature and suggests the "non-existent nature of arising" (*sheng wuxing* 生無性) (JYJYL: 8). The underlying *ālaya*, once purified from illusion and misperception, returns to its originally pure state as the non-dual state of mind

[13] Incorporating Yogācāra theories into their own systems of thought, Huayan masters approached early and later Yogācāra quite differently (Lü 1986: 2584–2962; Keng 2009: 81–85).

characterized by the absolute nature. Thus, the immaculate mind *qua* emptiness conveys the "absolute non-existent nature" (*shengyi wuxing* 勝義無性) (JYJYL: 8).

Combining the teachings of absolute emptiness and illusory manifestation, Liang specifies that the ultimate nature of reality is "the mind being exhaustive of everything, as pure suchness devoid of false illusions" (全物皆心, 純真無妄) (JYJYL: 8)—which later becomes his formulation of metaphysical idealism. Liang's reservation about Yogācāra stems from his endorsement of Paramārthian Yogācāra-*tathāgatagarbha* syncretism. As such, he confines his analysis to early Yogācārins' theories of consciousness and extensively quotes their texts, a limitation he acknowledged in the 1980s (DMGXZ: 1149). Liang goes on to trace the cause of suffering. Inclined to perceive the world in terms of a subject-object duality, sentient beings are prone to treat things as immutable entities which generate "desires and cravings" (*yunian* 慾念) (JYJYL: 16). In their ignorance of emptiness, they experience "feelings" (*ganshou* 感受) of "pleasure" (*le* 樂) when desires are satisfied and endure "suffering" (*ku* 苦) when cravings are unfulfilled (JYJYL: 16). Since desires never cease to emerge and cannot always be fulfilled, it is certain that the amount of suffering exceeds that of pleasure (JYJYL: 16–17). As such, sentient beings are entrapped in the insurmountable existential crisis of this-worldly life due to ignorance of the ultimate nature of reality *qua* emptiness (JYJYL: 15).

Hence, this existential crisis can be resolved once sentient beings renounce this-worldly ignorance and recuperate other-worldly emptiness (JYJYL: 19). At the prescriptive level of this project, Liang casts doubt on the promise of various proposals oriented toward this-worldly life (JYJYL: 17–18). Earlier in his 1914 letter, he had deemed several intellectual traditions in the East and the West as secondary to Buddhism, because they were not apt for the ultimate eradication of human suffering (TF: 489). His own proposal comes to fruition in 1916. Juxtaposing the this-worldly realm of causality with the other-worldly realm of emptiness, he uses Buddhist vocabulary to translate Western philosophy. For instance, Liang equates "ether" (*yitai* 以太)—which is identified by Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931) as the metaphysical origin of physical matter—with *ālaya* (JYJYL: 6). In doing so, he regrets that Le Bon fails to connect the immaterial origin with absolute emptiness (JYJYL: 6). Similarly, even though Liang appreciates Kant's position—as he understands it—that "thing-in-itself" (*wuru* 物如) is beyond the scope of dualistic thinking, he does not believe that humans can attain "free-will" (*ziyou* 自由) in this-worldly life (JYJYL: 10–12). As for social Darwinist Herbert Spencer and his critic Henri Bergson, although they comprehend the illusory nature of this-worldly matters, they remain unaware of the ultimate nature of reality *qua* the other-worldly emptiness (JYJYL: 13–14). In a comparative framework, Liang brings to light how Buddhism preserves the ultimate truth in contrast to other systems of thought across time and place.

It follows that a world devoid of suffering can never be realized by proposals oriented toward this-worldly life. Humans can use these proposals to increase the chance of fulfilling desires (JYJYL: 17), but suffering will also mount as pleasure grows (JYJYL: 18). Under the influence of Zhang Taiyan, Liang reveals how social Darwinism presents only one side of the story and glosses over the evolution of evil

(JYJYL: 18). He thus concludes that these this-worldly centered proposals could temporarily promote human flourishing. Eventually, humans should move beyond this-worldly life to eradicate the cause of suffering, which necessitates the Buddhist path. In Liang's terms, "socialism, anarchism, Kant's democracy, and Nietzsche's *übermensch* … as I anticipate, are not unattainable" (JYJYL: 18), yet "those who follow this-worldly life to promote social progress shall also facilitate the success of Buddhism" (JYJYL: 20). Liang's position at the prescriptive level resonates with his prioritization of absolute emptiness as the ultimate nature of reality at the explicative level. In its ability to resolve human suffering, Buddhism promises China a modernization that starts with a Western style of socialism and ends with a non-Western Buddhist future (JYJYL: 20).

Such a promise, in turn, consolidates Liang's determination to become a Buddhist practitioner (JYJYL: 20). After the release of his 1916 article, Liang's talent was recognized by the president of Peking University, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940), who invited Liang to teach Indian philosophy at this institute. Through his interaction with colleagues and students, Liang deepened his study of Buddhism. As recounted in "In Memory of Mr. Xiong Shili" (憶熊十力先生, henceforth YXSL), Liang particularly admired the work of Ouyang Jingwu at the China Institute of Inner Learning (*Zhina neixue yuan* 支那內學院) (YXSL: 522). Influenced by Ouyang's approach, Liang dedicated more time to later Yogācāra, especially the writings of Xuanzang and his disciples. As a result, he came to scrutinize his previous interpretations of Buddhism. In the 1923 appendix to JYJYL, Liang expressed his critique of ZHANG Taiyan (JYJYL: 21–22).[14] As he specified in remorse, his argumentation in the 1916 article was premised on a false proposition that downplayed the value and worth of this-worldly life (JYJYL: 22; WDZX: 698). In the next section, I will examine how his study of later Yogācāra—especially Yogācāra epistemology—from 1917 to 1921 led to his reassessment of this-worldly life.

4 The Second Period (1917–1921): "Return to the This-Worldly Realm"

Liang's "return to the this-worldly realm" (*huidao shijian lai* 回到世間來) was accomplished in three steps (WDZX: 698). He initiated this process upon advancing his study of Yogācāra epistemology in *Outline of Indian Philosophy* (印度哲學概論, henceforth YDZX), substantialized his reaffirmation of the value of this-worldly life in *Manual of Yogācāra* (唯識述義, henceforth WSSY), and finalized his turn to

[14] Respecting Ouyang as the only authority in Yogācāra studies, Liang became critical of his previous colleagues, such as Zhang Kecheng 張克誠 (1865–1922) and Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873–1958) (Meynard 2014: 202–205). In contrast, he spoke very highly of Lü Cheng who was acknowledged by Liang as Ouyang's protégé (YXSL: 523).

this-worldly Confucian duties in *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* (東西文化及其哲學, henceforth DXWH).

The *Outline of Indian Philosophy* is a textbook Liang authored for teaching Indian philosophy at Peking University (YDZX: 26). In this work, Liang expands his previous twofold project into a threefold one by introducing a detailed investigation of "epistemology" (*renshilun* 認識論) along with "ontology" (*bentilun* 本體論) on the explicative level and the "doctrine of the this-worldly realm" (*shijianlun* 世間論) on the prescriptive level (LSMQJ 1/3–4). As an initial effort, this textbook does not fully depart from metaphysical idealism. In the first section on ontology, Liang perpetuates the view that the *ālaya* consciousness is the "utmost cosmic origin" (*yuzhou zhi dagenben* 宇宙之大根本), both pure as absolute emptiness and impure as the totality of illusory dharmas (YDZX: 104). Referencing *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, Liang prescribes the solution to suffering as leaving this-worldly realm for the other-worldly emptiness (YDZX: 247). Indeed, although Liang strives to position Buddhism as neither monist nor dualist, neither materialist nor idealist, he does not make a case for this claim until he shifts his focus from speculative philosophy to the acquisition of knowledge in the second section on epistemology.

The second section starts with the theory of Buddhist logic as presented in the later Yogācāra theory of *liang* 量 (*pramāṇa*, measurement), where measuring is an analogy for knowing (YDZX: 144). According to later Yogācārins, there are three modes of knowledge: *xianliang* 現量 (*pratyakṣapramāṇa*), *biliang* 比量 (*anumānapramāṇa*), and *feiliang* 非量 (*apramāṇa*), which Liang interprets as pure sensation, abstract concept, and concrete idea respectively (YDZX: 148). Liang speaks of *xianliang*—a mode of knowing purely devoid of any "duality" (*fenbie* 分別)—as "pure sensation" (*danchun ganjue* 單純感覺) to specify how it does not need the mediation of concepts (YDZX: 148–153). Among the eight types of consciousness, the first five, *qua* the five senses, are targeted toward the "particular characteristics" (*zixiang* 自相) of an object, thus furnishing a person with pure sensation (YDZX: 153). To be more specific, when a person comes to perceive a white porcelain bottle, for example, the eye-consciousness provides the pure sensation of white (YDZX: 153). A pure sensation does not involve any abstract thinking of whiteness, nor does it transform into a coherent "perception" (*zhijue* 知覺) of the bottle as a unity of color, shape, texture, etc. (YDZX: 153). Once abstract thinking is evoked, such a mode of knowing becomes *biliang*, an inference that is able to conceptualize the "common characteristics" (*gongxiang* 共相) shared by various objects of cognition (YDZX: 153). Nevertheless, if this person mixes pure sensation with inference, the mode of knowing becomes *feiliang* (YDZX: 153). The previous example of perceiving an object as a coherent unity of various types of sensations with an unchanging identity—the perception of the white porcelain bottle as the specific one in front of this person—illustrates *feiliang* as "concrete idea" (*juti zhi*

guannian 具體之觀念) (YDZX: 161).[15] Indeed, Liang considers the coherent perception of this specific white porcelain bottle in front of a person as a type of concrete idea in contrast to *biliang* as the "abstract concept" (*chouxiang zhi gainian* 抽象之概念) of whiteness in general (YDZX: 161).

Thereafter, Liang associates these modes of knowing with the three natures. Both concrete idea and abstract concept thrive by means of conceptualization, which enables a person to falsely imagine phenomena in experience as immutable and unchanging (YDZX: 163). As such, concrete idea and abstract concept are associated with the imagined nature (YDZX: 163). Conceptualization is founded on the non-dual cognition of particular characteristics—namely, on pure sensation in the this-worldly realm—which shows the other-dependent nature (YDZX: 163). "This-worldly sensation" (*shijian xianliang* 世間現量) further opens the door to the "sensation at the level of the Buddha" (*fowei xianliang* 佛位現量) through which a person sees things as they are in both the this-worldly and other-worldly realms (YDZX: 164). As such, the sensation at the level of the Buddha entails the absolute nature (YDZX: 164). At this point, Liang pinpoints the limitations of "Western dogmatism" (*duduanlun* 獨斷論) and "skepticism" (*huaiyilun* 懷疑論) (YDZX: 166–167). Against dogmatism, Yogācārins prove that the ultimate nature of reality is beyond the grasp of conceptual thinking; and *contra* skepticism, Yogācārins contend that truth is immediately presented through pure sensation (YDZX: 167). Closing the rift between dogmatism and skepticism, the Yogācāra theory of *pramāṇa* enriches Kant's critical philosophy for its affirmation of the knowability of "noumena" (*benti* 本體) through the non-dual insight of *xianliang* (YDZX: 167).

In parallel with the three natures, Liang continues to depict how consciousness serves as the condition for the possibility of various "cognitive objects" (*jing* 境) in one's experience (YDZX: 168). When *ālaya* and the five senses function, they direct themselves toward objects that present things as they are, in pure sensation (YDZX: 169). These objects are referred to as *xingjing* 性境 (objects as such) (YDZX: 169). As mentioned in Sect. 1, the sixth and the seventh consciousnesses aim at *ālaya* to produce concrete ideas that habitually misperceive *ālaya*'s seeing part and image part as immutable self and *dharma* respectively. Based on this habitual misperception, the sixth consciousness produces abstract concepts to reinforce ignorance. Relevant to this discussion, Liang comes to describe the object in the habitual misperception as *daizhijing* 帶質境 (objects expressing the basic stuff) insofar as these objects present various types of "basic stuff" (*zhi* 質) of real existence under false imagination, such as the seemingly real seeing and image parts of *ālaya*

[15] From the Yogācāra perspective, *feiliang* is erroneous knowledge, which Liang specifies as non-knowledge (*feizhishi* 非知識) (YDZX: 160–161). For Yogācārins, it is a mistake to impose a concept on sense manifold, a mistake that is exemplified by how the seventh consciousness superimposes an unchanging ego on the seeing part of *ālaya* and misperceives it as a self-in-itself. Erroneous knowing can also come from fallacious inference, which does not seem to be fully unpacked by Liang (YDZX: 160). Kuiji's example of fallacious inference is that if someone perceives smoke and infers fire, but it turns out that what this person has seen is just mist over a huge waterfall, then the misinference of fire on the basis of the misinference of smoke becomes fallacious inference (T44N1840, P140a9).

(YDZX: 169). Objects in conceptual misperception are referred to as *duyingjing* 獨影境 (objects as merely illusory representations), for they are not straightforwardly presented but merely amount to "illusory representations" (*yingxiang* 影像) of the basic stuff (YDZX: 170).[16]

In his discussions on the three modes of knowing, the three natures, and the three types of cognitive objects, Liang describes this-worldly sensation as that which connects abstract concept and concrete idea in an ignorant mindset, with awakening *qua* sensation at the Buddha level. As such, Liang no longer deems the functionality of consciousness in the this-worldly realm to be illusorily non-existent. Rather, it allows for the open possibility between misperception and insight. The open possibility is determined by the mind of each person. As suggested by the analysis of cognitive objects, the mind does not passively receive external stimuli. Rather, it actively reaches out to constitute a meaningful perceptual-field full of illusory representations, the basic stuff under false imagination, or things as they actually are. In other words, the transcendental ideality of the mind is correlated with conventional/empirical reality to ensure the non-duality and the fluid transformation of ignorance and awakening. Liang expresses the correlative non-duality of these two realms as "non-duality of the oneness of all *dharmas*" (*yiqiefa yixing fei-er* 一切法一性非二) (YDZX: 72). Turning to Western philosophy, he concludes that epistemic realism fails to explain the origin of illusory representations in its affirmation of mind-independent reality, while epistemic idealism cannot attest to the objective existence of the basic stuff (YDZX: 169). For Liang, even Kant fails to demarcate how things actually are from the basic stuff of real existence and illusory representations (YDZX: 169).

Liang's conception of correlative non-dualism matured in his 1920 *Manual of Yogācāra*. A major breakthrough of this manual consists in Liang's recognition of epistemology as the first philosophy that provides a methodological foundation for metaphysical enquiries (WSSY: 271). In light of his stress on epistemology, Liang no longer perceives the school of characteristics as inferior to the school of nature. Rather, he identifies later Yogācāra as representative of all Buddhist teachings (WSSY: 269).

For Liang, later Yogācāra's doctrine of consciousness-only directs one's attention back to everyday, this-worldly experience (WSSY: 282). This is why Liang opens his interpretation of consciousness-only by describing how a person comes to know a white porcelain bottle (WSSY: 282). This person first acquires pure sensations as various types of immediate awareness of the white color or the hard texture, etc. (WSSY: 283). Pure sensations then serve as the ground for two types of mediated knowledge. From synthesizing immediate awareness, the person can derive *feiliang* as a concrete idea of a white porcelain bottle instantaneously, and *biliang* as the inference of an abstract concept of "white porcelain bottle" (WSSY: 283). Since

[16] Here, Liang does not refer to Kuiji's treatise on consciousness-only (T43N1831, P620a19-b27), but cites Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–976) (T48N2016) for elucidating these three types of cognitive objects.

both abstract concept and concrete idea are founded upon sensation, it is through sensation that various objects appear in a person's experience. As such, Liang contends that consciousness-only is *ipso facto* "sensation-only" (*weiyou ganjue* 唯有感覺) (WSSY: 286). Sensation unfolds through the four-part structure of the seeing part, the image part, the self-awareness, and the reflexive awareness of self-awareness, as an indication of how mental acts and perceived phenomena arise from the underlying flow of consciousness that is reflectively aware of its functionality (WSSY: 287).

Thus, the mind—the system of eight types of consciousness—should not be reduced to a collection of mental acts as a unity of psychological activities. Nor is it the same as an absolute idea *qua* the underlying self-awareness. In Liang's terms, the mind in the Yogācāra sense is a "thing" (*dongxi* 東西), not an "activity" (*zuoyong* 作用), a "whole" (*zhengge* 整個), not a "half" (*banbian* 半邊) (WSSY: 288). This is how Liang demarcates later Yogācāra's position from strands of idealism that perceive the mind as a unity of psychological activities or an absolute idea. He then moves on to the Yogācāra critique of realism. The term "*ālambanapratyaya*" (*suoyuanyuan* 所緣緣) is introduced to describe the "condition" (*yuan* 緣, *pratyaya*) of that "which can be perceived" (*suoyuan* 所緣, *ālambana*) (WSSY: 297). By definition, an *ālambanapratyaya* must fulfil two requirements: it should have real existence to be a condition, and it should be perceivable. Some realists inside the Buddhist community conceive of atom-like *paramāṇu* (*jiwei* 極微) as *ālambanapratyaya*, without being mindful of how such objects are too small to be perceivable (WSSY: 298). Others depict a combination of atom-like *paramāṇu* as *ālambanapratyaya*, subsequently overlooking that certain fictional combinations have no real existence (WSSY: 299). For instance, if a person hallucinates and sees two moons, the existence of the second moon is hardly real (WSSY: 299). Thus, it is not the case that there are mind-independent real objects serving as external stimuli to affect the mind and produce knowledge (WSSY: 296). Rather, the mind actively serves as the condition for the possibility of these objects to appear in one's experience. As such, objects depend on consciousness to be cognized (WSSY: 301). Through its description of knowledge, Liang follows later Yogācāra to explain how transcendental ideality is correlated with empirical reality—a correlation that secures the transformability from this-worldly ignorance to other-worldly awakening.

Upon using the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness as the methodological foundation for metaphysical enquiries, Liang attributes the origin of suffering to knowledge, given that the cognition of consciousness serves as the ground for the rise of mental factors, including the affective mental states of feeling, emotion, and affliction (WSSY: 309–318). While he speaks of Yogācāra epistemology as the unique contribution of Indian culture, he reads this tradition with a focus on personal experience and liberation to underscore how the perceptual-field, as a "world of sense for each individual," is inaccessible to others (WSSY: 304). Recall the discussion on Bodhisattva in Sect. 1. If Liang centers on the personal level of experience, he probably will need other resources outside the Buddhist tradition to furnish people with

a moral theory at the interpersonal level and finalize the mechanics for the Bodhisattvas' compassionate practice. Meanwhile, in 1918, Liang's father committed suicide in defense of Confucianism, which led him to rediscover this tradition in grief. According to a "Speech Delivered at the First Seminar on Confucius' Philosophy" (在孔子哲學第一次研究會上的演講, henceforth KZZX), Liang locates the moral teaching of *jiaohua* 教化 (education and transformation) in Confucianism as a skillful means to be used by Buddhists as an integral part of their Bodhisattva practice in this-worldly life that prepares them for realizing other-worldly emptiness (KZZX: 550).

These deliberations led to his 1921 monograph on *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* (東西文化及其哲學, henceforth DXWH). Together with the 1920 manual, it shows how Liang demarcates "Indian culture" (*yinduhua* 印度化) and "Chinese culture" (*zhonguohua* 中國化) from "Western culture" (*xihua* 西化) (WSSY: 259). In his investigation of these cultures, he starts by defining culture as a way of life that unfolds through moment-by-moment arising "events" (*shi* 事) of a seeing part and an image part (DXWH: 376). Explicitly utilizing Yogācāra vocabulary, Liang innovatively incorporates the doctrine of consciousness-only into his philosophical framework. He continues to detail that life by nature is an endless "will" (*yiyu* 意欲) (DXWH: 352). The three forms of will characterize Western culture, Chinese culture, and Indian Culture, respectively: "forward-moving" (*xiangqian* 向前) in its stress on conquering things in the world, "self-reconciliating" (*ziweitiaohe* 自為調和) in its emphasis on the harmonious co-existence of a person and the world, and "backward-moving" (*xianghou* 向後) in its negation of any form of duality (DXWH: 381–395).

In the 1921 work, Liang continues to make a case for his analysis of will through epistemology (DXWH: 396). Advancing the epistemic theory in *Outline of Indian Philosophy*, he connects more explicitly the three modes of knowing with the three types of cognitive objects (DXWH: 397). First, pure sensation *qua xianliang* is the immediate awareness of *xingjing*—namely, objects that present things as they are (DXWH: 397). For instance, pure sensation furnishes a person with an immediate awareness of tea flavor when this person tastes tea, with a straightforward awareness of white when seeing a white cloth (DXWH: 397). From pure sensations, a person can derive abstract concepts of black tea, green tea, strong tea, or light tea and distinguish them from the concepts of non-tea beverages such as water or wine, even when this person has never tasted any one of them (DXWH: 398). Abstract thinking produces inference *qua biliang* that is directed toward a specific type of cognitive objects called *duyingjing*, as merely mental representations without reference to any basic stuff in everyday experience (DXWH: 399).

The most ingenious part of this discussion can be found in Liang's delineation of concrete ideas or *feiliang*. Here, Liang refashions the definition of concrete ideas to remove the negative connotation the concept of *feiliang* held in its original Buddhist context. He reinterprets this mode of knowing as "intuition" (*zhijue* 直覺)—a state between immediate awareness and abstract thinking (DXWH: 399). As such, intuition arises on the basis of sensation and paves the way for inference, which

furnishes a person with a concrete understanding of the self and other things in everyday experience (DXWH: 399). Intuition is the basis for several mental factors, such as "aesthetic feelings" (*yiwei* 意味) (DXWH: 400). Its cognitive object amounts to *daizhijing,* which is characterized by Liang as partly objective due to its reference to the basic stuff of real existence and partly subjective due to the meaning bestowed by a subject (DXWH: 400). Although Yogācārins ascribe *feiliang* as the epistemic origin of habitual misperceptions and innate attachments, Liang appreciates it as intuition that indicates the individual creativity needed to flourish in the this-worldly realm.

In this epistemic framework, Liang portrays Western culture as that which uses inference on the basis of pure sensation for empowering the forward-moving will and enabling social progress (DXWH: 485). Nonetheless, due to the epistemic limitation of inference, Western culture cannot realize the ultimate truth of emptiness but only reinforces the self-other confrontation, which determines its inability to resolve the existential crisis (DXWH: 518). Turning to Chinese culture, Liang reworks Confucianism into a way of life that prioritizes intuition over inference (DXWH: 486). Confucianism proposes to overcome dualist thinking by immersing the microcosmic individual "I" into the macrocosmic universal "I" (DXWH: 448). Such an immersion can be realized through moral cultivation, which will terminate conceptual misperceptions and discriminative attachments (DXWH: 486). By virtue of Confucianism, a person is able, together with other people, to initiate the purification of consciousness in this-worldly life, as preparation for removing the habitual misperceptions and innate attachments to realize the utmost transformation of the mind(s). While Confucianism furnishes Chinese culture with the self-reconciliating will, only Indian Buddhism can bring about universal awakening (DXWH: 487). Subordinating inference to pure sensation, Buddhism enables a person to perceive emptiness in terms of this-worldly sensation (DXWH: 411). Eventually, this person goes beyond cognition to become one with emptiness as the "realization of suchness in ultimate wisdom" (*genbenzhi zheng zhengru* 根本智證真如) (DXWH: 411). The backward-moving will in Indian culture, thus, finalizes the transformation of the this-worldly society into the other-worldly pure dharma realm (DXWH: 411–413).

Now that Chinese and Indian cultures play their distinctive yet complementary and indispensable roles in the realization of universal awakening, Liang concludes that the world is in the process of accepting first Western science for social progress and then Chinese Confucianism for moral cultivation, before finally embracing Indian Buddhism for liberation (DXWH: 526–528). Remarking on how Indian and Chinese cultures are premature, Liang perceives the modernization of China not as Westernization but as Sinicization—namely, a rejuvenation of Confucianism (DXWH: 539). Upon acquiring this viewpoint, Liang confidently returns to this-worldly life.

5 Conclusion

Since Liang embraced the Yogācāra idea of non-duality as a life principle, he was able to engage in the Confucian moral cultivation in this-worldly life as the beginning of purifying consciousness for the Buddhist pursuit of other-worldly emptiness and universal awakening. As previously mentioned, Liang read Yogācāra with a focus on personal liberation and was subsequently convinced that Buddhism as a teaching of other-worldly emptiness is limited in providing sufficient resources to remedy this-worldly problems (DXWH: 529). In his terms, Buddhism preserved only the "method" (*fangfa* 方法), not the mechanism for "self-aware" (*zijue* 自覺) and "self-disciplined" (*zilü* 自律) moral actions (RFYT: 169). It was this conviction that made him question the potential of humanistic Buddhism (DXWH: 528).[17]

Nonetheless, the Buddhist pursuit of other-worldly emptiness remained an aspiration for those who cultivate themselves in compliance with Confucian morality. That explains why Liang disapproved of Xiong Shili's critique of Buddhism, insofar as Liang considered Xiong to be oblivious to the Bodhisattva spirit of staying in this-worldly life to save all sentient beings without being entrapped in *saṃsāra* (DXSH: 773). It can be inferred that Liang located a concrete mechanism of the Bodhisattvas' compassionate practice in Confucian moral theories. As such, he was able to move freely between being this-worldly Confucian in practice and other-worldly Buddhist in aspiration.

References

DMGXZ *Da meiguo xuezhe aikai xiansheng fantanjilu zhaiyao* 答美國學者艾愷先生訪談記錄摘要 ["Summary of the Recorded Interview with American Scholar Guy Alitto"; 1980], *LSMQJ*, 1993, vol. 8: 1137–1178.

DXWH *Dong-Xi wenhua ji qi zhexue* 東西文化及其哲學 [*Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies*; 1921], *LSMQJ*, 1989, vol. 1: 319–547.

FFYSJ *Fofa yu shijian* 佛法與世間 ["Buddhist Dharma and This-Worldly Realm"; 1978], *LSMQJ*, 1993, vol. 7: 454.

JYJYL *Jiuyuan jueyi lun* 究元決議論 [*On Finding the Foundations and Resolving the Doubt*; 1916], *LSMQJ*, 1989, vol. 1: 1–22.

LSMQJ *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集 [*Complete Works of Liang Shuming*, vols. I to VIII]. Jinan: Shandong People Press, 1989–1993.

RFYT *Ru-Fo yitong lun* 儒佛異同論 ["On the Difference Between Confucianism and Buddhism"; 1966], *LSMQJ,* 1993, vol. 7: 152–169.

TF *Tan fo* 談佛 ["On Buddhism"; 1914], *LSMQJ*, 1991, vol. 4: 487–492.

TWDSX *Tan wode sixiang wenti* 談我的思想問題 ["On the Problem of My Thought"; 1964], *LSMQJ*, 1993, vol. 7: 117–124.

WDRL *Wo dui renlei xinli renshi qianhou zhuanbian butong* 我對人類心理認識前後轉變不同 ["The Changes and Differences in My Understanding of Human Psychology"; 1965], *LSMQJ*, 1993, vol. 7: 130–143.

[17] For a more detailed analysis of Liang's exchange with Taixu, see Cheng 2002; Meynard 2011.

WDZX Wo de zixue xiaoshi 我的自學小史 [*The Short History of My Self-Learning*; 1942], *LSMQJ*, 1989, vol. 2: 661–699.
WSSY Weishi shuyi 唯識述義 [*Manual of Yogācāra*; 1920], *LSMQJ*, 1989, vol. 1: 251–320.
YDZX Yindu zhexue gailun 印度哲學概論 [*Outline of Indian Philosophy*; 1919–1922], *LSMQJ*, 1989, vol. 1: 23–250.
YXSL Yi Xiong Shili xiansheng 憶熊十力先生 ["In Memory of Mr. Xiong Shili"; 1983], *LSMQJ*, 1993, vol. 7: 522–523.
ZKZZX Zai kongzizhexue diyici yanjiuhui shang de yanjiang 在孔子哲學第一次研究 會上的演講 ["Speech Delivered at the First Seminar on Confucius Philosophy; 1918"], *LSMQJ*, 1991, vol. 4: 549–550.
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