



Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison

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1. Introduction

On the morning of July 27, 2015, Venerable Master Hsing Yun met scholars and other devotees attending the Third Symposium on Humanistic Buddhism on the third floor of the Dharma Transmission Center, during which he gave a speech “How I Realized Humanistic Buddhism,” (originally titled “The Causes and Conditions that Guided Me to Humanistic Buddhism”).¹ I had the great fortune of personally listening to this speech, during which Venerable Master responded to doubts (eight of them) on Humanistic Buddhism raised by those who do not quite understand it, covering topics such as tradition and modernization, laity and monastic, transcendence and engagement, origins and contemporary, spiritual cultivation and activities, etc. In all, Venerable Master Hsing Yun proposed twenty approaches, of which the third was:

Faith is complex and plural, but the Humanistic Buddhism we propose can unite this complexity. It is because of the energy from our Buddha-nature that all can be accomplished. Even though faith is of varying depth and plural types, there are different depths of faith

1. 〈我對人間佛教的體認〉，（原來題目叫〈我對人間佛教的因緣〉）-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

of various types, Humanistic Buddhism will complete the varying approaches of all religions. This is the tolerant nature of Humanistic Buddhism, which can serve as a faith for all humankind.²

In this quote, Venerable Master Hsing Yun clearly mentions Humanistic Buddhism's plurality, which is the same as that of Buddhism as a whole, and should not be seen as a school or modality of Buddhism. Plural Buddhism and monistic Christianity have very different religious characters. This paper studies and clarifies the plurality of Buddhism from the lens of Buddho-Christian comparison, which can be considered as a short footnote to the above twenty approaches.

2. Buddhism's Plurality From the Perspective of Buddho-Christian Comparison

The term "Buddho-Christian Comparison" refers to the comparative study of Buddhism and Christianity. From this perspective, Christianity is monistic while Buddhism is plural, but what it refers to is not religious sectarianism, since both are split into many schools and sects, but should instead be understood from the three aspects outlined below.

2.1 Monism and Pluralism in Terms of a Religion's Founder or Objects of Faith

Christianity believes that there is only one God, while there are many buddhas in Buddhism. In Buddhism, although the Hīnayāna School only recognizes Sakyamuni Buddha as its sole founder, Mahāyāna Buddhism which has become mainstream in the development of Buddhism (which Chinese Buddhism is a part of) has "countless buddhas."³ For example, seven buddhas

2. 「信仰是複雜性的、多元的，但是我們人間佛教在意義上，能統一這許多複雜性，因為我們的佛性能源，一切都可以成就；儘管信仰的層次不同、種類多元，但人間佛教會圓滿一切宗教的說法。這是我們人間佛教的包容，也是可以做全人類的信仰。」-Ed.

3. Weiqun Yao, Introduction to Buddhist Studies (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishing House, 2003), 39.

are mentioned in *The Platform Sūtra*⁴ which are: “In the past *vyūha kalpa* there were Vipasyin, Śikhin, and Vishvabhu buddhas; in the present *bhadrakalpa* there are Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni buddhas.”⁵ Furthermore, other buddhas are often mentioned in Mahāyāna Buddhism, such as the past Dipankara Buddha, the future Maitreya Buddha, Amitabha Buddha of the Western Pure Land, Medicine Buddha in the Eastern Realm of Pure Lapis Lazuli, and the ruler of Esoteric Buddhism Vairocana Buddha, etc. *The Lotus Sūtra*⁶ further mentions the “immeasurable hundred trillion Buddhas”⁷ in the worlds in all the ten directions, such as Candrasuryapradipa, Mahābhijñā-jñānābhibhū, Maharatnaketu, and Akṣobhya buddhas. In summary,



The Seven Buddhas of the past.

4. 《壇經》-Ed.

5. 「過去莊嚴劫毗婆尸佛、尸棄佛、毗舍浮佛，今賢劫拘留孫佛、拘那含牟尼佛、迦葉佛、釋迦文佛」-Ed.

6. 《法華經》-Ed.

7. 「無量百千萬億諸佛」-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

Mahāyāna and Theravāda Buddhism, taken together does not recognize a sole or single buddha, as reflected in the quote: “[in every] world in all ten directions, there are buddha-tathāgatas.”^{8,9}

There are not only numerous buddhas in Buddhism, but also numerous bodhisattvas and arhats. In Chinese Buddhism, Avalokiteśvara has thirty-three emanation bodies, and the number of arhats have grown from the eighteen in India to five hundred. Although neither bodhisattas nor arhats are founders of Buddhism, they are undoubtedly saints and objects of faith. Some may opine that besides God there is also Jesus Christ in Christianity, and therefore Christianity is not monotheistic. However, as the *Apostles' Creed* states, which has been in existence since the time of the early church:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived
by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He
ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in
the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life
everlasting. Amen.*¹⁰

On the surface it may appear that Christianity is polytheistic, but the Christian theory of trinitarianism makes clear that God is singular, yet it simultaneously composed of three parts: the Holy Father (God), Holy Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit (love from God). It is clear that in the theory

8. 「十方世界，諸佛如來」-Ed.

9. The “Buddha” as used here refers to the person(s) in the sense of the founder of Buddhism, and thus does not, and should not, include the connotations of Buddha-nature referred to in “Buddha of the Mind,” “Mind Is The Buddha” or “Everyone is originally the Buddha.”

10. *The Apostles' Creed*, from the Catholic booklet *Prayers and Practice*.

of trinitarianism, Jesus Christ, as the Holy Son, does not exist independently as an object of faith, but is contained within God. However, in comparison, though in terms of function we can—only very roughly—compare Buddha to God the Holy Father, a bodhisattva to Jesus the Holy Son, and an arhat (the state of liberation) to the Holy Spirit, this Buddhist triplicate does not share a relationship like the Christian Trinity. They exist independently of one another. That is to say, a bodhisattva and an arhat exist as independent objects of faith just as the Buddha is, and is not part of the Buddha, though the Buddha exists in a more advanced state according to Buddhist doctrine.

For example, Chinese Buddhism's popular belief in Avalokiteśvara does not require faith in the Buddha. Other than being independent of the Buddha, in some sense, the belief in Avalokiteśvara is even more influential and the belief is independent rather than defined in relation to the Buddha. In Christianity, however, faith in Jesus Christ is based on the foundation of faith in God—the former cannot exist independent of the latter, because its significance is defined in relation to the other. Without God, Jesus Christ is nullified. Therefore, the Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Spirit in Christianity are monistic in structure, whereas the Buddha, a bodhisattva, and an arhat are plural.

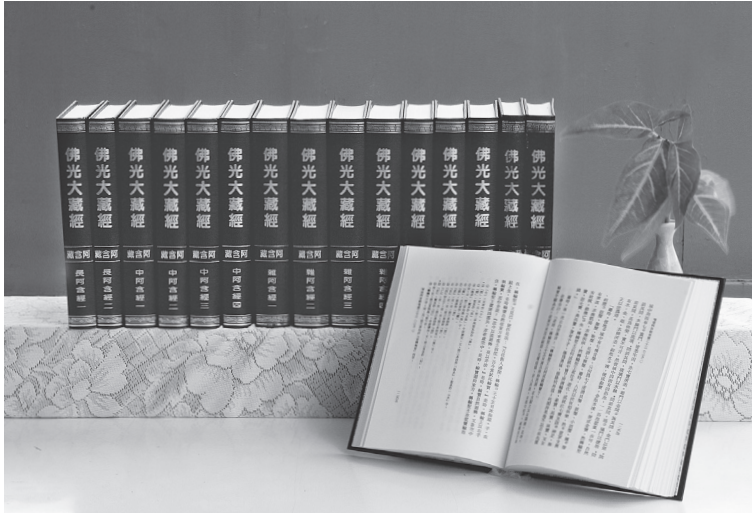
2.2 Classic Monism and Pluralism in Religions

Strictly speaking, Christian scriptures are contained in one *Bible* (including the *Old Testament* and *New Testament*),¹¹ and all denominations use it as its primary scripture. Of course, besides the *Bible*, Christian denominations also accept supplementary scriptures which derive from the spirit of the Bible, and hold less importance. On this point, Professor Duan Dezhi of Wuhan University stated:

Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism all regard the Bible as the foundation of their faith, but they simultaneously recognize the authority of some other texts. For example, Catholicism recognizes some treatises on patristic philosophy and scholasticism,

11. 《聖經》（包括「舊約」和「新約」）-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*



Buddhist scriptures are diverse, and pictured is the *Fo Guang Buddhist Canons: Agama Canon*.

and the Pope's teachings, and the Vatican's catechism; Eastern Orthodoxy bases the standards for its faith on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, Chalcedon Creed,¹² and the resolutions of the first seven bishop conferences¹³ that took place between the 4th and 8th centuries; the various denominations of Protestantism recognize the Articles of Faith¹⁴ and also the writings of people such as Luther and Calvin.^{15,16}

12. 《尼西亞——君士坦丁堡信經》、《迦西敦信經》-Ed.

13. 「普世主教會議」-Ed.

14. 《普世信經》-Ed.

15. 天主教、東正教、新教雖然都以《聖經》作為信仰的依據，但同時還分別承認其他一些文獻的權威性。例如，天主教就認為教父哲學和經院哲學的一些著述、教皇的教諭、教廷的信條具有重要的意義；東正教則為《尼西亞——君士坦丁堡信經》、《迦西敦信經》，以及西元四至八世紀之間召開的前七次「普世主教會議」的決定，可以作為信仰的標準；新教各宗除了肯定《普世信經》之外，也分別承認路德、加爾文等人的著述的重要性。-Ed.

16. Dezhi Duan, *Introduction to Religion* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2005), 98.

Nevertheless, the *Bible* is the most fundamental, and the other Christian scriptures derive from it. However, in Buddhism there are numerous scriptural texts of equal importance (including the Buddhist Canon's three collections of Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma). Moreover, each school has a different primary scripture. Taking the case of Chinese Buddhism, the Huayan School takes the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*¹⁷ as its primary scripture and the Tiantai School the *Lotus Sūtra*.¹⁸ There are even cases where the primary scripture is not a single document, such as the Pure Land School's "three scriptures and one treatise," which includes *The Infinite Life Sūtra*, the *Contemplation Sūtra*, *The Amitabha Sūtra*, and the *Treatise on the Rebirth in the Pure Land*;¹⁹ the Chan School's "Three Chan Sūtras"²⁰—the *Diamond Sūtra*, *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, and *Platform Sūtra*;²¹ the Three Treatise School's "Three Treatises"—the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, *Twelve Gate Treatise*, and *Śataśāstra*;²² the Vinaya School's "four vinayas and five treatises"—the *Sarvāstivādavīnaya*, *Dharmaguputakavīnaya*, *Mahāsaṅghikavīnaya*, *Mahīśāsakavīnaya*, *Vīnaya-māṭrkā*, *Sarvāstivādanikāya-vīnaya-māṭrkā*, *Samantapāsādikā*, *Sarvāstivāda-vīnaya-vibhāṣā*, and *Lu Ershi Er Mingliao Lun*.²³ There are even some schools that regard all related scriptures as their primary scripture, which amounts to an impressive collection. For example the Faxiang School regards all Chinese translations of the school's scriptures (e.g. the *Sandhīnirmocanasūtra* and *Yogācārabhūmīśāstra*)²⁴ as primary, while the Esoteric School regards their own scriptures (e.g. the *Vairocana Sūtra* and *Vajraśekharasūtra*)²⁵ in the same manner.

17. 《華嚴經》-Ed.

18. 《法華經》-Ed.

19. 「三經一論」，即《無量壽經》、《觀無量壽經》、《阿彌陀佛經》和《往生論》-Ed.

20. Or "Three Zen Sutras"-Ed.

21. 「禪宗三經」，即《金剛經》、《維摩詰經》和《壇經》-Ed.

22. 「三論」，即《中論》、《十二門論》和《百論》-Ed.

23. 「四律五論」，即《十誦律》、《四分律》、《摩訶僧祇律》、《五分律》、《毗尼母論》、《摩得勒伽論》、《善見論》、《薩婆多論》和《明了論》-Ed.

24. 《解深密經》、《瑜伽師地論》-Ed.

25. 《大日經》、《金剛頂經》-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

Not only can we tell the difference between monism and pluralism in the number of primary scriptures that Christianity and Buddhism have, but we also see this in the way the scriptures are regarded. Christian denominations have traditionally adhered to the *Bible* and rejected others, while Buddhist schools, although each have their own primary scriptures, does not reject others, and will often utilize other resources available in various sūtras to construct their own school's philosophy—a process called “interpenetration.”²⁶ An example would be the Tiantai School drawing from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.^{27,28} In more extreme cases, Buddhism often draws upon non-Buddhist classics²⁹ from traditions such as Confucianism, Taoism, and even Christianity to explain Buddhist doctrine. For example, in Chinese Buddhism, from the time it was



The one and only scripture in Christianity is the *Bible*.

26. 「圓融」-Ed.

27. 《華嚴經》-Ed.

28. Zhiyi, founder of the Tiantai school, in formulating the philosophy of “The Three Thousand Realms are within One Moment of Thought” drew upon the discourse of “one moment/one thought” in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. See Chen Jian, “A Discussion of Zhiyi’s “Mind of One Moment,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Studies* 9 (March 2005): 127-49.

29. Buddhism regards Buddhist Studies as “inner studies” and term Buddhist scriptures as “canonical.” With regard to other philosophical and religious systems, the term is “non-Buddhist studies” and their scriptures as “non-Buddhist texts.” For example, to Buddhism, Confucianism is a non-Buddhist study and the *Analects* a non-Buddhist text. Further, the scriptural catalogue *Tang Catalog of the Canon* compiled by Daoxuan (Tang dynasty) is that of Buddhist scriptures, and the “Chinese Inner Studies Institute” founded by Ouyang Jingwu in Nanjing is a Buddhist college.

introduced to China as Geyi Buddhism until its mature state of “integration of the three teachings,”³⁰ Buddhist philosophers have always had a passion for explaining Buddhist doctrine through concepts from the Confucian and Taoist classics.³¹ In a contemporary Buddhist booklet which promotes a vegetarian diet and refraining from killing animals, I even found that the author quoted from the *Bible* and the *Analects of Confucius* to rationalize vegetarianism:

The Bible states: “Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; as the green herb have I given you all. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.” Stop and think for a moment, where can we find meat that is without blood? God’s words here are truly contradictory. Why then did he speak this way? This is akin to persuading a habitual smoker to quit, saying: “You can smoke any cigarette you want except one that contains nicotine and will emit smoke.” Everyone knows that the meaning of such an utterance is to emphasize: “Do not smoke.” In the Analects, Confucius said: “If meat does not meet the following conditions, do not eat it: fresh, beautiful hue, without odor, appropriately cooked, appropriately seasoned, properly presented after cooking, and palatable with the use of condiments. Anyone who has cooked will know that this dish is impossible to create, and even if it is somehow possible, Confucius would still refuse to eat it given any excuse. How can this statement be interpreted in any other way than as a hint directing people to become vegetarian? In order to educate people who have too many desires, these great sages can only [guide people

30. 「三教圓融」-Ed.

31. In *Geyi Buddhism*, we find that only small fragments of concepts and philosophy from Confucian and Taoist classics being employed to explain Buddhist doctrine. However, by the time of the “integration of the three teachings,” Buddhists often do so through commenting on entire Confucian and Taoist texts. Examples include Ouyi Zhixu’s *An interpretation of Zhouyi by Buddhism and Commentary on the Analects* in the Ming dynasty, and, Hanshan Deqing’s *Explanations of Laozi’s Daode Jing* (老子道德經解) and *A Straightforward Explanation of the Doctrine of the Mean*.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

gently] as if they were holding a bird in their hands, neither grasp too tightly lest it is strangled, nor grasp too lightly lest it fly away. As a result, these sages can only adopt this lesser strategy of speaking ambiguously; can we not understand their painstaking efforts?^{32,33}

In this quote, we find that both the Christian *Bible* and Confucian *Analects* share the same status as Buddhist scripture, and they are all supporting the Buddhist viewpoint. Only Buddhism has such great inclusiveness and openness to quote from these two sources in explaining the Dharma, and address God and Confucius as “great sages.” Consider this: does Christianity dare to quote from Buddhist scriptures to explain its own philosophy or address the Buddha as a “great sage”? I am certain it does not.³⁴ The *Diamond Sūtra*³⁵

32. 《聖經》上說：「凡活著的動物都可以作為你們的食物，這一切我都賜給你們如同蔬菜一樣。」「唯獨肉帶著血，那是牠們的生命！你們不可以吃。」您想想看，於底下去哪裡找沒有血的肉呢？上帝這些話真是太矛盾了。那麼他為什麼要這樣說呢？這就好像說我們勸一個老菸槍戒菸，對他說：「您什麼菸都可以抽，但是有尼古丁和會冒煙的菸不能抽。」大家都知道，這句話的意思就是要突顯出「不要抽菸」的用意。在《論語》中孔子曾說：「若沒有符合以下條件的肉不吃：新鮮、色澤好看、聞起來沒有腥味、有適合的烹煮方法、符合時節、煮完之後的肉要方方正正、沾了佐料要符合胃口。」煮過菜的人都知道，這盤菜根本做不出來，即使您做的出來，孔子只要找個藉口就可以不吃了，這不是暗示我們要吃素，那是什麼呢？這些偉大的聖人為了要教導我們這些欲望太深的人，就好像是手上抓著一隻小鳥一樣，抓得太緊怕把牠給掐死了，抓得太鬆又怕不小心使牠飛了。所以聖人們講話才不得不出此下策，講得模稜兩可，難道我們不能夠體會一下聖人的苦心嗎？-Ed.

33. *Diet and Health* (Jinan: Qianfo Mountain Xingguo Temple, 2005), 36-7. The citation from the *Analects* is originally “魚餒而肉敗，不食；色惡，不食；臭惡，不食；失飪，不食；不時，不食；割不正，不食；不得其醬，不食。”

34. Mr Huang Xianian, chief editor of the *The Religions Cultures in the World* once discussed this with me. He said he once edited an article introducing the life of a Muslim in China in which it is mentioned that this Muslim very much likes the *Analects* and Confucianism. After the magazine was published, it attracted much criticism from many Muslims who opined that a Muslim can only adhere to the Quran and should not take a liking to the *Analects*. From this we can tell that Islam is like Christianity in maintaining its monism.

35. 《金剛經》-Ed.



The teachings of the Buddha are boundless.

states that, “all dharmas are the buddhadharma”^{36,37}—not only is the Dharma contained in the Buddhist scriptures but also in the Christian, Confucian, and Taoist texts. The Chan school even has a theory of “even the inanimate teaches the Dharma,”³⁸ which proposes that the insentient natural world is also speaking the Dharma.³⁹ In summary, the teachings of the Buddha are boundless; throughout space and the dharma realms, “all dharmas are the buddhadharma,”^{40,41} is also expressed as “true Dharma is unconditioned. For example, if one cannot do this or that, that is conditionality and not the Dharma; if one clings onto any single teaching as the Dharma,

36. 「一切法皆是佛法」-Ed.

37. Translation of Charles Muller. See http://www.acmuller.net/bud-canon/diamond_sutra.html, retrieved 21 June 2019.

38. 「無情說法」-Ed.

39. Benjamin Bagley, “Loving Someone in Particular,” *Ethics* 125, no. 2 (January 2015): 484–85. “Even the inanimate teaches the Dharma” was first proposed by Nanyang Huizhong. See Chen Jian, “On the “Even the inanimate teaches the Dharma” of National Master Huizhong,” *Minnan Foxue* 1 (December 2002): 345–52. The scriptural source for the term can be found in the Vol. 2 of the *Compendium of the Five Lamps* (Zhonghua Book Co., 1992), 777–8.

40. 「一切法皆是佛法」-Ed.

41. Translation of Charles Muller. See http://www.acmuller.net/bud-canon/diamond_sutra.html, retrieved 21 June 2019.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

he or she must be mistaken.”^{42,43} Take the example of regarding to refrain from killing as the Dharma, but “if one truly understands good ecological conservation and sincerely acts in accordance with what brings the most ecological benefit, then I deem even the necessary capturing and killing of pests such as rats as good (Buddhist) spiritual practice.”^{44,45}

2.3 Monism and Pluralism in Religious Method

Religious method here refers to what these religions offer in terms of helping people realize spiritual advancement. Different religions naturally have different methods. What Christianity offers is “grace” and “redemption,”⁴⁶ and this is further explained here:

According to Christian doctrine, the ancestors of humankind, Adam and Eve, went against God's will and ate the forbidden fruit. This caused all of humankind to be born with original sin and fall under the devil's reign of sin without the possibility of redemption. God therefore sent Jesus Christ into the world to die so that humankind's sins may be redeemed in order to attain salvation. Therefore, humankind has only to believe in Jesus Christ as savior to have eternal life.^{47,48}

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42. 「真正的佛法沒有定法，非要這樣不可、非要那樣不可，這都是定法，不是佛法。如果執著一法為佛法，那就搞錯了。」-Ed.
43. Xiao Yao, “If there is a rat infestation, can we kill them?,” Bimonthly journal of Hanshan Temple 4 (2005): 48.
44. 「你能真正懂得保護好生態環境的道理，並認真按照有利於生態環境的要求去做，包括必須時捕殺老鼠等害蟲，我認為也是很好的（佛教）修行。」-Ed.
45. Xiao Yao, “If there is a rat infestation, can we kill them?,” Bimonthly journal of Hanshan Temple 4 (2005): 48.
46. 「恩寵／救贖」-Ed.
47. 「按照基督宗教的教義，人類的始祖亞當和夏娃由於違背了上帝的命令，偷吃禁果，而使全人類都具有了與生俱來的原罪，陷於魔鬼的罪惡統治之下，以致無法自救；所以，上帝派遣基督下世受死，為世人贖罪，拯救他們，而人類也只有信賴基督才能蒙救稱義、獲得永生。」-Ed.
48. Dezhi Duan, *Introduction to Religion* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2005), 101.

Or it can alternatively be said that humankind, through faith and prayer, express gratitude to God in order to obtain his grace and redemption, to actualize spiritual advancement.

Although different Christian denominations interpret grace and redemption⁴⁹ differently,⁵⁰ there is only one established method, and all the different schools practice it. However, a single method with various interpretations will result in multiple methods being employed, just as Christian theology has many interpretations concerning the bread and wine in the Holy

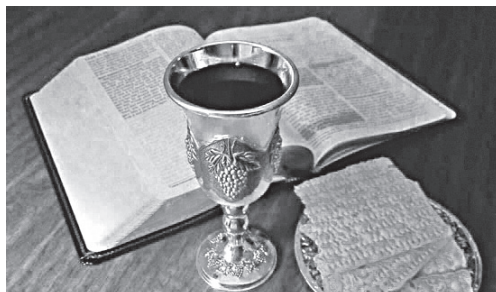
49. 「恩寵／救贖」-Ed.

50. For example, in regard to “grace,” Catholicism “often emphasizes that it is because of Jesus Christ’s act of redemption that God gifts believers with a supernatural grace. People need to obtain this grace through prayer and the holy sacraments. Catholics further divide grace into two types: actual and habitual (or sanctifying). Protestants commonly oppose Catholicism’s concept of linking grace with works, instead proposing that people can only obtain salvation through faith. They also emphasize that salvation comes by God’s grace alone and not through one’s works.” With regards to “redemption,” in Christian theology, “objective atonement” proposes that Jesus Christ’s death changed God’s attitude towards man while “subjective atonement” proposes that his life and death became an example that moved people to change their attitudes towards God, resulting in redemption. Concretely speaking, it can be split into the following: 1. Ransom to Satan: believes that the death of Jesus Christ constituted the ransom that is paid to Satan to save people from the latter’s dominion; 2. Victory over Satan: believes that Jesus Christ defeated Satan by his Resurrection, causing Satan to lose his dominion over people, but yet not obtain a ransom; 3. Atonement: believes that people’s sin has offended God’s dignity, and God has to uphold the “justice” of punishing all offences. As Jesus Christ the Holy Son is innocent yet is put to death, this fulfills God’s requirement of justice, and thus people obtain redemption. After elaboration and supplementation, this theory became the principal theory maintained by Catholicism; 4. Moral Influence: believes that Jesus Christ’s sacrifice of himself evidences God’s holy love and is an exemplar for people, moving the people to repent and turn to God, emphasizing that it is not God but people who changed in attitude. Generally speaking, the former three belong to “objective atonement” while the last belong to “subjective atonement.” See Dezhi Duan, *Introduction to Religion* (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2005), 101-2.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

Communion,⁵¹ the ritual, the bread, and the wine itself does not alter and is still singular. Another analogy is that of people having different interpretations of the War in Iraq that was initiated by US President George W. Bush, but the President initiating this war is singular. In comparison, the Buddhist religious method, i.e., “the Dharma gate to liberation”⁵² is plural.

It is said that there are eighty-four thousand methods of practice or methods of practice [that number] the sand of the Ganges^{53,54} in Buddhism. Although this is not exactly true, it refers to an immense amount. Specific to Chinese Buddhism, Dharma gates to liberation⁵⁵ can be broadly divided into five categories: Chan, Teachings, Pure Land, Esoteric, and Vinaya, which are then split into many finer subcategories. For example, within the Chan school there are Hīnayāna Chan and Mahāyāna Chan. Mahāyāna Chan is further split into



Bread and wine in Christian Holy Communion have unique symbolism and significance.

51. With regard to this, there are three different approaches Christian theology takes: the first being “transubstantiation,” believing that after consecration it has materially and symbolically transformed into Jesus Christ’s body and blood; the second is “homooousion,” believing that after the consecration there is no material change, but Jesus Christ’s body and blood in actual form must necessarily coexist in the Holy Communion; the third is “symbolic presence,” believing that after consecration it is merely symbolic, and serves to commemorate Jesus Christ’s last supper and his sacrificing his blood for people’s redemption, stressing that there is no secret significance. Some Protestants approve of the last theory. See Dezhi Duan, *Introduction to Religion* (Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2005), 104.

52. 「解脫法門」-Ed.

53. 「八萬四千法門」或「恆沙法門」-Ed.

54. 「八萬四千」是印度佛教中的一個常用術語，係指數量之多，並非實指八萬四千。佛教認為，不但佛教的法門有八萬四千，眾生的煩惱也有八萬四千。「恆沙」是「恆河沙數」之略，佛經中也常用它來表示數量之多，因為恆河（印度的一條大河）中的沙，其數量當然是很多的。比如在《金剛經》的〈一體同觀分〉中，佛問：「須菩提，於意云何？如一恆河中所有沙，有如是等恆河，是諸恆河所有沙數佛世界，如是寧為多不？」（須菩提）答曰：「甚多，世尊。」

55. 「解脫法門」-Ed.

Shenxiu's Northern School of Chan and Huineng's Southern School of Chan, of which the latter is again divided into the Chan of investigating the topic of inquiry, silent illumination meditation etc. In this manner, Chan methods are innumerable.⁵⁶ Within the Teachings school, there is the Tiantai school's Cessation and Contemplation, Huayan school's Contemplation on the Realm of Reality, of which the former is split into Gradual, Indeterminate, and Complete Stopping and Seeing.⁵⁷ In Pure Land, there is the goal of mindfulness of the buddhas to attain rebirth [in the Pure Land], but the recitation can be divided into four types: mindfulness of the buddhas through upholding the Buddha's name, contemplation, contemplation of the image, and his actual form (i.e. the Dharmakāya). Rebirth in the Pure Land can also be divided into four types: rebirth through right mindfulness, amidst hysteria, with indeterminate karma, and silent mindfulness.⁵⁸

Among the esoteric practices, the Tibetan and Tang traditions differ. Tibetan Buddhism is made up of different esoteric techniques such as tantra,

56. 比如智者大師的《釋禪波羅蜜次第法門》就收集了禪宗成立之前，在中國流行的各種各樣的大小乘禪法，如世間禪、出世間禪；八背捨、十六特勝，琳琅滿目，數不勝數。而宗密的《禪源諸詮集》（已佚，僅留其序即〈禪源諸詮集都序〉）在談到禪的種類時亦說：「禪則有淺有深，階級殊等。謂帶異計欣上厭下而修者，是外道禪；正信因果，亦以欣厭而修者，是凡夫禪；悟我空偏真之理而修者，是小乘禪；悟我法二空所顯真理而修者，是大乘禪。若頓悟自心，本來清淨，元無煩惱，無漏智性，本自具足，此心即佛，畢竟無異，依此而修者，是最上乘禪，亦名如來清淨禪，亦名一行三昧，亦名真如三昧。此是一切三昧根本。若能念念修習，自然漸得百千三昧。達摩門下，輾轉相傳者，是此禪也。達摩未到，古來諸家所解，皆是前四禪八定。諸高僧修之，皆得功用。」參見石峻等編：《中國佛教思想資料選編》第2卷第3冊，北京：中華書局，1983年1月，頁423。《釋禪波羅蜜次第法門》和《禪源諸詮集》二者合起來，堪稱為中國禪法大全。

57. 關於天台宗的「止觀」修習法門，不妨參見拙作：《無明即法性——天台宗止觀思想研究》，北京：宗教文化出版社，2004年7月，頁83。天台宗祖庭浙江天台山國清寺的現任方丈允觀法師曾對我說，天台宗的止觀有四種，除了「漸次止觀」、「不定止觀」和「圓頓止觀」，還有「童蒙止觀」，這其實是一種誤解，因為「童蒙止觀」是智者大師所撰的介紹止觀修習方法的一本入門書的書名。

58. Fubao Ding, *The Dictionary of Buddhist Terms* (Vol. 1)(Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 1995), 798.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

vajrayana sahajiyāna kalachakrayana. In the Vinaya, the precepts and rules are numerous, and practiced according to different sets that constitute different Dharma gates to liberation. The most commonly mentioned precepts and rules are the Five Precepts, the Eight Precepts, the Ten Precepts, and the precepts of full ordination, which number 250 for *bhikṣus* and 348 for *bhikṣuṇīs*—as many Buddhists are aware.

Not only are there different practices under the banners of the Chan, Teachings, Pure Land, Esoteric, and Vinaya schools, they can also merge into peripheral practices which are combinations of Chan-Teachings, Chan-Pureland, and Chan-Esoteric. For Example, the heart-of-mind method developed by the late (lay teacher) Yuanyin Laoren is a Chan-Esoteric Dharma gate to liberation.⁵⁹

In the above explanation, I have made a simple comparison between Buddhism and Christianity through the three dimensions of religious founders, scriptures, and methods, and demonstrated Christianity's monism and Buddhism's pluralism.⁶⁰ What then are the factors that led to Buddhism's pluralistic approach? I am of the personal opinion that it is Buddhism's values of humanism.

3. Buddhism's Humanism in the Context of Pluralism

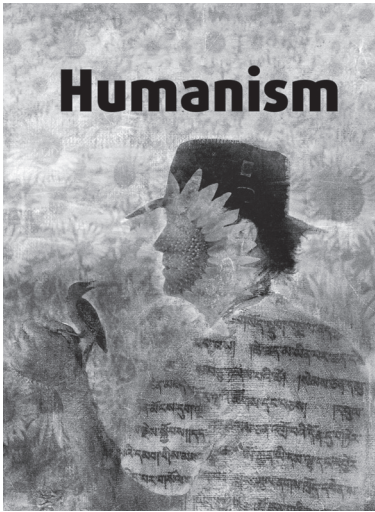
What is humanism? The *Foreign Philosophy Dictionary* explains humanism as:

A term widely used by Chinese academia since the 1980s. It is generally used in contrast with "scientism," and refers to certain

59. Yuanyin Laoren, *Ganges Mahamudra* (恆河大手印) (Sichuan: Religious Cultural and Economic Exchange and Service Center(宗教文化經濟交流服務中心), 1999).

60. 我想，綜合地來看，佛教的多元性在中國文化的語境中得到了最淋漓盡致的發揮，比如「賈島的詩作與他的苦吟精神，在唐末五代很有影響。如晚唐的李洞『常持數珠念賈島佛，一日千遍。』有喜歡賈島詩的人，李洞抄錄了送給他，『叮嚀再四曰：此無異佛經，歸焚香拜之。』又如南唐孫晟，也畫了賈島的像掛在壁上，朝夕禮拜。……賈島被有些人稱為『佛』，是符合人人都可成佛的理念的，他的詩被人當作『佛經』，也符合佛教只要與佛理相通，不管是誰說的都可稱為『佛經』的開放精神。」參見肖堯：〈「賈島佛」〉，《寒山寺》佛教雙月刊第4期，蘇州：寒山寺，2005年，頁46。

Western philosophical theories, doctrines or schools. Sometimes it is used to refer to philosophies which are human-based, targeted at humans, or hold humans as the core for its values. Chinese academic interpretation of renben zhuyi (lit. human-based-ism is varied, with attributions to humanism (rendao zhuyi or renwen zhuyi), anthropology (renlei xue), or homonology (renxue).^{61,62}



A philosophical stance that emphasizes “human beings as its core value, focus, and purpose,” is termed “humanism.”

Humanism as a term is used by Chinese scholars to translate and introduce Western academic thought to refer to a Western philosophical theory, a doctrine, or a school. Its use is quite broad, as long as philosophies are human-based, targeted at humans, or hold humans as its core value, it can be said to be humanistic. For example, a consensus in Chinese academia is that Ludwig Feuerbach’s philosophy is humanistic philosophy, Abraham Maslow’s psychology is humanistic psychology, Erich Fromm’s ethics is humanistic ethics, Nikolay Chernyshevsky’s materialism is humanistic materialism (his work was translated as *Humanism in Philosophy*⁶³), F.C.S. Schiller’s pragmatism is humanistic pragmatism (his work was translated as *Research in Humanism*⁶⁴) and many more, which I cannot mention in full here. More recently, there are

61. 二十世紀八〇年代以來中國學術廣泛使用的術語。一般在與「科學主義」相對的意義上使用。指某些西方哲學理論、學說或流派。有時亦泛指一種以人為本、以人為目的和以人為尺度的思潮。中國學術界對漢語「人本主義」一詞的英文註釋不盡一致，有的註 humanism（一般譯「人道主義」）或 Humanism（一般譯「人文主義」），有的註 anthropology（一般譯「人類學」、「人本學」）或 homonology（一般譯「人學」）。-Ed.

62. Feng Qi and Xu Xiaotong, ed., *Foreign Philosophy Dictionary* (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Publishing House, 2000), 10.

63. 《哲學中的人本主義》-Ed.

64. 《人本主義研究》-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

even scholars who have linked Confucian philosophy with humanism in order to compare Confucianism and Christianity. For example, Sun Jiabao wrote:

In the Confucian system, humans are the focus and measure for thought, philosophy is humanistic, and the “discourse on humans” that is built upon such a foundation must necessarily be strongly flavored with the character of humanism; Christian thinking focuses and measures God instead of humans. Christianity takes the lead from God, viewing problems through revelations from God, and therefore unavoidably branding everything with his mark.^{65,66}

As we see, humanism does not refer to any particular theory or school of thought, but is a broad category that encompasses all these factors. Many of these ideas are located within this spectrum—including Buddhism, which also has its own humanismic principles,⁶⁷ that are found in the Buddha’s teaching of different dharmas to different people. This can be said to be truly based on the

65. 在儒學系統中，人是思考的中心和尺度，哲學是人本主義哲學，在此基礎上發展出來的「人論」，必然要呈現出強烈的人本主義特徵；基督教思考的中心和尺度不是人而是神，人站在神的角度，透過上帝的啟示看問題，難免要打上神的烙印。-Ed.

66. Sun Jiabao, “Comparative Research between the Discourse on Humans in the Si-Meng School of Confucianism and Christianity (思孟儒學與基督宗教「人論」的比較研究),” in *Shandong University Master’s Dissertations* (山東大學碩士論文) (Jinan, Shandong University Press, 2005), 2.

67. 將佛教與「人本主義」連繫起來，當然不是我的首創，比如有人認為「佛學是人學，是心學，是關於人生智慧的哲學。人生在世，有許多疑問和困惑，會給人帶來許多痛苦和煩惱，如何活得更快樂、更充實、更安心，在人自身能力感到無所企及的時候，往往會想要借助於神的啟迪和保佑。但是佛教說人心中都有一個佛，不要求神拜佛，要求就求你自己——就是通過參悟，啟發智慧，感悟生命，不斷尋找更高層次的生存智慧和力量，開發、實現自己心中的潛能。這其實和心理學中的第三勢力——人本主義的主張是不謀而合的。」（參見天心月圓：〈《金剛經》中的人生智慧〉，《寒山寺》佛教雙月刊第4期，頁94。）這裡所說的佛教人本主義與本文所說的佛教人本主義，並不是從同一個角度來立論的，其中的區別只要閱讀下文便知，無須在此多加解釋。

human individual, and is in accordance with “teachings are given in response to the individual’s capacity and medicine prescribed according to the specific ailment.”^{68,69} Here, “capacity” refers to the fundamental ability of sentient beings and “ailment” to defilements, both of which vary between individuals. “Teachings” refers to Buddhist philosophy and “medicine” to the practice which can eliminate defilements. The Buddha gave different teachings and medicine according to the corresponding capacities and illnesses of individual people. As such, the very large collection of Buddhist philosophy and the multitude of practices all meet the humanistic conditions of being “human-based, targeted at humans, and holding humans as its core value.” Therefore, Buddhism is also humanistic. Mr. Zhang Taiyan once said: “The theory of Buddhism compels the wise to believe in it, and its precepts and rules compels the foolish likewise. Being suited for both the wise and foolish, it is the most useful.”^{70,71} This quote figuratively and appropriately expresses the humanistic character of Buddhism, i.e. Buddhism encompasses many facets of the Dharma suited to people of varying capacities.

Buddhism’s humanism is developed in the context of pluralism. Alternatively, it can be said that Buddhism’s pluralism is entirely built upon an emphasis on humanism. We are all aware that humans are pluralistic, people differ in their capacities, wisdom, character, erudition, and daily habits. They also differ in their defilements, levels of delusion, and awareness, and furthermore, differ in the temporal and cultural environment they are in; even age and gender are areas that constitute differences. At the same time, Buddhists differ in their identity—having a unique position within the sevenfold assembly—such as being a member of the laity (*upāsaka* and *upāsikā*), or the

68. 「觀機設教，對症發藥」-Ed.

69. Shandong Buddhist Online Scriptural Press, *Essential Compilation of Venerable Yinguang’s Works* (印光法師文鈔精編) (Shandong Buddhist Online Scriptural Press, 2005), 20.

70. 「佛教的理論，使上智人不能不信；佛教的戒律，使下愚者不能不信。通徹上下，這是最可用的。」-Ed.

71. Famous Personalities in China and Abroad Speaks on Buddhism” (中外名人談佛教) in *Chan* (Issue 1) (Henan: Bailin Temple, 2005), 48.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

monastics (*bhikṣu*, *bhikṣuṇī*, *śrāmaṇera*, *śrāmaṇeri*, and *śikṣamāṇā*). Because Buddhism is capable of providing different paths to liberation for different people, the teaching of the Dharma must necessarily have a pluralistic structure. Speaking plainly, considering the Buddhist practices of precepts and rules, each member of the sevenfold assembly is required to adopt different practices within this structure. The laity are required to observe the five precepts, the *śrāmaṇeras* and *śrāmaṇeris* the ten precepts, the *śikṣamāṇās* observe the six precepts in addition to the ten precepts, while *bhikṣus* observe 250 precepts and *bhikṣuṇīs* 348 precepts.⁷² Buddhist precepts and rules are most obviously evident in the humanistic plural structure of the Dharma. However, the most systematic expression of this structure is Chinese Buddhism's theory of the classification of teachings.⁷³

In Chinese Buddhism, there are many ways of classifying the teachings, with different schools having their own individual methods. According to Zhiyi in the tenth fascicle of the *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra*,⁷⁴ in the Northern and Southern dynasties before the formation of Chinese Buddhist schools, there already existed “three [systems] in the south, seven in the north” in terms of the classification of teachings.⁷⁵ They all differ in content, but their

72. With regards to the details of the sevenfold assembly and the precepts and rules they observe, please see Weiqun Yao, *Introduction to Buddhist Studies* (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishing House, 2002), 219-23.

73. 印度佛教中並沒有判教理論，藏傳佛教中的寧瑪派雖然有「九乘判法」的判教理論，但這種判教理論是模仿漢地佛教（亦即中國佛教）的結果。唐代的摩訶衍禪師將漢地禪宗南宗的禪法傳入西藏，其中也包括判教的思想。寧瑪派吸收了摩訶衍禪師所傳的禪法，並將佛之教法判為「九乘」，其中最高的一乘是所謂「大圓滿法」，這「大圓滿法」實際上就是禪宗南宗禪法的一個翻版。中央民族大學宗教系的班班多杰教授，2005年11月17日在山東大學作了一場題為「西藏文化與西藏佛教」的演講，其中就談到了上述觀點。筆者親聆聽講。

74. 《法華玄義》-Ed.

75. 所謂「南三」，是指出現於南方的三種判教方式，即虎丘山岌師之「五教」判、宗愛師之「四時教」判、定林柔次道場惠觀之「五時教」判；所謂「北七」，是指出現於北方的七種判教方式，即北地師之「五時教」判、菩提流支三藏之「二教」判、佛駄光統之「四宗」判、有師之「五宗」判、老闍凜師之「六宗」判、北地禪師之「二大乘教」判、北地禪師的「一音教」判。

《人間佛教》學報 · 藝文 | 第二十六期

approach and position are surprisingly similar—they all rank and group the innumerable and varied mass of teachings in the Buddhist scriptures into an ordered list. They further point out that these Buddhist teachings (though of differing ranks and categories) and perhaps even quite contradictory on the surface, are spoken by the Buddha for different sentient beings facing varying circumstances. Therefore, all of these teachings are humanistic teachings directed towards the human individual. Because there are many differences between people, and sometimes even contradictions are apparent, the Buddha's teachings are accordingly different and at times seem contradictory—this is a very natural outcome. In summary, the theory of the classification of teachings in Chinese Buddhism is an indication that humans are plural, and the Buddhist teachings should also be plural. Below I discuss the Tiantai classification of teachings to better illustrate this point.



Humans are pluralistic, so are the teachings of the Buddha.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

Tiantai classifies teachings as the “five periods and eight teachings,”⁷⁶ of which the five periods refer to the Avataṃsaka teaching, the Deer Park teaching, extended teachings, *Prajñāpāramitā* Sūtra period, and *Lotus Sūtra* and *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* periods, while the eight teachings are split into the four modes of exposition: sudden, gradual, secret, and indefinite teachings, and the four types of transformative teachings: Tripiṭaka, common, separate, and perfect teachings. As for their exact details, many scholars who study and write on Tiantai and even general works concerning Chinese Buddhist history discuss these teachings, readers are therefore advised to consult these materials.⁷⁷ Internally within the Tiantai school, there is the practice of aligning the five periods and the eight teachings to the four types of transformative teaching—Tripiṭaka, common, separate, and perfect teachings. Master Jingquan, a 44th generation Dharma descendent of the Tiantai school, spoke on this in *An Outline of the Essentials of the Tiantai School*⁷⁸ accordingly:

The five periods is a vertical categorization of separating teachings of a whole lifetime into five periods. The eight teachings is a horizontal categorization of separating the teachings of a whole lifetime into eight types of doctrines, and within them...although the four modes of exposition are known as teachings, they are contained within the Tripiṭaka, common, separate and perfect teachings. The four modes of exposition are akin to prescriptions while the four types of transformative teaching are like medical herbs. The prescription is but a piece of paper. The reason it can cure ailments is because of the

76. 「五時八教」-Ed.

77. Here are a few related works for reference. 1. Pan Guiming, *A Critical Biography of Zhiyi* (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1996); 2. Pan Guiming and Wu Zhongwei, *A General History of the Chinese Tiantai School* (Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House, 2001); 3. Venerable Huiyu's *Tiantai Jiao Xue Shi* (天台教學史) (this work circulates among Buddhists but have yet to be properly published).

78. 《天台宗綱要》-Ed.

various medical herbs prescribed.^{79,80}

Precisely because of this, in *An Outline of the Essentials of the Tiantai School*⁸¹ Venerable Master Jingquan states, “Therefore [I] lucidly discuss the four types of transformative teaching while I skip over the four modes of exposition.”⁸² In reality, in the history of Tiantai school, there are two other publications which specifically discuss the classification of teachings in the four types of transformative teaching, one is Zhiyi’s *Outline of the Tiantai Fourfold Teachings*,⁸³ and the other is Master Zhi Xu’s *The Essence of Teaching and Meditation*.^{84,85} Through the exposition on the four types of transformative teachings, these three titles clearly elucidate Buddhism’s humanistic plural teachings. As Master Jingquan states, the central ideology:

The four types of transformative teachings are the Tripiṭaka, common, separate, and perfect teachings. As sentient beings have both sharp or blunt intellects, and both heavy or light defilements, the Tathāgata with his altruistic wonderful Buddha-wisdom, skillful and expedient means separated the single Buddha vehicle into four

79. 五時是從豎的方面說，把一代時教，分為五個時期；八教是從橫的方面說，把一代時教，分成八種教義，而八教中，……化儀四教，雖稱為教，其實它內中所含有的義理，還是藏、通、別、圓四教。化儀四教，譬如藥方；而化法四教，譬如藥味。藥方僅僅是一張紙，它之所以能有醫療疾病的作用，還是在於種種藥味。-Ed.

80. Jingquan, *An Outline of the Essentials of the Tiantai School* (Shandong: Qingdao Zhanshan Temple, 1994), 11.

81. 《天台宗綱要》-Ed.

82. 「但明化法四教，化儀四教便略而不談」-Ed.

83. 《四教儀》-Ed.

84. 《教觀綱宗》-Ed.

85. There are also some commentaries on these two titles, such as Mengrun’s (Yuan dynasty) *Anthology of Commentaries on the Outline of the Four Teachings*, Venerable Jingxiu’s (early Republican era) *Jiaoguan Gangzong Keshi* (教觀綱宗科釋).

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

teachings.^{86,87}

As Master Zhi Xu puts it: “The *Tathāgata* with his altruistic wonderful Buddha- wisdom prescribes medicine for sentient beings’ ailments. If one’s views are mistaken views and thinking seriously deluded, he prescribes the *Tripitaka* teachings; if light in condition, he prescribes the common teachings; if one’s ignorance is severe, then the separate teachings; if light then the perfect teachings.”^{88,89}

The target audience for each of the four types of transformative teaching differs. The *Tripitaka* teachings are for those with low capabilities and common teachings for high capabilities within the three realms. The separate teachings are for those with low capabilities and the perfect teachings for high capabilities outside the three realms. Accordingly, there are differing *jiaoguan*⁹⁰ for each of these, with *jiao* meaning Buddhist theory and *guan* meaning spiritual practice.⁹¹ The theoretical and practical foundations for each of the teachings are:

1. For the *Tripitaka* teachings, emptiness of non-existence or annihilation, and the meditative practice of analyzing objects to be empty of self-nature.
2. For the common teachings, emptiness of existence, and apprehension of the essential emptiness of existence.
3. For the separate teachings, emptiness of neither existence nor non-existence, and the graduated threefold insights.

86. 「化法四教，是藏、通、別、圓。因為眾生的智慧有利鈍，煩惱有厚薄，所以如來以利他妙智，善巧方便，於一佛乘，開為四教。」-Ed.

87. Jingquan, *An Outline of the Essentials of the Tiantai School* (Shandong: Qingdao Zhanshan Temple, 1994), 11.

88. 「如來利他妙智，因眾生病而設藥也。見思病重，為說三藏教（亦即藏教）；見思病輕，為說通教；無明病重，為說別教；無明病輕，為說圓教。」-Ed.

89. Jingxiu, *Jiaoguan Gangzong Keshi* (教觀綱宗科釋) (Fujian: Putian Guanghua Temple, 2005), 37.

90. 「教觀」-Ed.

91. The Tiantai school’s method of practice is termed *zhiguan* (cessation and contemplation) or *guanxin* (mind contemplation), which is also abbreviated to *guan* (contemplation).

4. For the perfect teachings, emptiness of simultaneous existence and non-existence, and the three insights in one thought.

Furthermore, according to the above theories and practices, the four types of transformative teachings often explain a single Buddhist concept differently. Taking the Four Noble Truths as an example, the teachings respectively speak of the Four Noble Truths as arising-and-perishing, non-arising, immeasurable, and unconstructed.

Another example:

The term nirvāṇa can be explained as the extinguishing of birth, aging, illness, and death (Tripiṭaka teachings). The term saṃsāra is essentially empty in nature and that there is no suffering (common teachings). The term transcending the two sides of saṃsāra and the end of saṃsāra (separate teachings). The term saṃsāra is nirvāṇa, and vice versa, are both inconceivable in nature (perfect teachings). Another example concerns the Buddha's body, that it is of a height measuring one zhang and six chi (Tripiṭaka teachings). The Buddha's body is like Mount Sumeru (common teachings). The Buddha's body has immeasurable positive marks (separate teachings). The Buddha's body is equal to the true dharma realm (perfect teachings).^{92,93}

Other concepts such as the six perfections, two truths, and the twelve causes and conditions are also differently explained by each of the four types of transformative teachings. I will not go into further detail of these ideas here.

In conclusion, the different Buddhist theories and spiritual practices, with

92. 「如說『涅槃』二字，便可作幾種解釋。可以說，滅除生、老、病、死，一切都盡，名為涅槃（藏教）；也可以說，生死本空，本來無苦，名為涅槃（通教）；也可以說：生死是一邊，生死滅盡是一邊，超出二邊，名為涅槃（別教）；也可以說：生死就是涅槃，涅槃就是生死，生死不可思議，涅槃也不可思議（圓教）。又如說：佛身長丈六（藏教）；也有說，佛身如須彌山（通教）；也有說：佛身有微塵相好（別教）；也有說：佛身等真法界（圓教）。」-Ed.

93. Jingquan, *An Outline of the Essentials of the Tiantai School* (Shandong: Qingdao Zhanshan Temple, 1994), 11.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

their different explanations of similar concepts constitute the different teaching systems for sentient beings, i.e. the four types of transformative teachings.

Readers may not fully comprehend the four types of transformative teachings, but this is not an obstacle to understanding the pluralism of the Dharma. As for the exact significance of this understanding, I regret that I am unable to touch on it here as it is unrelated to the central discussion of this paper. For those interested in this information, please refer to the three documents mentioned above.

When examining the pluralistic structure of Buddhist humanism through the four types of transformative teachings, parallels are evident. For example, the Buddha gave different teachings to different people, and they are all equal and parallel to one another, and no disparities are apparent where one can be said to be better than the other. However, the Chinese Buddhist perspective is that such parallel relationships are only one of the modes evident in Buddhism's humanistic plural structure, and another mode is one that disparities are also evident.

4. Disparities in Buddhism's Humanistic Plural Structure

These disparities come in the following three forms.

4.1 The “Good and Best” Disparity

The Pure Land school in Chinese Buddhism believes the all Buddhist practices can aid one's liberation; they are all good, but the best and most effective is considered to be Pure Land. Master Yinguang, the school's 13th Patriarch expressed this here:

Sentient beings have both strong and weak capabilities, and both strong and weak ignorance. They should [all be taught] according to their capabilities and circumstances, so that they may



Master Yinguang, 13th Patriarch of the Pure Land school in China.

benefit. The practices which can be taught are vast like sand grains in the Ganges.⁹⁴ Among these, Pure Land practice is the most perfect, sudden, wonderful, profound, and easiest to practice. This practice achieves the most results and requires the least exertion, yet brings the quickest results, can be applied to the three grades of wholesome roots, encompasses all dharmas, can be simultaneously practiced by both the saintly and the mortal, and can benefit those with strong or weak capabilities. All this can only be achieved through the excellent Pure Land practice.⁹⁵

At the same time, Master Yinguang believes that of all the practices, Pure Land can encompass all practices:

Pure Land practice is great and no one is excluded from it. It can be applied to the three grades of wholesome roots, and for those people with both strong and weak capacities...all practices have its source in this dharma realm; all practices eventually return to this dharma realm...The enlightened Buddha took pity on all sentient beings...spoke the Dharma in accordance with capabilities and circumstances. In summary, there are five schools. Which five? The Vinaya, Teachings, Chan, Esoteric, and Pure Land schools. The Pure Land school is the final destination for the Vinaya, Teachings, Chan, and Esoteric, just as all the rivers and waterways return to the sea. Pure Land practice is the alpha and omega for all buddhas in the ten directions past, present, and future in their accomplishing of

94. 眾生根有大小，迷有淺深。各隨機宜，令彼得益。所說法門，浩若恆沙。就中求其至圓至頓，最妙最玄，下手易而成就高，用力少而得效速，普被三根，統攝諸法，上聖與下凡共修，大機與小根同受者，無如淨土法門之殊勝超絕也。-Ed.

95. Shandong Buddhist Online Scriptural Press, *Essential Compilation of Venerable Yinguang's Works* (印光法師文鈔精編) (Shan- dong Buddhist Online Scriptural Press, 2005), 1.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

enlightenment and teaching of sentient beings.^{96,97}

Master Yinguang does not deny that practices other than that of the Pure Land school are also paths to liberation, as taught by the Buddha for sentient beings in accordance with their capabilities and the circumstances. However, he thought most highly of Pure Land practice and felt that it was superior to or better than the other practices.

In short, whether we take the view of Master Yinguang on the Pure Land school that the excellence of Pure Land practice surpasses other schools without excluding them, among the Pure Land practitioners, there is this widely circulated metaphor that explains the great excellence of this practice: Sentient beings are like a small insects trapped in the bottom of a bamboo tube, their liberation is like coming out of it. There are two methods available to escape the bamboo tube. One is the horizontal method, to break out by boring through its stem wall. The other method is the vertical method by boring through the bamboo joints upwards and finally exiting through the top of the plant. We may ask: Which way is less strenuous and better? Obviously going horizontally is the easier way. Pure Land practitioners would then say, pleased with themselves, that Pure Land practice is the horizontal way out, while the other methods are the vertical one.

4.2 The “Expedient and Ultimate” Disparity

The *Lotus Sūtra* teaches a path to liberation which is “expedient and ultimate.” “Ultimate” here refers to enlightenment, while “expedient” to enlightenment’s many supporting conditions. Expedient means themselves cannot lead to enlightenment, but neither can ultimate practices. Only by

96. 淨土法門，其大無外。三根普被，利鈍全收。……一切法門，無不從此法界流。一切行門，無不還歸此法界。……大覺世尊，潛諸眾生，……隨順機宜，廣說諸法。括舉大綱，凡有五宗。五宗為何？曰律，曰教，曰禪，曰密，曰淨。……淨為律、教、禪、密之歸宿，如百川萬流，悉歸大海，以淨土法門，乃十方三世諸佛，上成佛道，下化眾生，成始成終之法門。-Ed.

97. Jingquan, *An Outline of the Essentials of the Tiantai School* (Shandong: Qingdao Zhanshan Temple, 1994), 2-5.

practicing the expedient means to open the door to ultimate practices can enlightenment eventually be achieved, which is what the *Lotus Sūtra* calls “to unite three into one,”⁹⁸ as mentioned in the following scriptural quotation:

The Buddha addressed Śāriputra, saying: “The Buddha Tathāgatas lead and inspire only bodhisattvas. All the acts of a buddha are always for one purpose. The buddhas manifest their wisdom and insight solely to inspire sentient beings to enlightenment. “O Śāriputra! A Tathāgata teaches sentient beings the Dharma only through the single buddha vehicle. There is no other, neither a second nor a third. “O Śāriputra! The true nature of all the buddhas of the ten directions is exactly like this...Having understood the various desires and deep-rooted inclinations of sentient beings, I teach the Dharma according to their capacities through the power of skillful means, using various explanations and illustrations. “O Śāriputra! I do this in order to cause them to attain the omniscience of the single buddha vehicle. “O Śāriputra! Since there is no second vehicle in the worlds of the ten directions, how could there be a third!...all the buddhas illuminate the three [vehicles] with the power of skillful means in order to teach the single buddha vehicle...The words of the Buddha Tathāgatas are never false. There are no other vehicles, only the single buddha vehicle.”^{99,100,101}

98. 「會三歸一」-Ed.

99. 佛告舍利弗，諸佛如來，但教化菩薩，諸有所作，常為一事，唯以佛之知見示悟眾生。舍利弗，如來但以一佛乘故，為眾生說法，無有餘乘，若二若三。舍利弗，一切十方諸佛，法亦如是。……知諸眾生有種種欲，深心所著，隨其本性，以種種因緣、譬喻、言辭方便力而為說法。舍利弗，如此皆為得一佛乘一切種智故。舍利弗，十方世界中尚無二乘，何況有三。……諸佛以方便力，於一佛乘分別說三。……諸佛如來，言無虛妄，無有餘乘，唯一佛乘。-Ed.

100. T. 262, 9: 7a29-7c09.

101. *The Lotus Sūtra*, trans. Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama (California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), 31-2.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*



In the *Lotus Sutra*, Buddha uses three kinds of vehicles as metaphors for Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas. Pictured are the south wall murals of Mogao Caves 98 and 61, depicting the “Parable of the Three Vehicles and the Burning House.”

This quote is rather long, so we will summarize its main points. “To unite three into one”¹⁰² can also be said to be “to unite two into one,”¹⁰³ of which the three refers to the three vehicles of the Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas, the two refer to the Hīnayāna (which includes the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas vehicles) and Mahāyāna (i.e., the Bodhisattva vehicle) and one refers to the single Buddha vehicle.

As such, we can tell that “to unite two into one”¹⁰⁴ is a generalization of “to unite three into one,”¹⁰⁵ but these are in reality one and the same. We shall only discuss the latter one here.

The philosophy of “to unite three into one”¹⁰⁶ holds that all buddhas liberate sentient beings through the single Buddha vehicle: “The buddhas

102. 「會三歸一」-Ed.

103. 「會二歸一」-Ed.

104. 「會二歸一」-Ed.

105. 「會三歸一」-Ed.

106. 「會三歸一」-Ed.

manifest their wisdom and insight solely to inspire sentient beings towards enlightenment.”^{107,108} This single Buddha vehicle is the ultimate practice available to sentient beings so that they can become enlightened. As for the three vehicles that the buddhas teach at other times to other beings, this is an expedient means taught according to the varying capabilities of the sentient beings. Therefore, the buddhas need to teach the three vehicles “according to [sentient beings’] capacities.”^{109,110} If the buddhas were to insist on teaching the single Buddha vehicle only, then some sentient beings will not be able to be taught, thus “illuminat[ing] the three [vehicles]...in order to teach the single Buddha vehicle.”^{111,112} These three, or three vehicles, are the expedient means towards the ultimate practice.

In short, the *Lotus Sūtra*’s philosophy “to unite three into one”¹¹³ tells us that the practices related to one Buddha vehicle and the three vehicles may respectively manifest into many concrete practices, they are simultaneously hierarchical but are also (must be) mutually encompassing.

The practice of the one Buddha vehicle is both primary and ultimate, but does not reject the three vehicles, which are secondary and expedient. At the same time, the former is not said to be superior to the latter. Instead, the two complement each other to form a complete practice leading to liberation, and neither can function without the other.

Clearly, the practices of the one Buddha vehicle and three vehicles are not a parallel relationship, but neither is it a hierarchical one where one surpasses the other. It is a relationship where both are inclusive and encompassing.

107. 「唯以佛之知見，示悟眾生」 from the *Lotus Sūtra*.-Ed.

108. *The Lotus Sūtra*, trans. Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama (California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), 31.

109. 「隨其本性」 from the *Lotus Sūtra*.-Ed.

110. *The Lotus Sūtra*, trans. Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama (California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), 31.

111. 「於一佛乘，分別說三」 from the *Lotus Sūtra*.-Ed.

112. *The Lotus Sūtra*, trans. Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama (California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), 31.

113. 「會三歸一」-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

With the *Lotus Sūtra* as its primary scripture, the Tiantai school's practice of cessation and contemplation exemplifies the hierarchical expedient and ultimate relationship. For example, the school's founder Zhiyi splits the practice of cessation and contemplation into ten stages in the introductory book to the practice, *Shamatha- Vipashyana for Beginners*:¹¹⁴ "Now I will briefly elucidate the ten stages to illustrate to the practitioner the vow and the steps required in the grades towards nirvāṇa in order to achieve supreme enlightenment."^{115,116} This is known as the "ten steps of cessation and contemplation." The ten steps of cessation and contemplation can be divided into the first five preliminaries and the latter five aspects of practice.¹¹⁷

The five preliminaries are:

1. Be provided with external conditions.
2. Renounce worldly desires.
3. Drive away obscuration that delude the mind.
4. Adjust the five duties.
5. Utilize expedient means.¹¹⁸

The five aspects of practice are:

1. Observe correct concentration.
2. Practice the roots of ethical behavior.
3. Be aware of [the different types of] *māras* (afflictions).
4. Heal illness.

114. 《童蒙止觀》-Ed.

115. 「今略明十意，以示初心行人登正道之階梯，入泥洹之等級」-Ed.

116. Li An, *Editing and Explanations on the Treatise of Lesser Calming and Discernment* (Beijing: Chung Hwa Book Co., 1997), 2.

117. 前五科和後『五門』-Ed.

118. Zhiyi, *The Basic Principles of Calming (śamatha) and Insight (vipaśyanā) Meditation*, trans. Venerable Zhenguan.

Retrieved from <http://www.bauswj.org/wp/wjonline/the-basic-principles-of-calming-samatha-and-insight-vipasyana-meditation-%E7%AB%A5%E8%92%99%E6%AD%A2%E8%A7%80%E5%BC%88%E4%BA%A6%E5%90%8D%E5%B0%8F%E6%AD%A2%E8%A7%80/> on 23 June 2019.

5. Awaken,¹¹⁹ which is also known as correct practice, and is the stage of the path where the rewards of the practice are reaped.

As a complete method of practice for cessation and contemplation, the inclusion of both levels of the five expedient preliminaries and five aspects of practice is strong evidence of the expedient and ultimate hierarchical relationship.

4.3 The Relative and Absolute Disparity

The basic model of this hierarchical relationship is the same as that of expedient and ultimate, with “relative” replacing “expedient” whilst “absolute” replacing “ultimate.” However, the specific issues differ.

While the expedient and ultimate hierarchical relationship discusses the internal relationship between the various Buddhist practices are relative and absolute dealing with the relationship between Buddhism and non-Buddhist spiritual systems. Examples of this relationship include Brahmanism (the predecessor of Hinduism), Confucianism, Taoism, and Christianity.

In the historical development of Buddhism, attitudes toward non-Buddhist faiths have changed over time. During the period of Sectarian Buddhism, Buddhism and other faiths (which were said to have been ninety-six at that time) engaged in a pointed conflict which might have involved the loss of life. However, with Buddhism’s development into the Mahāyāna period, Buddhism softened its opposition to other systems.

In fact, Buddhism went further than simply softening its opposition towards other religions. It later gradually evolved a tolerant and adopting attitude by absorbing non-Buddhist philosophy with the view that it is “to Buddhism’s benefit.” In this way, Buddhism started to harmonize with non-

119. Zhiyi, The Basic Principles of Calming (śamatha) and Insight (vipaśyanā) Meditation, trans. Venerable Zhenguan.

Retrieved from <http://www.bauswj.org/wp/wjonline/the-basic-principles-of-calming-samatha-and-insight-vipasyana-meditation-%E7%AB%A5%E8%92%99%E6%AD%A2%E8%A7%80%E8%BC%88%E4%BA%A6%E5%90%8D%E5%B0%8F%E6%AD%A2%E8%A7%80/> on 23 June 2019.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*



Buddhism harmonizes with the local Bon religion after its spread to Tibet.

Buddhist systems. For example, Esoteric Buddhism which finally evolved from Mahāyāna Buddhism in India, was in fact “related to the assimilation between Hinduism [and Buddhism]...[with] many of its religious practices coming from Hinduism.”^{120,121}

Similarly, Buddhism harmonized with the local Bon religion after its dissemination into Tibet. In China, Buddhism also harmonized with local Confucian and Taoist belief systems. Academia has long reached a consensus on the validity of the above statements, which I shall not elaborate upon here.

One thing I would like to mention here is that the harmonized symbiosis between Buddhist and non-Buddhist systems exhibits a relative and absolute hierarchical relationship. In *The Great Calming and Contemplation*,¹²² the Buddho-Confucian relationship that Zhiyi discussed can serve as an excellent

120. 「與印度教的同化有關……密教的許多宗教實踐實際取自印度教。」-Ed.

121. Weiqun Yao, *Introduction to Buddhist Studies* (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishing House, 2003), 115-6.

122. 《摩訶止觀》-Ed.

case to aid our understanding of the relative and absolute hierarchical relationship. Zhiyi wrote:

If sentient beings do not have the capability to transcend the mundane world [and] cannot accept the profound transformative teaching due to a weak basis of strength, then worldly medicines [i.e. teachings] should be given, such as those of Confucius and Duke Zhou, who formulated social orders and hierarchical orders, so seniors are respected and juniors loved, the world is stable and prosperous, etiquette and statues are observed and order prevails, which is beneficial to the [development of] precepts. Calming minds with joy and improving habits and customs is beneficial to [the development of] meditative concentration. The best of virtues, morality and essence of principle from emperors of the past would be beneficial to [the development of] wisdom. At the very beginning the world was primal chaos, and it was not an opportune time [for Buddhism] to emerge. Having capabilities akin to those in the border regions Buddhism would not prosper. I therefore send the three sages [i.e., Laozi, Confucius, Yan Hui] to educate [the people of] China. Only by starting with proper etiquette and right action will [they be] able to have faith in the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna scriptures. If this can be done in China, then it can be done everywhere else. We first have to start with worldly teachings.^{123,124}

Here Zhiyi expresses a very important view of the worldly rules of Confucian ideology with its system of benevolence, righteousness, rites, and music as a support for Buddhism's supramundane dharma(s) of precept,

123. 若眾生無出世機，根性薄弱，不堪深化，但授世藥，如孔丘姬旦制君臣，定父子，故敬上愛下，世間大治，禮律節度，尊尊有序，此扶於戒也；樂以和心，移風易俗，此扶於定；先王至德要道，此扶於慧。元古混沌，未宜出世；邊表根性，不盛佛興，我遣三聖，化彼真丹，禮義前開，大小乘經然後可信。真丹既然，十方亦爾，故前用世法授與之。-Ed.

124. T. 1911, 46: 78 c1-8, retrieved from CBETA.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

meditation, and wisdom—the threefold training. He is further of the opinion that “only by starting with proper etiquette and right action”¹²⁵ can an inroad be provided for Buddhism’s successful dissemination into China, and so that “will [they be] able to have faith in the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna scriptures.”¹²⁶

In this context, Confucianism led the way to Buddhist practices, providing the expedient means for the propagation of Buddhism. Hence, Confucianism and Buddhism, which initially was without the slightest connection, became an integrated whole.

In this whole, Confucianism and Buddhism are obviously not on equal terms. Buddhism is the goal, ultimate, and absolute, while Confucianism is a means, expedience, and relative. They were in a disparate relative and absolute relationship.

Zhiyi opined that this model of Buddhism in China having to realize its “absolute” through Confucianism’s “relative” nature can be accomplished everywhere, and serves as the universal standard¹²⁷ for the application of the Dharma. He further analyzed Confucian worldly rules and Buddhism’s supramundane dharma(s) in this way:

*What does the giving of worldly rules refer to? Just as a king would out of love lay thick cushions on the ground to spare his son the pain of falling from a height, likewise does a sage regard sentient beings who will take rebirth in the three lower realms, guiding them with the relative truths and virtuous worldly rules, so that they may avoid [the pains of] unfortunate rebirths. Subsequently, he gives the medicine of the Dharma. All ignorant ones are guided and taught a way out by sages descending to the level of the mundane during times when the Buddha was not in the world.*¹²⁸

125. 「禮義前開」-Ed.

126. 「大小乘經然後可信」-Ed.

127. 「放之四海而皆準」-Ed.

128. 何謂用世間法施，譬如王子從高墮下，父王愛念，積以繒綿，於地接之，令免苦痛；眾生亦爾，應墮三途，聖人愍念，以世善法，權接引之，令免惡趣。然施法藥，凡愚本自不知，皆是聖人託跡同凡，出無佛世，誘誨童蒙。-Ed.

*The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*¹²⁹ says, “All non-Buddhist scriptures are the words of the Buddha, not those of non-Buddhists.” The *Suvarṇaprabhāsaśāstara*¹³⁰ states: “All virtuous teachings of the world [arise] due to this Sūtra. If [one] deeply understands the worldly rules, [they will see] it as the Dharma; why is that so? Abiding by the ten virtues is equivalent to observing the five precepts; deeply understanding the five constant virtues and five elements is in essence the same as [understanding] the five precepts.”¹³¹

*Benevolence, compassion, taking pity, and caring for others and non-harming them is the precept against killing. Righteousness, incorruptibility, and giving oneself to others is the precept against stealing. Marriage in accordance with propriety and regulation is the precept against sexual misconduct. Having wisdom, discretion and clarity, being upright in conduct, balanced and moral is the precept against intoxicants. To be trustworthy, truthful, loyal and sincere is the precept against lying. The Duke of Zhou and Confucius established these five constant virtues as the Dharma medicine for the world [in order to] cure people's illnesses.*¹³²

Likewise, the five elements parallel the five precepts: The precept against killing shields against fire; stealing, metal; sexual misconduct, water; lying, earth; and, intoxicants, fire.

Likewise, the five classics parallel the Five Precepts: the Classic

129. 《大經》-Ed.

130. 《光明》-Ed.

131. 《大經》云：一切世間外道經書皆是佛說，非外道說。《光明》云：一切世間所有善論，皆因此經，若深識世法即是佛法，何以故？束於十善，即是五戒，深知五常、五行，義亦似五戒。-Ed.

132. 仁慈矜養，不害於他，即不殺戒；義讓推廉，抽已惠彼，是不盜戒；禮制規矩，結髮成親，即不邪淫戒；智鑒明利，所為秉直，中當道理，即不飲酒戒；信契實錄，誠節不欺，是不妄語戒，周孔立此五常，為世間法藥，救治人病。-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

*of Rites admonishes against flagrant celebrations thus the precept against intoxicants. The Book of Music harmonizes the mind, thus against sexual misconduct. The Book of Songs criticizes assassinations, thus against killing. The Book of Documents explains yielding in righteousness, thus against stealing. Finally, the Book of Changes is about the yin and yang, thus against lying. These and other wise worldly rules are in accordance with the ultimate [truth], and one can surpass them.*¹³³

Clearly, in my opinion, the non-Buddhist scriptures such as the *Bible* and the *Analekts* contain philosophy which is also the Dharma. Such broad-mindedness and wisdom!¹³⁴

In the three disparities of Buddhism's pluralistic structure discussed above, all are founded upon humanism. For example, with respect to the good and best disparity, the Pure Land school believes that its practice is the "best" in the Age of Declining Dharma due to sentient beings' capabilities being weak.

133. 又五行似五戒，不殺防木，不盜防金，不姪防水，不妄語防土，不飲酒防火。又五經似五戒，《禮》明樽節，此防飲酒；《樂》和心，防姪；《詩》諷刺，防殺；《尚書》明義讓，防盜；《易》測陰陽，防妄語，如是等世智之法，精通其極，無能逾無能勝。-Ed.

134. 作為比較，這裡有必要提下天主教。雖然上世紀六〇年代，一向「唯我獨尊、排斥異己」的「天主教召開了一次大公會議，透過反省，教會發覺其他宗教也有部分真理。因此，教會一改以往的態度，積極宣導宗教交談，……也開始與其他的宗教合作」，但是天主教對其他宗教的態度依然還是高高在上，不無鄙視：「其他宗教掌握部分真理，而完整的真理存在於天主教會內。」參見袁廣義：《活出豐富的生命》，濟南：洪家樓天主堂，2005年，頁11-12。看得出來，即使是改變了態度的天主教，也完全沒有佛教那種能充分認同並將其他宗教的思想納入自家體系的寬廣胸懷。天主教與其他宗教無論如何不能合為一個有等差關係的宗教共同體，但佛教卻能做到這一點。同時，天主教即使承認其他宗教「掌握部分真理」，其他宗教與天主教之間也不存在正文中所說的「好／最好」的等差關係，因為天主教說其他宗教「掌握部分真理」，只是意味著在天主教看來其他宗教是「部分好」，而不是「好」。實際上，天主教之所以一改過去「唯我獨尊、排斥異己」的態度，而承認其他宗教也「掌握部分真理」，完全是迫於當代「宗教對話」、「宗教對極化」的客觀情勢，不得已而為之（否則它自己就難以運作），它骨子裡其實還是一種排他性的宗教，與多元寬容的佛教不可同日而語。

With respect to the expedient and ultimate disparity, the Tiantai school establishes the expedient means of uniting three into one based on the different capabilities of the three vehicles of sentient beings (Sravaka, Pratyekabuddha, and Bodhisattva).

With respect to the relative and absolute disparity, Mahāyāna Buddhism establishes expedient means towards enlightenment by dispelling delusion and explaining reality according to the cultural inclination of the region where Buddhism spreads (such as the Chinese Confucian culture). All of these exemplify Buddhism's humanistic thought, which I will not explore further for the sake of brevity.

5. “One Voice [of the Buddha]” and the “Perfect Voice [Suited for all Beings]”—The Unification and Pluralism of Buddhism

According to the understanding of Chinese Buddhism, “the doctrine is the words of the Buddha” and “Chan is the mind of the Buddha.”^{135,136} All Dharma originates from the Buddha,¹³⁷ and is unified in him—thus the Buddha's “one voice.” However, this one voice has a pluralistic expression, and can adapt to the needs of different sentient beings (i.e. Buddhism's humanism as discussed earlier in this paper).

As such, the one voice becomes the Buddha's perfect voice, the expression of both of which is simultaneously unified and pluralistic. Fazang in *Rounded Sound in One Volume*¹³⁸ gave the following two explanations of the two terms:

One explanation is that the Tathāgata can speak all disparate dharmas using one voice. For example, those who have strong greed, will hear the Tathāgata teaching the contemplation of impurity, and so forth [for other types of beings], thus it is named the perfect

135. 「教是佛語，禪是佛心」-Ed.

136. Translation adapted from A.C. Muller's translation of the *Axiom Mirror of the Three Teachings* (Samga Gwigam 《三家龜鑑》) by Hyujeong. Retrieved from <http://www.acmuller.net/kor-bud/samga-gwigam-trans.html> on 29 June 2019.-Ed.

137. However, Japanese Buddhism proposes that “Mahāyāna is not taught by Buddha.”

138. 《圓音章》-Ed.

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

voice. Therefore, the Avataṃsaka Sūtra says: “The Tathāgata in one article of speech demonstrates the boundless sea of scriptures.” The second explanation is that the Tathāgata speaks multiple tongues in one voice, i.e., each sentient being only hears the Tathāgata speaking in the being’s own language, as the Avataṃsaka Sūtra says: “All languages and grammars of sentient beings are spoken completely by [the Tathāgata’s] one voice.”^{139,140}

The first example of *Rounded Sound in One Volume* tells of the Buddha speaking disparate teachings suited to sentient beings’ differing needs, thus they are able to obtain what they each require. The second example of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* speaks of the Buddha speaking only one teaching instead of disparate teachings, but when sentient beings hear the teaching, they feel it is exactly what they need, as if the Buddha taught specifically for that being. In fact, this has given us two interpretations of “The Buddha taught with one voice; Sentient beings understood according to their own perspectives.”¹⁴¹

Here “the Buddha taught with one voice”¹⁴² refers to one voice while “sentient beings understood according to their own perspectives”¹⁴³ is the perfect voice. No matter which of the two explanations we take, we come to the conclusion that they equate to each other. Fazang further describes the following three related explanations in Chinese Buddhism concerning the two terms:

There is an explanation that in one act of speech, the Tathāgata manifests all sentient beings’ speech, which they hear in their own language. It is not that the Tathāgata only spoke one sound, it is

139. 一謂如來能以一音演說一切差別之法，所謂貪欲多者，即聞如來說不淨觀，如是等乃至一切，故名圓音，是故《華嚴》云：如來於一語言中，演說無邊契經海；二謂如來一音能同一切差別言音，謂諸眾生各聞如來唯己語故，《華嚴經》云：一切眾生語言法，一言演說盡無餘。-Ed.

140. Fazang, *Rounded Sound in One Volume* (Nanjing: Jinling Scriptural Press), 1.

141. 「佛以一音演說法，眾生隨類各得解」-Ed.

142. 「佛以一音演說法」-Ed.

143. 「眾生隨類各得解」-Ed.



“The Buddha taught with one voice; Sentient beings understood according to their own perspectives.” A woodcut print on the “Turning of the Dharma Wheel” (one of eight junctures in the life of the Buddha), painted by renowned Taiwanese artist Lin Chih-hsin.

(Picture provided by FGS Buddha Museum)

*Humanistic Buddhism: Plurality and Humanistic Buddhism
in the Context of a Buddho-Christian Comparison*

because it is the same act of speech, thus it is called one voice, and because the expressed speech is many, it is the perfect voice. There is another explanation that the Tathāgata only made a single Brahmanic utterance, which is called the single voice, but it can create positive conditions for sentient beings, so that they understand it differently in accordance to their practice, and thus it is called the perfect voice—it is not that the Tathāgata made multiple utterances. There is another explanation that the Tathāgata made a single silent formless utterance of nirvāṇa and liberation, which is called a single voice, but each sentient being due to his capabilities hears the Tathāgata speaking many utterances, which is known as the perfect voice. It is not that the Tathāgata's utterances are one or many.^{144,145}

From the history of Chinese Buddhism, pluralistic Buddhism did not create sectarian divisions between the Buddhist schools. Instead, it is monistic Christianity that has sectarian disputes which are unresolvable. From the Buddhist perspective, the root cause of such phenomena is that the Buddhist doctrinal system is balanced and harmonized by the one voice and perfect voice principle, which gives rise to its simultaneous existence as monistic and pluralistic, leading to the favorable situation of “a hundred flowers blossom while a hundred schools of thought contend.”¹⁴⁶

144. 或有說言，如來於一語業之中，演出一切眾生言音，是故令彼眾生各聞己語，非謂如來唯發一音，但以語業同故，名曰一音；所發多故，名曰圓音。或有說言，如來唯發一梵言音，名為一音，能為眾生作增上緣，令其所作，感解不同，故名圓音，非謂如來有若干音。或有說言，如來唯一寂滅解脫離相言音，名為一音，而諸眾生機感力故，自聞如來種種言音，故名圓音，非謂如來音有一有多。-Ed.

145. Fazang, *Rounded Sound in One Volume* (Nanjing: Jinling Scriptural Press), 1-2.

146. 「百花齊放，百家爭鳴」-Ed.