

ONTOLOGICAL INDETERMINACY AND ITS
SOTERIOLOGICAL RELEVANCE: AN ASSESSMENT OF
MOU ZONGSAN'S (1909–1995) INTERPRETATION OF
ZHIYI'S (538–597) Tiantai BUDDHISM

Hans-Rudolf Kantor

Graduate Institute of East Asian Humanities, Huaan University, Taipei

Introduction: The Concern with Ontology in Tiantai Buddhism

The issue of ontology in Zhiyi's Tiantai teaching is the central focus of Mou Zongsan's study *Buddha-nature and Prajñā wisdom* (*Foxing yu bole* 佛性與般若).¹ This study represented the first time in the scholastic tradition of Tiantai Buddhism that the subject had been dealt with in depth, yet no subsequent studies dealt critically with the issue, contributing either a new point of view or substantially developing Mou's.² Rather, the works of Mou's Taiwanese disciples emphatically supported their master's views, providing only some exegetical explanations.³ In contrast to Mou Zongsan, Wu Rujun (also known as Ng Yu-Kwan), a Buddhist scholar and Mou Zongsan disciple from Hong Kong, denies that ontological speculation plays a crucial role in this system of Tiantai teaching, although he borrows some important insights from Mou. Rather than ontological issues he stresses the importance of the epistemological and soteriological aspects of Tiantai teaching.⁴

In fact, there is just one English article, written by Mou Zongsan's disciple Wing-cheuk Chan, relating Mou Zongsan's conception of ontology in Tiantai Buddhism to Heidegger's thoughts on fundamental ontology.⁵ Chan's study essentially attempts to point out the similarities between the theoretical speculation in Tiantai teaching and Heidegger's views on the concepts of "world," "truth," and "Erschlossenheit."

Mou's view of Tiantai Buddhism represents an important part of his general reconstruction of Chinese philosophy, which also includes his reflections on Confucianism and Daoism. In his concern with the issue of ontology in Tiantai Buddhism, he is influenced by a certain scholastic movement that started to assert itself in the Chinese intellectual environment at the beginning of the twentieth century. Three generations of Chinese scholars have focused their efforts on reconstructing the entire system of Chinese philosophy, referring both to the three traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism and to the essential differences between Chinese and Western philosophical traditions. This New Confucian Movement (當代新儒家) is concerned with reconstructing a "Chinese philosophy" that mainly relies on Chinese traditions and is supposed to be essentially distinct from Western philosophy, although it is nonetheless believed to represent a universal type of modern humanism.⁶

The initial inspiration came from first-generation thinkers like Liang Shuming (1893–1988), Ma Yifu (1883–1967), Xiong Shili (1885–1968), and He Lin (1902–

1992). Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), Tang Junyi (1909–1978), and Xu Fuguan (1903–1982) represent the most important thinkers of the second generation. Particularly, Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi developed comprehensive systems of their own that integrate various elements both from the three Chinese traditions and from Western traditions. Mou Zongsan’s system eventually proved to be the most influential. Conceptions of a distinctive type of Chinese philosophy based on third-generation thinkers like Tu Wei-ming (1940–) and Liu Shuxian (1934–) were crucially influenced by Mou Zongsan. In spite of their diverse approaches and divergent interpretations, there is one major issue of agreement among these Chinese thinkers: Chinese traditions have developed a certain type of philosophy that is essentially distinct from that developed by Western traditions of philosophy.

Mou Zongsan’s philosophical speculation focuses particularly on the question of metaphysics and ontology in relation to ethics in the three Chinese traditions. In his discussion of a distinctive type of Chinese metaphysics, Mou points out that the three Chinese traditions follow a common pattern of ontological speculation that can be precisely delineated by contrasting the speculative components of these traditions with Kantian thinking.⁷

Based on his interpretation of the three Chinese traditions, Mou Zongsan claims that there is a bipolarity of finite and infinite dimensions constituting and penetrating human existence. In this twofold pattern of ontology, which he presents mainly in his work *Phenomena and the Thing in Itself*, he assigns the Kantian *thing in itself* (non-empirical *noumena*) to the infinite, and the Kantian phenomenon (*empirical object*) to the finite.⁸ The two poles oppose one another and therefore refer exclusively to one another; as in a dialectical relationship, they mutually include each other based on mutual negation as opposites. This polarity between the finite empirical and infinite non-empirical involves two aspects: mutual inclusion and ontological transcendence. Kant’s *transcendental difference between noumena and phenomena*⁹ is interpreted according to the bipolarity of this pattern, and Mou’s thesis regarding Confucian ethics and metaphysics is based on this interpretation of Kantian terms.¹⁰ However, the bipolar structure of this twofold pattern itself is neither Kantian nor Confucian, as I will demonstrate in the subsequent sections; to trace its origin we must go back to Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist soteriology, which proclaims ultimate salvation from worldly suffering for all sentient beings universally. In order to realize this soteriological ideal, Chinese Mahāyāna schools—for example, the Huayan and Tiantai schools—claim, as does the Chinese Mahāyāna text *The Awakening of Faith for the Great Vehicle*, that the profane and the sacred are originally nondual,¹¹ although the two poles must be taken as mutually opposed.

The profane and the sacred are opposites conceived of as exclusively referring to each other and therefore including each other.¹² According to Mou’s reconstruction of Chinese philosophy, the profane and the sacred in Buddhist soteriology are now understood as a Chinese Buddhist version of ontological bipolarity corresponding to the Kantian noumena and phenomena.¹³ Conversely, this understanding presupposes that the Kantian transcendental difference of noumena and phenomena must also be interpreted according to the bipolarity of this twofold pattern.¹⁴ Mou desig-

nates the two poles of his ontological concept “noumenal ontology” (智思的存有論) and “phenomenal ontology” (現象的存有論), corresponding to the Buddhist dichotomy of attachment (執) and nonattachment (無執).

Mou’s concept of bipolar ontology relies on an interchange between two elements from different sources: first, its dialectical aspect is rooted in a Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist soteriology that refers both to nonduality and to opposition between the sacred and the profane; second, its aspect of ontological transcendence is deduced from his interpretation of Kant’s epistemological distinction between noumena and phenomena. On the one hand, Mou employs Buddhist dialectics—nonduality between the two opposite poles—to constitute a relatedness both exclusive and mutual between noumena and phenomena; on the other hand, he explains the polarity between the sacred and the profane in terms of his interpretation of ontological transcendence based on the Kantian non-empirical noumena and empirical phenomena. From this interchange between Buddhist and Kantian sources, Mou derives the bipolar scheme of a finite and an infinite constituting and penetrating the existence of human beings.

With regard to content, the finite refers to the empirical realm in human existence; its utmost disclosure makes possible the cultural achievements of Western traditions, as, for example, the natural sciences, technology, and democracy. The infinite refers to the non-empirical realm and encompasses issues thought to transcend time and space—for example, timeless human values; it corresponds to cosmological principles of origination commonly explored by the Chinese traditions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Moreover, Mou stresses that a metaphysics disclosing all aspects of human existence must demonstrate the correlation between the two poles: the completion of metaphysics must demonstrate that the two poles are complementary to each other. Mou assigns the program of noumenal and phenomenal ontology in his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy with this task and calls the ontological scheme of this metaphysics “two-level ontology” (兩層存有論).¹⁵ He believes that this bipolar pattern expresses mutual completion in terms not only of ontological issues but also of cultural development in both the Eastern and Western traditions. For this reason Mou considers his bipolar pattern of finite and infinite as a universal metaphysical scheme that fits different cultural traditions, one that is necessary for the development of the kind of transcultural humanism that, while anticipated by Kant and Chinese thinking, will eventually be accomplished through his own reconstruction of Chinese philosophy.¹⁶

Based on this interchange of soteriological concepts from Buddhism with terminology from Kant’s transcendental philosophy, Mou first of all deduces his concept of bipolar ontology and second establishes his idea of homogeneity between ethics and metaphysics in his reconstructive Confucian *moral metaphysics* (道德的形上學), which provides the foundation for his vision of transcultural humanism.¹⁷ According to Mou’s understanding, the relevance of his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy is not confined to the intellectual environment of Chinese culture.

In his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy, Mou’s assignment of Confucian, Kantian, and Buddhist elements may be described in a formal way. First, Kantian

concepts provide the terminological frame through or by means of which the essential pattern of ontological speculation in Chinese tradition is supposed to become evident.¹⁸ Second, Confucian values mark not only the summit of a distinctive Chinese type of ethics but also a superior humanism necessarily incorporating the universal metaphysics and its ontological pattern, which Mou envisioned in his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy.¹⁹ Third, Buddhist soteriology developed both a structure and a methodological means of integration with which the classification of Western-Kantian philosophy and Chinese philosophical traditions can be accomplished.²⁰

Mou's thesis regarding ontology in Tiantai Buddhism and in Chinese Buddhism in general plays a constitutive role in his entire reconstruction of Chinese philosophy. Its delineation would involve discussing Mou's joint reflection on Kantian and Confucian elements, yet his description of Confucianism and of Kant involves his interpretation of Buddhism. Based on these interrelated interpretations of the three elements, Mou attempts to establish a universal scheme of classification for philosophical traditions worldwide. Due to his system's complexity it would be impossible to elucidate it fully in a single short paper. Therefore, I will confine myself to one major aspect of this system: Mou's interpretation of the ontological issue in Tiantai Buddhism.

In the subsequent sections, I demonstrate first that Mou's attitude toward Kant is ambiguous and that, because of this ambiguity, the appropriation of Kantian thinking in his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy finally proves too inconsistent. Kant's distinction between noumena and phenomena cannot be interpreted according to Mou's bipolarity of the finite and the infinite. Second and conversely, Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts of soteriology—particularly that of Tiantai Buddhism—that refer to the sacred and the profane in the existence of sentient beings cannot be interpreted according to the Kantian distinction between noumena and phenomena. Mou's concept of ontological transcendence, derived from his interpretation of Kant, does not fit Tiantai Buddhism's tendency to reject subordinate levels of being. Third, I attempt to demonstrate that the soteriological system of Tiantai Buddhism necessarily includes a certain type of ontological speculation that refers to the experience of worldly diversity of sentient beings and the fundamental principles of this experience. However, my own point of view, unlike Mou's interpretation, does not follow the metaphysical scheme according to which worldly diversity appears to be a finite modification of its transcendent or non-empirical origin (Mou's infinite dimension in human existence).

I will hold that ontological speculation in Tiantai Buddhism is closely and necessarily combined with its soteriological tenets, postulating that one's own ultimate salvation from worldly suffering must be indivisibly linked with that of all sentient beings—the goal of ultimate and universal salvation in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Ultimate and universal salvation for all sentient beings is an end in itself that presupposes the totality of the interrelations of these sentient beings. Progression on the path of one's own salvation benefits that of others; one's own example of progression must inspire others to proceed in the same way. The principle of transforming

sentient beings by means of teaching includes the idea of sharing the fruits of enlightenment with others, which in turn entails the postulate that one's single achievement of ultimate salvation consists in universal salvation. If one being attains ultimate salvation, all the others must do so as well; otherwise, that one being has not yet really attained ultimate salvation. All sentient beings are involved in this universal process of ultimate salvation; consequently, the fates of salvation of sentient beings are linked together, and this must be reflected by the ultimate type of teaching called "perfect teaching" (圓教) in the Tiantai and Huayan schools. Each sentient being itself manifests this universal interrelatedness, which indicates the ultimate value of universal salvation. Consequently, each sentient being's life itself embodies the ultimate value of universal salvation, which is an end in itself for the existence of all sentient beings universally.

On the other hand, the ontological component of Tiantai Buddhism mainly refers to the question of diversity within this universal interrelatedness among sentient beings: each moment in the existence of sentient beings expresses its interrelatedness with the totality of other moments, although each moment in itself is different from every other.²¹ Thus, the unique expression of universal interrelatedness between all sentient beings elevates each single moment of existence to the level or status of concretely embodying the absolute value of ultimate salvation itself. Each embodiment of it is unique and different from others, although this diversity displays infinite variations of the same ultimate value of existence indicating universal salvation. Because of its uniqueness, each moment of existence is indispensable within the whole course of salvation; it itself embodies the absolute value of universal and ultimate salvation. Its ultimate value and its transitional nature do not exclude each other, because each different moment of existence embodies an instructional value that refers to ultimate salvation.

Speculations about principles of diversity in the existence of sentient beings are of an ontological nature; however, these speculations are subordinated to the primarily soteriological goal of Tiantai Buddhism, whose practical course of completion, conversely, cannot dismiss this experience of speculative thinking. In contrast to Mou's thesis about ontological transcendence, based on his interpretation of Kant, I will hold that Tiantai Buddhism's ontological speculations do not allow the idea of ontological "transcendence"; there is no ranking of different levels of being. Polarity between the profane and the sacred excludes ontological transcendence, because the Mahāyāna ideal of universal salvation must presuppose nonduality between the two poles. Universal and ultimate salvation expresses the absolute value of human existence itself. This value is conceived as disclosing its immanent meaning through a referential totality, referring to all existing things in their infinite variety. The soteriological point of view of Tiantai Buddhists includes an ontology of total immanence, which I would call "ontology of immanent reference."

In the next section I will provide a fuller discussion of the metaphysical foundations of Mou's reconstruction of Chinese philosophy—his crucial pattern of two-level ontology and Tiantai Buddhism, which in turn is based on his interpretation of Kant; in the third section I will refer directly to the primary sources of Tiantai Bud-

dhism itself, in order to show how its ontological implications are not really captured by Mou's metaphysical interpretation.

Ambiguity in Mou's Appropriation of Kantian Terminology

A similar notion of finite and infinite components constituting human existence had been expressed earlier by Mou's teacher Xiong Shili (1885–1968), who used the Chinese terms “quantitative knowledge” (量智) and “knowledge of nature” (性智).²² Indeed, Mou's use of Kantian terminology does not essentially modify his teacher's idea. It mainly indicates Mou's own wish to show that this ontologically twofold metaphysical scheme in his understanding of traditional Chinese thinking is universally applicable. In this case, its validity cannot be limited to the three Chinese traditions; it must also be represented in at least one of the Western traditions of metaphysics. For that reason, he adopts the more universal terms of phenomena and noumena from Kant, and simultaneously interprets Kantian criticism as a metaphysical system anticipating his bipolar or two-level ontology.²³

In terms of Chinese philosophy, Mou points out that the twofold pattern of noumena and phenomena structurally corresponds to the dichotomy of *wisdom of nature and virtue* (德性之智) and *sensory knowledge* (見聞之知) in Neo-Confucianism based on Zhang Zai (1020–1077).²⁴ In Buddhism, the twofold structure of ontology has been expressed most directly by the Mahāyāna classic *The Awakening of Faith for the Great Vehicle*, through its distinction between the *mind of arising and perishing* (生滅心) and the *mind of suchness* (真如心).²⁵ Mou Zongsan actually derives his notion of a two-level ontology from the same Buddhist scriptural terms, calling this a “one mind disclosing two gates” (of arising-perishing and suchness) (一心開二門).²⁶ Following this interpretation, Mou states that Tiantai Buddhism also adheres to the same twofold pattern of ontology by using the Buddhist terms for *ignorance* (無明) and *dharma-nature* (法性) in its conception of *one moment's thought of ignorance and of dharma-nature* (一念無明法性心).²⁷ Finally, the two levels are conceived of as being *distinct but indivisible* (不二而二), since the realm of human existence cannot be split into heterogeneous segments. Their dialectical correlation means their mutual inclusion. The finite level is not essentially different from the infinite; the former is only a dialectical inversion of the latter, which in turn is supposed to be primordial and beyond conceptualization. Thus, inversion of the infinite into its opposite—the finite—becomes an indispensable part of its process of manifestation.²⁸

Mou claims, for example in terms of Confucianism, that moral values refer to the infinite, because they transcend the contingency of human life—the finite realm; however, these moral values must stand out against this spatial and temporal finiteness to prove their relevance. The moral (infinite) subject must prove its relevance in the midst of the contingency of human life. Consequently, Mou understands the cognitive (finite) mind as the inversion of the moral (infinite) mind.²⁹ In Chinese Buddhism, the scope of the sacred (infinite) exclusively refers to its opposite—the profane (finite); the relevance of the sacred consists of its potency for transforming

the unwholesome conditions of the profane into wholesome conditions. Conversely, the profane, understood as the clue to its opposite, manifests the sacred inversely. Consequently, Mou concludes that only the two levels of finite and infinite in their combination can accomplish the complete system of metaphysics. According to Mou's system, this combination must finally contain the previously mentioned elements from Kantian philosophy and Chinese philosophy.

In his view of the Chinese pattern of ontology, Mou Zongsan expresses three primary theses. First, there is a feature common to all three Chinese traditions: the two inseparable but mutually opposed dimensions of the infinite and finite, which disclose the realm of human existence. Second, this bipolar pattern has an ambiguous relation to the dualism in Kantian philosophy. Third, following from the second thesis, we need to combine Kant and Chinese philosophy in order to establish a universal metaphysical teaching.

Mou's second thesis needs some further explanation in order to elucidate the conclusion of his third thesis. His interpretation of Kant's affinity with Chinese traditions is ambiguous; Mou claims that only the Kantian system, among Western traditions of philosophy, presupposes a twofold structure of ontology similar to that in Chinese traditions—the distinction between the non-empirical noumena and empirical phenomena—whereas other, Western, thinkers have never expressed ideas structurally related to the Chinese view. However, he emphasizes that Kant's conclusion about the impossibility of speculative cognition of metaphysical objects disagrees with the thinking of Chinese traditions. The three Chinese traditions allow cognition in *speculative metaphysics*, whereas Kantian philosophy restricts any possible cognition to the realm of empirical objects and denies it to speculative metaphysics.³⁰ In terms of the possibility of speculative metaphysical cognition, the Kantian system and Chinese philosophy maintain opposite standpoints, according to Mou's interpretation. Mou says that the Kantian system discloses the finite sphere of human reality and refers to the infinite sphere in a negative way—Kant's restriction of cognition to the empirical realm and its rejection in speculative metaphysics—whereas Chinese philosophy exclusively focuses on the infinite component in human reality and neglects its finite component, for example with Buddhist speculations on a Buddha-nature that penetrates all sentient beings, Confucian doctrines of the oneness of heaven and man, and so forth.³¹

Mou claims that, in particular, the Confucian tradition from the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties had developed the most outstanding system of metaphysics of and within the three Chinese traditions, all of which remained ultimately unsurpassed by Kantian philosophy in terms of metaphysical profundity. The Buddhists and the Daoists followed the same tendency as the Confucians regarding metaphysical cognition, but—and this is Mou's conclusion—with regard to their final results their systems were less sophisticated and less comprehensive than that of the Confucians.

Mou concludes that Kant's exclusive reference to the finite overemphasized what Chinese philosophy, with its focus on the infinite, neglected, and vice versa. Chinese metaphysics—noumenal ontology—represents a philosophy of the non-

empirical *thing in itself*, whereas Kant's thinking represents a philosophy of the empirical *phenomenon*—phenomenal ontology. Although the two traditions are opposed to each another, ultimately they rely on the same concept of a bipolar ontology. According to Mou, the bipolar pattern of the finite and the infinite provides the link between the Western-Kantian and Chinese traditions in terms of metaphysics and ontology, even if the two traditions emphasize opposite poles of this pattern. The ambiguous link between Kantian thinking and the Chinese tradition corresponds to the dialectical inclusion of these two poles. For this reason Kantian philosophy and the Chinese tradition could be interpreted as mutually complementary. Mou concludes, based on this connection, that a universal scheme for all metaphysical systems can be achieved: a transcendental philosophy referring to empirical objects and a speculative metaphysics referring to non-empirical objects.³² Their combination is called a two-level ontology, consisting of a noumenal and a phenomenal ontology. Based on this ambiguous connection between Kantian thinking and Chinese philosophical traditions, Mou draws the conclusion that only a combination of Kantian and Chinese philosophy could achieve a universal system of metaphysics that entirely covers both the finite and infinite aspects of human existence.³³ Thus he chooses Kantian concepts to construct the terminological framework for his views on Chinese ontology, metaphysics, and ethics. The key concepts that Mou chooses from Kantian philosophy for his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy appear in the titles of his two books *Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy* and *Phenomenon and the Thing in Itself*.

Mou transforms the Kantian term “intellectual intuition,” with its negative connotation, into a positively valued metaphysical cognition.³⁴ In Kantian philosophy, “intellectual intuition” has an exclusively negative meaning because it indicates the cognitive limitations of human reason. Kant's rejection of intellectual intuition denotes *via negatione* that the cognitive power of human reason is exclusively restricted to the area of empirical objects. No positive content can be associated with this notion, from the standpoint of human reason's finite cognition.³⁵ But, in contrast to the Kantian point of view, Mou holds that human cognition includes a positive form of intellectual intuition. There are discernible objects within a non-empirical or transcendent realm corresponding to this property of metaphysical cognition in the human mind that he calls intellectual intuition. The metaphysical foundations of these objects are disclosed through the types of intellectual intuition, which the three Chinese traditions have variously discussed.

Mou eventually interprets the Kantian “intellectual intuition” as the “sensorium receptive to religious and moral values” explored by Chinese traditions.³⁶ According to Mou, these types of values are beyond temporal and spatial—empirical—presentation, because original sources describe these values as transcending the contingency of human life.³⁷ Consequently, he claims that this sensorium particularly explored in Chinese traditions of Confucianism and Buddhism must be understood as metaphysical cognition, because he regards these religious and moral values as “transcendent entities.” Again, Mou exchanges the two meanings of Kantian intellectual intuition and the sensorium receptive to moral-religious values in

Chinese traditions. Intellectual intuition becomes a sensorium receptive to moral and religious values, whereas this sensorium is interpreted as metaphysical cognition. However, the conversion between intellectual intuition and sensorium receptive to moral-religious values implies Mou's interpretation that these values must be considered transcendent entities—non-empirical objects of metaphysical cognition, also called noumena.³⁸ The apprehension of these religious and moral values, understood as transcendent entities, then amounts to cognition in speculative metaphysics, which could be referred to as the Kantian "intellectual intuition."

Because of Kant's objections to intellectual intuition, Mou explains that now, in contrast to Chinese philosophy, Kantian philosophy must fail to disclose positively the speculative metaphysics of noumena, although it analytically develops the terminological frame for its possible representation. According to Mou, the superiority of Chinese tradition over Kantian philosophy relies on its capability to disclose the realm of noumena by acknowledging and developing intellectual intuition as its mode of metaphysical cognition, whereas Kantian philosophy denies such a property of human cognition, although Kant himself did not deny the possible realm of noumena. Kantian epistemology claims the duality of two realms of cognition—non-empirical noumena and empirical phenomena—although it only acknowledges the empirical cognition of human reason.

Kant's basic argument for the duality of the two realms of cognition, the empirical and the non-empirical, is his thesis of the ideality of *space* and *time*.³⁹ According to Kant, human cognition is constituted by two heterogeneous elements: sensuality and intellect. In spite of its heterogeneity, the two refer to each other as mutually complementary sources of empirical cognition. Sensual intuition (*sinnliche Anschauung*) presupposes the *a priori* mode of presentation of things as perceptible things (*reception*), whereas the intellect's cognition presupposes the *a priori* principle of the conception of these things as discernable objects (*spontaneity*).⁴⁰ Space and time are subjective forms of sensual intuition *a priori*: they are sensual forms *a priori* constituting the mode of presentation of empirical things. The human intellect's cognition of objects refers exclusively to this sensual mode of presentation;⁴¹ therefore, its cognition is restricted to the realm of empirical objects. The two subjective forms of sensual intuition *a priori*—space and time—determine the presentation of empirical things. Empirical things are presented as they appear to the subject's form of intuition (*Anschauung*) and not as they are "for and in themselves." Therefore, a distinction between the empirical *thing in its appearance* and the non-empirical *thing in itself* becomes necessary in Kantian philosophy. Kant claims that intuition is exclusively sensual in the case of human beings, and the human intellect's cognition of objects exclusively refers to (that is, relies on) this sensual mode of presentation. For we cannot imagine a non-sensual presentation of things beyond space and time.

According to Kant, cognition of the non-empirical *thing in itself* would belong to an intellect independent of any sensual intuition. Because of its independence, its object—the thing in itself—would have to be presented by virtue of this intellect itself. In contrast to the human intellect, this intellect's cognition would not be differ-

ent from an intuition (*Anschauung*) in which this *thing in itself* is presented. Consequently, the so-called “intellectual intuition” would be its mode of presentation—an intuition or mode of presentation that the intellect itself generates. Kant thus denies the possibility of intellectual intuition for the human mind, but emphasizes the necessity of the thing in itself. Although it is not an object of human cognition, its concept is necessary in order to denote human cognition’s necessary limit, its restriction to empirical objects. Therefore, such an intellectual intuition’s corresponding object is an *intelligible object*—a noumenon—in contrast to the *empirical object* or phenomenon.

Kant discusses “intellectual intuition” within the context of theory of cognition exclusively, whereas teachings in Chinese traditions refer to the experience of religious and moral values transcending contingent conditions in human life. Mou does not really demonstrate convertibility between “intellectual intuition” and “apprehension of religious-moral values,” which he claims in his interpretations of Chinese traditions. For this purpose, Mou should first have discussed the type of “cognition” pertaining to the experience of these values; second, he should have demonstrated in what way these religious and moral values in Chinese traditions do amount to transcendent entities—noumenal objects. It is by no means self-evident that the “apprehension of religious and moral values” in Chinese traditions can count for a metaphysical cognition such as intellectual intuition in the Kantian sense. However, Mou’s two works about intellectual intuition and two-level ontology—*Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy* and *Phenomena and the Thing in Itself*—do not explicitly refer to these crucial issues. This must be evaluated as an obvious inadequacy in his conception of Chinese metaphysics.

There is still another ambiguity with regard to Mou’s ideas about Chinese philosophical traditions and their relation to Kant. In contrast to the Kantian critical philosophy, Mou’s reconstruction of Chinese metaphysics attempts to demonstrate the homogeneity between principles of speculative cognition and ethics (*moral metaphysics*) based on his claim for the possibility of metaphysical cognition in Chinese traditions.⁴² In opposition to this view, Kantian criticism rejects the possibility of metaphysical cognition, holding that the principles of speculative cognition⁴³ and ethics cannot be reduced to one another. Kantian criticism rejects speculative cognition in metaphysics and emphasizes the heterogeneity between the principles of speculative cognition and ethics—*spontaneity* and *autonomy* of pure reason; thus, Kant’s ethics is based on his rejection of metaphysical cognition, whereas Mou’s *moral metaphysics* claims just the opposite: a metaphysical cognition based on a moral approach. The subsequent part of this section deals with this issue in more detail.

For while in Kantian critical philosophy the noumena are denied as possible objects of human cognition, they are still acknowledged as necessary concepts of pure (non-empirical) reason negatively indicating the cognitive limits of the human intellect. Their functional role in providing possible non-empirical concepts of totality is also indispensable for synthesizing the intellect’s diverse empirical cognitions into the systematic unity of natural science; also, Kantian ethics, with its autonomous

ego standing outside the realm of phenomena, relies on the logically possible notion of noumena.

This ethical issue needs a more detailed explanation. Kant argues that the moral good is not just contingently but absolutely good, if it is supposed to be always and universally, that is, categorically, good.⁴⁴ For this reason it must be independent of any empirical conditions. This independence is related to the concept of autonomy. Kantian ethics presupposes the logically possible concept of a noumenon called *freedom* (i.e., *causa noumenon*), which can be interpreted as *autonomy* in the practical sense. Theoretically—in speculative cosmology—this concept of freedom refers to the possibility of a first cause, which itself is independent of empirical conditions. The possibility of a *causa noumenon* (freedom) as *causa prima* (first cause) is made clear in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—Kant’s critique of speculative cosmology; its corresponding manifestation as moral law is set forth in the *Critique of Practical Reason* based on the concept of *autonomy*: if human action were solely determined by empirical conditions, there would be no free will marking the moral subject as a moral subject. Action would be determined solely by the empirical causality of the natural law. The moral subject must be able to consider its motivation for moral action as being *independent* of any empirical determination in order to acknowledge its own free will as the first cause of its moral action. Morality must be based on this notion of independence. However, the evidence for any object corresponding to this concept of autonomy does not rely on the contemplative insight of intellectual intuition; rather it relies on a *practical postulate* of pure (non-empirical) reason.

It is the fact that we do claim to be moral that presupposes its reality as necessary. Our claim to act morally expresses itself through the concept of *duty* pointing to categorical necessity according to rules and laws independent from natural causality, which in turn refers to pure reason itself as the ultimate paradigm for universality and necessity.⁴⁵ Pure Reason itself—reason not determined by empirical causality—must then be the determining cause for the maxims of moral action. Autonomy means that reason becomes practical; that is, practical reason itself prescribes conformity to necessity and universality in our maxims of acting. Maxims of moral action must be conformable to necessity and the universality of pure reason. This formal-ethical criterion of our maxims is called the categorical imperative, pointing to practical pure reason as moral law.⁴⁶ Maxims of moral action must be based on a subject whose independence requires a free (non-empirical) will and which, according to the Kantian argument, is pure practical reason itself.

The restriction of human reason’s *theoretical cognition* to empirical objects and Kant’s exclusion of the possibility of intellectual intuition provides the space for this *postulate of practical pure reason* recognized as moral law—the formal-ethical criterion of our maxims. Based on the restriction of principles of theoretical cognition and the exclusion of intellectual intuition, Kant discloses the domain of ethics. Noumenal freedom is not an object of metaphysical cognition; interpreted as autonomy it is the practical postulate of pure reason expressing that its reality must be presupposed as necessary by virtue of the very fact of our claims to act morally. The practical and

theoretical principles of human reason—*autonomy* and *spontaneity*⁴⁷—are heterogeneous principles of one and the same human reason in Kant's philosophy; its heterogeneity means that spontaneity and autonomy cannot be reduced to one another.⁴⁸ Autonomy depends on spontaneity according to the *ratio cognoscendi* but not according to the *ratio essendi*. Only the terminological framework of autonomy, which is the concept of the *causa noumenon* as freedom, is generated by the speculative cosmology of pure theoretical reason, whose principle is spontaneity. Based on this concept of freedom, we can only recognize the principle of morality as autonomy, which does not mean that autonomy, or practical reason, originates in theoretical reason, or spontaneity. Nor does the Kantian *primacy of the practical*⁴⁹ mean that spontaneity originates in autonomy. The two count for heterogeneous principles of one and the same pure—non-empirical—reason.

In contrast to this essential idea of Kantian critical thought, Mou Zongsan identifies his noumenal infinite with the practical (*autonomy*) and interprets the theoretical as the finite (*spontaneity*), which the latter takes as the dialectical inversion of the former. The infinite subject must invert itself into the finite dimension in order contrastively to manifest its significance as moral or sacred subject in the opposite realm of contingent being. Mou calls this inversion of the infinite into the finite as the necessary "*self-negation*" of the infinite.⁵⁰ Mou then turns the heterogeneous relationship between theoretical and practical aspects into a homogeneous one based on the idea of dialectical inclusion, in his concept of two-level ontology. In contrast to the Kantian heterogeneity between the practical and the theoretical, the dialectical inclusion of the finite and infinite in a two-level ontology constitutes a homogeneous relationship. Thus, metaphysics and ethics become a single homogeneous field, or a field based on homogeneous principles. Mou even argues that all metaphysical questions can only be properly solved within the framework of an ethical approach, which he calls *moral metaphysics*.⁵¹ And only the Neo-Confucians of the Song and Ming dynasties provided such a framework in their combined reflections on cosmological and moral issues.

Mou's moral metaphysics, based on his twofold ontology, turns out, then, to be a revision of essential Kantian ideas. As I have briefly suggested here, the acknowledgment of an intellectual intuition would make all the major Kantian ethical principles at best superfluous: practical reason as moral law would no longer be a *practical law*—an *imperative*—if intellectual intuition, or non-empirical, speculative cognition, were acknowledged and the cognition of human reason were not restricted to empirical objects exclusively. The formal character of this law as an *imperative* presupposes the limited cognition of reason: principles of practical reason rely on the restriction of principles of theoretical reason!

Without this cognitive restriction, the crucial notion of "*duty*" in Kantian ethics would also be unnecessary. Ethics as a domain contrasted with the theory of cognition would be abolished; the distinction between practical and speculative cognition would be superfluous; practical and theoretical philosophy would become unified by homogeneous principles; and ethics would be a part of speculative metaphysics—which would then be a *noumenal ontology* leading to *moral meta-*

physics in Mou's system. However, Kant's critical theory distinguishes between theoretical and practical reason based on the two heterogeneous principles of spontaneity and autonomy (freedom). Theoretical pure reason and practical pure reason—spontaneity and autonomy—cannot be reduced to one another. This essential thought in Kant's philosophy means that the major principles of Kantian ethics must be based on the exclusion of intellectual intuition and speculative metaphysical cognition, whose objects in general would be *noumena*.

However, Mou Zongsan acknowledges intellectual intuition and simultaneously adopts the major principles of Kantian ethics, taking the spontaneity of theoretical reason as a dialectically modified form of autonomy or practical reason, which he understands as intellectual intuition.⁵² This, I would claim, is one of the serious inconsistencies in Mou's interpretation of Kant: the essential Kantian point is the distinction between practical and theoretical principles of human reason based on the restriction of human reason's cognition to empirical objects. Kantian ethics relies on a restriction (the Greek *kritik* means "limit") of theoretical principles. Mou abandons this restriction while adopting Kantian ethics, in order to take spontaneity and autonomy as homogeneous principles, based on which his mutual (inter)penetration of metaphysics and ethics—moral-metaphysics—becomes possible. According to Mou, moral metaphysics is the distinctive feature of Song and Ming Confucianism, combining as it does cosmological speculation and ethics. Mou's twofold ontological pattern ensures the interpenetration of metaphysical and ethical principles, and thus inverts Kant's essential conception. I am arguing, then, that it is highly questionable whether Kantian criticism could really "presuppose" Mou's bipolar ontology. How can Mou establish the homogeneity of ethics and speculative metaphysics in his reconstructive system of Confucian moral metaphysics based on terminology drawn from the Kantian critical philosophy, which itself is so closely bound up with the opposite position—that of the heterogeneity of ethics and speculative cognition?

The Mahāyāna Ideal of Universal Salvation: Polarity versus Transcendence

The previous section has cast some doubt on Mou's view that Kant's transcendental difference between noumena and phenomena can be understood in terms of the two-level ontology introduced in his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy. Ultimately, the bipolarity of a two-level ontology must contradict the Kantian heterogeneity of ethics and speculative cognition. Conversely, the Buddhist concept(s) of the bipolarity of sacred and profane can be just as little understood through Kant's transcendental distinction, as will be shown.

Structurally, Mou deduces the pattern of twofold ontology from Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mou explains the relationship between the two levels according to the bipolar concept of the profane and the sacred in Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁵³ Essentially, he resorts to this Buddhist bipolar pattern of the profane and the sacred to explain the mutual inclusion of noumena and phenomena, which he uses to interpret Kant. As previously mentioned, this bipolar conception of the sacred and the profane is originally rooted in the Mahāyāna ideal of universal salvation accom-

plished through teaching and transformation. Particularly, Zhiyi's Tiantai teaching stresses that exclusive reference between the sacred and the profane—their mutual inclusion—is doctrinally indispensable; otherwise it would be impossible to establish the Buddha-dharma teaching according to which the enlightened one adapts himself to the world of the unenlightened and the unenlightened transforms himself and ascends to the realm of the enlightened.⁵⁴ Without this dialectical conception of exclusive reference between the sacred and the profane, then, the ideal of universal salvation through teaching and transformation (教化) could not be established doctrinally.⁵⁵ The Huayan school and the Mahāyāna scripture *Awakening of Faith for the Great Vehicle* express a similar point of view.

Finally, the concept of “one mind disclosing two gates” from this influential Mahāyāna scripture inspires Mou's concept of “two-level-ontology.”⁵⁶ Mou holds that the designations of phenomenal and noumenal ontology can be replaced by the Buddhist expressions of *attachment* (執) and *nonattachment* (無執). The Kantian transcendental difference between noumena and phenomena would ultimately correspond to the Buddhist distinction between nonattachment and attachment.⁵⁷ Phenomenal ontology is nothing but an *ontology of attachment* (執的存有論) referring to the finite realm of empirical objects, and noumenal ontology corresponds to an *ontology of nonattachment* (無執的存有) referring to the infinite realm of noumenal objects. In his reconstruction of Chinese philosophy, such antonyms as empirical and transcendent, finite and infinite, noumena and phenomena, and attachment and nonattachment are convertible. Such Mahāyāna Buddhist expressions as *saṃsāra* (生死), *arising and perishing* (起滅), *conditioned co-arising* (緣起), *conventional truth* (俗諦), *sentient beings* (眾生), and *ignorance* (無明) denote the finite realm of phenomena in Mou's ontology of attachment; expressions such as *nirvāṇa* (涅槃), *emptiness* (空), *wisdom* (智慧), *ultimate truth* (真諦), *Buddha-nature* (佛性), and *dharmā-nature* (法性) refer to its opposite—the infinite realm of noumena in the ontology of nonattachment.

The original context of these Buddhist concepts refers to the Mahāyāna ideal of ultimate and universal salvation from worldly suffering for all sentient beings. The first series of expressions, tied to the “realm of attachment,” designates the Buddhist unwholesome or profane aspect in the existence of sentient beings, whereas the latter expressions refer to the “realm of nonattachment”—the Buddhist wholesome or sacred realm. According to Buddhist traditions, ignorance causes sentient beings to experience their mode of existence as the realm of arising and perishing—the profane or unwholesome realm of sentient beings' existence. Arising things are determined to perish; all desired objects are transitory and can never guarantee permanent felicity; the world's impermanence must be finally experienced as suffering. Attachments to desired objects and to worldly felicity cause an increase of suffering, because the impermanence of these objects inevitably causes new inclinations to satisfy unfulfilled desires, which means continual desire and its final result—the experience of suffering. The fundamental cause of this vicious circle is the ignorance (無明) by sentient beings of the fact that the wish for release from suffering through satisfaction of desire just creates more suffering.

Ignorance is regarded as the very root of suffering, with its realm of arising and perishing—the realm of profane existence of sentient beings; this is the realm of attachments. Enlightenment and nonattachment indicate the realm of salvation. In Chinese Mahāyāna, attachment is associated with illusion, because attachment to objects disregards the very fact of impermanence; nonattachment is linked with truth, wisdom, and enlightenment because it is based on the insight into the impermanence of all existing things. “Arising and perishing” refer(s) both to how things come into existence and to the underlying fact of their impermanence. A more detailed understanding of “arising” in Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism gives us the doctrine of “conditioned co-arising” (緣起), which stresses that the existence of each thing depends on the accumulation of factors that refer to one another and thus form the constitutive context of that thing’s meaning.⁵⁸ The dissipation of these factors causes the perishing of things. Accumulation and dissipation—arising and perishing—describe the existence of things as one phase of a dynamic process. In this alternation of states of arising and perishing, existing things must ultimately be devoid of any substantial or permanent reality in themselves (無自性), and this is called emptiness (空).⁵⁹

The term “conditioned co-arising” excludes even for itself the image of any substance corresponding to arising, and therefore the Tiantai school says that “conditioned co-arising is non-arising,”⁶⁰ stressing the illusory character of the arising and perishing of sentient beings. The two expressions “conditioned co-arising” and “emptiness” could be understood as antonyms, each completing the meaning of the other.⁶¹ The affirmation of existence through conditioned co-arising avoids nihilism, and negation through emptiness avoids its misperception as (a) substantial being. The combination of the two expressions is ambiguous and causes a kind of vagueness in Buddhist ontological speculations. In Chinese Mahāyāna this ontological pattern was transferred to other Buddhist doctrines as well, such as that of the “two truths” (二諦). Seng Zhao (383–414) discusses the meaning of the two truths—conventional truth and ultimate truth—by means of the opposition between *you* (有) and *wu* (無)—the ambiguous Chinese dichotomy expressing polarity of existence and nonbeing on the one hand, and opposition between substantial being and nothingness on the other.⁶² This dichotomy originates in Daoist terminology; however, its ambiguous meaning is the result of its Buddhist appropriation. Its ambiguity involves a kind of ontological indeterminacy with regard to the ontological status of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising, which determines the further development of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism and eventually results in Zhiyi’s doctrine of the threefold truth.⁶³

The threefold truth in Tiantai teaching teaches that conditioned co-arising is nothing but emptiness, provisional (假), and the middle (中).⁶⁴ Emptiness restricts conditioned co-arising to the meaning of provisional existence⁶⁵ by means of negating the latter’s hypostatization as substantial being. Provisional existence restricts emptiness to the meaning of “nonsubstance (nonbeing)” by means of negating the latter’s misconception as nothingness. Emptiness and the provisional refer to each other both positively and negatively.⁶⁶ However, their restrictive and affirmative

functions are originally inseparable, which is indicated by the expression of the middle. The middle expresses that the two poles dialectically include each other as opposites. Consequently the three cannot be discussed apart from one another, and this is called “threefold truth.”

Suffering is also understood as the accumulation (集) of conditions; consequently, the dissipation and eradication of these conditions means the extinction of suffering, according to the Buddhist doctrine of the fourfold truth. Zhiyi concludes that the course of accumulation also points to the method of dissipation and eradication that leads to the extinction of suffering. Each individual case of conditioned suffering shows how the eradication of its conditions must be carried out in practice. The unwholesome factor in suffering includes within itself the inspiration for its transformation into a wholesome condition, just as disease inspires medical science to develop treatments for overcoming it.⁶⁷ The inspiration of this originally negative factor is nothing but its positive opposite transforming unwholesome conditions into wholesome ones. The Buddhist doctrine of salvation holds that avoiding suffering by indulging desires continues and increases suffering; however, facing suffering as a source of instruction and inspiration leads to its ultimate extinction—*nirvāṇa*.⁶⁸ Soteriology in Tiantai Buddhism is based on this principle. Consequently, the bliss and felicity of Buddhist salvation are mostly referred to in Tiantai Buddhism by the use of paradoxical expressions.⁶⁹ The meaning of salvation cannot be found outside its polar correlative, the context of suffering; hence the mutual reference between the profane and the sacred in Tiantai teaching.

The realm of existence of sentient beings only appears to sentient beings themselves in this illusory mode of arising and perishing, yet they are deluded by their attachments, rooted in a fundamental ignorance (根本無明). However, in spite of its illusory character, this realm of attachment is not nothingness. Paradoxically, in its double appearance as arising and perishing, the realm of existence of sentient beings completely embodies the nonconstruction (*wuzuo* 無作) as well as the permanence (*chang* 常) and indestructibility (*wupo* 無破) of the instructive and therefore wholesome value of its transitory moments—the ultimate value of existence as clue to universal salvation.⁷⁰

Each moment within the contingent existence of sentient beings inspires the enlightened one, then, to apply the distinctive teaching necessary to face the present degree of ignorance. Paradoxically, unwholesome moments of existence encompass the directions for their own wholesome transformation; any given moment of existence contains this instructional or heuristic value. According to Zhiyi, teaching as a means of the transformation of sentient beings—the very meaning of the Buddha-dharma—is manifested through the existence of things.⁷¹ The authentic nature of all things is precisely this “instructional” nature penetrating each moment of existence, or Buddha-nature (*foxing* 佛性). And according to Tiantai Buddhist views, all existing things are believed to be its manifestation(s).⁷² Existing things considered as isolated entities are illusory; existence has an ontological relevance or sense only through its more fundamental soteriological meaning. Reality of existence consists in things’ reference to the sacred. Consequently, the realm of attachment—arising and

perishing—is nothing but the illusory mode of nonattachment itself, although the two remain in opposition as ignorance and wisdom (enlightenment), the sacred and the profane in the existence of sentient beings.

Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist soteriology exclusively relates all questions of human existence to this polarity. The profane and the sacred in human existence correspond to the opposition of ignorance (being unenlightened) and enlightenment. These opposite concepts represent categories referring to the existence of sentient beings and its particular quality. The *Huayan sūtra* (*Avataṃsaka sūtra*) establishes a scheme of ten dharma-realms (十法界) encompassing the six unwholesome destinies of *saṃsāra*—the profane existence of arising and perishing—and the four sacred and wholesome spheres of the Śrāvaka, Pratyeka-buddha, Bodhisattva, and Buddha. Tiantai teaching refers to the profane mode of existence—the six unwholesome destinies—as being “within the three spheres of desire, form, and formlessness” (界內), and to the sacred mode—the four wholesome destinies—as being “beyond the three spheres” (界外); ultimately, however, the ten spheres penetrate each other because the unwholesome and wholesome exclusively refer to each other as opposites.⁷³ Important Chinese Mahāyāna texts often refer to this bipolar structure in expressions like “nonduality yet distinctiveness” (非一非異).⁷⁴

Finally, the two can be considered antonyms: because of their opposition and mutual inclusion they complete each other within the process of universal salvation involving all sentient beings. The Tiantai and Huayan schools demonstrate this through dialectical arguments.⁷⁵ Structurally, the dialectical inclusion between the sacred and the profane resembles the opposition of A and non-A. Non-A is the negation of A, and A is the negation of non-A; based on mutual negation, the two presuppose each other as mutually inclusive opposites, which results in their mutual affirmation.⁷⁶ In terms of salvation, mutual completion of the two opposites means that the enlightened sage exclusively acts for the sake of the unenlightened, whereas the unenlightened or profane person ultimately strives for the salvation of the enlightened. Both sides exist for the sake of the other; the interdependent purposes of their respective existences shape the dynamics between the Buddha and all sentient beings: this is the process of universal salvation based on teaching and transformation. The Indian Mahāyāna *sūtras* first expressed this view; for example, the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* says that the liberation of the *tathāgata* (Buddha) must be sought in the thought and action of sentient beings, and that delusions are nothing but enlightenment (*bodhi*).⁷⁷

These statements anticipate Zhiyi’s Tiantai interpretation that the “instructional” value of the profane, the negative aspect of pain, delusion, and suffering, can paradoxically be regarded as positive, just as the positive meaning is inversely manifested as suffering, pain, and delusion. Zhiyi’s Tiantai teaching most directly expresses this meaning by stating that “good is evil.”⁷⁸ Good and evil are not moral but rather soteriological categories. Good refers to anything useful for the purpose of salvation, and this can even include the “instructional value” of evil.

Based on this dialectical inclusion, the profane pole can be interpreted as an inverse manifestation of the sacred, as in the Tiantai teaching drawn from examples in

the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*.⁷⁹ Its own inversion into the profane is a necessary manifestation of the sacred. Without reference to the profane world, the non-manifested sacred would be meaningless to sentient beings. The relevance of the sacred lies exclusively in its power to transform sentient beings by virtue of teaching (instruction). For this reason, the sacred is the sacred only in exclusive reference to the profane. Otherwise, the sacred would not mean anything; it would be either nothingness or mere emptiness;⁸⁰ it would lie beyond conceptualization by the profane. For sentient beings in the profane realm the sacred as such—the sacred without reference to its opposite—must be beyond conceptualization.⁸¹ If the profane is the inverse but necessary manifestation of the sacred, the sacred is fundamental.⁸² The sacred is then fundamental but beyond conceptualization; the now-manifesting profane is its dialectical inversion based on the profane’s conceptualizing of the sacred. In terms of soteriology, the inverse manifestation of the sacred means that the profane realm’s value consists in its general “instructiveness” for the salvation of all sentient beings. Yet viewed from this standpoint it must be universally penetrated by the sacred, which means (fundamentally and ultimately) that the profane is nothing but the sacred itself.⁸³ The profane is fundamentally the sacred, whereas the sacred exclusively refers back to the profane.

Paradoxical statements—for example, good is evil or delusion is wisdom—are grounded in this bipolar pattern of sacred-and-profane. Such paradoxical articulation stresses that this bipolarity must necessarily be presupposed by the ideal of universal salvation.

All sentient beings are involved in this process of universal salvation consisting of teaching and transformation. However, this presupposes that sentient beings must already contain the potential for or the power of their transformation—this is again the sacred as Buddha-nature penetrating all profane sentient beings. The doctrine of Buddha-nature, particularly in Tiantai Buddhism, expresses this potency of the profane—its exclusive reference to the sacred in a pattern of instructional inversion.⁸⁴ This pattern enables the profane to obtain its potency for transformation. In respect to this potency there is, consequently, no difference between sentient beings—the unenlightened—and the Buddha or enlightened,⁸⁵ which accords with Zhiyi’s doctrine that good (sacred) is evil (profane). Buddha-nature itself implies that the profane fundamentally and ultimately is the sacred.

If, moreover, all sentient beings are involved in this process of universal salvation, the fates of salvation of single sentient beings are combined together within this universal process of teaching and transformation leading to their salvation. One’s own progress on the path to salvation benefits that of others and vice versa based on teaching and transformation. This is again the interrelationship of the existence of all sentient beings. Tiantai and Huayan doctrines stressing the transformation of others by means of self-transformation and teaching always refer back to this issue of interrelation.⁸⁶

In fact, the Mahāyāna concept of universal and ultimate salvation represented by the Tiantai and Huayan schools and the *Awakening of Faith for the Great Vehicle* combines three aspects: first, the exclusive inter-reference between the sacred and

the profane or bipolar sacred-profane; second, the potential in sentient beings for their own transformation; and third, the interrelation between all sentient beings. The doctrine of mutual inclusion of the sacred and the profane is extensively discussed by both the Huayan and Tiantai schools.⁸⁷ The doctrine of a Buddha-nature—the potential for transformation of sentient beings—penetrating all sentient beings is an important issue in Tiantai teaching.⁸⁸ The concept of the interrelation of all sentient beings is a focus of the Huayan school, expressed by its doctrine of the “dharma-realm as conditioned co-arising” (法界緣起)⁸⁹. According to Chinese Mahāyāna, then, the ideal of universal salvation depends on the concept of exclusive reference between the bipolar sacred and profane, which in turn inspires the doctrines of Buddha-nature and “dharma-realm as conditioned co-arising,” both of which imply an interrelatedness in the existence of all sentient beings.

Kant’s transcendental difference between noumena and phenomena, then, does not really fit with Chinese Buddhism’s understanding of the relationship between the sacred and the profane as simultaneously one of opposition and nonduality. Noumena and phenomena just represent objects of or within different cognitive realms; for Kant these are heterogeneous realms because there is no way for us to reduce the one to the other. Therefore the Kantian phenomena cannot be interpreted as just manifestations of noumena, nor the noumena as merely the foundation of phenomena. In Kantian philosophy, phenomena do not at all provide the “instructive clue” revealing the realm of noumena, whereas in the Tiantai Buddhist teaching of inverse manifestation, as we have seen, the profane provides by means of instructive inversion the clue to the sacred, or discloses it dialectically. The Kantian notion of transcendental difference denotes a gap between the two heterogeneous realms of cognition, one that cannot be solved by dialectical mediation. Kant holds that human reason cannot obtain any clue by which to recognize the empirical thing as a manifestation of the “thing in itself.”

Particularly in Tiantai Buddhism, the profane world is understood as an instructive inversion manifesting the sacred. Therefore, the profane is just an illusory appearance (or virtual surface) of what it essentially is—the sacred realm.⁹⁰ Ontologically, the profane is the form of an illusion that points to the sacred inversely; it might be considered a privative mode of the sacred; however, it would be wrong to say that it is a “phenomenon” in the sense of Kantian philosophy. The phenomenon in Kantian philosophy is not the appearance of something else; it is not illusion—it is the empirical object appearing in the matrix of sensibility, and, according to categories of the understanding, to the subject of human cognition. The Kantian phenomenon does not mean deceptive illusion but rather a true fact of empirical reality; empirical reality does not mean the false or inverse reflection of noumena but rather the realm of truth within the frame of human cognition; Kant’s empirical phenomena do not point to noumena inversely. However, in the Tiantai teaching the profane realm of existence—*saṃsāra* or the realm of arising and perishing—is understood as an instructive inversion manifesting the ultimate value of universal salvation, *nirvāṇa*; the former is just the illusory mode of the latter. Zhiyi refers to this by paradoxical statements expressing the “identity of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.”⁹¹

In other words, for Buddhism, in ontological terms, the profane realm of the existence of sentient beings embodies the ultimate value of universal salvation by means of inversion; however, epistemologically, the two must appear as an opposition between the wisdom of the sacred and the deception of the profane. But the Kantian duality between realms of cognition is not compatible with this type of soteriological concept—noumena and phenomena are not correlative with Buddhist attachment and nonattachment—because empirical cognition is not deceptive, and intellectual intuition would still be some sort of metaphysical cognition. In Mou's interpretation of Kant, intellectual intuition is transformed into a sensorium receptive to values of a moral or religious nature, which deviates completely from Kant's sense of intuition. That is, while the Buddhist wisdom of the sacred might be interpreted in terms of this kind of sensorium receptive to certain values independent of contingent conditions, Kant's intellectual intuition cannot be interpreted in this way, any more than the sacred values in Tiantai Buddhism can be considered transcendent entities. The profane realm is nothing but its embodiment through the process of instructive inversion, and wisdom in Tiantai Buddhism can hardly be understood as metaphysical cognition.

Mou Zongsan claims that Tiantai teaching acknowledges an intellectual intuition based on which human cognition can disclose the realm of phenomena as the clue to noumena. Kant denies intellectual intuition; therefore, he must claim that human cognition cannot close the gap between noumena and phenomena—something that, according to Mou, can be done by Chinese traditions acknowledging intellectual intuition. However, according to Kant, sensual and intellectual intuition are primarily heterogeneous modes of the presentation of things; there is no apparent connection between them. Noumena are not necessarily beyond the intellect's logical categories, as Mou concludes;⁹² however, they also cannot be presented according to the sensual intuition of human beings. In fact, there is no clue that would allow us to interpret the relationship between noumena and phenomena according to Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist patterns of manifestation of the sacred by its inversion into the profane. The Buddhist path of salvation—its methods of contemplation and practicing compassion—need not necessarily mean that practitioners transcend the temporal and spatial mode of the presentation of empirical things and enter the realm of the manifested "thing in itself" based on the so-called intellectual intuition. There is sufficient evidence in various Buddhist scriptures that the successful practitioner—the Buddhist sage—is, rather, someone acting in the midst of the saṃsāric and profane world of sentient beings and accomplishing here his mission of teaching and transformation.⁹³

Kant's transcendental difference between noumena and phenomena, I would then argue, does not correspond to the Buddhist dialectics of sacred and profane, a dialectics necessarily presupposed by the soteriological goal of universal and ultimate salvation of all sentient beings through teaching and transformation. The profane understood as both inverse manifestation of and instructive clue to the sacred fundamentally and essentially is that sacred itself. In Tiantai Buddhism the profane is also interpreted as a function (用) of the sacred, whereas the sacred is understood

as the fundamental essence of the profane (體).⁹⁴ But in Kantian philosophy, it would be impossible to make the same statement about the relationship between phenomena and noumena. “Transcendental difference” means that two different realms of cognition must be presupposed from the finite standpoint of human reason. The Buddhist dialectical inclusion of sacred and profane does not correspond to the transcendental difference of noumena and phenomena; Kantian phenomena can be interpreted as neither inverse manifestations of nor instructive clues to noumena. On the contrary, the Buddhist dialectics of sacred and profane excludes the possibility of a transcendental difference between phenomena and noumena. The Kantian noumena and phenomena are not convertible into the soteriological concepts of attachment and nonattachment in Buddhism. The polarity between sacred and profane cannot be explained in terms of an ontological transcendence of noumena “beyond” the phenomenal world; any such transcendence would contradict the Mahāyāna ideal of universal salvation.

The Soteriological and Ontological Meaning of Paradoxical Articulation in Tiantai Teaching

In spite of these objections to the fundamental concepts in Mou’s reconstruction of Chinese philosophy, some of his insights into ontology in Chinese Buddhist schools are important and should not remain unmentioned. First, Mou points out the correlation between the doctrine of “perfect teaching” (圓教) in Chinese Buddhist schools and its paradoxical articulation.⁹⁵ Second, he stresses the ontological relevance of the doctrine of Buddha-nature with its notion that dharmas necessarily exist.⁹⁶ This doctrine can explain the foundation of the existence of all dharmas.⁹⁷

In this section I will try to delineate the threefold linkage between soteriology, ontology, and paradoxical articulation in Tiantai Buddhism. The distinctive mark of soteriology in Tiantai Buddhism is its teaching on the nonduality of the sacred and the profane inspired by the ideal of universal and ultimate salvation (度一切眾生). Paradoxical articulation on the ultimate level of its doctrinal system—perfect teaching—includes three aspects: first, the function of deconstructing the falsity of nihilistic misconception and false hypostatization in linguistic conventionality;⁹⁸ second, the holistic interpretation of the “total inclusion of all dharmas” (具足一切法)⁹⁹; and third, the understanding (interpretation) of the nonduality of the sacred and the profane. The ontological issue in Tiantai teaching can be subsumed under two aspects: first, the ontological indeterminacy expressed by the Buddhist doctrine of conditioned co-arising resulting in the Tiantai doctrine of a threefold truth (三諦); second, the dialectical relationship between the fundamental principle of diversity—ignorance—and the fundamental principle of reality as reference to the sacred—dharma-nature—a dialectic that expresses the Tiantai view of the foundation of existence in the realm of sentient beings and its diversification into distinguishable things.¹⁰⁰

Zhiyi stresses that the accomplishment of universal salvation must necessarily be based on the nonduality of the sacred and the profane, for otherwise “the profane

could not be transformed into the sacred; and the sacred would be devoid of wisdom of penetration [inspired through the profane in order finally to overcome its negative aspects].”¹⁰¹ The sacred and the profane are two poles exclusively referring to each other as opposites, which entails their mutual inclusion, and Zhiyi’s evaluation of the profane as the embodiment of the sacred entails the necessity of a paradoxical articulation on the level of perfect teaching, which can be demonstrated with regard to Zhiyi’s interpretation of the threefold truth.

The opposition between emptiness and the provisional according to the Tiantai threefold truth expresses mutual affirmation by means of mutual restriction¹⁰²—emptiness restricts the provisional and its tendency toward hypostatization; the provisional restricts emptiness and its tendency to be understood in terms of nihilistic misconceptions. Ultimately, “nonbeing” (replaced by “emptiness”) refers to the same positive expression of existence (as the provisional) by means of linguistic negation; conversely, “existence” refers to the same negative expression of nonbeing by means of linguistic affirmation.¹⁰³ Viewed from the standpoint of linguistic conventionality, these two modes of negation and affirmation must exclude each other, because (as essentially in any language) the Chinese affirmative *you* (有) is the opposite of the negative *wu* (無). However, with regard to the ontological status of the existing thing constituted by conditioned co-arising, the two modes cannot exclude their respective opposites and separately refer to the ontological status of the existence of things. For the linguistic function of negation of the Chinese *wu*, ultimately referring to the ontological status of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising, causes this term to be misunderstood as “nothingness,” just as the affirmative function of the Chinese *you* ultimately causes it to be hypostatized as (a) substantial being.¹⁰⁴ Either a synthesis of the two—“both existence and nonbeing”—or the transcendence of both—“neither substantial being nor nothingness”—more adequately catches the ontological sense of conditioned co-arising.

Ultimately, the ontological status of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising cannot adequately be expressed by a conventional linguistic usage that exclusively refers to the world through affirmation or negation. The “logical opposition” between the Chinese *you* and *wu* manifests this ambiguity caused by linguistic reference—on the one hand, the vague connection between existence and substantial being caused by linguistic affirmation, on the other hand that between nonbeing and nothingness based on linguistic negation. However, the replacement of the Chinese terms *you* and *wu* by the Tiantai concepts “provisional” and “emptiness” can prevent their being misunderstood as substantial being and nothingness.¹⁰⁵ The mutual negation and affirmation of these two poles constitutes both simultaneously; this relationship between simultaneous restriction and affirmation is seen as the “middle” in Tiantai teaching.¹⁰⁶ In terms of linguistic reference, the ontological status of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising remains ultimately vague, which means that it is inexpressible in terms of unequivocal or unambiguous linguistic reference.¹⁰⁷ The existence of things is marked by an ontological indeterminacy, which results in the familiar distinction between linguistic conventionality and the inexpressible—the level of the ultimate.

This insight is a crucial one, and the Mahāyāna doctrine of the two truths refers to these two levels of the conventional (俗諦) and the ultimate (真諦).¹⁰⁸ Yet the distinction between the two levels is made on the level of linguistic conventionality exclusively, inasmuch as “differentiation” (or “difference”) is still a form of verbal statement and thus cannot claim ultimate validity; consequently, this distinction cannot be regarded as ultimate. These two levels of the conventional and the ultimate are therefore considered to be mutually complementary.¹⁰⁹ The inevitable falsity—nihilistic misconception and false hypostatization—in conventional linguistic usage hints at the inexpressible level of the ultimate, while the inexpressibility of the ultimate would be “meaningless” if it were devoid of reference to the level of linguistic conventionality. The term “inexpressibility” still indicates that the ultimate maintains its negative reference to verbalization, whereas the ultimate completely unrelated to verbalization—neither negatively nor positively—would simply be meaningless. For this reason, this distinction is necessary but cannot be regarded as ultimate. This thought, placed in the soteriological context of universal salvation, suggests that the meaning of ultimate salvation—the ultimate meaning of the Buddha-dharma—must be bound up with the verbalization of various doctrines for the sake of saving all sentient beings. However, none of these doctrines can express the ultimate meaning of the Buddha-dharma itself. Even the term “Buddha” is only a provisional designation.¹¹⁰

The inexpressibility of the ultimate level corresponds to the ontological indeterminacy of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising. Only the paradoxical combination of the positive and the negative modes can eventually point toward what is inexpressible on the conventional level—the ultimate. Based on this insight, paradoxical articulation becomes the specific practice of wisdom in the *Prajñā-pāramitā sūtras*. Examples such as “wisdom is not wisdom if it is called wisdom” express this practice of nonattachment, which means, epistemologically, not being attached to either the positive or negative extreme.¹¹¹ Both hypostatization as substantial being and nihilistic misconception (or “hypostatization as nothingness”) originate in an exclusive attachment to either the affirmative or negative mode. Linguistically, there is no adequate mode of expression exactly corresponding to the illuminated state of nonattachment, which must be then indicated via paradoxical articulation. Many Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Prajñā-pāramitā sūtras*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*, and the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* refer to the ultimate and its corresponding state of nonattachment based on this mode of paradoxical articulation.¹¹²

Paradoxical articulation, then, combines different functions and meanings: it points out the inadequacy of linguistic conventionality as regards the ontological indeterminacy of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising—the level of the ultimate and its corresponding state of nonattachment; it also indicates the nonduality of the sacred and the profane—a doctrine essential to the Mahāyāna ideal of universal salvation. These two aspects of paradoxical articulation—ontological indeterminacy and soteriological nonduality—refer to each other; linguistic reference to the ultimate entails falsity, although the ultimate cannot be devoid of reference to

linguistic conventionality. Linguistic conventionality could then be regarded as an “inverse indication” of the ultimate, as indeed suggested by paradoxical articulation. That is, the falsehood of linguistic conventionality inversely points to the ultimate, and, conversely, the ultimate must point to the inversion of linguistic conventionality as paradoxical articulation. Similarly, the profane manifests the sacred inversely, as also implied by paradoxical articulation. The falsehood of linguistic conventionality and that of the profane are considered inversions based on attachments pointing to the sacred as the ultimate state of nonattachment.

The dialectics of threefold truth in Tiantai teaching finally combines, then, these two aspects of ontological indeterminacy and soteriological nonduality. The identity of the Chinese concepts of *jia* (假), “provisional,” and *zhong* (中), “middle,” expresses this meaning. In Tiantai teaching, *jia* is interpreted as an ambiguous concept combining a positive and negative meaning.¹¹³ Its negative connotation means false and illusory; its positive one means borrowed, provisional, an expedient means for the purpose of salvation. Negatively, it counts for illusion, suffering, attachment, and ignorance; positively, it refers to the Bodhisattva’s wisdom of expedient means necessary to save other sentient beings. The ambiguity of the term (and concept) “ambiguity” reflects the dialectical relationship between the sacred and the profane: the negative and unwholesome aspect of its profane meaning inversely manifests the instructive clue for its transformation into wholesome conditions, which is its positive aspect—its sacred meaning. As previously expounded, the existing thing on the linguistic level referred to by its specific and distinctive marks always includes the tendency toward hypostatization as (a) substantial being, and thus the tendency toward illusoriness, unreality. The fact of this illusory side is intimately bound up with the realm of conditioned co-arising;¹¹⁴ however, this negative aspect of illusoriness means that the sacred—the illuminated and wholesome condition—is inversely manifested as the instructive value connected with the experience of the unwholesome profane, the unreal aspect of the provisional. The ambiguity between negative and positive connotations of the concept *jia* refers to (is a function of) the nonduality of the sacred and the profane.

The corresponding ontological meaning of *jia*—the ontological indeterminacy of the existing thing—must be expressed by the ambiguous concept of *zhong* (the middle), which denotes the reality of human existence simultaneously contrasted with the illusion (illusoriness) of substantial being. In Tiantai teaching, existing things are identified with the middle,¹¹⁵ which expresses this ontological ambiguity. Thus, existing things simultaneously acquire unreal and real aspects.¹¹⁶ The value of existence does not reach beyond its inversion into the unwholesome illusion of things as substantial beings, for the existing thing embodies the value of the sacred as instructive clue, just as the sacred is inversely manifested as its opposite, the profane. The value of the sacred is an absolute value—an end in itself—the ultimate value of existence indicating universal salvation. Its manifestation necessarily includes its inversion into the instructive clue as the profane, the illusory world of substantial beings experienced as the realm of attachment and suffering. Threefold truth in Tiantai teaching combines ontological ambiguity—the real and unreal aspects of existing

things expressed as the middle—with the soteriological nonduality of the sacred and the profane, the ambiguous meaning of the provisional. Zhiyi's formula of the identity of conditioned co-arising, emptiness, the provisional, and the middle—particularly the identity of the ambiguous middle and the profane—denotes this combination of ontological indeterminacy and soteriological nonduality between the sacred and the profane. On the level of linguistic conventionality, the “two” can only be referred to by means of paradoxical articulation.

The threefold truth in Tiantai teaching could even be considered an abstract formula for paradoxical articulation. This truth, like this articulation, transcends the opposition between verbalization and inexpressibility.¹¹⁷ The ultimate level and the level of linguistic conventionality refer to each other just as emptiness and the provisional do.¹¹⁸ The ultimate meaning of the Buddha-dharma verbalizes itself by means of provisional designations variously adapted to its “respect context” of teaching and transformation during the universal course of salvation involving all sentient beings. There is, for example, the teaching about the four alternatives regarding the ontological status of existing things: existence—the Chinese *you*; nonbeing—the Chinese *wu*; both existence and nonbeing—the synthesis of *you* and *wu*; and neither being (the illusory side of existence) nor nothingness—a transcendence beyond both.¹¹⁹ Each of the four alternatives represents a provisional designation referring to what the combination of all four completely and ultimately means. Conversely, each of the alternatives includes and presupposes the meaning of the other three, although each refers to the ultimate and complete meaning in a different context. The interpenetration of all four “modes” is considered an all-inclusive form of expression directly corresponding to the meaning of the ultimate and to the highest doctrinal level of the Tiantai system, the level of “perfect teaching.”¹²⁰ This mode of expression consists of provisional designations marked by paradoxical phrases.

Regarded as provisional and not ultimate forms of expression, each respective designation includes all the other meanings—thus pointing to the ultimate meaning of the Buddha-dharma, which can only be indicated by means of paradoxical phrases. This presupposed all-inclusiveness of the provisionally designated ultimately completes what the single designation cannot express apart from its paradoxical combination; the provisionally designated, which must be linked with its paradoxical combination, completely expresses the inexpressible ultimate. From this standpoint of “perfect teaching,” this all-inclusive way of expression can even transcend the opposition between verbalization and inexpressibility.¹²¹ The perfect teaching then claims that conventionality is nothing but the ultimate.¹²² Again, we have the middle in Tiantai teaching, which refers to this mediation of the opposites: empty-provisional, ultimate-conventional, inexpressible-verbalized, and sacred-profane. The middle is the fundamental relation based on which these opposites must include and presuppose each other as opposites. For this reason, Zhiyi calls it “the primary truth of the middle” (中道第一義諦).

The middle integrates the two opposite poles of emptiness and the provisional, because the middle itself is the entire relation between the two. The two, conversely, reflect the middle through their mutual restriction and affirmation. As their common

foundation, it is not a *tertium comparationis*; it accounts for their entire relational pattern of mutual negation and affirmation. It expresses the dialectical relationship between the two poles. The middle is nothing but emptiness and the provisional simultaneously. Consequently, the two opposite poles of emptiness and the provisional are convertible; in the middle, the two opposites affirm each other: emptiness is the provisional, and the provisional is emptiness. The threefold truth ultimately expresses the dialectical inclusion of the three based on this ambiguous meaning of the middle in relation to the dialectical inclusion of affirmation and negation. Zhiyi says that its threefoldness means oneness, and its oneness means threefoldness.¹²³

Ontologically, the doctrine of threefold truth refers to the ambiguity of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising: while negatively it is supposed to indicate nonsubstance rather than nothingness, its simultaneously positive connotation is taken to be provisional existence rather than substantial being. Paradoxically, the two opposites refer ultimately to one and the same meaning—that of the middle. The ontological status of existing things constituted by conditioned co-arising to which the threefold truth ultimately refers cannot but be dialectically disclosed. The ontological indeterminacy of existing things corresponds to the ambiguity of such linguistic references as the Chinese expressions *you* and *wu*, which were eventually replaced by the dialectics of the threefold truth in Tiantai teaching.

This ontological indeterminacy, moreover, entails that existing things cannot be regarded as isolated and independent entities; the existing thing is inseparable from its referential context, which constitutes the meaning and existence of this thing. Separated from its referential context, it is a mere fiction or even an illusory projection. Provisional existence refers to the dynamic phase of arising and perishing, which involve the referential context constituting each thing's distinctive meaning and existence. The existence of a certain thing always involves, then, the totality of its referential context by means of which it obtains its meaning as this certain thing existing in its contextual world. In contrast to Western ontological thinking, Tiantai Buddhism does not consider the existing thing as an entity because its existential environment—the referential context in which it is situated and to which it is related—is inseparable from the existence of this thing itself. The existence of a certain thing means “existence with, in, and of its environmental world.”¹²⁴ Its existential environment is the inseparable foundation of a thing's existence; there would be no existence beyond the constitutive factors of this “context.” For Tiantai Buddhists, the notion of an entity as such would be a fictional construction lacking any corresponding reality and ultimately contradicting the ambiguous principle of conditioned co-arising.

Huayan Buddhists, by also focusing on these aspects of conditioned co-arising, established the dichotomy of *li* (理), “principle,” and *shi* (事), “thing,” in Chinese Buddhism. The *li-shi* dichotomy in Huayan Buddhism makes clear the hermeneutical potential of conditioned co-arising.¹²⁵ It represents a kind of universal polarity marking all existing things based on conditioned co-arising. *Li* expresses the referential totality of an existing thing. Its referential totality points to the ultimate foundation

of its existence. This must be infinite, because the (ultimate) totality excludes nothing, and thus is (ultimately) inexpressible. *Li* means oneness, totality, infinity, nondistinction, and inexpressibility. *Shi* refers to the opposite aspects, the distinctiveness of the existing thing, which must be presupposed along with its referential totality. For referential totality understood as contextual existential environment presupposes the existing thing to which it is constitutively related. In contrast to *li*, the discrete *shi* is not ultimate but rather relative because it is determined by its referential context—its existential environment; for that reason, it accounts for (or represents) the provisional and finite.¹²⁶ Finally, because of its distinctiveness it is expressible. *Shi* is the opposite of *li*; however, the two mutually and necessarily presuppose each other. In Huayan Buddhism the mutuality of *li* and *shi* is called the “interpenetration of *li* and *shi*.”

The *li-shi* dichotomy of the Huayan school reveals the crucial heuristic aspect¹²⁷ of the Buddhist doctrine of conditioned co-arising. The threefold truth¹²⁸ in Tiantai Buddhism is, then, the dialectical interplay between ontological indeterminacy and the soteriological nonduality of the sacred and the profane. This dialectical interplay is presupposed by the Mahāyāna ideal of universal salvation.

The Ontological Foundation of Existence: The Sacred as Ground of Reality and Its Diversification into Profane Worldliness

The nonduality of the sacred and the profane—the doctrinal foundation of universal salvation in Zhiyi’s Tiantai teaching—includes the ontological indeterminacy of the existence of things, which in turn has two meanings. First, existing things are illusory but not nothingness—the ambiguity of the middle and provisional due to the doctrine of threefold truth. The profane world of sentient beings is both real and unreal. Profane existence is real insofar as it embodies the instructive value of the sacred, whereas things themselves are unreal as long as they are identified with discrete entities apart from reference to the sacred. Second, the existence of things includes its referential totality as the existing environment of mutually related things.

This mainly refers to the soteriological notion that the fates of sentient beings regarding ultimate salvation must be universally interrelated, because the existence of different sentient beings and things universally embodies the instructive value of the sacred.¹²⁹ The Tiantai doctrine of “all-inclusiveness of dharmas” (具足一切法) expresses this thought—each existing thing reflects its universal interrelatedness with others, and these interrelated things exist as the environment of its referential world.¹³⁰ The soteriological meaning of this doctrine emphasizes that each different moment of existence ultimately points to the (same) value of universal salvation reflected by the others, which then makes possible the doctrine of “saving others by saving oneself,” pragmatically accomplished through self-transformation and teaching.

“Saving oneself” means self-transformation and self-cultivation and refers to the Tiantai practice of “contemplating mental activity” (觀心)—another term for introspection.¹³¹ By “contemplating mental activity” the practitioner discovers the po-

tency of universal teaching and transformation, corresponding to the needs of all sentient beings and finally leading them to ultimate salvation.¹³² For each moment of profane existence, as well as each moment of mental activity, embodies this potency as its instructive clue to the sacred. “Each single moment of mental activity” in the life of sentient beings provides the practitioner with this potency most directly, because it counts as the most immediate experience of one’s existence.¹³³ Contemplating mental activity discloses this potency and enables the practitioner to realize “perfect teaching” as “saving others by saving oneself.” Each moment of mental activity reflects the complete course of universal salvation. The ultimate meaning of the Buddha-dharma, diversified into various means of expediency corresponding to the needs of all sentient beings, is reflected by each moment of mental activity marking sentient beings as sentient beings.¹³⁴ Based on this potency, the deluded mind of sentient beings can be transformed into an ultimate wisdom capable of accomplishing universal salvation—saving all sentient beings. The Tiantai doctrine referring to this potency of mental activity is called “one-moment thought involving three thousand worlds—the entire world of existing things” (一念三千)¹³⁵. The soteriological meaning of this doctrine is that the transformability of mental activity from ignorance to wisdom is just its potential for universal salvation.

The ontological meaning of this doctrine involves the understanding that “one-moment thought” in the existence of sentient beings—embodying the ultimate value of universal salvation—must ultimately include the universal interrelatedness of existing things, which presupposes the existence of all things as the environmental world of “one-moment thought.” This “one-moment thought” must exist within the environment of its referential world, the realm of sentient beings called “three thousand worlds.” Zhiyi emphasizes: “As soon as there is ephemeral mental activity, three thousand worlds are immediately extant. If there were no mental activity at all, everything would be terminated.”¹³⁶

This statement sounds a little ambiguous, because the meaning of mental activity could be misunderstood as a “transcendental foundation” or as an “absolute consciousness” generating the world of existing things. Mou Zongsan and Wu Rujun follow this idealistic interpretation.¹³⁷ Neither Mou’s interpretation as “transcendental foundation” nor Wu’s as “absolute consciousness” fits the meaning of Zhiyi’s doctrine of “one-moment thought involving three thousand worlds.” This doctrine includes no idealistic meaning, nor does it express a particular type of cosmogony that intends to explore the ultimate origin of existing things.

The Chinese term *xin* (心), literally “heart,” refers to perception, sentiment, consciousness, conception, and thought—ephemeral mental activity in the realm of deluded sentient beings.¹³⁸ “Each moment of mental activity” itself is like anything else existing in its surrounding world, the realm of sentient beings, to which it must refer. Mental activity describes an instance of ephemeral existence equal to any other existing thing in its environment; conversely, the existence of things as an environmental world of mental activity cannot be given apart from the latter. The existence of things must rely on mental activity, and, thereby, the former is regarded as the referential world of the latter; however, mental activity itself is nothing else but

ephemeral existence in the world of existing things.¹³⁹ Zhiyi's doctrine of "one-moment thought involving three thousand worlds" expresses the interdependence of mental activity and existence. This interdependence means that mental activity necessarily points to the existence of all things and that, conversely, existence is permanently and indivisibly bound up with mental activity, for existence primarily means the environmental and referential world of mental activity. Their interdependence means that the two must constitutionally refer to each other: the existence of "one-moment thought" must include the totality of all things as the world of its referential "property"; based on the referential totality of all existing things this "one-moment thought" exists as what it means. Zhiyi's conception of "world"—three thousand worlds within the range of ten dharma-realms—is founded on this pattern of interdependence.

Again, Zhiyi's understanding of the term *xin* is ambiguous. On the one hand, he says that mental activity includes the ten dharma-realms¹⁴⁰—the realm of all sentient beings, which embodies the range of its mutability and thus its possible transformation, that is, its potential to become that universal wisdom necessary to accomplish ultimate salvation for all sentient beings. On the other hand, he says that mental activity equal to any other existing thing of the ten dharma-realms is also subject to the principle of conditioned co-arising, which stresses its contingency as ephemeral existence.¹⁴¹ These two statements seem to contradict each other: the first statement emphasizes that mental activity embraces all the ten dharma-realms constituted by conditioned co-arising, whereas the second one claims that mental activity itself is subject to the same principle supposed to be founded on mental activity due to the first statement. Mental activity, which is as much subject to conditioned co-arising as the ten dharma-realms, seems to contradict mental activity embracing the ten dharma-realms founded on conditioned co-arising, because this latter type of mental activity would also embrace conditioned co-arising, and, thereby, it would be more fundamental than conditioned co-arising, which contradicts the former type of mental activity.

However, Zhiyi's ostensible contradiction rather expresses that mental activity is no more separate from the environment of its referential world than are existing things from the illusory influence of deluded mental activity—this is the interdependence between mental activity and the existence of things. Mental activity shapes the environment of its referential world, which consists of existing things.¹⁴² These things are illusory because of the false images of their existence, which mental activity has shaped, but this does not mean nihilism. Conversely, environmental conditions constrain the range in which the false and true understandings of the mental activity of sentient beings emerge. The existential quality of the environment of sentient beings originates in their understanding of its conditions, whereas the conditions of this existential environment conversely constrain sentient beings' understanding. Sentient beings' understanding (mental activity) and environmental conditions (conditioned co-arising) refer exclusively to each other. Understanding and environmental conditions correspond to each other according to their respective modes of existence in the realm of sentient beings. A certain understanding re-

spectively fits its environmental conditions of existence, distinguished according to the categories of sentient beings—the ten dharma-realms previously mentioned. Humanlike environmental conditions cause mental activity to understand its own existence correspondingly. Mental activity, either as wisdom or as ignorance, also correspondingly shapes the environment of its experienced referential world.

Ultimately and fundamentally, as a result of “contemplating mental activity,” there are only the reciprocal dynamics between the two poles of conditions (緣) and mental activity (心) alternating within the range of ten dharma-realms.¹⁴³ Based on these reciprocal dynamics, the referential totality between the two poles of conditions and mental activity variously displays the universal value of the sacred as being that of diverse but interrelated existing things within the range of the three thousand worlds pertaining to the ten dharma-realms. The reciprocal dynamics of mental activity and conditions determines the realm of existence experienced by sentient beings as their respective lives.¹⁴⁴ Mental activity and its reference to existence could be understood in terms of the phrase “existing-in-the-world”¹⁴⁵ consummated as understanding. Existing in the world of one’s own environmental conditions completes, fulfills, or consummates itself as understanding—the very meaning of mental activity. Consequently, based on contemplating mental activity, sentient beings can ultimately influence not only the existence that they experience as their own life but also that of other sentient beings by means of teaching and transformation, which is again believed to be an extension of “contemplating mental activity.”¹⁴⁶ The difference between sacred understanding (wisdom) and profane understanding (ignorance) determines the difference between the two modes of existing—as Buddha or as profane sentient being.

With its doctrine of “non-duality of form and mental activity” (色心不二), the *Sinianchu* refers to the same idea of interdependence between the existence of things and mental activity.¹⁴⁷ This doctrine also emphasizes the reciprocal dynamics of the two poles, while replacing the term “conditions” with “form.” Originally, “form and mental activity” refer to the Buddhist doctrine of the “five aggregates”—the five constituents of the empirical person in Buddhist traditions; mental activity embraces the four factors of reception, thought, activity, and consciousness.¹⁴⁸ In this context, “form” (色) replaces the term “environmental conditions” (緣) and, moreover, means “external and/or distinctive form,” which refers to the perceptible marks of existing things.

This wisdom of contemplation only means contemplating one instance of mental activity contaminated by ignorance. This mental activity is nothing else but dharma-nature. . . . If one practices the [deconstructive] contemplation of these ten dharma-realms falsely assumed to be external [to mental activity], one immediately sees mental activity from its inside. . . . If one focuses on what is inside mental activity, one deconstructs [by means of contemplation] all dharmas [appearing to be external to it]. If one practices [this deconstructing] contemplation of the ten dharma-realms appearing to be external [to mental activity], one immediately sees mental activity from inside. One should know that it is always mere consciousness [i.e., mental activity], no matter whether one deals with distinctive form or if one deals with consciousness. It is always mere form, no matter

whether one deals with distinctive form or if one deals with consciousness [i.e., mental activity].

Although we are talking about the two expressions of distinctive form and mental activity, in fact there only is the one-moment thought of the ten dharma-realms consisting of ignorance and dharma-nature. This is precisely the inconceivable one instant of mental activity, encompassing all dharmas produced by causes and conditions.¹⁴⁹

“Distinctive form” means distinctiveness of perceived and conceived objects. What appears to be external to mental activity itself is distinctive form—the perceived or conceived objects. The distinctiveness of a certain object marks its difference from others and thus refers to its external nature, because this certain object is viewed from (the perspective of) something different from itself; something that does not pertain to this object itself must be considered as external to it. What perceives is different from the perceived mental activity—and distinctive form must appear to be external to what perceives. Consequently, distinctiveness presupposes the diversity of objects or discrete entities, and their differences from each other mark their external nature. The distinctiveness and external nature of the object create the image of its independence as a discrete entity. The expression “external form” includes the distinctiveness of and diversity among existing things—the false images of their independence that arise when existence is exclusively identified with discrete entities, without reference to that sacred, which, on the contrary, hints at the interrelatedness of existence. External or distinctive form accounts for the illusory character of diverse existing things based on their hypostatization and inversion into illusion—the unwholesome influence of mental activity.

The nonduality of mental activity and external form means that existence cannot but be realized as (the existence of) discrete entities originating in mental activity’s tendency toward hypostatization. Mental activity must even experience its own existence as “external form,” although the latter is said to be external to the former. Anything referred to by mental activity—which also includes the experience of its own existence—appears as external form, the deluded mode of existence based on the tendency of mental activity toward hypostatization. Mental activity as a source of illusion itself is only known through its illusory products, which appear to be external to it—the impression of discrete entities. However, the distinctive recognition of mental activity as a source of illusion also cannot escape its own tendency toward hypostatization. What is really referred to by the term “mental activity” must ultimately be inconceivable and inexpressible. The *Mohe zhiguan* speaks of “contemplating mental activity as inconceivable object.”¹⁵⁰ A complementary explanation is provided by the *Sinianchu*, when it says that there is only “mere consciousness” or mental activity, which ultimately amounts to saying that there is only “mere form.”

Consequently, it would be an illusion again to assume that one could eradicate the source of illusions; however, it is possible to obviate the unwholesome influence of this state of delusion. Wisdom, then, means living in a world of illusions, but understanding it as the instructional inversion of the sacred, which must be permanently adjusted according to the contingent and alternating moments of one’s existence. Thus, illusiveness itself is not the object of destruction during the contempla-

tion of mental activity leading to wisdom. The section on “Deconstructing Dharmas Universally”¹⁵¹ in the *Mohe zhiguan* does not refer to the destruction of dharmas; it rather teaches the practitioner to regard illusions as illusions and then to recognize the illusory nature of the contemplated, which is inevitably bound up with this very contemplation. It gradually teaches one, first, to relieve oneself of the negative influence of the tendency toward hypostatization in provisional existence, which is called “entering emptiness from the provisional” (從假入空); second, to recognize the positive aspect of the provisional as its reference to the sacred and its means of expediency, but not to dwell in a state of emptiness, which is called “entering the provisional from emptiness” (從空入假); third, to avoid the negative influences of the two by means of holding on to their positive and mutually complementary aspects, which is called “contemplating the middle” (觀中道); and ultimately, to combine all three aspects simultaneously in each moment of mental activity that contemplates its own inconceivable nature, which is called “one moment of mental activity combined as threefold contemplation” (一心三觀).

This threefold contemplation is the ultimate completion of wisdom, which immediately recognizes each moment of illusory, unwholesome and profane existence as the instructional inversion of the wholesome sacred. This wisdom is achieved upon contemplating the nature of mental activity as both the source of illusion, called ignorance (無明), and the reference to the sacred, called dharma-nature (法性) or the real mark of existence (實相). The inconceivable object of this threefold contemplation is then called the “identity of dharma-nature and ignorance” (無明即法性), which refers to the ultimate nature of mental activity.¹⁵²

In accordance with this and many other statements in the *Mohe zhiguan*, the *Sinianchu*, previously quoted, says that mental activity must involve the two aspects: both ignorance as source of illusions and dharma-nature or real mark that reference to the sacred, ultimately marking existence as real, and this must then be true for (or from the perspective of) any existing thing constituted by conditioned co-arising within the range of the ten dharma-realms, because mental activity, as previously discussed, necessarily refers to existence. The doctrine that “one-moment thought consists of ignorance and dharma-nature” is complementary to Zhiyi’s doctrine of “one-moment thought involving three thousand worlds”; it specifies Zhiyi’s understanding of the concept of *xin* or mental activity. The ambiguous meaning of the concept *xin* becomes evident, because this term hints at the ideal notion that wisdom must not escape illusion but rather must face the unwholesome aspect of the latter as instructional inversion; this is the very nature of both mental activity and existence. Essentially, the opposition between ignorance and dharma-nature follows the same pattern of mutual inclusion previously explained with regard to the relation between the profane and the sacred. The two are mutually indivisible poles of the whole relation, to which they respectively point from opposite directions/standpoints. The dialectical inclusion of dharma-nature and ignorance is ultimately founded on the pattern of the threefold truth.

The elements here could be analogically arranged. The negative connotation of emptiness corresponds to dharma-nature. Because of the falsity of linguistic conven-

tionality it can only be negatively referred to, even though dharma-nature is understood as the reference by existing things to the sacred, which marks the reality of existence. This true nature common to all dharmas constituted by conditioned co-arising is designated as the absence of self-nature (無自性), which would be illusorily inverted if it were positively designated. The positive connotation of the provisional (the literal Chinese meaning is false and borrowed) corresponds to ignorance. Ignorance contains the function of hypostatization, which corresponds to the Buddhist term “illusory inversion” (顛倒虛妄). Illusory inversion means to invert the dynamic process of the arising and perishing of existing things into abiding entities in order to make distinctions among all existing things, that is, to conceive of existence exclusively as the diversity of discrete entities. The discriminatory act of hypostatization inverts original non-abidingness into false abidingness.¹⁵³ The linguistic designation distinctively referring to existing things presupposes this act of inverse hypostatization. In his commentary on the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*, Zhiyi explains:

Illusory discrimination is the state of inclination to distinctive form. What is the root of illusory discrimination? Inverse conception is its root. Inverse conception means that, in fact, there is no mental activity. One inversely speculates that there is a potency that produces illusory discrimination. Because of the distinction between mental activity and form, there is inclination to distinctive form. If one eliminates inclination to distinctive form, one would not discriminate form from mental activity any more. There would be only inverse conception speculating that this mental activity exists [as such]. If only mental activity exists, then it is the state of inclination to formlessness. What is the root of inverse conception? Non-abiding is its root. Non-abiding means non-beginning. Ignorance is the root of the realm of formlessness marked by inclinations to invert existence. . . . There is nothing upon which this ignorance is founded; therefore it is called non-abiding. Absence of foundation means non-beginning ignorance.¹⁵⁴

In this section Zhiyi analyzes the meaning of ignorance in terms of subsequent levels comprising the inclinations to inversion and illusory discrimination, eventually leading to falsity in linguistic conventionality.¹⁵⁵ The term “invert existence,” referring to mental activity, expresses that on the fundamental level of ignorance non-abiding existence is inverted into that meaningful abidingness called “mental activity.” The immediate and dynamic experience of existence is inevitably inverted into the existence of experience or mental activity. This is a very primary form of attachment, clinging, or hypostatization, understood as a “state of inclination to invert existence.” But this primary level of ignorance must inevitably lead to the next level of ignorance—the inclination toward illusory discrimination. As soon as there is mental activity, its reference to perceived or conceived objects must follow; this produces its distinctive form external to mental activity. The inclination to invert existence and the tendency toward illusory discrimination make for the diversity of discrete entities.

Ignorance is recognized as the root of the misconception that discrete entities are multiple and diverse. Ignorance could be regarded as the ground of diversification, whereas dharma-nature would be the ground of existence or of reality. However, except for the “state of inclination to invert existence” there is still the more

fundamental level of ignorance designated by such synonyms as “fundamental ignorance” (根本無明), “non-abiding ignorance,” “non-beginning ignorance,” or “state of ignorance.” Fundamental ignorance is non-abiding because there is no ground more fundamental than this level, and for that reason there is no clue to its beginning. This conception of the non-abiding or non-beginning “state of fundamental ignorance” presupposes that the dynamic state of existence, its non-abidingness, cannot be meaningless or nothingness, if it is real; but non-abidingness without inversion into abidingness (hypostatization) would be meaningless.

The relationship between abidingness and non-abidingness is analogical to that of linguistic conventionality and the ultimate, as expounded in the previous section. Linguistic conventionality as well as abidingness is understood as inversion; this includes falsity. However, the ultimate as well as non-abidingness cannot be devoid of reference to its respective inverse mode. This is the ontological clue of inverse manifestation: the profane is the inverse manifestation of the sacred; fundamental ignorance is nothing but dharma-nature. Here the reference to the sacred marks existence as real and meaningful. Illusions understood as instructional inversions of the sacred are nothing but dharma-nature marking existence as real.¹⁵⁶ Without this complementary function of its manifestation into ignorance, dharma-nature would only mean absence of self-nature, but could not display its meaning as reference to the sacred, marking existence as real. It would in this case not be meaningful; there would be nothing that could be manifested, and it would be nothingness. Consequently, “fundamental ignorance” points to the necessity that it originally pertains to dharma-nature (the ground of reality) as its indispensable function of manifestation. The ontological meaning of this combination expresses that the ground of reality includes the ground of diversification, and vice versa.

Zhiyi refers to the dialectical inclusion of the two with a term from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* called the “non-abiding ground” (無住本), which he also explains as being identical with the middle way.¹⁵⁷ Ignorance as source of illusions and dharma-nature as reference to the sacred marking existence as real must refer to each other as do the profane and the sacred, according to the conception of inverse manifestation, which in turn is formalized as threefold truth. Ignorance must include dharma-nature, just as dharma-nature includes ignorance. Just as the negative connotation of emptiness relies on the restriction of the provisional, dharma-nature cannot but inversely manifest this reference to the sacred as the diversity of discrete entities, that is, as fruits of ignorance, for otherwise the sacred would be meaningless and/or nothingness. Conversely, the illusion(s) of ignorance ultimately cannot be based on (an) illusion completely devoid of any ground of reality. Zhiyi expresses this understanding in the *Mohe zhiguan*:

Ignorance shapes dharma-nature dharma-like and thus produces all dharmas... Although dharma-nature includes the minimal [ground], it is not nothingness. Although ignorance includes the manifold, it [i.e., this manifold] does not exist. For if one points to the one, it becomes the manifold; however, the manifold is not manifold. If one points to the manifold, it becomes one; however, the one is not minimal. Therefore this mental activity is called [the] inconceivable object.¹⁵⁸

The mutual inclusion of the ground of diversification and the ground of reality is the “non-abiding ground,” corresponding to the middle. Zhiyi continues to refer to this issue in the same section, previously quoted from his commentary to the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*:

What is the root of this non-abiding ignorance? How could it be without any root? Non-abiding means absence of roots. Correctly spoken, ignorance relies on dharma-nature. Dharma-nature is ignorance; the two are nondual and indivisible. How could the [fundamental] nature rely on [another fundamental] nature! When one contemplates the diversity of sentient beings and thus realizes emptiness, one has proceeded to the non-abiding ground. If one then explores the sources thoroughly, one proceeds to the principle of the middle way. . . . Therefore, the diversity of all dharmas is based on the non-abiding ground.¹⁵⁹

Jingqi Zhanran’s (711–782) commentary on this passage stresses the conception of the “non-abiding ground” as a dialectical inclusion of the ground of diversification and reality:

Diversity of all dharmas is based on the non-abiding ground. . . . Dharma-nature is identical with ignorance, because dharma-nature does not have an abode. Ignorance is identical with dharma-nature, because ignorance does not have an abode either. Although dharma-nature as well as ignorance is without abode, they are still fundamental [ground] for all dharmas. Therefore it is said [in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*]: Diversity of all dharmas is based on the non-abiding ground.¹⁶⁰

These statements present the ontological interpretation of the crucial doctrine of the nonduality of the sacred and the profane necessarily presupposed by the ideal of universal salvation in Zhiyi’s soteriology. The dialectical inclusion of (the grounds of) diversification and reality corresponds to the nonduality of the sacred and the profane. The paradoxical term “non-abiding ground” is interpreted according to the conception of inverse manifestation. Diversification of existence into discrete entities is basically illusory but nonetheless necessary for making manifest the relevance of the sacred as the ultimate value of existence based on its significance for instructional inversion. Ontological indeterminacy—the reality and non-reality of existence—in Zhiyi’s speculations points to this soteriological clue. The real aspect of existence (its reference to the sacred) is inversely manifest; it is manifest as instructional inversion into the unreal world of the diversified profane. The term “non-abiding ground,” which Zhiyi also identifies with the term Buddha-nature (i.e., the sacred as the instructional inversion of the profane), expresses the ontological equivalent of the ultimate value of existence by means of paradoxical articulation. It hints at the necessity of diversity among discrete but unreal entities, while simultaneously pointing to the sacred as the real side of existence; based on this significance it refers to the ontological ground of existence in Tiantai teaching. This ontological reflection represents an indispensable part of Zhiyi’s speculative soteriology, precisely because the sacred is understood as the ultimate value of existence diversified into the profane world.

Consequently, this type of ontology does not at all signify, refer to, or point toward transcendence. Tiantai Buddhism simply excludes the notion of an ontology expressing any sense of an order of being such as we have in Mou's two-level ontology. It does not admit any transcendent being that lies "beyond" the plurality of worldly existence. Neither noumena nor the Kantian "thing in itself" can be associated with this type of speculative thinking. Mou's conception of "noumenal ontology" does not fit this tradition of Buddhism at all. In contrast to Mou's conception, the ontology of Tiantai Buddhism could be designated an "ontology of referential immanence."

Notes

In the following notes the abbreviation *T* refers to *Taishō shinshū daizokiyō*, ed. Takakuso Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku (Tokyo: Issaikyō Kankō Kai, 1924–1934).

- 1 – Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bole* (Buddha-nature and Prajñā wisdom) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1977 and 1993). See also other works of Mou referring to this issue: *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* (Intellectual intuition and Chinese philosophy) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1974); *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen* (Phenomena and the thing in itself) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1975); *Yuanshan lun* (On the Perfect and Ultimate Good) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1985); *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* (Nineteen lectures on Chinese philosophy) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1986); *Zhong-Xi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang* (Fourteen lectures on the integration of Chinese and Western philosophy) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1990).
- 2 – Japanese studies on Tiantai Buddhism are predominantly concerned with questions of philology, textual criticism, exegesis, and interpretation of doctrinal issues. A more philosophical study of Tiantai Buddhism in general might be Toshio Andō's *Tendai shōgu shisō ron* (On the Tiantai philosophy of nature-inclusion) (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1953).
- 3 – See You Huizhen, *Tiantaizong xingju yuanjiao zhi genju* (Foundation of perfect teaching and nature-inclusion in the Tiantai school) (Taipei: Wenjin, 1993); *The Significances of "The One Single Mind Embracing Ignorance and Dharma-nature Simultaneously" in T'ien-t'ai Buddhism—Examined from the Expository Framework of "Two-Gates-in-One-Mind"* (in Chinese), *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* (Taipei: Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies) 10 (1997): 341–361; *Mou Zongsan Xiansheng duiyu Fojiao yili de quanshi yu jiangou* (Mou Zongsan's conception and hermeneutics of Buddhist doctrines), in *Mou Zongsan Xiansheng yu Zhongguo zhexue zhi chongjian* (Mou Zongsan's reconstruction of Chinese philosophy), ed. Li Minghui and Cai Renhui (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1998), pp. 345–355; Guan Zhenqiang, *Mou Zongsan Xiansheng lun yuanjiao zhi genju* (Mou Zongsan on the foundation of per-

- fect teaching), *Ehu xuezhì* 14 (June 1995): 1–26; Wang Caigui, *Rujia yuanjiao jianli zhi kenengxing de tantao* (Investigation on the possibilities of establishing a perfect teaching in Confucianism) (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Institute of Philosophy, Zhonghua Wenhua University, Taipei, 1995).
- 4 – Ng Yu-Kwan (Wu Rujun), *T'ian-t'ai and Early Madhaymika* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), p. 135. See his recent study in Chinese: Wu Rujun (Ng Yu-kwan), *Fahua xuanyi de zhexue yu gangling* (Philosophy and structure of the "Profound Meaning in the Lotus") (Taipei: Wenjin, 2002), pp. 72–85. In his recent Chinese publication, Wu Rujun claims that ontology in Tiantai Buddhism cannot be separated from soteriology. On the other hand, Wu criticizes Mou for his ontological interpretation of certain Tiantai doctrines, which he considers to be essentially soteriological expressions, and says that there is no clue to any ontological implication. Finally, he refers to the famous Tiantai doctrine, "one-moment thought involves three thousand worlds," and gives a vague interpretation of its ontological meaning by claiming its relatedness to Heidegger's idea of "Dasein" and Husserl's idea of "Lebenswelt." However, Wu's interpretation of this Tiantai doctrine involves some misunderstandings of Heidegger's and Husserl's philosophy, which I pointed out in my Chinese article, *Tiantaizong zhi yuanji jiagou* (Entelechy as structural clue to the "ultimate and perfect" in Tiantai teaching), in *Huafan renwen xuebao* 2 (Taipei) (2003): 26–73.
- 5 – Chan Wing-Cheuk, "Heidegger and T'ian-T'ai Buddhism," in *Heidegger and Chinese Philosophy* (Taipei: Shangye, 1986).
- 6 – In 1958 Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi (1909–1978), Xu Fuguan (1903–1982), and Zhang Junmai (Carson Chang) (1886–1969) jointly published a declaration of this movement. Its Chinese title, *Wei Zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan*, could be rendered as *A Manifest on Chinese Culture to the World*; see in *Minzhu pinglun* 9, no. 1 (1958), and *Zaisheng* 1, no. 1 (1958). For an English translation of this text, see Zhang Junmai, *Xinrujia sixiangshi* (History of New Confucian thought) (Taipei: Carson Chang Foundation, 1980). Recent Chinese materials on this movement are numerous; see particularly the works of Cai Renhou, Li Minghui, and Liu Shuxian. For a comprehensive survey in English, see Umberto Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism: The New Confucian Movement* (Taipei: Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 2001).
- 7 – Mou, particularly, expresses this point of view in his *Zhong-Xi zhexue zhi hui-tong shisi jiang*, pp. 85–123. In this article I do not focus on Mou's process of intellectual development. His theory of ontology and metaphysics in the three Chinese traditions is the most influential part of his philosophical work. It represents the mature phase of his philosophy, which he started to express systematically in such works as *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* and *Xian-xiang yu wuzhishen*.

- 8 – See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 1–14.
- 9 – Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft: Die transzendente Dialektik: Vom transzendenten Schein*, Werkausgabe W. Weischedel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982; 2nd ed., Royal Prussian Academy [PRA], 1986), B 352/353.
- 10 – See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 1–14, and, particularly, the second chapter of this book. For a comprehensive survey of his interpretation of Chinese philosophy founded on these Kantian concepts, see also his *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*. For his latest publication on these topics, see *Zhongguo zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 69–123.
- 11 – This Mahāyāna idea occurs not only in Chinese Buddhism; the *Mūlamādhyamīkākārikā* (Chinese: *Zhonglun*) of Nāgārjuna stresses the “non-duality between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*” (*T* 30.21b); the *Huayan sūtra* (*Avataṃsaka sūtra*) claims “non-difference between the Buddha, sentient beings, and mind” (*T* 9.592a/610b); the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* states that wisdom means delusion (*T* 14.576a); the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* emphasizes the doctrine of Buddha-nature penetrating all sentient beings (*T* 12.803a); the *Lotus sūtra* proclaims enlightenment and universal salvation for all deluded sentient beings; and the *Dazhidu lun* states that even the terms “wisdom,” “Bodhisattva,” “Buddha,” and “Buddha-dharma” are provisional designations (*T* 25.102b, 318b, 432b–433b, 452b). However, Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism more explicitly claims that for the sake of ultimate and universal salvation, non-duality between the sacred and the profane is doctrinally necessary; Zhiyi says in the *Mohe zhiguan* (Great calming and contemplation): “If the [profane] tentative were devoid of the real [pointing to the sacred], it could never be transformed into the sacred. If wisdom of the sacred were devoid of the [profane] tentative, it would not truly be wisdom [of universal penetration]. This teaching would be an unbalanced teaching; it slanders the sacred and offends the profane. Moreover, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* explains that all [profane] sentient beings obtain Buddha-nature;... the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* says that all [deluded] sentient beings represent the marks of wisdom. ... Each moment-thought involves the ten dharma-realms [of the sacred and the profane—the six profane destinies as *saṃsāra* and the four sacred spheres as Śrāvaka, Pratyeka-buddha, Bodhisattva, and Buddha]; again, each [of the ten dharma-realms] involves all the ten dharma-realms ...” (*T* 46.53b–54a). Other Tiantai Buddhist sources emphasize “identity between the ultimate and conventional,” referring to the same point; see the *Fahua xuanyi* (The subtle meaning of the *Lotus sūtra*) (*T* 33.703b). The *Qixin lun* (Awakening of faith) establishes a Chinese term corresponding to the “non-duality of the sacred and the profane”; it refers to the non-duality of real suchness (真如 or the realm of the sacred, and *saṃsāric* arising-perishing (生滅) or the realm of the profane; this term means literally “non-oneness and non-difference” (非一非異) (*T* 32.576a and 576b). In texts of the Huayan school, this expres-

sion is frequently used to refer to this very meaning. Particularly, both the polarity and mutual penetration of finite items (*shi* 事) and infinite principle (*li* 理) are referred to using this expression; for example, see Dushun's (557–640) *Huayan fajie guan* in Chengguan's (738–839) *Huayan fajie guan xuanjing* (T 45.677a–b).

- 12 – Various Tiantai doctrines express this thought: (1) “mutual inclusion between the ten dharma-realms” [of the sacred and the profane—the six destinies of *samsāra* and the four sacred spheres of the Śrāvaka, Pratyeka-buddha, Bodhisattva, and Buddha] (*Mohe zhiguan* [T 46.54a]); (2) “identity between the ultimate and conventional” (*Fahua xuanyi* [T 33.703b]); (3) “inconceivable liberation as severing delusions of the nine dharma-realms without severing the dharma-realms themselves” (*Sijiao yi* [T 46.761a] and *Guanyin xuanyi* [T 34.882c–883a]).
- 13 – See Mou's *Zhong-Xi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 95–111; *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 283–331; and the seventh chapter of *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*.
- 14 – Ibid.
- 15 – Ibid.
- 16 – For Mou's ideas about this transcultural humanism based on Chinese traditions and Kantian philosophy, see the sixth chapter in his last work, *Yuanshan lun*.
- 17 – See the introduction to *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen* and pp. 37–41 of the second chapter.
- 18 – Mou's translations of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason*, his attached commentaries, and his interpretive works on Kantian philosophy (*Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* and *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, as well as *Yuanshan lun*) attempt to integrate Kantian terminology with his reconstructive view of Chinese traditions.
- 19 – Except for the previously mentioned works about Kant, Mou's comprehensive studies on Neo-Confucian traditions from the Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties, *Xingtì yu xinti* (Essence of human nature and essence of mind) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1969) and *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* (From Lu Xiangshan to Liu Jishan) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1979), display in detail his views on the ethics and metaphysics of the Chinese Confucian schools.
- 20 – See the *Foxing yu bole*, *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, and *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*. In these works Mou particularly refers to the Chinese Buddhist habit of establishing classifications for diverse Buddhist doctrines (i.e., doxographies) in order to integrate the ambiguous ideas from different periods and schools of Indian Buddhism into a comprehensive system called *panjiao* (判教)—literally, “judging the doctrines.” In fact, his vision of transcultural humanism,

for example his two-level ontology, receives important inspiration from these patterns of Chinese Buddhist tradition; see, especially, the last section of the last chapter of *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, dealing with the universal meaning of the Buddhist *classification of doctrines* (*panjiao*), pp. 447–455.

- 21 – In spite of the mutual difference between all moments of existence, each moment includes the entire referential context between itself and anything else; each unique moment equally represents the totality of reference among all things. From this standpoint of mutual reference among all things, “every thing” is the center of this totality of interrelatedness. Brook Ziporyn uses the expression “omnicentrism” to point to this meaning in *Evil and/or/as the Good: Omnicentrism, Intersubjectivity, and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2000).
- 22 – Xiong Shili, *Xin weishi lun* (Treatise on the new mere consciousness) (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 1985), p. 256.
- 23 – The end of this section provides a critical evaluation of this Kantian interpretation. See also my German article, *Rezeption Kants und die Einheit von Wissen und Handeln bei Mou Zongsan (1909–1995)*, in *Chinesisches Selbstverständnis und kulturelle Identität*, ed. C. Hammer and B. Führer, Deutsche Vereinigung für Chinastudien, Bd. 3 (Dortmund: Projekt Verlag, 1996); pp. 78–95.
- 24 – Zhang Zai, *Zheng meng*, ed. Wang Jinxiang (Taipei: Hanjing Wenhua, 1983), chap. 6, “Chengming.” See Mou’s *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, p. 21.
- 25 – *Dasheng qixin lun* (T 32.576b). See Mou’s *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, chap. 7.
- 26 – Ibid. See also Mou’s articles on this doctrine in his *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 283–313, and in his *Zhong-Xi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 95–111.
- 27 – See the Tiantai work *Sinian chu* (T 46.576c). See Mou’s *Foxing yu bole*, pp. 739–768.
- 28 – See the fourth chapter of *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, particularly the section on self-negation (pp. 122–125), and that on the Buddhist idea of the nonduality of the sacred and the profane (p. 177). For Mou’s theory of the infinite subject inspired by Luo Jinxi’s (1515–1588) interpretation of the hexagram *Fu* from the *Yijing* (Book of changes), see pp. 94–125.
- 29 – Mou’s explanation of this inversion from the moral (infinite) mind into the cognitive (finite) mind—the “*self-negation* of the infinite subject”—consists of a combination of *Yijing* terminology, Buddhist conceptions, and Kantian ideas; see *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 122–125.
- 30 – *Speculative metaphysics* refers to a *metaphysic specialis* as distinguished from *metaphysic generalis*—Kant’s transcendental philosophy. This distinction is pre-Kantian (see H. M. Baumgärtner, *Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*

[Freiburg and München: Karl Alber, 1988], pp. 52–58); in Kantian philosophy the two types of metaphysics refer to two different types of non-empirical sciences. *Metaphysic generalis* refers to nonempirical conditions preceding and constituting all possible empirical cognition, the constituting and universal conditions of possible experience in transcendental philosophy, whereas *metaphysic specialis* or *speculative rationalism* refers to nonempirical objects transcending all empirical cognition—proofs of God’s existence in rational theology, proofs of the human soul’s eternal life in rational psychology, and proofs of the universe’s foundation in rational cosmology. Mou claims that the Chinese type of speculative metaphysics—Mou’s noumenal ontology—refers to the *thing in itself* and solves more fundamentally all questions of Western *metaphysic specialis* without splitting into theology, psychology, and cosmology (see Mou, *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, p. 25).

- 31 – With regard to the affirmative attitude toward speculative metaphysics in Mou’s noumenal ontology, one might wonder why Mou did not discuss this issue of Chinese traditions in reference to the continental rationalism of Spinoza, Descartes, and Leibniz. Probably this is because Mou focuses on his concept of two-level ontology, which he finds explicitly mentioned in Kantian philosophy only. For him, this key concept is the only possible ground of comparison or mutual reference between Western metaphysics and Chinese traditions. See *Zhong-Xi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 111–123.
- 32 – This system would include the two types of metaphysics, in Mou’s terminology the “two-level ontology.” *Metaphysic specialis* would be replaced by the Chinese type of speculative metaphysics, Mou’s noumenal ontology, based on Chinese traditions—whereas *metaphysic generalis*, Mou’s phenomenal ontology, would be based on Kantian transcendental philosophy. However, from the traditional Chinese point of view, ramifications in rational theology, psychology, and cosmology would be superfluous according to Mou; there is only one speculative metaphysics: noumenal ontology, referring to noumena in the sense of the “*thing in itself*.” According to Mou, the ramifications of *metaphysic specialis* could be overcome by the Chinese types of *intellectual intuition*. See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 30–41.
- 33 – For Mou the following terms are convertible: on the one hand *thing in itself*, *noumena*, *nonempirical*, *transcendent*, *infinite*, *metaphysic specialis*, *speculative metaphysics*, *noumenal ontology*; on the other hand, *phenomena*, *empirical thing*, *finite*, and also *metaphysic generalis* (or *transcendental philosophy*) and *phenomenal ontology*. See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, p. 24.
- 34 – See the introduction to *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*.
- 35 – Kant’s pre-critical philosophy acknowledges the possibility of intellectual intuition. But Mou exclusively refers to the critical philosophy of Kant. In Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, intellectual intuition is briefly mentioned twice, in the first part of “The Transcendental Esthetics” and at the end of the “The

Transcendental Analytics” of editions A and B. During two hundred years of exegetical literature on the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* this term has hardly been of any relevance in Kantian interpretations. However, intellectual intuition became a positive term in the German idealistic philosophy of Fichte and Schelling, which is completely different from Kant’s meaning, of course. Mou’s appropriation of this term refers neither to Fichte nor to Schelling.

- 36 – A concise argument on this interpretation is found in the third chapter of *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 92–121. For a more detailed one, see the *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*.
- 37 – Mou, particularly, refers to the ethical ideal of *ren* (仁), or reciprocity among human beings, from Confucius’ *Lunyu* (Analects) (fifth century B.C.), and the concept of *benxin* (本心), or original/moral mind, in the work of Mencius (371–289 B.C.). Mou follows the Neo-Confucian interpretation from the Song and Ming dynasties: the two indicate not only the original properties pertaining to human nature (人性) but also the ultimate destination of human existence. The two terms represent an indestructible and unconstructed realm of values in human existence and simultaneously point to fundamental principles of production and reproduction on the cosmic level. In Mou’s interpretation these values are now understood as transcendent entities that can yet be experienced by each human individual’s moral sense(s); consequently, the Confucian *ren* and *benxin* are recognized as Kantian intellectual intuition, noumena, and freedom, based on which metaphysics could be understood as cosmological speculation. See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 92–121.
- 38 – This part of Mou’s interpretation is related to similar issues discussed in the German idealistic philosophy of Fichte and Schelling—cognition in the experience of religious and moral values and its relation to metaphysical cognition. However, the question here is whether or not religious and moral values can be considered “transcendent entities.” I cannot focus on this complicated question in this article. Rather I must limit myself to Mou’s interpretation of Kant.
- 39 – See the first section of Kant’s “The Transcendental Esthetics,” in *Critique of Pure Reason*. For a critical and concise survey of the exegetical literature about this section of the first Kantian *Critique*, see P. Baumanns, *Kants Philosophie der Erkenntnis* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1997), pp. 85–210.
- 40 – In Kantian epistemology, reception refers to the function of “sensuality” or “sensibility” (*Sinnlichkeit*)—the capacity to receive sensual impressions by virtue of the “*Affizierbarkeit des Gemüts*.” The a priori forms of intuition—the presentation of sensually perceptible things—are space and time. Spontaneity refers, then, to the pure intellect’s conceptual-categorical function of synthesis of the sensual manifold given in this intuition. Spontaneity is the pure intellect’s function of constituting empirical objects by virtue of its a

priori categories. Empirical cognition relies on spontaneity and reception, according to Kant.

- 41 – This is the conclusion of the chapter “Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Intellect’s Concepts,” in the second section of the second (B) edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, demonstrating that there exist objects corresponding to the *a priori* concepts of the intellect, but that they are restricted to the empirical realm exclusively. See also the relevant chapter in Baumann’s *Kants Philosophie der Erkenntnis*.
- 42 – For a more detailed elucidation of his argument, see the end of this section.
- 43 – In Kantian terminology “*speculative cognition*” means “*theoretical cognition*” (*theoretische Erkenntnis*). Its principle is called “*spontaneity*,” the constitutive principle of theoretical pure reason. In Kant’s transcendental philosophy, the pure intellect’s categories are regarded as necessary conditions for the constitution of empirical objects. The pure intellect’s constitutive capacity regarding empirical objects is its spontaneity. Theoretical cognition refers to questions about *Sein* (Being) and is confined to objects of the empirical realm; speculative cognition referring to non-empirical, transcendent objects (*metaphysical cognition*) would surpass the finitude of human reason. In contrast to the theoretical principles of epistemology, Kant establishes the practical principles of ethics. The principle of “*practical cognition*” (*praktische Erkenntnis*)—also a *postulate of pure reason*—is called *autonomy*; this is the constitutive principle of practical pure reason and thus the constitutive principle for Kantian ethics. Practical cognition refers to questions about *Sollen* (Should be). Spontaneity is the principle of theoretical reason, autonomy that of practical reason. In Kantian critical philosophy spontaneity and autonomy cannot be reduced to one another; they are heterogeneous principles of one and the same pure reason. For a detailed explanation of the relationship between these two types of reason, see P. Baumanns, *Kants Ethik* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 2000), pp. 15–31.
- 44 – See the first chapter of Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, dealing with *goodwill*, the *function of reason*, *duty*, and the *formal principle of duty*. See pp. 394–405 of the second edition, issued by the Royal Prussian Academy in Berlin.
- 45 – Kant speaks of the “*fact of reason*” expressing this meaning (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 394–399).
- 46 – See *ibid.*, pp. 402–403, 421–424.
- 47 – Spontaneity is the synthesis function of the pure intellect’s categories that refer to a manifold given in sensual intuition; thus, it is the principle of the human reason’s theoretical (speculative) cognition.
- 48 – For a clear explanation of the relationship between spontaneity and autonomy see Baumanns, *Kants Ethik*, pp. 15–34.

- 49 – See Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*, 1st part, 2nd book, 2nd section, III, in PRA, pp. 216–220. Pure speculative reason creates the concept of *noumena* but cannot demonstrate the existence of a corresponding object, because theoretical cognition is restricted to empirical objects exclusively. However, the postulate of practical reason demonstrates that a noumenal freedom must be presupposed as necessary. Practical reason solves what theoretical reason cannot demonstrate. Kant calls this the *primacy of the practical*.
- 50 – The idea of this inversion into its opposite (a special form of self-negation) is based on the perspective of Buddhist soteriology, the nonduality of the sacred and the profane. The two refer exclusively to each other—the profane as inverse clue to the sacred, and the sacred as the potency for transformation of the profane. Mou’s conception of inversion from moral mind into cognitive mind follows the same pattern, although he also resorts to terminology from the *Yijing*. See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 122–125.
- 51 – See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 62–83.
- 52 – See *ibid.*, pp. 92–105.
- 53 – Mou particularly argues that the phrase “one mind disclosing two gates” could be regarded as the fundamental pattern for his two-level ontology in universal metaphysics. See *Zhong-Xi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 85–95, and *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 283–313.
- 54 – See the passage from the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.53b), previously quoted.
- 55 – See Zhiyi’s refutation of the *Shelunshi* and *Dilunshi*—early Chinese representatives of Yogācāra Buddhism—in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.54a). Zhiyi argues that a separation between the profane and the sacred due to these Buddhist teachings would harm the ideal of universal salvation.
- 56 – See note 53. Mou’s pattern of “two-level ontology” could be regarded as a combination of this expression with the Kantian terms “noumena” and “phenomena.”
- 57 – See *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 123–125, 165–170, 317–321, 401–447.
- 58 – See the famous Buddhist simile comparing the empirical person with a carriage, which is nothing but a conglomeration of its parts such as its wheels, axle, shaft, etc. This simile is mentioned by numerous Buddhist texts. Particularly, the Chinese Huayan school stresses the heuristic relevance of the doctrine of conditioned co-arising. Fazang’s (643–712) doctrine of the *six marks* (六相), universally pertaining to things constituted by conditioned co-arising, stresses the necessary interdependence between the parts constituting a thing and the wholeness of the constituted thing, as in the simile of the house and roofbeams: roofbeams are only roofbeams in regard to the whole house they constitute, and the whole house is a house only in regard to its constituting components such as roofbeams. See the *Huayan yishengjiao fenqizhang* (T 45.508a–b).

- 59 – This expression is a key concept of many Mahāyāna scriptures, particularly the *Mādhyamika* and *Prajñā-pāramitā* scriptures. For a concise survey in English, see D. Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way* (New York: State University of New York, 1986).
- 60 – See Zhiyi’s *Sijiao yi* (T 46.721c), and the section on “Deconstructing Dharmas Universally,” in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.59b–62a), explaining the fundamental principle of “non-arising” (無生). See also the *Dazhidu lun* (T 25.319a).
- 61 – The *Zhonglun* of Nāgārjuna (second century)—Kumārajīva’s (344–413) Chinese translation of the *Mūlamādhyamika-kārikā*—says: “Because of the meaning of emptiness, all dharmas can be accomplished” (T 30.21b). The existence of things is based on conditioned co-arising, which in turn is possible only under the condition of emptiness—the absence of a permanent self-nature in existing things.
- 62 – See Seng Zhao, *Buzhen kong* (T 45.152a–153a). For an English translation of Seng Zhao’s works, see W. Liebenthal, *Chao-lun: The Treatises of Seng-chao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1968).
- 63 – This is the main thesis of P. Swanson’s *Foundations of T’ien-t’ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Buddhism*, Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press 1989), pp. 33–57.
- 64 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.8c–9a and 61a). Zhiyi refers to Nāgārjuna’s *Zhonglun* in his interpretation; see T 30.33b. According to Mou Zongsan, Wu Rujun, and Toshio Andō, the original meaning of the Sanskrit version—the *Mūlamādhyamika-kārikā*—seems to be slightly different from Zhiyi’s interpretation; see Wu Rujun (Ng Yu-kwan), *T’ien-t’ai and Early Mādhyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993); p. 83, and Andō, *Tendai shōgu shisō ron*, pp. 60–71. The term “threefold truth” comprises three components: conventional truth, ultimate truth, and the primary truth of the middle. However, conventional truth is convertible to provisional, ultimate truth to emptiness, and the primary truth of the middle to the middle way; see Zhiyi’s *Sijiao yi* (T 46.728a), and the *Weimo jing xuanshu* (T 38.535a). The term “threefold truth” originates in Chinese but not in Indian Buddhism; it first occurs in the apocryphal Chinese *sūtras*, *Renwang jing* (T 8.827c, 828c, 829a, 833b) and the *Yingluo jing* (T 24.1015b–c). It is also frequently used by other Chinese Buddhist schools in the sixth and seventh centuries, such as the Dilunshi and the Sanlun school of Jizang (549–623). However, the interpretation of this term in Zhiyi’s Tiantai teaching is completely different from the other Chinese Buddhist teachings.
- 65 – A term that first appears in the *Dazhidu lun*; see T 25.287b. However, it is frequently used in texts of the Huayan and Tiantai schools. See also Wu Rujun’s exposition on the Chinese term *jia*, *jiayou*, and its inspiration from the Sanskrit *Prajñapti*, in *T’ien-t’ai and Early Mādhyamika*, pp. 128–131.

- 66 – See the Chinese terms “mutual negation of the extremes” (雙遮二邊) and “mutual affirmation of the two truths” (雙照二諦), frequently used in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.2a, 17a, 24c, 26a, 47c, 55a, 58a, 82c).
- 67 – Zhiyi expresses this by means of *paradoxical articulation*: for instance, *saṃsāra* (profane existence) means *nirvāṇa* (the sacred); see the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.2a).
- 68 – This is the basic idea of the fourfold truth in Buddhism; see Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London: Trubner & Co., 1937). See Zhiyi’s statement that the “dharma-body [the sacred] means the substance of the mind of suffering” (*Fahua xuanyi* [T 33.686a]).
- 69 – For example, in *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.2a): “ignorance is wisdom, the extreme is the middle, *saṃsāra* is *nirvāṇa*, etc.”
- 70 – Suffering, impermanence and defilement are linked with profane existence as *saṃsāra*. The opposites, such as bliss, permanence, and purity, are linked with *nirvāṇa*, the sacred. Based on inspiration from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, Zhiyi claims that the marks of *saṃsāra* are ultimately unreal but those of *nirvāṇa* are real. See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.53b).
- 71 – Zhiyi expresses this idea with his statement that all dharmas (all things) are nothing but the Buddha-dharma, or that even the tiniest particle of dust contains the vast canon of Buddhist *sūtras*. See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.9a).
- 72 – See Zhiyi’s teaching about Buddha-nature in the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.700a). Inspired by the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, Zhiyi claims that Buddha-nature is nothing but conditioned co-arising in the realm of profane existence.
- 73 – See the Tiantai doctrine of mutual inclusiveness of the ten realms (T 46.54a).
- 74 – See *The Awakening of Faith for the Great Vehicle* (T 32.576a), the *Huayan fajie xuanjing* (T 45.677a) of the Huayan school, and the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.54a) of the Tiantai school.
- 75 – The Huayan school uses the Chinese terms *li* (principle) and *shi* (discrete thing), *se* (form), and *kong* (emptiness); see Dushun’s *Huayan fajie guan* and Fazang’s *Jinshizi zhang* (T 45.663a–667b, no. 1880). The Tiantai school mainly uses the pattern of the threefold truth and the dialectics of ignorance and dharma-nature; see the two following sections.
- 76 – See the threefold truth explained as mutual restriction and affirmation between emptiness and the provisional in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.2a, 17a, 24c, 26a, 47c, 55a, 58a, 82c). See also Andō’s exposition of dialectics in Tiantai thought in *Tendai shōgu shisō ron*, pp. 44–55, 208–221.
- 77 – See T 14.576a and Zhiyi’s quotation in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.52c).
- 78 – See the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.744a).

- 79 – See the previous two notes and particularly the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.56b), which claims that ignorance is nothing but dharma-nature.
- 80 – See Zhiyi's critiques of the Śrāvaka and Pratyeka-buddha (T 46.76b). These two types of sage are soteriologically meaningless, because they remain in a state of emptiness not benefiting other sentient beings on their path to salvation. Therefore, they rank below the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, who exercise the deeper meaning of teaching and transformation. Zhiyi says that this state of emptiness is still dominated by ignorance and does not mean ultimate salvation. These ideas might be inspired by the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*, which claims that emptiness and non-emptiness do not exclude each other but rather presuppose each other.
- 81 – The Tiantai school uses expressions such as “inconceivable realm” and “inconceivable liberation,” indicating that the sacred as such is ineffable. However, this “sacred as such” would be not only meaningless for the salvation of sentient beings but also inconsistent with the Buddhist doctrine of “emptiness,” denying independence and substantiality to entities. For this reason, the inconceivable is only one aspect of the sacred, linked with its opposite aspect or pole of conceivability, which is manifested as the Buddha-dharma's variations on expedient means for universal salvation in the profane world of sentient beings. Zhiyi even repeatedly says that, ultimately, the inexpressible is nothing but the expressible; other doctrines refer to this same thought of the ramification of the Buddha-dharma into various doctrines such as “manifesting the real by virtue of disclosing the tentative.” In the Huayan school, Fazang displays his concept of the “one vehicle teaching”—the one vehicle of ultimate and universal salvation—in the *Huayan yishengjiao yi fenqi* (T 45, no. 1866). This consists of manifold aspects as well; the inconceivable and ineffable aspect is referred to as the “fruits” of “the one vehicle of the eminent teaching,” corresponding to the state of enlightenment in the “*Samādhi* of oceanic reflection,” which unifies and transcends the Buddha-dharma's ramifications into diverse doctrines without denying them. The other aspect, the “cause” of this ultimate *Samādhi*, refers to the former's verbalization and explains the principle of integration and penetration in Huayan Buddhism. Fazang also says that the “cause” and “fruits” essentially are not different—which completely accords with Zhiyi's paradoxical assertion that “the inexpressible is the expressible”; they are the two aspects of the “one vehicle doctrine” of universal and ultimate salvation. For Fazang's theory of the one vehicle see the *Huayan yishengjiao yi fenqi* (T 45.477a–478b); for Zhiyi's nonduality of the expressible and inexpressible, see the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.3a11–b9).
- 82 – This idea, commonly expressed by the Huayan school and *The Awakening of Faith for the Great Vehicle*, points to the meaning of the *Tathāgata-garbha* doctrine, based on which the diversity of the profane is explained. Even the

Tiantai school says that ignorance is nothing but dharma-nature; see the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.56b).

- 83 – See the Tiantai and Huayan doctrines such as “ignorance is dharma-nature” (Tiantai school) (T 46.56b); “the conventional is the ultimate” (T 33.767b); “combination of the unreal and real” *Awakening of Faith* (T 32.576a); and “interpenetration between the principle and discrete things” (Huayan school) (T 45.677a).
- 84 – See Zhiyi’s identification of Buddha-nature with *saṃsāra*, in the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.700a).
- 85 – See the statement of the Huayan *sūtra* stressing that there is no difference between mind, Buddha, and sentient beings. Zhiyi frequently quotes this passage. His famous doctrine, “one-moment thought involves three thousand worlds” (i.e., the totality of all things), is directly based on this passage. See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.9a and 54a).
- 86 – Frequently appearing expressions hint at this concern in Zhiyi’s Tiantai teaching: “striving for the higher to save the lower,” “saving oneself by saving others,” “benefiting oneself by benefiting others,” “mutual inclusion of the ten dharma-realms,” and “seclusion based on non-seclusion [of sentient beings’ realms]”; see the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.2a). Even the famous Tiantai doctrine of “one-moment thought involves three thousands worlds” is closely linked to this issue of mutual reference and (inter)dependence among all things involved within the process of universal salvation. The soteriological meaning of this universal interrelation refers to the idea of transforming by virtue of teaching. The Huayan school’s interpretation of the Buddhist doctrine of “conditioned co-arising” also focuses on the mutual reference and interdependence among existing things for the same reason. Chengguan’s doctrine of the four “dharma-realms,” particularly the “dharma-realm of non-obstruction [mutual penetration] between all things” and “dharma-realm of mutual penetration between things and principle of [total reference],” attempts to justify theoretically the mutual dependence (interdependence) among everything involved within the process of universal salvation for sentient beings, based on teaching and transformation. See the *Huayan fajieguan xuanjing* (T 45.677a).
- 87 – See the doctrinal examples in note 81.
- 88 – See the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.700a).
- 89 – This Chinese expression is a compound of the two terms dharma-realm and conditioned co-arising. This term expresses that the soteriological meaning of the Buddha-dharma (dharma-realm of the sacred) inversely reflects itself into the profane world of conditioned co-arising. The world of conditioned co-arising is regarded as an inverse manifestation of the Buddha-dharma’s soteriological meaning as universal and ultimate salvation for all sentient beings. See Fazang’s *Huayan yishengjiao yi fenqi* (T 45.477a and 503b).

- 90 – See Zhiyi’s exposition of the threefold truth in the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.704c–705b).
- 91 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.2a).
- 92 – Mou’s interpretation of Kant claims that the noumena are beyond the conceptualization of the Kantian categories; see *Xianxiang yu wuzishen*, pp. 98–100.
- 93 – See the Tiantai work *Guanyin xuanyi* (T 34.882c–883a), which says that the Buddha does not seclude the nine realms of profane existence and that he stays with the deluded sentient beings in order to save them. See also the *Sijiao yi* (T 46.761a), which points to the same issue.
- 94 – See the *Fahua wenju* (T 34.38a).
- 95 – See *Xianxiang yu wuzishen*, pp. 423–430; *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 331–367.
- 96 – See Mou’s *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 362. Buddha-nature refers to the ultimate value of that sacred which marks the existence of all sentient beings because the profane—the realm of sentient beings—inversely manifests the sacred as an instructive clue to universal salvation. Existence itself embodies this ultimate value of universal salvation. Consequently, existence is not only the most valuable attribute; it is also necessary and indispensable. It has the potential and power to transform all sentient beings into sacred beings through the attainment of ultimate salvation. Although the doctrine of conditioned (or dependent) co-arising denies the hypostatization of existing things as substantial beings, the doctrine of Buddha-nature must presuppose the existence of things. Based on this concept in Tiantai Buddhism, Mou concludes that the concept of Buddha-nature is essential in the ontology of Chinese Buddhism.
- 97 – See the introduction to Mou’s *Foxing yu bole*.
- 98 – See the chapter on “Universal Deconstruction of Dharmas” in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.59b–64c). See also Mou’s interpretation of the inexpressible and the “dharma of non-disputation” in *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 368.
- 99 – In Tiantai Buddhism this doctrine points to the highest level of teaching, called perfect teaching. See the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.692c, 693c, 725b, 726a, 733a, 741c, 777b, etc.). See B. Ziporyn’s work referring to this.
- 100 – See the subsequent section dealing with this issue.
- 101 – *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.53b).
- 102 – See the threefold truth explained as mutual restriction and affirmation between emptiness and the provisional in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.2a, 17a, 24c, 26a, 47c, 55a, 58a, 82c).
- 103 – This at least is Zhiyi’s Tiantai interpretation of the famous phrase from Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamādhyamika-kārikā* (T 30.33b). See the *Sijiao yi* (T 46.728a),

- the *Weimo jing xuanshuo* (T 38.535a), and the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.24c–25a, 55a).
- 104 – This is one of the important issues in Seng Zhao’s treatise *Buzhen kong* (T 45.152a–153a).
- 105 – See the thesis of P. Swanson in note 63.
- 106 – Zhiyi’s conception of the “middle” is different from that of Nāgārjuna; for this issue see Mou’s *Foxing yu bole*, pp. 160–179, and Wu Rujun’s (Ng Yu-Kwan’s) study, *T’ien-t’ai Buddhism and Early Mādhyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1993).
- 107 – Zhiyi says, in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.1c), that each instance of sound, form, and fragrance is the middle, which refers to this ontological indeterminacy.
- 108 – The studies of Wu Rujun (Ng Yu-Kwan) and P. Swanson refer extensively to this issue.
- 109 – In the *Zhonglun*, Nāgārjuna states that the Buddha-dharma is based on the distinction between the two truths, although the two cannot be separated from each other; see T 30.23c. Zhiyi says that the conventional is the ultimate, and vice versa (*Fahua xuanyi* [T 33.703b]), which means that the two are mutually complementary.
- 110 – See the *Dazhidu lun*, which says that the Buddha is only a provisional designation (T 25.102b, 318b, 432b–433b, 452b).
- 111 – See Mou Zongsan’s commentaries on this issue in the *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 368, and in *Foxing yu bole*, p. 1012.
- 112 – See note 11.
- 113 – On the one hand Zhiyi says that “*jia* is nothing but inversion into illusion” (T 46.63a); on the other, he stresses that “the [Buddha-]dharma must be established based on *jia*” as a means of expediency (T 46.75c). This ambiguity explains Zhiyi’s concept of threefold contemplation. “Entering emptiness from the provisional” refers to the negative aspect of the provisional. “Entering the provisional from emptiness” refers to its positive aspect. The same could be said about “emptiness.” The first mode refers to the positive meaning of emptiness, the second to its negative meaning as nothingness. See Andō, *Tendai shōgu shisō ron*, pp. 66–71.
- 114 – The previously mentioned term or phrase “seclusion without secluding the nine delusive dharma-realms” in the *Sijiao yi* (T 46.761a) expresses this meaning.
- 115 – See the claim in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.1c) that fragrance and form are the middle.
- 116 – Zhiyi’s identification (T 46.56b) of ignorance and dharma-nature expresses this meaning.

- 117 – Zhiyi even claims the nonduality of the inexpressible and verbalization in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.3a and 55a).
- 118 – See the *Sijiao yi* (T 46.728a).
- 119 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.75b).
- 120 – In the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.75a), see the Chinese terms “complete integration and interpenetration” (圓融無礙) and “immediate expression of the subtle principle” (妙理頓說), which correspond to the “four alternatives of perfect teaching” (圓教四門).
- 121 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.3a and 55a).
- 122 – See the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.703b).
- 123 – See the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.705a).
- 124 – This is the ontological meaning of the Tiantai doctrine “one-moment thought involves three thousand worlds” in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.54a).
- 125 – See the recent German study by M. Obert, *Sinndeutung und Zeitlichkeit: Zur Hermeneutik des Huayan-Buddhismus* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2000).
- 126 – See the *Huayan fajie xuanguan* (T 45.676a–b).
- 127 – See Fazang’s (T 45.508a–b) simile of the roofbeam and house, stressing the mutual reference and interdependence of wholeness (*li*) and diversity of parts, which suggests the principle of the hermeneutic circle according to which understanding consummates itself based on this interdependence.
- 128 – Toshio Andō’s study also stresses the dialectical aspect of the threefold truth (*Tendai shōgu shisō ron*, pp. 44–55). Wu Rujun’s (Ng Yu-Kwan’s) study denies the ontological meaning of the threefold truth but stresses instead its soteriological relevance (*T’ian-t’ai and Early Mādhyamika*, pp. 62–90 and 153–185).
- 129 – See Zhiyi’s interpretation of the Buddha-nature as threefold causes leading to *nirvāṇa*, which he identifies with the threefold path of suffering in the *saṃsāric* world of profane existence (*Fahua xuanyi* [T 33.700a]).
- 130 – This doctrine occurs frequently in the *Fahua xuanyi* and the *Mohe zhiguan*; see T 33.692c, 693c, 725b, 726a, 735a, 744a, 777b, and T 46.53c–54a. With regard to the interpretation of this doctrine Mou Zongsan distinguishes between the *Prajñā-pāramitā sūtras* and the Tiantai school; see *Foxing yu bole*, pp. 69–89. In contrast to Mou Zongsan, Wu Rujun stresses the soteriological meaning of this doctrine; see *Fahua xuanyi de zhexue yu gangling*, pp. 72–84.
- 131 – This is the fundamental mode of contemplation mentioned in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.50b–55c), which is also called “contemplating mental activity as inconceivable object.” The *Fahua xuanyi* uses “contemplating mental activity” as a category of *sūtra* interpretation. There are only Japanese studies

referring to the issue of “contemplation” in Tiantai teaching; see Sekiguchi Shindai, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū* (Research on Contemplation and Calming in Tiantai) (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1969), and Ono Yujin, *Tendai shikan seiritsushiki no kenkyū* (Research on the History of Establishing the Doctrine of Contemplation in Tiantai) (Tokyo: Hōssōkan, 1994).

- 132 – See the section from the *Sinianchu* (T 46.578c) quoted and translated below.
- 133 – The *Mohe zhiguan* points to this thought in T 46.52a–b.
- 134 – Zhiyi expresses this idea in reference to the *Huayan sūtra*, claiming the non-distinction between mental activity, sentient beings, and the Buddha. See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.9a).
- 135 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.54a). For an English translation of this section, see B. Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as Good*, p. 179.
- 136 – *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.54a).
- 137 – See Mou’s *Foxing yu bole*, pp. 473–480, and Wu Rujun’s *Fahua xuanyi de zhaxue yu gangling*, pp. 72–82.
- 138 – The concept of *changxin* (eternal mind) or *zhenxin* (true mind) in tathāgata-garbha literature might be different from Zhiyi’s understanding. See, for example, the previously mentioned phrase “one mind disclosing two gates” from *The Awakening of Faith for the Great Vehicle*.
- 139 – The *Mohe zhiguan* refers to this meaning in T 46.54a.
- 140 – Ibid.
- 141 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46. 54a) and the *Sinianchu* (T 46.578c).
- 142 – See Zhiyi’s frequently quoted phrase from the *Huayan sūtra* claiming that the mind is like a “constructor,” producing all things; see the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 52c).
- 143 – See the section of “one-moment thought involving three thousand worlds” in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.54a), where Zhiyi holds that the origination of all dharmas—the three thousand worlds—must be discussed *via* (“in terms of”) the interrelation of the two terms.
- 144 – Fazang from the Huayan school also stresses the dynamics of reciprocity between mental activity and conditions; see the *Huayan jingyihai baimen* (T 45.627b–c).
- 145 – I take this phrase as being roughly analogous to Heidegger’s notion of “*Dasein*” (“being-there”) as “*in der Welt sein*,” “being-in-the-world.” See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1986), 16th ed., pp. 52–59.
- 146 – Zhiyi explicitly expresses this in the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.778c).

- 147 – *Sinianchu* (T 46.745a–c). See Sato Tetsuei’s discussion about the authorship of this Tiantai work, *Tendai daishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hyakkaen, 1961), pp. 427–459.
- 148 – See Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 398b.
- 149 – *Sinianchu* (T 46.578c).
- 150 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.52b).
- 151 – See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.59b–84a).
- 152 – See the section of “Deconstructing dharmas universally” in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.69b–84a).
- 153 – The Chinese sources directly refer to this act of illusory inversion. Nāgārjuna says: “To hold the impermanent for permanent, this is called inversion” (T 30.31c); Zhiyi says: “To take the non-abiding as abidingness” (T 38.676b–c), and “To invert the real into the unreal” (T 46.62c–63a).
- 154 – *Weimojie jing lueshu* (T 38.676b–c). This commentary on the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* is ascribed to Zhiyi, but abbreviated and commented on by Zhanran. It represents Zhiyi’s thoughts in his mature phase.
- 155 – Ibid.
- 156 – Zhiyi directly expresses this in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.56b).
- 157 – See the *Weimojie jing lueshu* (T 38.676b–c).
- 158 – *Mohe zhiguan* (T 46.55a).
- 159 – *Weimo jing lueshu* (T 38.676a–c). The last phrase is a quotation from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* (T 14.547c).
- 160 – Jingqi Zhanran, *Fahua xuanyi shijian* (T 33.920a–b).