Chapter 6

Introducing Buddhism as Philosophy: The Cases of Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili, and Tang Yongtong

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The early-twentieth century saw the introduction of Buddhist studies into the Chinese academic world. For the most part, this occurred in the philosophy departments of the newly established universities. The subsequent academic discourse on Buddhism was a great challenge to the traditional teachings of the monasteries. Some Buddhist monks, such as Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), and Buddhist laymen, such as Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無 (1871–1943), responded by developing a modern approach to their intellectual tradition.[1] Under the pressure of Western-style academic institutions, including Christian universities and seminaries, a number of Buddhist training centres opened. These included the Wuchang Buddhist Institute 武昌佛學院 and the Minnan Buddhist Institute 閩南佛學院, established in 1922 and 1925 respectively by Taixu, and the Institute of Inner Learning 支那內學院 in Nanjing, which was established (and subsequently directed) by Ouyang in 1922.[2] The teaching and research of Buddhist scholars working in academic institutions developed in quite a different direction, but they maintained close contact with the Buddhist institutes throughout the Republican period.

This chapter examines three important scholars who contributed to Buddhist studies in the first half of the twentieth century. All three taught Buddhism in the Philosophy Department at Peking University. Broadly speaking, they were representative of three different academic approaches: the cultural, the metaphysical, and the historical. Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893–1988) developed a cultural philosophy in which Buddhism represented the future religion for all humanity. Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885–1968) used Buddhism as a conceptual tool in his own metaphysical system. Finally, Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (1893–1964) was an historian of Buddhism.

Through an analysis of these three figures, I clarify how, and why, Buddhism came to be classified as "philosophy." In particular, I investigate how their understanding of Buddhism was transformed by their use of this label. More specifically, I focus on three questions concerning the relation between philosophical discourse and Buddhism. First, could Buddhism be completely comprehended within the limits of philosophy? Second, what was the status and relevance of a Buddhist philosophy detached from practice? Third, was the academic discourse on Buddhism neutral, or did it ultimately serve other purposes?

1. Liang Shuming: Buddhist Philosophy in the Service of an Existential Commitment

1.1 The Discovery of a "Philosopher"

It was by chance that Liang joined philosophical circles. Between 1914 and 1915, he was dealing with existential issues. These included the meaning of life after a friend's death; and following the outbreak of the First World War, the future of civilization itself. During a kind of quasi-retreat, Liang intensively read both Buddhist sutras and Western philosophy. In his first philosophical essay, "Treatise on Finding the Foundation and Resolving Doubt" (1916), Liang proposed overcoming the existential and intellectual crisis of the age by exploring the foundation of human existence and the universe; a foundation which he expressed using the Buddhist term "suchness" (*zhenru* 真如).[3] In writing this article, Liang was most probably unaware that he was "doing philosophy" as such. He was motivated not by a love of knowledge or speculation, but rather by his need to solve an existential crisis. In his preface to *Essentials of Chinese Culture* (1949), Liang confessed that he did not engage in academic work for its own sake but because he was forced to do so in order to solve personal issues.[4]

The chancellor of Peking University, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940), discovered Liang's article and recognized it as a work of philosophy. Cai also realized that Liang could teach philosophy and invited him to lecture on Indian philosophy. Liang was very much aware of his lack of credentials: "Concerning my qualifications, first, I did not go to university; second, I did not study abroad. Concerning my specialization, I had only diligently studied some disciplines by myself and acquired a smattering of

knowledge."[5] He was given the label of "philosopher" by an academic institution eager to attract bright minds. Without Cai's invervention, Liang would most probably never have started his career as a "philosopher" and would likely have become a Buddhist monk.[6]

Here, we face an important historical issue: after the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905, what careers were available to young intellectuals? With the split between intellectual and political elites, could intellectuals be satisfied with a prestigious position in teaching and research, albeit one that was cut off from their traditional involvement in public life? Going beyond the historical period under consideration, we can ask what the role of a philosopher is in society, whether a philosopher can exist outside of philosophy departments or research institutes, and what price a philosopher should be willing to pay for the support he or she receives from an academic institution.

1.2 A Buddhist "Science"

Once Liang had joined an institution devoted to the professional pursuit of philosophy, he embraced the neologism of "philosophy." He followed the Anglo-Saxon pragmatism that was so prevalent at the time, after the lectures given at Peking University by John Dewey and Bertrand Russell. Liang was clearly influenced by Hu Shi's experimental method and advocated building a "scientific" philosophy. He attempted, in all of his works, to tie his own philosophical discourse to the world of science, including particle physics, the social sciences and biology. Like Hu Shi (1891–1962), Liang did not consider science limited just to particular objects. Rather, he believed it referred mostly to a spirit and method of rigorous analysis. Liang also held that theory was not, as such, sufficient for something to be scientific. What ultimately mattered was an agreement with facts, or, as Liang said: "A credible theory has to be proven in practice."[7] Philosophical rationality implied a continuous dialectic between theory and its confirmation by practice. It was in this very sense that Liang recognized Western philosophy as truly a "scientific philosophy" (*kexue de zhexue* 科學的哲學), as he stated in his *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* (1921).[8]

Liang applied this definition of philosophy to Eastern thought but arrived at a very different conclusion from that of either Hu Shi or Feng Youlan (1895–1990), both of whom sought to unearth a logical method in

ancient Chinese thought. Liang instead held that Eastern thought was mostly "unscientific." Although Confucianism could provide some interesting insights into human life, because it lacked a rigorous method, it failed to reach the ultimate truth. Liang also rejected Pure Land Buddhism as superstitious, and Chan Buddhism as inarticulate and inconclusive.[9] He thus came to consider the Buddhist school of Yogācāra to be the only Asian theory of knowledge able to match its Western rivals.[10] Yogācāra was at that time experiencing an astounding revival, appearing as an Asian alternative to Western scientific discourse. Furthermore, it was considered typically Asian by virtue of its focus on the mind rather than matter. Liang's interest in Yogācāra was spurred by the reprints of Buddhist texts and by the works of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1868–1936), who is also discussed in this volume. Liang Shuming inherited many of Zhang's ideas and methods, including the idea that Yogācāra could compete with Western epistemology.[11] Liang was also influenced by Zhang's notion that Buddhism could have a positive role as a religion for modern times.[12] However, Liang expressed his disapproval of Zhang's *Qi wu lun shi* 齊物論釋 [Explanation of "Discourse on making all things equal"] (1914), in which Zhang used Yogācāra to interpret Chinese philosophy.[13] Later on, Liang came to consider Zhang to be an amateur outsider (*waihang* 外行) to Buddhism, and he distanced himself from Zhang's thinking.

In his *Outline of Yogācāra* (1920), Liang considered Yogācāra's theory of knowledge to be scientifically sound and as forming the necessary philosophical basis upon which a metaphysics could be built.[14] He even held that "Yogācāra represents the entirety of Buddhist doctrine."[15] As we can see, Liang's conception of Buddhism and philosophy was very much shaped by Western empiricism. At the same time, Liang strongly criticized Western science for its limited use of the human mind and, therefore, for its inability to reach ultimate reality. The instrumental reason (*lizhi* 理智) of Western science, he pointed out, was only able to grasp appearances. Liang praised Henri Bergson for the role he gave to intuition, but he held that Yogācāra alone had developed a thorough method. This enabled it to reach the highest degree of reality through direct perception (*xianliang* 現量). Therefore, Liang strove to establish Buddhism as a philosophical science—a science that met the criteria of the West, yet went even further, in the direction of a complete science encompassing both matter and mind.

1.3 Buddhism as Anti-Philosophy

While Buddhism was, for Liang, true philosophy, he also made philosophy relative by stressing that religious experiences were central to the human experience overall: "What we call philosophy is thought systematized into a doctrine. What we call religion is thought, with a special attitude, leading to a certain behaviour."[16] Although religion aimed at a transcendental reality, religion as a practice was more anchored in the present world than philosophy was.

As with philosophy, Liang adopted the Western concept of religion but radically transformed it. Instead of building upon the notion of God's existence or the experience of the divine, Liang defined religion from a Buddhist perspective: as a radical negation of the present world. This meant two things. First, Buddhism, as a religion, went further than philosophy. It reached a non-conceptual reality, beyond the dichotomy of the thinking subject and the object of thought. Second, in its method, Buddhism used a thorough-going dialectic: reason was systematically used to deny ultimate reality to any element of experience. In the end, even reason itself was negated, leading Liang to state that "Buddhist philosophy is the exhaustion of philosophy."[17] In another very concise formulation, he described the Buddhist method as "canceling understanding through understanding" (*yi lijie quxiao lijie* 以理解取消理解).[18] Whereas ordinary philosophy developed positive knowledge about reality, Buddhism was an anti-philosophy. It destroyed philosophy itself and sought after a wisdom that was beyond both Western rationality and Confucian moral intuition.[19] The mind could access ultimate reality only when reason had systematically eliminated all the conceptual attachments it had created in the first place. The mind could then fuse with the ultimate reality, without any distinction between the inner and outer worlds. Within the mind, there would no longer be any self-reflection, nor would there be space for self-awareness. Instead, there would be only pure, spontaneous activity.

Therefore, Liang saw Buddhist philosophy as the death of philosophy: "By making Buddhism an object of study and research, it loses its meaning. The original intention of Buddhism was not to practice philosophy; [it] in fact meant the death of philosophy."[20] Indeed, Indians had adopted the necessary attitude for understanding ontological reality,[21] but their understanding did not remain at the intellectual level. By destroying the conceptual constructions of the mind regarding the absolute, Indians were finally able to succeed in uniting with it.

1.4 Philosophy and Practice

Liang's culturalist approach to philosophy allowed him to give an important role to different methods of self-cultivation: religion in the West, practical morality and self-cultivation in China, and meditation in India. In the case of India, Liang affirmed the importance of religion: "India has no individual philosophers, but only religious schools."[22] Indeed, a philosophy reflected only the thinking of one individual, sometimes with a limited influence. Only religion could transform individuals and society in concrete ways. Liang started from questions encountered in the cultural realm, clarified them through the mediation of philosophical enquiry, and then, in the third stage, returned to the issues of culture and practice, discussing their general orientation and concrete expressions. In this scheme, philosophy worked mostly as a tool.

Liang's cultural philosophy could be very fruitful. Not only did he integrate praxis into the philosophical field, but he also attempted to understand the philosophies of each tradition at their roots. Liang thus judged particular philosophies in terms of their degree of connection to culture. This approach led him to consider Western philosophy to be mostly an intellectual activity which could produce efficient results in the empirical world but which was alienated from the question of meaning. Liang's judgment was severe:

> Philosophies of life in the West do not deserve the name philosophy. From ancient times up to now, almost all of them have the same style. What style? In short, the emphasis is on the intellect. Either the focus is on efficiency, and then it is a matter of intellectual computing; or the focus is on knowledge, and then it is a matter of intellectual enterprise; or else the focus is on the absolute, and even then, it is a problem of rationality.[23]

Here, Liang departed from his own definition of philosophy as science, given above. He attempted to expand philosophy's scope, holding that Indian philosophy was not only an intellectual activity but a true mode of life. In regards to Confucianism, Liang also understood it not as a theory but as grounded in concrete methods of self-cultivation. He always refused to consider his thinking a purely theoretical activity that was limited to the academic arena. For him, ultimate reality could not be grasped by philosophical reason. The mistake of modern scholars was to try to solve, through philosophy, questions that were outside its scope. Therefore, Liang invited them to look in the direction of a practice that was necessary, individual, and communitarian.[24]

As suggested above, Liang understood very clearly that real competition did not occur between philosophical systems. Among philosophers, there was no real need to oppose one another in order to establish oneself. In fact, the real conflict occurred between groups competing for members.[25] This was one of the reasons Liang left Peking University and became involved in rural reconstruction in the twenties and thirties. His experience with academia had allowed him to clarify his ideas, but he realized that institutions of higher learning were limited when it came to changing people and society. His shift to more direct forms of engagement reveals that Liang felt quite constrained within the narrow limits of academia, and that he considered educating the peasant masses to be more important, and effective, than the education of elites.

1.5 Liang's Crypto-Buddhism

Throughout his life, Liang advocated the revival of Confucianism for our present age. Indeed, he has been considered the forerunner of New Confucianism and has famously been called the "last Confucian."[26] However, Liang maintained a conviction that Confucianism could not address the ultimate questions of meaning for either the individual or for the world. The complex relationship Liang had with Buddhism has been understood only recently by the academic community, primarily after the publication of the interviews Liang gave in his later years, in which he revealed he had remained a Buddhist throughout his life.[27] The academic community's misperception of Liang's true identity is understandable. Believing that humanity was not yet ready to enter into the Buddhist cultural period, Liang promoted Confucian morality as a necessary step, since in fostering self-reflection and personal cultivation it prepared the ground for eventual Buddhist enlightenment. Considering his philosophical approach to solving problems, we may surmise that Liang's silence concerning his Buddhist faith was due to his hope that people would concentrate on the issues they were presently facing, without being distracted by issues with which they were not yet ready to deal.

From this perspective, the intellectual itinerary of this crypto-Buddhist becomes quite clear. During his twenties, Liang turned to Buddhism as a way of resolving existential issues, such as the question of suffering and death. At that time, he adopted the conviction that he should engage in cultivation and aim eventually "to leave this world" (*chushi* 出世). Later on, he felt the need to find a more rational foundation

for his Buddhist faith. He proceeded to adopt Yogācāra, which provided him with a rational discourse that, pushed to its extreme conclusions, was self-negating and opened into the extra-rational realm of Buddhahood. Liang articulated his Confucian social engagement with his Buddhist faith. Confucianism and Buddhism constituted two complementary poles for Liang: Buddhism reminded Confucianism that its worldly engagement should lead to transcendence, and Confucianism reminded Buddhism that true transcendence could only be obtained through an active engagement with the world.

Although Liang himself believed in Buddhism, he opposed reviving it in the culture and society of China, since he did not consider the time ripe for addressing ultimate questions. He rejected the concept of "Buddhism for human life" with which Taixu had attempted to establish a modern form of Buddhism.[28] Taixu and his followers took issue with Liang on this precise question—Buddhism's relevance as a social and cultural force. In doing so, they represented and defended the interests of the *sangha*. But they also displayed a sectarianism that was contrary to the spirit of Buddhism. Indeed, from the perspective of Buddhist teachings, anything that helped people alleviate their suffering could be called "Buddhist." Liang's promotion of Confucianism was a departure from Buddhist orthopraxis, but Buddhists could still consider it a legitimate form of "skilful means" (*upāya*; *fangbian* 方便).

In concluding this section on Liang, I should say that he held an ambiguous position regarding Buddhism as philosophy. He understood Yogācāra as the highest form of rationality, and yet he pointed to the limitations of philosophical discourse. Liang's stance can be seen as both a cultural and an intellectual form of resistance. It was cultural resistance in the sense that he attempted to reshape the concept of philosophy, inherited from the West, into something more congenial to the Chinese. This cultural resistance was itself supported by an intellectual resistance. First, he employed reason practically, making it serve the Buddhist liberation project. Second, he claimed that rational discourse could not encompass the supra-mundane reality envisioned by Buddhism. These two characteristics of Buddhism—its practicality and its extra-rationality (or even anti-rationality)—show the *aporia* of a "Buddhist philosophy." By understanding Buddhism as *the* true religion, Liang displaced philosophy from the central position it was supposed to occupy. Whereas Hu Shi and Feng Youlan contributed to the establishment of philosophy as the centre of human experience, Liang was critical of this notion of philosophy, as

was Fu Sinian (shown by Carine Defoort in this volume). Let us now turn to Xiong Shili, who followed Liang's lead in developing an academic discourse on Buddhism, but in a very different way.

2. Xiong Shili: Buddhist Philosophy in the Service of Confucian Metaphysics

2.1 The Life of an Independent Thinker

Early in their careers, Xiong Shili and Liang Shuming were both politically active. However, by the time they met in the summer of 1919, both were distressed by the ongoing political chaos and had already turned to Buddhism.[29] It was at that time that Liang introduced Xiong to Ouyang Jingwu, for the purpose of studying Yogācāra at the Institute of Inner Learning in Nanjing. Xiong stayed there for two years. In 1922, Liang invited Xiong to join him at Peking University. There, Liang regularly met with a group of teachers and students to read and discuss Chinese Classics. After *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* became a bestseller, Liang gained quite a number of followers who were reacting against the radicalism of the New Culture Movement. Xiong was one of them. He was probably deeply influenced by Liang's shift from Buddhism to Confucianism, although he may not have fully understood that this did not represent the complete denial of Buddhism. Also, through the influence of Liang, Xiong started to read works by Western philosophers, such as Bergson, in Chinese translation. At some point, Liang and Xiong lodged together in the same house. The university setting played an important role for Xiong, as it had for Liang. Constantly exposed to new ideas, Xiong could gain intellectual independence from Buddhism and develop his own ways of thinking.

In 1924, when Liang decided to undertake a rural reconstruction project in Shandong, he invited Xiong to accompany him. After a few months, however, Xiong gave up and returned to his teaching position. From there, the two followed different paths: whereas Liang became a cultural and social activist engaged in rural reconstruction, Xiong was engaged in a metaphysical construction project at Peking University. After the Japanese invasion and until 1949, Xiong and Liang were both in Sichuan, but they had substantial contact with each other only between 1950 and 1954. At that time, both were staying in Beijing, and they had

many discussions. Xiong always made sure that Liang was the first to read his manuscripts.[30] After 1954, Xiong moved to Shanghai and stayed in his son's house. When the Cultural Revolution broke out in 1966, he wrote letters to political leaders denouncing it.[31] He died in 1968. In the words of Ng Yu-kwan, "not only did Xiong have an existential understanding of the truth, but also he was able to put into practice the Confucian moral principles and values of neither fearing nor submitting to political power."[32] Because of this, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 called Xiong a "true man" (*zhenren* 真人).[33]

2.2 The Use of Buddhism for Confucian Metaphysics

Xiong Shili was foremost a metaphysician, searching for the "fundamental state" (*benti* 本體) of cosmic reality.[34] Only when this state had been secured would it be possible to know the foundation of human, moral, social, and political life, and finally the foundation of human knowledge. Xiong therefore aimed at constructing a philosophical system. He used the conceptual tools of Yogācāra for this project, specifically its analysis of the mind and the concept of instantaneous transformation. Yet, as with Liang, his analysis depended more on a Chinese interpretation of Yogācāra than on genuine Indian Yogācāra. Deeply influenced by the *Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixinlun* 大乘起信論) and the Flower Garland school (*Huayan zong* 華嚴宗), Xiong moved in the direction of ontology. He stood with Chinese Buddhism on the side of the "emptiness school" (*Kong zong* 空宗; Madhyamaka) and its fundamental ontology, against the "*dharma*-character school" (*Faxiang zong* 法相宗), which deconstructs reality and resists building an ontology. Xiong constantly referred to the Buddhist metaphor of the sea water and waves, expressing the underlying ontological relationship between mental acts and the original mind.

Whereas Yogācāra posits the mind to be an illusion that must be transcended, Xiong held that the mind was the ultimate reality. Indeed, for Yogācāra, consciousness was the only way to liberation. At the same time, however, it was also the final obstacle and illusion to be overcome, since consciousness tended to strengthen belief in both the existence of the world and the subject. Xiong completely overturned Yogācāra's analysis: the subject and the mind, as flows of consciousness, were no longer problems. They instead became invested with the highest level of reality. Therefore, while Yogācāra understood the mind to be "nothing but

consciousness," Xiong reinterpreted it as a "special consciousness." For the Buddhist dialectic of transcendence and immanence, Xiong substituted a monistic trans-consciousness.

Xiong fully embraced the Neo-Confucian concept of an original mind present in the cosmos, as developed by the Lu-Wang school of the mind. He maintained the unity of fundamental state (*ti* 體) and function (*yong* 用), which he clearly identifies with principle (*li* 理) and material force (*qi* 氣). Xiong also borrowed the ideas of "unceasing creativity" (*shengsheng buxi* 生生不息) and "closing and opening" (*xi pi* 翕闢) from the *Yijing* 易經. These ideas gave his Neo-Confucian thought a very dynamic dimension.[35]

In opposition to the scientific and materialist thought of the West, Xiong felt that philosophy should be based not on the investigation of the external world, but rather on the inner knowledge of the "fundamental state." Like Liang, Xiong thought that Buddhism had in place the appropriate elements of an epistemology that led to ontology. But unlike him, Xiong held Buddhist ontology to be very partial and flawed. For Xiong, the "fundamental state" could not be empty since it permeated the whole universe. Therefore, while Buddhism had a workable epistemology, it fell short of "seeing the fundamental state" (*jianti* 見體). In his masterwork, *New Yogācāra* (*Xin weishi lun,* 1932), Xiong affirmed his ontological premise:

> The purpose of epistemological enquiry is to help us bear witness to the fundamental state. If we are determined to not recognize that there is a fundamental state, and spend all of our energy working through epistemology, this kind of enquiry can [yield] no result. How can this not be said to have departed from the philosophical position?[36]

Thus, for Xiong, philosophy corresponded to the inner quest of the mind for a fundamental ontology. Philosophy was ontology, but, as Xiaoqing Diana Lin rightly points out in her contribution to this volume, Xiong's ontology was very different from classical Western philosophy, since it was not based on the notion of a static essence. In the first edition of *New Yogācāra*, Xiong contrasted scientific rationality with the intuition gained from cultivation, but he later recognized that both were in fact needed: "As a rule, philosophy is a discipline in which reason and cultivation are intimately connected."[37] Yet, Xiong would still maintain that intuition alone allowed for "seeing the fundamental state."

2.3 From Traditional Buddhism to Buddhist Philosophy

When Cai Yuanpei wrote the preface for Xiong's *New Yogācāra*, he underlined the novelty of an approach emancipated from the Buddhist institution:

> When the gentlemen at the China Institute for Inner Learning edit and expound the texts, they do not dare to do so with a critical approach. In his *New Yogācāra*, Xiong Shili has now entirely discarded the set pattern of religious followers and, as a philosopher, he has brought new explanations. Xiong is not a Buddhist but proclaims himself a Confucian. To rely entirely on Buddhist commentaries amounts to a pure religious attitude. In fact, although the religious dimension of the sutras is quite strong, their philosophical dimension is not insignificant. All religions rely on the philosophical thinking of their founder. Judaism, Christianity, and other religions have philosophical principles. Only Buddhism considers itself more profound. What one sees depends on one's viewpoint, the reader examining from his standpoint. For two thousand years, Buddhism has been separated from education. It does not use a philosophical method of analysis and investigation, but it deals with its questions, attempting to resolve them by itself. The philosophical investigation of Buddhism starts now, with Xiong Shili's *New Yogācāra*.[38]

Cai Yuanpei here announced the birth of Buddhist philosophy in China; a rational discourse on Buddhism which critically evaluated the Buddhist teachings and even corrected them. He noted that Judaism and Christianity were able to submit their teachings to philosophical enquiry, but Buddhism lagged behind. Cai considered philosophy to have presented Buddhism with a chance to develop a rational discourse that was adapted to the modern age. Much later, Wing-tsit Chan evaluated Xiong's contribution along the same lines: "He [Xiong] has subjected Buddhism to lengthy, careful, and profound criticism. In fact, he is the first one in Chinese philosophy to do so."[39] More recently, the Taiwanese philosopher Lin Anwu 林安梧 considered Xiong to have pushed forward, more than anyone before him, the systematization and deepening of Chinese philosophy.[40]

The challenge Xiong brought to Buddhism was intellectual but it was also institutional. Buddhist discourse in the university setting was subjected to academic procedures quite different from the ones in Buddhist monasteries or Buddhist theological institutes. In the pluralistic milieu of the university, Buddhist discourse became autonomous from

religious orthodoxy and was used as a resource for constructing philosophical discourses completely detached from Buddhism's initial aim.

We thus see two discourses begin to compete with each other. I am referring here to the lengthy dispute, which lasted more than twenty years, between Xiong and Buddhist believers. In *New Yogācāra*, Xiong launched a frontal attack on Buddhist dualisms: the belief in reincarnation and *nirvāna*, and the attitudes of detachment and escapism from the world. Fundamentally, Xiong's rejection of Buddhism was grounded at the intellectual level, since he considered Buddhist philosophy to be conceptually flawed. However, during the controversy with his former Buddhist master and fellows, Xiong's critiques came to be more and more virulent. He eventually considered reincarnation to be a superstition that had deceived ignorant people.[41]

On the other side, Buddhist intellectuals such as Ouyang Jingwu, Taixu, Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896–1989), and Yinshun 印順 (1906–2005) could easily claim that Xiong had distorted Buddhism's original meaning and had committed gross mistakes from the point of view of Buddhist orthodoxy.[42] For example, Xiong misunderstood Yogācāra along the lines of a fundamental ontology.[43] His ontological thinking also led him to misunderstand Madhyamaka. In addition, Xiong wrongly believed that Mādhyamika advocated "eliminating phenomena in order to reach the ontological substance of emptiness" (*poxiang xianxing* 破相顯性), while this school, in fact, rejects separating ontological reality from phenomena.[44] Clearly, Xiong came to believe that the monistic conception of the "unity of the fundamental state with the function" (*tiyongbuer* 體用不二) was an idea exclusive to Confucianism. He thus came to judge Western philosophy and Buddhism as crude dualisms.

It is important to recognize that the two Buddhist discourses were not on the same level. Both Xiong and the Buddhist intellectuals failed to notice this, which may explain the virulence and bitterness of the dispute. In fact, Xiong's discourse should be recognized as a philosophical hermeneutic of Buddhism. Such a stance is perfectly legitimate. His *New Yogācāra* was a philosophical elaboration which used elements of Buddhist epistemology and served the larger project of developing a Confucian ontology. Buddhist intellectuals could perhaps have accepted and welcomed this as a chance to discuss critically their traditional teachings. Xiong's philosophical system had important implications for Buddhism—it provided intellectual stimulus, an opportunity for a rational cleansing of their discourse, and an open hermeneutics beyond

strict religious boundaries. Unfortunately, as was the case with Liang, Buddhist intellectuals did not make a sufficient effort to engage with Xiong's philosophical insight. Institutional Buddhism was too sectarian to value his philosophy positively, as a form of *upāya*.

A dogmatic attitude also prevailed on Xiong's side. He considered his own philosophy to be the only correct one, and dismissed some Buddhist tenets as erroneous. Although he was a creative thinker with penetrating insights, Xiong had a superficial understanding of the history of Buddhism. While he was still critical of Buddhism after 1949, by then it was mostly for political reasons.[45] Indeed, Xiong's dogmatism was later inherited by his disciple, Mou Zongsan. On both sides, a lack of recognition of the specificity of different discourses prevented a mutual enrichment.

2.4 A Road from Ontology to Existence?

Due to his long acquaintance with Xiong, Liang Shuming was quite familiar with his work. In the early sixties, Liang made a special effort to read systematically Xiong's works, and then wrote a lengthy report.[46] Liang basically accused Xiong of westernizing Chinese philosophy. This accusation may come as a surprise, since Xiong carefully avoided using Western concepts and mostly drew from Buddhist or Chinese traditions. For example, he used the term "profound studies" (*xuanxue* 玄學) instead of "philosophy" (*zhexue* 哲學). In fact, Liang meant that Xiong's project was similar to Western philosophy because it established an ontology out of a theoretical discourse. However, for Liang, the true foundation could only be known from practical experience; it was revealed in human experience in an intuitive way, rather than an intellectual one.[47]

Indeed, Xiong may have recognized the fact that Yogācāra was not an epistemological construction in the service of an ontology. Like Liang, Xiong would have agreed that Yogācāra epistemology was intimately connected to the concrete project of liberation. Also, Xiong clearly expressed that his ultimate aim was not intellectual in the narrow sense of the word; as Xiong himself said: "My learning begins with conceptual speculation and ends with existential identification. If learning does not ascend towards existential identification, it is in the end completely isolated from the truth."[48] Accordingly, in the words of Du Weiming, only an enlightened mind could return to its original state, but then had to go back to "authentic existence."[49]

Therefore, the divergence between Xiong and Liang was not so much about the existential dimension of this authentic existence. The cutting edge of Liang's critique was that Xiong committed the mistake of detaching intellectual enquiry from practice. His excessive intellectualization was cut off from personal practice. For Liang, the intellectual stage and the practical stage were never to be separated, as was the case in Xiong's philosophy. This was how Liang understood Yogācāra: as rooted in the meditative practice of yoga.[50] In other words, for Liang, there could be no path from a theoretical ontology to authentic practice. On the contrary, theoretical analysis should never leave the milieu of concrete engagement with society: one should start with questions arising out of practice and use theoretical tools to deepen one's understanding of existence. From this perspective, Liang considered Xiong's metaphysical system to be merely "empty talk."[51]

Liang's critique of Xiong helps us to understand better the pitfall into which many philosophers have stumbled: they completely detach Yogācāra from its overall project of individual, and social, liberation. Although philosophical research may require, to a certain degree, the abstraction of oneself from direct, worldly action and the mobilization of one's intellectual resources, the real place for intellectual elaboration could not be the university setting, which was cut off from social and political life. Liang criticized Xiong for situating the transcendental mind in a very rationalistic system, far away from practical life and the social structure (community and rituals) that could support it.

In this second section, we have considered Xiong's attempt to reconstruct a Confucian metaphysics as a reaction to the pressure exerted by modern Western philosophy. Like many intellectuals in the twentieth century, Xiong first went back and forth between different traditions, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Western thought. Then, he creatively built a new Confucian system, drawing from other intellectual traditions. He built a philosophical monism, an encompassing and exclusive system, around the concept of a "fundamental state," not unlike Hegel's absolute spirit. However, Xiong's discourse fell into the same traps as many other metaphysical discourses in the West and in China, which often resulted in solipsism and an inability to enter into a true dialogue with the human sciences, as Liang suggested. Having considered the culturalist approach of Liang Shuming and the metaphysical approach of Xiong, we shall now discuss a representative of the historical approach: Tang Yongtong.

3. Tang Yongtong: A History of Buddhist Philosophy in the Service of Academic Life

3.1 A Professional Academic

As we saw above, Liang Shuming developed an academic discourse in which Buddhism played a fundamental role. Although Liang made an unconventional use of Buddhism, he always remained within the bounds of the basic project of Buddhist liberation. For Xiong Shili, in contrast, Buddhism was a philosophical tool that could be detached from its original purpose and incorporated into his Confucian metaphysics. In the case of Tang Yongtong—the third Chinese intellectual to be considered here, Buddhism was for the most part approached as an historical artefact. Tang studied Buddhism using methods of historical and textual criticism that he had learned mostly from the West. While Liang was a crypto-Buddhist and Xiong an opponent of Buddhism, Tang attempted to maintain (with some difficulty, as we will see) the neutral attitude of a scholar.

Tang Yongtong attended high school in Beijing with Liang Shuming, and together they read about Indian philosophy and the Buddhist sutras. After graduating from Tsinghua University in 1917, Tang went to America. Besides knowing Chinese, Japanese, and English, once in the United States he learned Sanskrit and Pali. In 1922, Tang received his master's degree in philosophy from Harvard University. On his return to China, he began an academic career that lasted four decades. He was appointed to the Philosophy Department of South-East University (Dongnan daxue 東南大學), in Nanjing. It was then that he attended classes with Xiong Shili at the newly opened Institute of Inner Learning, where Ouyang Jingwu was lecturing on Yogācāra. The next year, Ouyang invited Tang to give classes on Pali and on the *Commentary on the Sāzkhya Verses* (*Jin qishi lun* 金七十論). In the first issue of the Institute of Inner Learning's journal, Tang published an article entitled "Heterodox Teachings at the Time of the Buddha" (*Shijia shidai zhi waidao* 釋迦時代之外道). Tang also collaborated with friends in launching the culturally conservative journal *Critical Review* (*Xueheng* 學衡). In 1932, the year in which Xiong Shili published his *New Yogācāra*, Tang became a professor in the Philosophy Department at Peking University. Following Liang Shuming and Xiong Shili, Tang Yongtong took his turn at teaching Yogācāra and also lectured on Western rationalism and empiricism.

In April 1938, following the Japanese invasion, Tang was appointed chair of the Philosophy, Psychology, and Education Department of the National South-western Associated University in Sichuan. In 1947, he was named as a researcher at the Academia Sinica and went to the United States to give a series of lectures at the University of California. After his return to Beijing in 1948, confronted with the imminent takeover of the capital by the communists, he refused to leave and go to Taiwan, as Hu Shi invited him to do. Tang witnessed the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. He later became involved in administration, serving as vice-president of Peking University. In addition, Tang was a member of the Standing Committee of the first, second, and third National People's Congresses.

His main work was *A History of Buddhism from the Han and Wei Dynasties to the Northern and Southern Dynasties* (*Han-Wei Liang-Jin Nanbeichao Fojiaoshi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史), a book he finished in 1930 but revised four times before its publication in 1938. His other works include *A Draft History of Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties* (*Sui-Tang Fojiaoshi gao* 隋唐佛教史稿, 1929) and *A Short History of Indian Philosophy* (*Yindu zhexueshi lue* 印度哲學史略, 1945).

3.2 Buddhist Studies from the Perspective of Religious Faith and Philosophical Enquiry

Tang was primarily an historian of Chinese Buddhism. He approached his research in a scientific way, through historical and textual criticism. His well-rounded training in the humanities, including literature, philosophy, and languages, allowed him to avoid narrow specialization and superficial understanding. In the postscript to *A History of Buddhism from the Han and Wei Dynasties to the Northern and Southern Dynasties*, he wrote: "Buddhism is both a religion and a philosophy."[52] Regarding religion, Tang held that:

> The religious feeling lies deep inside the human heart. Something groundless historically often becomes a symbol, unleashing powerful influences. [One] cannot reach the truth only by searching for historical evidence, without a silent sympathy.[53]

Tang reacted here against the tendency of modern historians to put aside religious symbols and legends. These historians limited their research to proven historical facts and were therefore unable to grasp the inner spirit

of the object of their study. They considered faith to be irrational and irrelevant. Such a purely external approach was not conducive to gaining a thorough understanding, since religious beliefs were indeed capable of transforming and making history. Tang sought to gain a deeper understanding of Buddhism by taking a broad perspective, regarding religion as a cultural movement that involved social practices and was grounded in faith. In order to achieve this, Tang used a wide range of documents in his Buddhist studies.

Besides understanding the faith of Buddhists, Tang attempted to approach his studies from a more universal position based in philosophy. In the same postscript, he continued to remark that:

> Philosophical subtlety allows one to penetrate reality. Ancient wisdom brings simplicity. Very often, words seem remote, but an example, even a contemporary one, allows one to see a profound and far-reaching meaning. Therefore, only using textual criticism, without the experience of the heart and mind, leads to inadequate results.[54]

For Tang, historical research could not only be concerned with facts and figures. It instead had to address questions of meaning and significance that lay beyond Buddhism's concrete cultural and historical expressions. Like Liang Shuming, Tang advocated the use of comparative philosophy. But whereas Liang mostly expounded on the differences between cultures, Tang was more interested in showing the commonalities Buddhism shared with both Chinese and Western thought. Xiaoqing Lin states: "These comparisons led Tang to conclude that there was a universal human quest to reconcile the finite self and the infinite universe, a tendency that governed all human societies across history."[55] While Tang's postscript had been included in the first edition of the book in 1938, it had disappeared by the 1955 edition. Such a sympathetic attitude toward religion was not encouraged at that time. We shall return below to the question of politics.[56]

3.3 The Indian Roots of Buddhism

Like Liang Shuming, but unlike Xiong Shili, Tang Yongtong attempted to understand the historical roots of Buddhism. It was thus necessary for him to go beyond Chinese Buddhism and understand how Buddhism in general had evolved from its roots as an unorthodox Indian school. Previously, the only Chinese-language information on the Indian schools

could be found in the Tripitaka. This knowledge was very partial and sectarian. Only in the twentieth century, stimulated by Western and Japanese scholarship, did Chinese Buddhist scholars start to do academic research on the Indian origins of Buddhism.

Liang Shuming offered a class on Indian philosophy at Peking University in 1917. The corresponding book was published in 1919 as *An Outline of Indian Philosophy*. A corrected and augmented version appeared in 1922.[57] The book is structured according to the categories of modern Western philosophy; for example, the second chapter discusses ontology (*bentilun* 本體論) and the third chapter epistemology (*renshilun* 認識論). Tang Yongtong taught the same class again in 1929, but his notes were published only in 1945 as *A Short History of Indian Philosophy*. Tang had an advantage over Liang since he knew Sanskrit and Pali. In contrast to Liang, Tang avoided using philosophical concepts from the West. In the preface, he stated that "every time a Western category is used, it is a wrong comparison, which makes things more confused and the truth more distorted."[58] As we have seen, Tang was in favour of comparative philosophy but not of analyzing Buddhism through Western concepts.

Like Liang, Tang considered Indian thought to be a true philosophical tradition. For Tang, while this had initially been dominated by a polytheistic religion, it did not evolve into monotheism as in Egypt or Israel. Instead, it gave rise to a philosophical enquiry about the origin of the cosmos.[59] Tang found in the *Vedas* a philosophical questioning of traditional religion. Yet this philosophical enquiry was in service of another aim: religious liberation from the mundane world.

3.4 Buddhism and Chinese Culture

At a time when Chinese culture was being subjected to foreign influences, Tang Yongtong reflected on the link between it and Buddhism. He recognized that this foreign religion had transformed Chinese culture, "but not yet to the point of a total and radical change."[60] Tang adopted Hu Shi's basic position concerning the indigenization of Buddhism in China.[61] Through different examples, Tang showed that Buddhist teachings had been influenced by the Chinese cultural environment and had thus been modified, becoming something that was genuinely Chinese.

Tang's interest in Chinese culture led him to focus on the history of Chinese Buddhism. Later on, he became interested in the cultural interaction between Chinese Buddhism and the "dark learning" (*xuanxue* 玄學),

a metaphysical school of the Wei and Jin dynasties. According to Tang, dark learning developed its metaphysics mostly through Taoist concepts, independent of Buddhist influence. The two systems of thought were not connected at the theoretical level. However, Tang saw mutual influences at work in a later stage. On one hand, the metaphysics of dark learning prepared the ground for Buddhism, so the latter became acceptable to the Chinese. On the other, Chinese Buddhism pushed the questions addressed by dark learning further. Tang concluded that Buddhism could be considered a part of dark learning: "At that time, Buddhist terminology mostly consisted of words that had been borrowed from the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*. Buddhism was therefore simply homologous with dark learning."[62]

This conclusion gave the higher ground to the Chinese tradition, articulating a process in which Chinese culture had selected a foreign intellectual resource, here Buddhism, to advance its own intellectual agenda. Unlike the cultural conservatives who affirmed the superiority of Chinese culture, however, Tang can be considered a "cultural liberal" who recognized the positive contribution foreign cultures had made, while stressing the specificity of Chinese tradition.[63] Yet, as we shall see, his position was not completely devoid of nationalistic tendencies.

3.5 The Chinese and Japanese Rivalry in Buddhist Studies

When Chinese scholars started their academic investigations of Buddhism at the beginning of the twentieth century, they lagged far behind their Japanese, European, and American counterparts. Chinese scholars who could read studies in Western and Japanese languages had a great advantage over colleagues who could read only Chinese. At the same time, Buddhist studies became the site of a fierce rivalry between China, the West, and Japan. Here, it will suffice to mention the competition between English, French, Japanese, and Chinese researchers to secure, translate, and interpret the Dunhuang 敦煌 materials. The repercussions of this battle can be felt even today.[64]

Buddhist studies became a question of national pride for Chinese scholars. This was especially true with regard to Japan. Yet many Chinese Buddhist scholars had to deal with Japanese Buddhist research. In 1959, during the Anti-Rightist Movement (*fanyoupai yundong* 反右派運動) and some fifteen years after the publication of *A Short History of Indian Philosophy*, Tang Yongtong made an embarrassing confession: his book

was, in fact, a mere compilation of the "books of Western and Oriental bourgeois scholars."[65] Tang gave a list of his sources in English: Surendranath Dasgupta (1887–1952), Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975), Augustus Hoernle (1841–1918), the *Sacred Books of the East* edited by Max Müller (1823–1900), and the English translations of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. However, who were the "Oriental bourgeois scholars"? Although not explicitly named, they would almost certainly have included Japanese academics. However, Tang did not feel comfortable writing the names of these Japanese researchers, whose scholarship he had previously used without providing any explicit references.

In fact, we find in Tang, as in other Buddhist scholars, a double strategy toward Japanese scholarship. When Tang found something sound in Japanese Buddhist studies, he used it, but without necessarily mentioning its source. However, whenever he found mistakes, he would criticize his Japanese counterparts. In the thirties, Tang wrote an article criticizing and rejecting a number of leading Japanese scholars.[66] We have the testimony of Tang Yijie 湯一介, Tang's son, concerning the motivation behind Tang's Buddhist studies:

> Tang Yongtong spent so much energy researching this question while he was ill. One reason was that he wanted to write off the widespread academic influence of some incorrect conceptions held by Japanese scholars, to reform [things] thoroughly, and to return to the original historical truth.[67]

It is therefore apparent that Tang did not pursue his Buddhist studies from a purely academic standpoint, in which he sought solely after the "original historical truth." In part, his research became a way for him to oppose Japanese aggression and demonstrate his patriotism to others, even after the end of the war. This nationalistic agenda cannot be completely ignored when reading Tang's Buddhist studies.

3.6 Academic Freedom Endangered and the End of Academic Life

It seems that Tang's decision to remain in Beijing in 1949 was due to his attachment to Peking University. In 1945, he had organized the return of the school from Kunming to Beijing. In 1949, he probably thought that academic freedom would continue under the new regime. Tang also felt that the Party had presented the country with a unique opportunity, and his patriotism therefore led him to stay. After the onset of Communist rule, there was a short period of collaboration and trust between

intellectuals and the Party. Many intellectuals were impressed with the Party's early results and enthusiastic about the prospect of building a new country. From the Party's perspective, there was the need to gain intellectual legitimacy after the military victory.

However, Tang Yongtong soon became entangled in the Party's efforts to gain ideological control of the university. After Hu Shi resigned from his position as chancellor in December 1948, Tang's fellow professors elected him, through a democratic process, Chairman of the Administrative Committee (*Xiaowu weiyuanhui zhuxi* 校務委員會主席) in May 1949. In the absence of a formal chancellor, Tang therefore became the acting president of the university. In 1951, in order to strengthen its ideological control, the new regime installed Ma Yinchu 馬寅初 (1882–1982) as the new president. When Ma came to Peking University, Tang refused to meet with him. Nevertheless, he was later forced to work with him and to accept the position of vice-president.[68] Tang's position was a pure façade. He had no real power and could not express his own views. Starting with the "thought reform" (*sixiang gaizao* 思想改造) campaign of 1951, Peking University, like other universities, was progressively turned into an institute of ideology. This was a great departure from the academic freedom Tang had enjoyed previously while studying at Tsinghua and Harvard, or while teaching at Peking University in the thirties.

As we have seen above, Tang had, at times, placed his scholarship in the service of his nationalist interests, such as when he opposed the dominance of Japanese scholarship. With the party requesting proof of intellectual allegiance, Tang, like many intellectuals in the university, lost his independence of thought. When the campaign against Hu Shi started in 1954, Tang wrote some speeches against his former chancellor. He could not resist the mental pressure and had a cerebral haemorrhage. In 1957, Tang gave speeches criticizing Xiang Da 向達 (1900–1966), a fellow professor from the history department.[69] Tang also wrote a postscript to the 1959 reprint of *A Short History of Indian Philosophy*, in which he admitted that his previous research had been completely flawed by "bourgeois idealism." He stated that he should rewrite all of his past research from the perspective of Marxist-Leninist historical materialism.[70] By this point, the life had gone out of Tang, both physically and intellectually.

The ideological control that was exerted over Tang Yongtong can be contrasted with the situations of Liang Shuming and Xiong Shili. Because

they succeeded in maintaining some independence from academic institutions and from the state machine, they could continue as independent thinkers, developing their own personal philosophy at the margins of the totalitarian regime. Both Liang and Xiong produced creative and independent works, such as Xiong's *Yuanru* 原儒 [An enquiry on Confucianism] (1956) and Liang's *Renxin yu rensheng* 人心與人生 [Human mind and human life] (1984). In contrast, Tang's career was linked with the academic institution. When this was annexed by national ideology, as had also occurred in Japan, Germany, and the Soviet Union, the result was the death of any true research or scholarship. Reflecting on this kind of extreme situation, one can ponder the cost of serving at academic institutions that bow to state ideology. The illusion that one could both pursue pure academic knowledge and neglect the independent political engagement that could guarantee true intellectual freedom, came to be an illusion for which many academics, including Tang, would pay a very high price.

Tang's intellectual collapse was also a personal one. There is nothing more telling that the short dialogue he had with Mao during the 1963 May Day celebrations at Tian'anmen Square. Mao apparently told him: "Your health is getting better. I have read your articles. But if you do not feel well, you can write short essays; this is all right." According to Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 (1916–2009), then a student of Xiong, Tang was very excited that day, saying that he should dedicate his knowledge to the people even further.[71] If Ren Jiyu's description is accurate, this story tells us a lot about the loss of Tang's ability to think independently.

4. Conclusion

Above, we have considered three representatives of academic Buddhism from the first half of the twentieth century. Liang, Xiong, and Tang taught Buddhist philosophy at universities, yet they spoke from different perspectives. At that time, Buddhist philosophy was recognized as a branch of Indian philosophy and was distinguished from both Western and Chinese philosophy. These terms define Buddhism as a foreign tradition. This was quite a departure from the traditional studies of Chinese Buddhism that had been practised in monasteries and had focused on Chinese texts. When Buddhist studies started in the philosophy departments of China, scholars attempted to go back to the Indian roots of Buddhism. However, because resources were scarce and because of a

patriotic focus on national studies, Buddhist studies came to be dominated by the patterns of thought, and by the schools, of Chinese Buddhism.

Liang Shuming was representative of this initial effort to distinguish Buddhist philosophy from Chinese philosophy. From the perspective of his cultural philosophy, he established a clear division between Chinese, Indian, and Western philosophies. Yet, Liang was not interested in academic life for its own sake, but rather in building a cultural and existential philosophy that could help societies and individuals to free themselves. He became, quite by chance, a Buddhist scholar for the relatively short period of eight years. He developed a conceptualization of philosophy that was based on concrete forms of cultural life, as an alternative to rationalistic and abstract forms of philosophy. Buddhism was a practical answer to the contingencies imposed by life and human reason. Logically, Liang decided to leave the academic institution, and engage himself in education and social reconstruction.

Xiong Shili used Buddhism as a conceptual tool with which to build a Confucian system—one that could become the theoretical framework for a reconstruction of Chinese culture, and of the country. Because Xiong was pursuing his own intellectual project, he was quite independent, both from the academic institution and from state ideology. He was not searching for the prestigious social position offered by universities but for the satisfaction which comes from leading an authentic life. However, this intellectual endeavour became isolated from society and, finally, disconnected from concrete issues.

Tang Yongtong developed a humanistic approach to Buddhism, making use of history, religion, and philosophy. Early in his career, he focused on Buddhism's Indian roots, but later shifted to Chinese Buddhism. He made pioneering efforts in understanding the indigenization of Buddhism in China. Unlike Liang, who saw Buddhism as a foreign culture and philosophy, and Xiong, who saw it as an analytical tool transcending cultures, Tang came to conceive of Buddhism as an intrinsic part of the history of Chinese philosophy. His historical approach may be understood as a form of resistance to the hegemonic discourse of philosophy, then dominated by Western ideas. This led him to focus on the intellectual history of China. Yet, lacking the philosophical depth of Liang Shuming or Xiong Shili, he put his Buddhist scholarship in the service of his own career, of the academic institution, and of his country.

Indeed, Tang's intellectual and personal failures at the end of his life illustrate the loss of freedom that occurs in academic discourses under state dictatorship.

Quite importantly, Buddhism was not fully treated as a religion. Since the universities were dominated by the liberal intellectuals of the New Culture Movement, who largely opposed religion as such, there were only a few religious schools or departments. Buddhism therefore found its place within philosophy departments. Even though Liang insisted on the practical dimension of Buddhism as a religion, his understanding was very individualistic and disconnected from society. Xiong similarly regarded Buddhism in quite a narrow sense, as metaphysics. Tang probably had the broadest perspective on Buddhism, considering it from the angle of comparative religious studies, as well as cultural, social, and intellectual history.

Finally, the three figures discussed here may remind us of three dimensions essential to any intellectual work: practical engagement and commitment, as in the case of Liang; intellectual depth, as in the case of Xiong; and historical research, as in the case of Tang. At a time when Buddhist studies had been emancipated from religious affiliations and schools, these three scholars contributed a great deal to the development, for the first time in China, of an academic discourse on Buddhism within a pluralistic environment, at least up until 1949.

Notes

1 Jing Haifeng further distinguishes five different kinds of Buddhist studies: traditional studies by the Buddhist community, modern Buddhist studies by monks, modern Buddhist studies by lay Buddhists, academic Buddhism by historians, and creative Buddhism by philosophers. Jing Haifeng 景海峰, *Xin ruxue yu ershishiji Zhongguo sixiang* 新儒學與二十世紀中國思想 [New Confucianism and Chinese thought in the twentieth century] (Zhengzhou: Zhongguo guji chubanshe, 2005), pp. 125–128.

2 Cf. Chen Bing 陳兵 and Deng Zimei 鄧子美, *Ershishiji Zhongguo Fojiao* 二十世紀中國佛教 [Chinese Buddhism in the twentieth century] (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2000), pp. 101–102.

3 Liang Shuming, "Jiuyuan jueyi lun" 究元決疑論 [Treatise on finding the foundation and resolving doubt], *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 XX (1916), p. x. For an alternate source, see *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集 [Complete works of Liang Shuming], Vol. 1 (Ji'nan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1989–1993), pp. 3–22.

4 Liang Shuming, *Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi* 中國文化要義 [Essentials of Chinese culture], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 3, p. 5.

5 Li Yuanting 李淵庭 and Yan Binghua 閻秉華, eds., *Liang Shuming xiansheng nianpu* 梁漱溟先生年譜 [Chronicles of Mr. Liang Shuming] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 1991), p. 31.

6 See Liang Shuming, *Wo de guoqu* 我的過去 [My past], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 6, p. 71.

7 Liang Shuming, *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue* 東西文化及其哲學 [Eastern and Western cultures and their philosophies], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 1, p. 363.

8 *Ibid*., p. 350.

9 Like many intellectuals of his generation, Liang was especially harsh in his condemnation of popular forms of Buddhism, such as the prayers and rituals for the soul kept in hell during the Chinese Buddhist Festival of Yulanpan 盂蘭盆節. However, Liang maintained a kind of faith in "supernatural power," or *shentong* 神通, throughout his life. See Thierry Meynard, "Intellectuels chinois contemporains en débat avec les esprits," in *Le Sacré en Chine*, edited by Michel Masson (Brussels: Brépols, 2008), pp. 163–190.

10 Yogācāra had disappeared in China as an independent school in the Tang dynasty and had usually been held in low regard because of its failure to grasp Buddhahood. However, it influenced other Chinese Buddhist schools such as Tiantai, Huayan, and even Chan, as well as some Confucian thinkers during the Qing dynasty, such as Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–1692).

11 Liang Shuming, "Jiuyuan jueyi lun," p. 16.

12 See Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, "Jianli zongjiao lun" 建立宗教論 [On founding a religion], *Min bao* 民報, 1906.9, pp. 1–26. See Liang Shuming, "Ru Fo yi yong

lun" 儒佛異同論 [Treatise on the differences and similarities between Confucianism and Buddhism], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 7, p. 159.

13 Liang Shuming, *Weishi shuyi* 唯識述義 [Outline of Yogācāra], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 1, p. 253.

14 *Ibid*., p. 271. In this chapter, I do not distinguish between the Indian term "Yogācāra" and the Chinese term "*Weishi*" (or *Vijñānavāda* in Sanskrit) for the theory of consciousness-only. *Weishi* was the core teaching of Yogācāra and became an alternative name for it in China.

15 *Ibid*., p. 269.

16 Liang Shuming, *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue*, p. 395.

17 Liang Shuming, *Yindu zhexue gailun* 印度哲學概論 [An outline of Indian philosophy], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 1, p. 73.

18 *Ibid*., p. 158.

19 Here, I do not detail Liang's anti-intellectualism in his understanding of Confucianism. He contrasted Confucianism's moral intuition with the abstract and utilitarian rationality of the West. See Fang Keli 方克立 and Cao Yaoming 曹耀明, "Liang Shuming feilixingzhuyi zhexue sixiang pingshu (shang)" 梁漱溟非理性主義哲學思想評述（上）[The anti-intellectualism of Liang Shuming (part one)], *Zhongguo luntan* 中國論壇 (Taipei) 26.7, 307 (1988), pp. 54–63; "Liang Shuming feilixingzhuyi zhexue sixiang pingshu (xia)" 梁漱溟非理性主義哲學思想評述（下）[The anti-intellectualism of Liang Shuming (part two)], *Zhongguo luntan* 中國論壇 (Taipei) 26.8, 308 (1988), pp. 60–68.

20 Liang Shuming, *Yindu zhexue gailun*, p. 72.

21 Liang Shuming, *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue*, pp. 415–416.

22 Liang Shuming, *Yindu zhexue gailun*, p. 58.

23 Liang Shuming, *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue*, p. 482.

24 See my paper, "Is Liang Shuming Ultimately a Confucian or Buddhist?" *DAO: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 6.2 (2007), p. 145.

25 Liang Shuming, *Yindu zhexue gailun*, p. 61.

26 This is in reference to Guy Alitto, *The Last Confucian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

27 See Liang Shuming, "Meiguo xuezhe Ai Kai xiansheng fangtan jilu tiyao" 美國學者艾愷先生訪談記錄摘要 [Excerpts from the recorded interview with the American scholar Guy Alitto], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 8 [1980], pp. 1137–1178.

28 See Liang's critique of Taixu in *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue*, p. 536. For Taixu's response, published in 1920, see: "Lun Liang Shuming *Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue*" 論梁漱溟東西文化及其哲學 [A discussion of Liang Shuming's *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies*], *Haichao yin* 海潮音 1.11 (1921); reproduced in *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書 [Complete works of Master Taixu], 35 vols. (Taipei: Shandaosi, 1946), vol. 25, pp. 302–304. For a more systematic answer to Liang, see Taixu, *Renshengguan de kexue* 人生觀的科學 [The science of the philosophy of life] (Shanghai: Taidong tushuju, 1929).

29 Xiong's despair was related to the atmosphere of political chaos following the 1911 Revolution. Liang's pessimism was deeper, and it explains his profound commitment to Buddhism.

30 Jing Haifeng, *Xin ruxue yu ershishiji Zhongguo sixiang*, pp. 159–166.

31 Umberto Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism* (Taipei: Ricci Institute, 2001), p. 120.

32 Ng Yu-kwan, "Xiong Shili's Metaphysical Theory," in *New Confucianism*, edited by John Makeham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 240.

33 Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, *Wushi zishu* 五十自述 [My autobiography at 50 years old], in Mou Zongsan, *Shengmingdexuewen* 生命的學問 (Guilin: Guilin shifan daxue chubanshe 廣西師範大學出版社, 2005), p. 106.

34 I translate *benti* as "fundamental state" in order to signify that Xiong built not a substance ontology but a process ontology.

35 Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 763–765.

36 *Xin weishi lun*, edited by Yudi, vol. 1, pp. 3b–4a, quoted in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, vol. 2, p. 547; translation modified.

37 Xiong Shili 熊十力, *Shili yuyao chuxu* 十力語要初續 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1949), p. 180.

38 Cai Yuanpei, "Preface," *New Yogācāra*; quoted in Jing Haifeng, *Xin ruxue yu ershishiji Zhongguo sixiang*, p. 91.

39 Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 687.

40 Lin Anwu 林安梧, *Dangdai xin rujia zhexueshi lun* 當代新儒家哲學史論 [Essays on the philosophical history of contemporary New Confucians] (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1996), pp. 55–56.

41 Xiong Shili, quoted in Jing Haifeng, *Xin ruxue yu ershishiji Zhongguo sixiang*, p. 92.

42 In 1932, Liu Dingquan wrote *Po Xin weishi lun* 破新唯識論 [Defeating *New Yogācāra*] (Nanjing: Zhina nei xue yuan, 1932). Xiong answered in 1933 with *Po Po Xin weishi lun* 破破新唯識論 [Defeating "Defeating *New* Yogācāra"] (Beiping: Beijing daxue chubanbu, 1933; reprinted Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001). On the occasion of Ouyang Jingwu's death in 1943, a dispute erupted between Xiong Shili and Lü Cheng. See "Bian Foxue genben wenti: Lü Cheng, Xiong Shili wangfu han'gao" 辯佛學根本問題——呂澂、熊十力往覆函稿 [Basic issues in distinguishing [true] Buddhism: Letters exchanged between Lü Cheng and Xiong Shili], *Zhongguo zhexue* 中國哲學 11 (1984), p. 171.

43 Xiong's interpretation was probably pushed in this direction under the influence of Neo-Confucian and Western philosophy. In the twentieth century, Western scholars like Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1869–1938) and Etienne Lamotte (1903–1983) considered Yogācāra to be subjective idealism. However, recent scholarship on Indian Yogācāra has explained it as a form

of phenomenology, radically opposed to any ontologization. See Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

44 Cf. Ng Yu-kwan, "Xiong Shili's Metaphysical Theory," p. 242.

45 In the 1953 edition of his *New Yogācāra*, many parts that dealt with Buddhism were deleted. See Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism*, p. 136.

46 Liang Shuming, "Du Xiong zhu ge shu shuhou" 讀熊著各書書後 [Remarks after reading the works of Xiong], in *Liang Shuming quanji*, Vol. 7 [1961], pp. 734–786.

47 *Ibid*., p. 764.

48 Cited in Ng Yu-kwan, "Xiong Shili's Metaphysical Theory," p. 240.

49 Du Weiming 杜維明, *Jindai sixiang renwu* 近代思想人物 [Contemporary thinkers] (Taipei: Shibao chubanshe, 1982), cited in Lin Anwu, *Dangdai xin rujia zhexueshi lun,* p. 59.

50 Liang Shuming, *Yindu zhexue gailun,* pp. 66–73.

51 Liang Shuming, "Du Xiong zhu ge shu shuhou," p.764.

52 Tang Yongtong, *Han-Wei Liang-Jin Nanbeichao Fojiaoshi,* in *Tang Yongtong quanji* 湯用彤全集 [Complete works of Tang Yongtong], Vol. 1 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin daxue chubanshe, 2000), p. 655.

53 *Ibid*., p. 655.

54 *Ibid*., p. 655.

55 Xiaoqing Lin, "Historicizing Subjective Reality: Rewriting History in Early Republican China," *Modern China* 25.1 (1999), p. 15.

56 The postscript was inserted again in *Tang Yongtong quanji*.

57 Liang Shuming, "Yindu zhexue gailun," p. 26. As Liang mentioned in the preface to the 1922 edition, he inherited notes from Xu Jishang 許季上 (1891–1953), who had taught the class before him at Peking University. According to Liang, these notes were themselves derived from "three or four Japanese books, and two or three English books." Liang completed his manual by adding further material from other Japanese books on Indian Buddhism that he obtained through a colleague, Wu Chengshi 吳承仕 (1884–1939).

58 Tang Yongtong, preface to *Yindu zhexueshi lüe* 印度哲學史略 [A short history of Indian philosophy] (Chongqing: Duli chubanshe, 1945; reprinted Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), p. 5.

59 Tang Yongtong, "Yindu zhexue zhi qiyuan" 印度哲學之起源 [The origins of Indian philosophy], in *Tang Yongtong xueshu wenhua suibi* 湯用彤學術文化隨筆 [Essays on learning and culture by Tang Yongtong], edited by Sun Shangyang 孫尚揚 (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 2000), p. 38.

60 Tang Yongtong, "Wenhua sixiang zhi chongtu yu tiaohe" 文化思想之衝突與調和 [Conflict and conciliation of cultures and thought], in *Xueshu jikan* 學術季刊 1.2 (1943); reprinted in *Tang Yongtong xueshu wenhua suibi*, p. 11.

61 Hu Shi, *Zhongguo zhexueshi dagang* 中國哲學史大綱 [Outline of the history of Chinese philosophy] (1919; reprinted Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1996), p. 6.

62 Tang Yongtong, "Wei-Jin sixiang de fazhan" 魏晉思想的發展 [The development of thought during the Wei and Jin dynasties], in *Tang Yongtong xueshu wenhua suibi*, p. 259.
63 See Chen Bin and Deng Zimei, *Ershishiji Zhongguo Fojiao,* p. 136.
64 The Dunhuang manuscripts were sealed in a cave in Gansu province in the twelfth century, and discovered only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many of the documents are now kept in England, France, Russia, and Japan.
65 Tang Yongtong, postscript to the reprinted edition of *Yindu zhexueshi lüe,* p. 165.
66 Tang Yongtong, "Dalin shuping" 大林書評 [A critique of many scholars], in *Tang Yongtong xueshu wenhua suibi*, pp. 290–295.
67 Tang Yijie 湯一介, "Preface," in Ma Tianxiang 麻天祥, *Tang Yongtong pingzhuan* 湯用彤評傳 [Biography of Tang Yongtong] (Nanchang: Baihua zhou wenyi chubanshe, 1993), p. 9.
68 I rely here on a personal communication with Sun Shangyang 孫尚揚—a professor in the philosophy department of Peking University and a student of Tang Yijie.
69 See Tang Yijie, "Tang Yongtong yu Hu Shi" 湯用彤與胡適 [Tang Yongtong and Hu Shi], in *Zhongguo zhexueshi* 中國哲學史 4 (2002), pp. 104–105.
70 See Tang Yongtong, postscript to the reprinted edition of *Yindu zhexueshi lüe,* pp. 165–171.
71 Tang Yijie, preface to *Tang Yongtong pingzhuan*, p. 48.