

Language in the Traditions of Madhyamaka Thought

(中觀學思想傳統中的語言觀)

Huafan University, Graduate Institute of Asian Humanities, Taipei
(華梵大學 東方人文思想研究所), June 27 – 29, 2014

研討會議程/Conference Schedule

2014 年6 月27 日 (星期五/Friday) 27 June 2014

時間	活動主題	主持人	發表人
08:20-09:00	報到 (領取資料) registration		
09:00-09:15	開幕式暨 貴賓致詞 Opening speech	華梵大學朱校長建民教授 Zhu Jianming (Principle of Huafan University)	
09:30-10:20	Two truths theory: what is <i>vyavahāra</i> ? (1)	待聘1 位	Professor Ogawa 小川英世 教授 (廣島大學 Hiroshima University, Japan)
10:20-10:30	茶敘 break		
10:30-11:20	Nāgārjuna's conception of language in the <i>Vaidalyaprakaraṇa</i> (2)	待聘1 位	Dr. Westerhoff University Lecturer (University of Oxford, UK)
11:20-11:30	茶敘 break		
11:30-12:20	Nāgārjuna's pun? The grammar of MMK 1.6 (3)	待聘1 位	Professor Salvini (Mahidol University, Thailand)
12:30-14:00	午餐 lunch		
14:00-14:50	The Social Origins of Buddhist Nominalism: "No-Self" and "Dependent Co-origination" in	待聘1 位	Professor Schlieter (Bern University, Switzerland)

	Nāgārjuna's Philosophy of Language (4)		
14:50-15:00	茶敘 break		
15:00-15:50	From skepticism to nihilism – An epistemological interpretation of Nāgārjuna's refutations (5)	待聘1位	Professor Ye Shaoyong 葉少勇 副教授 (北京大學外國語學院南亞學系 Beijing University Foreign Language Institute, Department of South-East Asian Studies, PR China)
15:50-16:00:	茶敘 break		
16:00-16:50	Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti on Language (6)	待聘1位	Professor Anne MacDonald (Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria)
16:50-17:00	茶敘 break		
18:30-	晚餐 dinner		

2014 年6 月28 日 (星期六/Saturday) 28 June 2014

時間	活動主題	主持人	發表人
09:00-09:30	報到 (領取資料) registration		
09:30-10:20	<i>Prapañca</i> and Non-Dualist Semantics in Indian Madhyamaka (7)	待聘1位	Professor Mark Siderits (Seoul National University, Korea)
10:20-10:30	茶敘 break		
10:30-11:20	Two Truths without any Ontological Commitment? Engaging Jizang (549-623) in a Conversation with Mark Siderits (8)	待聘1位	Professor Keng Ching (National Cheng-chi University, Taiwan) 耿晴 助理教授 (國立政治大學)
11:20-11:30	茶敘 break		
11:30-12:20	“Reflections on a ‘performativist account	待聘1位	Professor Dan Arnold (University of Chicago, US)

	of the language of self’, Or: The Sense Madhyamaka makes as a Buddhist position” (9)		
12:30-14:00	午餐 lunch		
14:00-14:50	The Nature and Stature of Language in rNying-ma Madhyamaka Thought (10)	待聘1 位	Professor Wanchuk (Hamburg University, Germany)
14:50-15:00	茶敘 break		
15:00-15:50	The Notion of Inexpressibility in the Controversy Surrounding the Existence of the Buddha’s Gnosis (11)	待聘1 位	Dr. Almogi Principle Investigator (Hamburg University, Germany)
15:50-16:00	茶敘		
16:00-16:50	Repercussions of Seng Zhao's (374-414) Notions of Namelessness and Non-Knowing (12)	待聘1 位	Professor Ziporyn (University of Chicago, US)
17:00-17:50	Kumarājīva’s Interpretation of Nonduality and Māhāyana Samādhi—On Māhāyana Samādhi Practice and Māhāyana Realization of Śūnyatā in Sengzhao’s <i>Zhu Weimuojie Jing</i> (13)		Professor Wang Ching-wei (National Taiwan Normal University) <u>王晴薇副教授</u> (台灣師範大學)
18:50-19:00	茶敘 break	待聘1 位	
19:30-	晚餐 dinner		

2014 年6 月29 日 (星期天/Sunday) 29 June 2014

時間	活動主題	主持人	發表人
09:00-09:30	報到 (領取資料) registration		
09:30-10:20	Language As an Instrument of Soteriological Transformation from the Madhyamaka Perspective (14)	待聘1 位	Professor Tsai Yaoming (National Taiwan University, Taiwan) 蔡耀明教授 (國立台灣大學)
10:20-10:30	茶敘 break		
10:30-11:20	Did Seng Zhao (僧肇 374-414) fail to <i>prove</i> the thesis of no-moving? An examination of Zhen Cheng's (鎮澄 1546-1617) critique (15)	待聘1 位	Professor Lin Chen-kuo (National Cheng-chi University, Taiwan) 林鎮國教授 (國立政治大學)
11:20-11:30	茶敘 break		
11:30-12:20	Dialetheism in Jizang's (549-623) Thought (16)	待聘1 位	Professor Deguchi (Kyoto University, Japan) 出口康夫教授(京都大學)
12:30-14:00	午餐 lunch		
14:00-14:50	"False/Provisional Designation" (<i>jiaming</i> 假名) in Chinese Tiantai and Sanlun thought (17)	待聘1 位	Professor Kantor (Huafan University, Taiwan)康特 副教授 (華梵大學)
14:50-15:00	茶敘 break		
15:00-15:50	Interdependence and Nonduality: On the Linguistic Strategy of the <i>Platform Sūtra</i> (18)	待聘1 位	Professor Ho Ch'ien-hsing (Nanhua University, Taiwan) 何建興 副教授 (南華大學)
15:50-16:00	茶敘		
16:00-16:50	The Narrative of Śūnyatā in the Chinese	待聘1 位	Professor Kuo Chao-Shun (Huafan University, Taiwan) 郭朝順 副教

	<i>Hua-yan sūtra</i> : Limits of Argument and the Function of Narratives (19)		授 (華梵大學)
16:50-17:00	茶敘 break	待聘1 位	
17:00-17:30			round table discussion
19:15-	晚餐		

註：每人專題演講時間以 30 分鐘為準，每一專題演講後之討論時間以 20 分鐘為準。華梵大學東方人文思想研究所所長當主持人。研討會的用意在於盡量給參與者參加討論的機會，是故不需要評論人。

The time for each presentation is scheduled for 30 minutes and the subsequent discussion for 20 minutes.

摘要 Abstracts

Hideyo Ogawa, 小川英世, Hiroshima University
hogawa@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

Two truths theory: what is *vyavahāra*?

In his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250) states the following kārikā:

MMK XXIV.10: *vyavahāram anāsritya paramārtho na deśyate \nolinebreak /
paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇaṃ nādhigamyate //*

"Without relying upon *vyavahāra*, the ultimate truth is not taught. Without understanding the ultimate truth, nirvāṇa is not attained."

若不依俗諦 不得第一義 不得第一義 則不得涅槃 (鳩摩羅什)

It is commonly accepted that Nāgārjuna means by the term *vyavahāra* here the 'conventional' truth (俗諦) and that the 'conventional' truth is what is valid of this world in which ignorance prevails. This interpretation of the term *vyavahāra* is apt to be misleading. What Nāgārjuna means by the term in question is the verbalization of the truth or the truth as it is spoken of.

Candrakīrti (c. 600–50) explains Nāgārjuna's point by quoting a verse whose authorship is unknown.

PrP 264.6-7: *anakṣarasya dharmasya śrutiḥ kā deśanā ca kā /
śrūyate deśyate cārthaḥ samāropād anakṣaraḥ //*

"How can one learn the truth (*dharma*) which is ineffable (*anakṣara*)? How can one teach such truth? But the truth, which is ineffable, is learned and taught through superimposition (*samāropāt*)."

According to *Bhāviveka* (c. 490–570), the Buddha, the teacher (*śāstṛ*) who tells no untruth (*avitathavādin*), taught through superimposition truth or reality (*tattva*), which is ineffable (*nirakṣara*), with words (*akṣaraiḥ*) (MHK 1.3: *tattvaṃ dideśa kāruṇyād yo nirakṣaram akṣaraiḥ / bhāvato 'stu namas tasmai śāstre 'vitathavādine //*; TJ on MHK 1.3 (Heitmann 2004: 10.8): *yi ge yis zēs bya ba ni yi ge dag gis sgro btags te'o / *akṣarair iti / akṣaraiḥ samāropya /*).

The present paper aims at considering what it is to speak of something ineffable. I shall consider this question from the point of view of the denotation theory of Bhartṛhari, who is often presented as the great exponent of śabdādvaita 'linguistic

monism' or 'linguistic absolutism'. Bhartṛhari lived no later than the fifth century A. D. and wrote the Vākyapadīya, the major treatise on semantics and philosophy of grammar in the Pāṇinian school. The text had a great impact on Indian linguistic theories and is referred to extensively in later treatises of many schools. In this text Bhartṛhari argues that the ultimate substance (*dravya*), Brahman, is ineffable in itself but susceptible to verbalization through the attribution of delimiting factors (*upādhi*). His arguments about this point will shed light on the question mentioned above.

Jan Westerhoff, University of Oxford

jan.westerhoff@lmh.ox.ac.uk

www.janwesterhoff.net

Nāgārjuna's conception of language in the Vaidalyaprakaraṇa

At the end of the Vaidalyaprakaraṇa, one of the six texts from Nāgārjuna's Yukti-corpus that deals specifically with the list of categories presented in the Nyāyasūtra Nāgārjuna makes the rather startling statement that "expressions do not exist" (mngon par brjod pa ni med). As a reason he makes the even more startling assertion that "all things do not exist" (dngos po thams cad med pa). My talk will explain how these statements are best understood, how they fit in with Nāgārjuna's criticism of the Nyāya system of debate, and how they are to be related to the early Madhyamaka view of language more generally.

Nāgārjuna's pun? The grammar of MMK 1.6

In MMK 1.6 Nāgārjuna analyses the dialectical relationship between *kriyā* and *pratyayas*; the two terms are usually understood as 'action/activity' and 'conditions' respectively. However, both terms have a technical valence in Sanskrit grammar, referring to the action/activity (expressed by the *dhātu*) and to the nominal and verbal particles that determine syntactical relations.

To put it differently, MMK 1.6 refers simultaneously to the process of dependent arising and to the language we employ to express it. The link with grammar is corroborated by most Indian commentators, and this pun is suggestive of the structural analogy between the assemblage of causes and conditions (*hetu-pratyaya*) that causes and effect, and the syntactical relations employed to convey meaning in (the Sanskrit *kāraka* system). The verse's double meaning mirrors the position of Madhyamaka analysis at the juncture between dependent arising and linguistic (non-)reference.

Jens Schlieter, Bern University
jens.schlieter@relwi.unibe.ch

The Social Origins of Buddhist Nominalism: “No-Self” and “Dependent Co-origination” in Nāgārjuna’s Philosophy of Language

The contribution will start with the observation that the two doctrines, “No-Self” (or “selflessness”) and “Dependent Co-origination”, developed in close contact to a “nominalist” critique of certain social claims regarding a substantial “moral self”. Both doctrines are partly directed against claims that a person may be granted a status of moral perfection by birth, by “name”, or by some inherent moral quality. It will be shown how these background ideas are still relevant for Nāgārjuna’s systematic development of a Buddhist philosophy of language.

From skepticism to nihilism

An epistemological interpretation of Nāgārjuna's refutations

On the basis of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, I recommend a skeptic presupposition as the starting point of Nāgārjuna's arguments, from which the ontological entities (*svabhāva*) could be viewed as referents of concepts. This position justifies the "confinement principle," that a definition or description of a concept would necessarily confine its supposed referent to an isolated, invariable state. The principle enables Nāgārjuna to deduce contradictions between the static nature of the supposed referent and the activity or dependent relationship in which it must be involved. Hence Nāgārjuna finds all concepts self-contradictory and devoid of referents (*niḥsvabhāva*), and reaches a nihilistic conclusion that all *dharmas* are empty (*śūnya*), which means that nothing within our ken exists ontologically.

Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti on Language

The topic of language is discussed under various aspects in Indian Madhyamaka treatises, always as something to be abandoned in the long run, yet unavoidable and of utility for reaching the goal of *nirvāṇa*. It is well known that technical terms such as *prapañca* and the pair *abhidhāna* and *abhidheya* are intimately connected with language, but their meaning and significance within the Madhyamaka system are often not fully appreciated, especially as concerns the school's ultimate view. The paper will take as its starting point a number of Nāgārjuna's references to language and their implications as regards both the *saṃvṛti* and ultimate levels and move on to explore Candrakīrti's interpretations of and elaborations on these.

***Prapañca* and Non-Dualist Semantics in Indian Madhyamaka**

There is widespread agreement among schools of Indian Buddhist thought that what is termed *prapañca* is a potent source of the ignorance that generates suffering. At first *prapañca* seems to have been understood merely as ‘conceptual proliferation’, the tendency of the mind to build castles in the air. But in several mature Abhidharma schools it came to be understood as hypostatization, the process whereby our ontology is inflated by wrongly supposing that all meaningful terms must have real referents. The errors to which this leads are to be counteracted by analysis, whereby many expressions of our everyday language are shown to be meaningful not through reference to really existing entities but rather by serving as useful shorthand expressions for commonly encountered types of states of affairs. The resulting doctrine of two truths leads to what can be called a dualist semantics, according to which there is a certain privileged class of expressions whose meanings are grounded in reference relations to real things, while other seemingly meaningful expressions represent mere cognitive shortcuts and so do not refer to genuinely existing entities. Mastery of this dualist semantics is thought to counteract our tendency to be misled by our usual ways of talking and thinking about persons and their states into believing persons to be ultimately real.

Indian Madhyamaka also understands *prapañca* as hypostatization, but its signature doctrine of emptiness is the denial that the notion of an ultimately real entity makes sense. The result is that there can be no privileged set of expressions; its semantics must be non-dualist. The question to be addressed here is whether this is a coherent position. If no expression picks out real features of the world, how are we to explain the fact that accepting certain statements can lead to successful practice? If, as the Madhyamaka doctrine of *prajñapti-mātra* suggests, all supposed things are taken as real only because of *prapañca*, then how could conceptual practices ever put us in touch with the world? Several possible responses to this question will be explored and evaluated.

Two Truths without any Ontological Commitment? Engaging Jizang (549-623) in a conversation with Mark Siderits

Mark Siderits has famously defended a purely semantic interpretation of the Madhyamaka philosophical framework of the two truths. According to Siderits, "The ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth." (2007: 182) A major difficulty with this interpretation, as is fully aware by Siderits himself, is whether a purely semantic is tenable without any ontological commitment.

Interestingly, Jizang, the foremost thinker in the Sanlun or the Chinese Madhyamaka tradition, holds an interpretation of the two truths that looks quite similar to Siderits' semantic interpretation. According to Jizang, the two truths framework is merely an expedient tool for teaching and hence has nothing to do with ontology. (T1853:45.15a16-17). This comes very close to Siderits' notion of a purely semantic interpretation. But arguably, Jizang also has passages where he seems to endorse the existence of an ineffable ontological reality. For example, Jizang says that the "reality of all dharmas (*zhufa shixiang*) defies language and concepts" (T1852:45.7b11); that "one harms the existence [of the Way] if one holds it to be non-existent" (T1852:45.2c17-19). Jizang also compares the two-truth framework to a moon-pointing finger: the function of the finger is to direct the attention to the moon, just like the function of the two-truth framework is to point to the ineffable principle (*li*), which is neither conventional nor ultimate. (T1854:45.108b22-28) All these passages suggest that, unlike Siderits, Jizang still commits himself to some sort of ontological reality that goes beyond the two truths.

This paper aims to investigate what Jizang may have to say about Siderits' interpretation, with the hope of seeing the strength and possible weakness of both sides.

“Reflections on a ‘performativist account of the language of self’, Or: The Sense Madhyamaka makes as a Buddhist position”

Defending the author’s favored interpretation of Madhyamaka against some typical criticisms, this paper enlists Jonardon Ganeri’s idea that Āryadeva and Candrakīrti, in particular, developed a “performativist account of the language of self.” Engaging the textual passages on which Ganeri chiefly bases his interpretation, the paper then examines how Ganeri’s novel characterization makes sense of another early Mādhyamika text that centrally involves the same terms in which Candrakīrti interprets Āryadeva. Perhaps not coincidentally, the other passage in question (MMK 27.8) is among those reckoned by Tillman Vetter as reflecting Nāgārjuna’s “certain closeness” (auch nicht identisch) to pudgalavāda. It will be argued both that Vetter’s suggestion makes sense given the interpretation of Madhyamaka the author will have sketched with reference to Ganeri, and, notwithstanding the whiff of heresy that attaches to pudgalavāda, that this interpretation can make sense of Madhyamaka as a specifically Buddhist position.

“The Nature and Stature of Language in rNying-ma Madhyamaka Thought”

A number of Buddhist sources, systems, and scholars seem to take for granted that there is a kind of (true) reality that is independent of a cognitive subject (*yul*)—which is often sub-classified in the Tibetan tradition into three, namely, (a) verbal expression/articulation (*sgra*), (b) perceptual/conceptual cognition (*blo*), and (c) person (*gang zag*)—and yet is cognitively penetrable. What I will attempt in this paper is to discuss, not so much the possibility, cognizability, or utility of true reality, and its cognitive subjects in general, but rather the nature and status of language (assumed to be based on conceptual constructions and associations) as a useful, albeit limited, means of communication. This will be done by resorting to the writings of several rNying-ma scholars who propose or presuppose Madhyamaka philosophy.

**The Notion of Inexpressibility in the Controversy
Surrounding the Existence of the Buddha's Gnosis**

Theoretical reflections on the nature of the Buddha generated various controversies. Particularly one of them has stirred up heated debates among later Indian Madhyamaka scholars, namely, the question as to whether gnosis (*jñāna: ye shes*) exists at the stage of a *buddha*, which is, in turn, closely related to the question as to how a *buddha* is able to act in the world for the sake of sentient beings along the lines of the Mahāyāna doctrine. The debates on the existence of gnosis at the stage of a *buddha* seem to have gained momentum among Indian Madhyamaka scholars from the eighth or ninth century and reached their peak during the eleventh century. Tibetan authors, who inherited this controversy, engaged in it with great interest as well. It occupied Tibetan Madhyamaka scholars particularly from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, though it continued to be of interest to later Tibetan scholars up until the present day.

Both Indian and Tibetan Madhyamaka authors have resorted in their discussions of this issue to logical arguments alongside citations from authoritative scriptures. However, several authors have resorted to, in addition the two means just mentioned, also to the notion of inexpressibility of the ultimate. In my paper I shall present these authors and their arguments and attempt to discuss the rationale behind them and the reason as to why some of them have chosen to employ the notion of inexpressibility in this regard.

Brook Ziporyn, Chicago University
ziporyn@uchicago.edu

"Repercussions of Seng Zhao's Notions of Namelessness and Non-Knowing."

The question of the specific content of a Buddha's knowledge--what does a Buddha know? what does enlightened experience consist of epistemologically?--has wider implications than may be at first apparent for many issues in Buddhist thought and the implications of basic Buddhist doctrine. Does a Buddha "know everything," omniscient in the way that is attributed to God in monotheistic traditions? If so, what is the everything he knows, and if not, what does this imply for the status of human projects, including the project of working toward Buddhahood? In this paper I will explore the implications of Seng Zhao's notion of "the namelessness of Nirvana" and "Prajna as Non-Knowledge" as nodal points that address these problems, and possibly provide a key to the great break between Indo-Tibetan Buddhism on the one hand and Sinitic Buddhism on the other.

**Kumarājīva's Interpretation of Nonduality and Māhāyāna Samādhi—On
Māhāyāna Samādhi Practice and Māhāyāna Realization of Śūnyatā in
Sengzhao's *Zhu Weimuojie Jing***

Kumarājīva is a key figure in the history of Chinese Buddhism who translated some of the most popular Mahāyāna *Sūtras* associated with Mahāyāna *Samādhi* (三昧) practices. The *Śūraṅgama Samādhi* of the *Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra* is described by Huisi 慧思 as a prerequisite of the Lotus *Samādhi*. The Lotus *Samādhi* in Kumarājīva's *Siwei lyueyao fa* (思惟略要法) was further adjusted and made popular by Tiantai Masters Huisi 慧思 and Zhiyi 智顛. However, for various historical reasons, Kumarājīva's views and practices of Mahāyāna *Samādhis* which are essential for our understanding of his rendition of Mahāyāna *Sūtras* as well as the nature of Mahāyāna meditation practice in the early stage of Chinese Buddhism have not been analyzed carefully by scholars. In this paper, I will attempt to reconstruct Kumarājīva's views and practices of Mahāyāna *Samādhi* based on a detailed analysis of Sengzhao's (僧肇) *Zhu Weimojiejing* (注維摩詰經) written in A. D. 410. Unlike *Zuochan Sanmei jing* (坐禪三昧經) and *Siwei lyueyao fa* (思惟略要法) which only provide Kumarājīva's prescriptive instructions for the practice of Mahāyāna *Samādhis*, Sengzhao's *Zhu Weimojiejing* recorded Kumarājīva's interpretive illustrations of how Mahāyāna bodhisattvas' realization of Śūnyatā, which can also be termed as "Nonduality," can be achieved through mastery of dhyāna and *Samādhi* practices. Some iconographic evidence related to the *Vimalakirti Sūtra* in the Dunhuang Caves will also be examined to illustrate the influence of Kumarājīva's view of Mahāyāna *Samādhi* in China.

Language As an Instrument of Soteriological Transformation from the Madhyamaka Perspective

Buddhist teachings and practices can be viewed as a journey of soteriological transformation, where language, as a tool for the analysis of views, occupies a place of special significance and importance. In both the Path to Liberation and the Path to All-encompassing and Thorough Enlightenment, one moves toward liberation from impoverished conceptualizations and views. In light of this, such concepts as ‘not-self’ and ‘emptiness’ are crucial for gaining insight into the limitations of concepts in the everyday use of language. This paper examines how the concept of non-duality, from the Madhyamaka perspective, has served as a powerful rhetorical device with the explicit aim of fostering soteriological transformation. This paper thus focuses on the rhetorical construction of non-dual terminology and the way linguistic strategies are used in directing non-dual terminology for the purpose of soteriological transformation. Among the various expressions representative of the Madhyamaka perspective, two are particularly explored in this paper for their facilitation of soteriological transformation: the expression of “neither a dharma nor a non-dharma” (na sa dharmo nâdharmah), and the teaching that “one should forsake dharmas, still more so non-dharmas” (dharmāḥ eva prahātavyāḥ prāg evâdharmāḥ). I argue that the Madhyamaka expression of “neither A nor -A” is hardly ever just about conforming to any linguistic conventions. It is about gaining liberation from linguistic conventions and unexamined remarks.

Lin Chen-kuo, 林鎮國, National Chengchi University

cklin@nccu.edu.tw

chenkuolin@gmail.com

Did Seng Zhao (僧肇 374-414) fail to *prove* the thesis of no-moving? An examination of Zhen Cheng's (鎮澄 1546-1617) critique

This paper aims to explore the episode of philosophical debate on Seng Zhao (僧肇 374-414)'s *Thesis on No-Motion of Things* (*wu buqien lun* 物不遷論, hereafter WBQL) taken place approximately at the turn of the late 16th and the early 17th centuries. Without any doubt the *Zhao Treatise* (*Zhao Lun* 肇論) is the most precious gem in the Chinese Madhyamika literature. Its reputation can be seen in the huge amount of commentarial literature. Unlike the flourish of Yogācāra Buddhism in China, however, Madhyamaka thought did not develop into the independent school after the innovative period of Seng Zhao and Jizang (549-623). This development does not mean that Chinese Buddhists are lack of the critical understanding of Madhyamaka philosophy. One of the critical yet understudied works of Chinese Madhyamika is Zhen Cheng (鎮澄 1546-1617)'s *Logical Investigation on No-Motion of Things* (*wu buqien zhengliang lun* 物不遷正量論, hereafter WBQZLL). As a scholar-monk who was affiliated with the Huayan lineage, Zhen Cheng severely criticized Seng Zhao's thesis of no-motion with the aid of hetū-vidyā. It is worthy of note is that the whole debate is a belated Dignāgean reading of Madhyamika philosophy in China.

“False/Provisional Designation” (*jiaming* 假名) in Chinese Tiantai and Sanlun Thought

This paper discusses the sixth century Chinese Madhyamaka view on semantics and the linguistic pragmatics corresponding to this. Shaping the indigenous development of Madhyamaka thought in China, Sanlun and Tiantai masters, such as Jizang (吉藏 549–623) and Zhiyi (智顛 538-597), are the protagonists who expound those views. Elaborating on the notion of the “two truths” (*erdi* 二諦), they discuss the complex relationship between meaning, sign, and understanding in our language use. The focus of their examination is the dynamic and mutual manner in which “names” (*ming* 名) and “meanings” (*yi* 義) must relate to each other to generate a sense of consistency in our linguistic understanding of truth.

According to the Chinese Sanlun and Tiantai interpretation, all the verbalized “traces” (*ji* 跡) that originate from the Buddha’s “realization” (*li* 理) devoid of words (*wuming* 無名) variously and inversely signify their “root” (*ben* 本) which is the ultimate meaning (*yi* 義) based on which they are constituted (*li* 立). Although borrowing from the indigenous tradition of Chinese thought, those masters equate the expression “root and traces” (*benji* 本跡) with the concept of the two truths transmitted in the Indian Buddhist texts. The traces of the verbalized teaching (*jiaoji* 教跡) refer back to the root devoid of words, so that this root – the ultimate and constitutive meaning of those traces – presents itself to our linguistic comprehension via inverse signification. Hence, for those Chinese Madhyamaka masters, the true and ultimate meaning inversely signified is fully present in the dynamic shape of “false/provisional designation(s)” (*jiaming* 假名) – a term which is the Chinese translation for the Sanskrit *prajñapti*. Unlike the Sanskrit, the Chinese *jia* (假) includes and combines the meanings of “false” and “borrowing”. This ambiguity allows for a new way to express the awareness that truth and falsehood are inseparable in our linguistic understanding, and thus to present the true and ultimate meaning under the condition of our conceptual and linguistic construction.

In what follows, I shall discuss those issues on the basis of Jizang’s (吉藏 549–623) Sanlun works regarding the two truths, and then proceed with a presentation of Zhiyi’s (智顛 538-597) Tiantai discussion about the same topic.

Interdependence and Nonduality: On the Linguistic Strategy of the *Platform*

Sūtra

Although Chan or Zen Buddhism traditionally claimed itself as a special transmission outside doctrinal teachings that does not establish written words, it has long been praised for its improvisational, uncustomary, intriguing, and intricate use of words. Prominent Chan masters are typically skillful in employing paradoxical and aporetic phrases, figurative and poetic expressions, negations, questions, repetitions, and so forth, to express their thoughts, cut off the interlocutor's habitual dualistic thinking, or evoke an experience of awakening in the latter. Herein, we may pay special attention to the linguistic strategy taught in the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* traditionally attributed to Huineng 惠能 (638–713), a strategy that centers around thirty-six pairs of things and is to be resorted to for adequately teaching the doctrine of Chan Buddhism. The strategy reflects a characteristic Chan way of thinking in the earlier phase of the Southern school and thereby warrants a detailed investigation. In this paper, I attempt to offer a philosophical analysis and rational reconstruction of the strategy and the correlated thinking. For this purpose, I also refer to a few texts that putatively record the sayings of some Southern Chan masters in Tang dynasty. With this approach, we inevitably go beyond the praxis orientation of Chan Buddhism. Nevertheless, such philosophical engagement should help to reveal a hitherto not fully explored dimension of the Southern Chan's style of thought.

**The Narrative of Śūnyatā in the *Hua-yan sūtra* :
Limits of Argument and the Function of Narrative**

Chinese Buddhist traditions developed two ways to refer to the sense of Śūnyatā: One which denies concepts of substantiality, and another which examines the relationship between Śūnyatā and Dharmas to show that apart from Śūnyatā no Dharma exists. The first is known from the *Prajñapāramitā sūtras* as well as treatises of the Mādhyamika, and has been called in China “Kong-Zong” (空宗 “school of emptiness”). But some of the ancient Chinese Buddhists, inspired by Ch.24-14 in Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamādyamakakārikā*, find another way to look at the Buddhist canon. According to the verse, *Sarvaṃ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate/ sarvaṃ na yujyate tasya śūnyaṃ yasya na yujyate* (以有空義故，一切法得成，若離於空者，一切皆不成)，they developed the understanding that there is no contradiction between Śūnyatā and the existence of Dharmas. Hence, they emphasized the sense of existing Dharmas, called “You-Zong” (有宗 “school of existence”).

The group that focuses on the existence of Dharmas could be further subdivided according to the two viewpoints: Those who adhere to the ideas of Vijñānavāda or Tathāgatagarbha Buddhism claim that Śūnyatā is nothing but one of the theoretical elements used to explain the existence of Dharmas, which, in addition to this, needs something else that is necessary to fully account for the way in which Dharmas exist. In this fashion, ālaya-consciousness and tathāgatagarbha might obtain a certain ontological status in Buddhism. The other group that I shall discuss in this paper tried to use and look at existing Dharmas in a way that the real and full sense of Śūnyatā can be manifested. They tried to show that what the Buddha had witnessed in his realization of liberation arises from a dynamic and complex view of the existence of all Dharmas through Śūnyatā wisdom, which, however, does not signify any metaphysical sense. This comes closer to the meaning of Śūnyatā than that of the first group and, probably, could have also been the original goal of Vijñānavāda or Tathāgatagarbha Buddhism.

In other words, what I try to explain is that, before Chinese commentarial traditions interpreted ālaya-consciousness and tathāgatagarbha in ontological or metaphysical terms, many Mahāyāna scriptures used the view of existing Dharmas to find a way to manifest the full sense of Śūnyatā. In this paper I shall introduce and analyze some

paragraphs from the *Huayan sūtra* which do not resort to the use of arguments to justify a certain concept of the “ultimate Dharma.” Instead, these examples illustrate the way in which the means of narrative is used as a function to disclose that sense of Śūnyatā which sustains coherence in the existence of Dharmas.