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The Buddhist Thought and Practice of Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936):

The Intellectual and Spiritual Pursuit of a Revolutionary Scholar

Titre français :

La pensée et la pratique bouddhique de Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936) :

la quête intellectuelle et spirituelle d'un savant révolutionnaire

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École Pratique
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La pensée et la pratique bouddhique de Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936) : la quête intellectuelle et spirituelle d'un savant révolutionnaire

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse étudie l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang Taiyan, l'un des propagandistes antimandchous les plus influents et un maître en études nationales chinoises. En utilisant un large éventail de sources primaires allant des publications théoriques et polémiques de Zhang à ses notes de séminaire et lettres privées, ainsi que les écrits de ses adversaires et les souvenirs de ses connaissances, la thèse s'engage dans un dialogue actif avec la littérature scientifique existante, sur laquelle l'auteur explicite ses découvertes et ses idées originales.

Outre des discussions approfondies et nuancées sur une série de questions majeures, notamment les études syncrétiques de Zhang sur le bouddhisme, le confucianisme et le taoïsme, sa combinaison de la réforme religieuse et de la révolution ethnique, ses débats avec les anarchistes sur le nationalisme et l'utopisme, la thèse consacre autant de pages à des événements négligés, depuis le désir ardent de Zhang de quitter le monde profane dans sa jeunesse jusqu'au rituel bouddhique de la Terre pure sur son lit de mort.

Pour un sujet traditionnellement traité par les historiens intellectuels, la thèse intègre largement les concepts, les approches et les résultats scientifiques des études religieuses. Grâce à cette nouveauté méthodologique, ainsi qu'à une lecture attentive et systématique de matériaux moins étudiés, elle démontre bien que la passion bouddhique de Zhang s'est manifestée par la méditation assise tout au long de sa vie, parmi d'autres expressions de son expérience et de sa pratique religieuses, et qu'elle ne devrait donc pas être qualifiée de purement intellectualiste. En outre, la thèse adopte une approche socio-historique présentant comment Zhang a joué de multiples rôles au sein des communautés bouddhistes sur lesquelles il a exercé une influence considérable.

MOTS-CLÉS

Zhang Taiyan, philosophie bouddhique, religiosité, révolution nationaliste, réseaux sociaux

The Buddhist Thought and Practice of Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936): The Intellectual and Spiritual Pursuit of a Revolutionary Scholar

ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the Buddhist engagement of Zhang Taiyan, one of the most influential anti-Manchu propagandists and a master in Chinese National Studies. Using a wide range of primary sources from Zhang's theoretical and polemic publications to his seminar notes and private letters, as well as his adversaries' writings and his acquaintances' recollections, the dissertation engages in active dialogues with existing scientific literature, upon which the author makes explicit his discoveries and original ideas.

Apart from in-depth and nuanced discussions about a series of major issues including Zhang's syncretic studies of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, his combination of religious reform and ethnic revolution, his debates with anarchists on nationalism and utopianism, the dissertation devotes equal pages to neglected events from Zhang's urge of leaving the profane world in his youth to the Pure Land Buddhist ritual on his death bed.

For a subject traditionally dealt with by intellectual historians, the dissertation extensively incorporates the concepts, approaches, and scientific results of religious studies. Thanks to this methodological novelty, along with a careful and systematic reading of less studied materials, it well demonstrates that Zhang's Buddhist passion manifested itself through lifelong sitting meditation, among other expressions of his religious experience and practice, hence should not be termed as purely intellectualist. Besides, the dissertation adopts a socio-historical approach presenting how Zhang played multiple roles within Buddhist communities on which he exerted extensive influence.

KEYWORDS

Zhang Taiyan, Buddhist philosophy, religiosity, nationalist revolution, Buddhist social networks

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I would like to finish the acknowledgments by paying tribute to Zhang Taiyan. Despite the distance carefully maintained in accomplishing this scientific investigation, I have nevertheless been invited into a constant conversation and experienced the age he lived through his eyes (and body). The ultimate lesson comes from his independence in exploring the world and his faithfulness to his nation.

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Introduction

* The subject of the dissertation *

This dissertation studies the Buddhist engagement of Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936). Born into a wealthy gentry family in Yuhang 餘杭 County of Zhejiang 浙江 Province, Zhang is considered by many as the most important anti-Manchu propagandist, and also one of the fathers of the Republic of China, established in 1912 on the ruins of the Qing Empire. Alongside his political influences, Zhang is also well-known as an encyclopedic and original scholar. The high-level academic training in the Han learning that Zhang received in his early years allowed him to make considerable contributions to Chinese linguistics, historical studies, and ancient classical studies. In his thirties or so, Zhang led an unsettled way of life in cosmopolitan cities such as Shanghai and Tokyo, where he extensively absorbed Western scholarship (primarily by the intermediary of Japanese intelligentsia) and engaged in debates on a wide range of political, ideological, and scholarly topics with reformists, royalists, revolutionaries, anarchists, and cultural conservatives. Zhang's role as an educator was also significant. Among his early disciples during his stay in Tokyo, several became leading figures for the New Culture Movement around the end of the 1910s, including Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) and Qian Xuantong 錢玄同 (1887-1939). Despite his reservations about the application of the Western parliamentary system in China, Zhang proved himself to be a firm defender of the Republic against the attempts to restore the monarchy. After the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang 國民黨) seized power in 1928, Zhang retreated from the political arena and devoted himself to the preservation and promotion of national studies. By his death, Zhang's image had been frozen as an outdated master of Confucian classics.

Buddhism occupied a unique position in Zhang's thought and life. His intellectual interest in Buddhism arose during his involvement with the reformist circles in the late 1890s and, to some extent, turned into a religious commitment during his three-year imprisonment (1903-1906). Similar to the other aspects of his social and scholarly activities, of which a major underlying motif can be generalized by the term "nationalism," Buddhism

was once promoted by Zhang as a religious force to facilitate ethnic revolution and restore the people's morality. Less well known was his Buddhist-inspired utopia aiming to transcend nationalism and resolve the abuses related to the ideology of evolutionism. Still fewer have been aware of Zhang's long-standing meditative practice, his urge to become a monk, as well as other religious experiences and involvements. The later stage of Zhang's Buddhist thought was driven by strong syncretism associating Buddhism with pre-Qin Daoist masters' teachings and Confucianism. Buddhism as a theme became less important in public writings and speeches during the last two decades of Zhang's life. This fact, nonetheless, should not overshadow the continuity and consistency of Zhang's Buddhist engagement in thought, practice, and social activities.

Since what Buddhism meant for Zhang was multi-dimensional and was inextricably interwoven with other domains of his life, this study requires me to attempt a comprehensive account of Zhang's overall scholarship and political career. Looking from a new angle, this Buddhist-centered approach will allow us to better understand the major issues related to him: his ideas about nationalism and national studies; his views on revolution and the post-revolutionary political system; his attitude towards foreign thought and diplomatic relations; his moral thought and spiritual pursuits. Apart from the variety of roles Zhang played as well as the complexity of his thought and personality, the drastic and general transformation of Chinese society Zhang went through adds to the difficulty of this study. Zhang's Buddhist engagement started in the aftermath of the 1894 Sino-Japanese War and reached a mature state when the New Culture Movement was triggered in 1915. This roughly twenty-year period corresponds to the crucial stage of China's radical transformation into its unique form of modernity. Taking this fact into account, we can better cope with the apparently ever-shifting characteristics of Zhang's Buddhist thought. Furthermore, it is the intention of this study to probe, through the case study of Zhang, several general questions: the differentiation of the "teaching" (*jiao* 教; a polysemous term which can also be translated as religion, education, instruction, or -ism),¹ and the modern fate of Chinese intellectuals; the radical revolution and cultural conservatism; and the religiosity of literati elites.

¹ See Douglas M. Gildow, 2018, p. 112.

* Approaches and themes in the current historiography *

As proof of his historical importance, we see a continuous history of scientific research on Zhang Taiyan since his death in various parts of the world. In 2013, Chen Xueran, a historian at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, published an article of 86 pages offering a nearly exhaustive bibliography of the scientific literature on Zhang.² Most of the scientific works were written in Chinese by both mainland Chinese and Taiwanese scholars. There, the academic works around Zhang have constituted a differentiated domain entitled “Zhang-studies” (*Zhangxue* 章學). Besides, there is an important tradition of Zhang-studies in Japan, based on the well-established philological scholarship as well as the leftwing intelligentsia. In Western sinology, the monographs and articles dedicated to Zhang remain limited. Nonetheless, Zhang’s name is frequently referred to by intellectual historians (mainly in the Anglophone world) primarily when discussing nationalism in modern China. Ever since Chen’s 2013 article, we see a continuing revival of Zhang-studies in mainland China. Equally important was the publication of the new edition of the *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (*The Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan*) in 2014-2017.

I choose to conduct the scientific literature review according to approaches and themes instead of chronological or regional order. The academic approaches and themes to be introduced are related to not only Zhang’s Buddhist engagement but also the other aspects of his life and thought and even more general issues. The reason for this choice lies in the fact that scholars affiliated with several different disciplines have contributed to Zhang-studies. Those of the same approach tend to share similar presuppositions, apply similar methodologies, focus on similar topics and facets, and are sometimes situated in the same academic network. Furthermore, Zhang Taiyan and Buddhism as a theme has not gained the status of a highly differentiated subdivision. The most valuable scientific works for my study were usually published by the scholars specialized in other subjects within Zhang-studies. It is unfeasible to sketch the current state of the scientific literature on

² Chen Xueran, 2013.

Zhang's Buddhist engagement while separating it from the general picture. In addition, reviewing in this form allows me to show how this study might be beneficial for colleagues occupied with different but related questions.

In the following part of the section, I would like to review 12 themes, starting with the more general questions and followed by those belonging more narrowly to Zhang-studies. The first group of themes is further divided into two fundamental approaches of intellectual history and religious studies. The second group of themes is arranged following the order from philological to theoretical approach. Inevitably, there is a certain degree of arbitrariness in my categorization and the themes may overlap with each other. For each theme, I will introduce its general views (and methodology in some cases), some representative scholars (especially those having directly contributed to my dissertation), and how I have benefited from their works.

Let us start with the approach of intellectual history. The first theme is the radicalization of intellectual culture in modern China. By “radicalization” I mean an ever-growing doubt and criticism against the intellectual heritage and institutional legitimacy in terms of Confucianism and imperial monarchy, which undermined the continuity of the Chinese cultural tradition across several generations of intellectuals. One of the most eminent studies came from Joseph Levenson. In his case study of Liang Qichao, Levenson explained the apparent inconsistencies and incompatibilities in Liang's ideas by relativizing them according to the situation and the reference. The anti-culturalism which Liang had painfully struggled to reach became a natural starting point for the next generation of the “new youth” (*xinqingnian* 新青年) The ideas they seemed to share were actually spoken in different languages and mental states.³ Levenson's schema is very helpful for apprehending Zhang's radical attacks against Confucius and Confucianism in the 1900s (corresponding to his turn to Buddhism) and his self-criticism a decade later. Despite the confrontation of their ideas on many issues, Zhang and Liang were contemporaries and experienced a similar “drift” in the rapidly changing spectrum of politics and culture.

In order to explain the radicalization of the intellectual sphere, Yu Ying-shih

³ Joseph R. Levenson, 1965, pp. vii-viii, 10-11.

articulated it with the marginalization of the educated elites in the political sphere.⁴ The most crucial event for the latter process, as pointed out by many, was the abolition of the imperial exams system (*keju* 科舉) in 1905, the impact of which was fully demonstrated in Henrietta Harrison's study of Liu Dapeng 劉大鵬 (1857-1942).⁵ A student of Yu Ying-shih and having also researched Liu Dapeng's diary, Luo Zhitian related the marginalization of the educated elites with the rise of a newly educated population from the peripheral to the central arena,⁶ which offered sociological insights into the increasing cultural radicalism. Another student of Yu, Wang Fansen dedicated an early work to introducing the general thought of Zhang Taiyan in the late Qing, which concluded by examining its far-reaching impacts on Confucianism.⁷ The debt that I owe to Wang's works is not sufficiently manifested in the citations. In addition, the mainland Chinese scholars of the 1970s and 1980s also touched on Zhang's career as a pioneering revolutionary thinker. Despite their problematic terms and theoretical frameworks by the standard of contemporary scholarship, several scholars (e.g. Li Zehou and Hou Wailu) have contributed insightful views revealing the mixture of radical and conservative elements in Zhang's thought.⁸

The second theme is conservatism as an intellectual trend of modern China. A classical research collection is *The Limits of Change*, edited by Charlotte Furth, which provides us with a dozen of case studies on the conservative alternatives offered by both intellectual elites and political forces throughout the late Qing and Republican history. Although radical and conservative are used to indicate two opposite orientations, the common principle is that the people sharing the same ideas in a certain period did not necessarily speak the same language and express the same mental state. While Levenson helped us to understand Zhang's conservative turn by the intergenerational radicalization, Furth's essay on Zhang's nationalism well demonstrated the compatibility between Zhang's cultural conservatism and political radicalism.⁹ A recent article by Aymeric Xu proposed a four-dimensional typology to map conservatism in Republican China, within

⁴ Yu Ying-shih, 2003, pp. 15-25 (as cited in Aymeric Xu, 2020, p. 159).

⁵ Henrietta Harrison, 2005.

⁶ Luo Zhitian, 2014, pp. 109-153.

⁷ Wang Fansen, 2012.

⁸ Li Zehou, 1979, pp. 382-420. Hou Wailu, 2014, pp. 1330-1475.

⁹ Charlotte Furth, 1976.

which Zhang was categorized as a major representative of antimodern conservatives. Moreover, Xu traced Republican conservatism to the late Qing movement of culturalist nationalism, in which Zhang played a crucial role.¹⁰ By illuminating the different connotations of conservatism in the late Qing and Republican contexts, Xu's study offers a thread to apprehend the changes and consistency of Zhang's thought across the decades. Among the contemporary mainland Chinese Zhang-scholars, it is Wang Rui who made remarkable new progress on Zhang's cultural conservatism in his later years, which contextualized it in Zhang's academic disputes with the "new youth" scholars and emphasized its connection with Zhang's mature political thought.¹¹

The third theme is the political and moral application of Buddhism in late Qing China. Among the studies of the intellectual culture during this period, much attention has been paid to the importance of Buddhism to reformist and revolutionary literati elites. In contrast to most of the earlier literati laity who limited their interest in and devotion to Buddhism to their private life, they promoted Buddhism as an indispensable means to save the Chinese nation and its moral tradition. Buddhism, along with the studies of pre-Qin masters as well as Western thought and religion, were considered to offer ideological alternatives to the official version of Confucianism. This topic has attracted both intellectual historians and scholars of Buddhist studies. In the first group, some scholars of (e.g. Chan Sin-wai and Jiang Hainu) proposed the term "political Buddhism" and discussed its logic and effects.¹² The second group, represented by Li Xiangping, concentrated more on the Buddhist values and their role in restoring morality.¹³ Despite the difference in their focus, there is no substantial divergence between the scholars when explaining the sudden surge of enthusiasm in Buddhism within the literati circles of political activists. They all agreed or presupposed that this short-lived enthusiasm was motivated by the urge to seek order and meaning (as the title of Chang Hao's monograph revealed) in a time of deepening national crisis.¹⁴ Although the bond between Buddhism and politics soon ceased to exist, the generation of the "new youth" largely inherited the same motivation as their late Qing

¹⁰ Aymeric Xu, 2020, pp. 137-140, 149.

¹¹ Wang Rui, 2014; 2016.

¹² Chan Sin-wai, 1985. Jiang Hainu, 2012.

¹³ Li Xiangping, 1993.

¹⁴ Chang Hao, 1988.

predecessors, which constituted a thread of underlying continuity, as discussed by Kondo Kuniyasu.¹⁵ In most studies, Zhang Taiyan and his Buddhist thought were treated as one of the main cases, usually alongside Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-1898), and Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927).

Now we shall turn to the approach of religious studies. Compared with intellectual historians, the scholars of religion have contributed much less to the subject of Zhang's Buddhist engagement. Based on the approach of intellectual history, Zhang's Buddhist engagement is equal to Zhang's Buddhist thought. In this more or less instrumentalist perspective, Zhang took advantage of Buddhism as one of the unconventional intellectual resources which facilitated his engagement in scholarly debates and political activities. Even those who recognized the sphere of belief in Zhang's Buddhist engagement tended to treat this belief as purely founded on intellectualism. While totally agreeing that Zhang's Buddhist engagement was different from the conventional situations of literati lay Buddhists, I intend to demonstrate that, by introducing the theoretical frameworks of religious studies and their recent scientific results (though usually without direct link with Zhang-studies), we are able to uncover aspects long neglected under the currently predominant instrumentalist approach and put forward a more complete picture. Once we perceive Zhang's Buddhist engagement as a way of "doing religion" and set out to search for primary sources in this direction, we begin to see how Buddhism provided Zhang with the means for self-cultivation, informed his urge for transcendental pursuit, and finally, reveals to us the role he played in the fast-changing landscape of Chinese religion. Although the scientific literature of religious studies is less well incorporated in the dissertation, it has resulted in many original points, especially in Chapters 4 and 6.

The fourth theme, and also the first for the approach of religious studies, is the Buddhist revival in modern China. To be introduced first is the classic study of Holmes Welch which made the thesis of "Buddhist revival" both prominent and problematic. Integrating a variety of texts, documents, and oral materials, Welch's monograph set the benchmark for the social history of Buddhist studies and is still inspiring today for his

¹⁵ Kondo Kuniyasu, 1988. To be noted, I do not speak or read Japanese and can only access Japanese scientific literature through published Chinese translations.

critical way of investigation.¹⁶ Following Welch's pioneering work, many new scientific results have been achieved in the form of biographical studies. In the West, we see Gabriele Goldfuss' study of Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837-1911), Don Pittman's study of Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947), and Daniel Campo's study of Xuyun 虛雲 (circa 1864-1959), among others.¹⁷ Goldfuss' monograph manifested the considerable influence Yang exerted over the reformist intelligentsia in the Jiangnan Area and hence facilitated my inquiry into the ambiguous distinction between Buddhist laymen (*jushi* 居士) and Buddhist scholars (Zhang being included in the latter), which was commonly maintained by earlier biographical studies in Chinese like those of Shi Dongchu and Yu Lingbo.¹⁸ Recent researches underlined the use of archives and manuscripts, allowing to sketch a more authentic portrait of prominent figures, a good example of which was Gong Jun and Lai Yueshan' study of Taixu.¹⁹

The fifth theme is the religiosity of the late Qing literati. As a relatively new concept, “religiosity” leads us to examine the exercise of personal agency in choosing from a vast and diverse religious repertoire. Among the schema developed on this conceptual basis, we have Adam Yue Chau's five modalities of “doing religion” and Vincent Goossaert's four-quadrant typology of elite religiosity.²⁰ Resorting to Chau's schema, my dissertation tries to demonstrate that the way Zhang engaged in Buddhism was far from solely discursive/scriptural, but also personal-cultivational and, to some extent, immediate-practical and relational. As to Goossaert, he proposed another concept related to religiosity, i.e. “biculturality,” which underlines the diversity of literati's personal religious convictions underneath the public role models that they were expected to play as officials or Confucians.²¹ By revealing the distance between public and private religiosities, we are able to surpass the dispute around confessional religious identities, which, in Zhang's case, involved problematic queries on whether Zhang can be seen as a Buddhist devotee (in contrast to his identity as a Confucian master).

The sixth theme, the differentiation of the “teaching,” offers another angle to question

¹⁶ Holmes Welch, 1968.

¹⁷ Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001. Don A. Pittman, 2001. Daniel Campo, 2013.

¹⁸ Shi Dongchu 1976. Yu Lingbo, 1995.

¹⁹ Gong Jun & Lai Yueshan, 2014. For more recent researches on Taixu, see Wang Song ed., 2018; 2020.

²⁰ Adam Yue Chau, 2006, p. 75. Vincent Goossaert, 2017, pp. 15-17.

²¹ Vincent Goossaert, 2017, pp. 10-13.

the religiosity of the late Qing intellectual elites, especially its decline and reconfiguration. Intellectual historians represented by Luo Zhitian and Wang Fansen have made great contributions to topics related to this theme such as the disintegration of the literati status group and the emergence of modern intellectuals, and the formation of history as a modern discipline in China.²² This theme has also entered the collective consciousness of the scholars of religious studies, as seen in a special issue on religion, education, and politics in modern China.²³ The editor of this issue, Ji Zhe, introduced the sociological theories of social differentiation to grasp the Chinese path of secularization and how the lay Buddhist elites (represented by Yang Wenhui and Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無, 1871-1943) opted to reconstruct the relations between sacredness, knowledge, and power.²⁴ This theoretical perspective and the aforementioned scientific results have led me to realize (1) the difference in the scriptural studies between Zhang and the next generation of Buddhist academics in Western-style universities and (2) the social role that Zhang expected Buddhism to play in contrast to the ideas of Ouyang and Taixu.

The seventh theme is the new landscape of popular religion in modern China. From a panoramic perspective, as provided by Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer's book,²⁵ the Buddhist engagement of Zhang Taiyan and other prominent figures was merely a relatively visible part of the vast "ecology" of China's religious landscape which evolved while constantly interacting with the other elements and forces of the society. In this landscape, the habit for Zhang-scholars is to pay attention to Zhang's scholarly ideas about Buddhism, pre-Qin Daoist masters, Confucianism, and their relationship. The neglect of the large-scale reconfiguration of popular religion, in which redemptive societies occupied an important position,²⁶ resulted in overlooking its relevance with Zhang's reservation towards the religious propagation of Buddhism. Next, I have benefited from the study of Sébastien Billiou and Joël Thoraval and that of Li Tiangang on Confucianism and popular religion, both combining fieldwork with textual studies, a methodological awareness that

²² Luo Zhitian, 2014. Wang Fansen, 2001.

²³ Ji Zhe ed., 2011.

²⁴ See, respectively, Ji Zhe, 2017; 2009.

²⁵ Vincent Goossaert & David A. Palmer, 2011.

²⁶ A recent publication of collected articles, edited by Philip Clart, David Ownby, and Chien-chuan Wang (2020), contains Fan Chun-wu's article on the Moral Studies Society (Daode xueshe 道德學社) and Matthias Schumann's on the "spiritual studies" (*lingxue* 靈學). I have not accessed this book until the last stage of dissertation writing.

Barend ter Haar generalized in his critical review on the history of Chinese religious studies.²⁷ These works guided me to more carefully investigate Zhang's changing conception of "religion" which is revealing for various issues.

After the introduction of the above general themes, let us proceed to the five remaining themes belonging to Zhang-studies. The eighth and ninth themes are respectively about the edition and publication of Zhang's works, and the works of annotation and biographical notes. Through the introduction of these two themes, we are able to get some basic knowledge about the situation of primary sources.

The eighth theme. The editors of Zhang's works have accomplished a high-quality job during the last half a century or so. The editing work, initiated in the Mao era, succeeded in publishing an incomplete edition of the *Zhang Taiyan quanji* in the early 1980s. Several favorable factors existed then, including Zhang's fame as an anti-Manchu revolutionary, his master-disciple relationship with Lu Xun, and Mao Zedong's 毛澤東 (1893-1976) interest in Zhang's studies of Legalism in the former's last years. Most importantly, however, were the collective efforts of Zhang's disciples (Wang Zhongluo 王仲犖, 1913-1986, Jiang Liangfu 姜亮夫, 1902-1995, and Zhu Zugeng 諸祖耿, 1899-1989, to name just a few) and their supporters. Since the first edition of *The Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan*, more of his writings were edited and published, based on which we see finally a new edition, published between 2014-2017, exclusively including all existing words of Zhang. Among the most important contributors are Zhang Nianchi, Zhang Taiyan's grandson, an indispensable initiator for the work of collection and publication; Tang Zhijun, the author of *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian* 章太炎年譜長編 (*Extended Notes on the "Chronological Autobiography of Zhang Taiyan"*), the compilation of which was based on his 1961 edition of a collection of Zhang's political essays;²⁸ and Zhu Weizheng, whose philological expertise allowed him to probe Zhang's long and complicated process of writing and revising two editions of the *Book of Urgency* (*Qiushu* 捷書) and, as the final edition, the *Book after Examination* (*Jianlun* 檢論).²⁹

The ninth theme. The work of annotation is extremely important for contemporary

²⁷ Sébastien Billioud & Joël Thoraval, 2014. Li Tiangang, 2017. Barend ter Haar, 2016.

²⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013. Zhang Taiyan, 1977.

²⁹ Zhu Weizheng, 1983.

Zhang-scholars in view of the notorious obscurity of Zhang's writing style. Just as the situation for the edition and publication, the main annotators were Zhang's disciples and their disciples as well as the scholars within their social networks. As the most remarkable results, we have Xu Fu's annotation of the *Book of Urgency (revised version)*, Pang Jun and Guo Chengyong's of the *Disquisitions on National Heritage* (*Guogu lunheng* 國故論衡), and Meng Zhuo's of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"* (*Qiwulun shi* 齊物論釋).³⁰ The early annotators, principally trained in traditional Chinese linguistics and studies of classical texts, did not well elucidate the parts related to Buddhism, as exposed in Xu Fu's case. In Meng Zhuo's recent work, this disadvantage has been overcome. Among the works of biographical notes, Tang Zhijun's aforementioned extended notes are of great value, offering comprehensive philological and contextual information about Zhang's writings. Originally published in 1978, this book has a revised edition in 2010 with complementary content based on Tang's fieldwork in the libraries and archives of Japan, the USA, Singapore, and elsewhere.³¹

The tenth theme is textual research, which constitutes the basis for most of Zhang-studies. Compared with those of his linguistic and classical studies, high-level textual researches on Zhang's Buddhist studies are limited. The academics who contributed the most to this theme are Buddhologists and philosophers. In the first group, we have the excellent work of Guo Peng and his colleagues whose expertise in the history and scriptures of Chinese Buddhism allowed them to cast critical new light on several key issues of Zhang's Buddhist ideas.³² The more recent monograph by Zhou Guihua offers solid contextual knowledge for Chapter 6 of my dissertation.³³ In the second group, John Makeham's article is the first one to systematically introduce Zhang's Buddhist thought to the Western world, from which I benefited for terminological translations. In addition, Makeham was also the editor for a collection on Yogācāra studies in modern China.³⁴ We also have an article by Zhang Zhiqiang on Zhang's philosophical reinterpretation of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, which, though strongly theory-oriented, was based on attentive readings

³⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2000. Zhang Taiyan, 2011c. Meng Zhuo, 2019.

³¹ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 569.

³² Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying, 1989, pp. 354-391.

³³ Zhou Guihua, 2006.

³⁴ John Makeham, 2012. John Makeham ed., 2014.

of Zhang's original texts.³⁵

The eleventh theme is the transcultural context of Zhang's thought. Along with the next one, these two themes concern more general questions. I arrange them here because all of the scientific literature introduced below belongs to Zhang-studies. The Japanese context is the central subject for this theme. During the twelve years between the end of 1899 and the end of 1911, Zhang traveled three times to Japan, the third of which lasted for more than five years. It is during this period that we witness not only the highlights of Zhang's career as a persevering anti-Manchu propagandist but also the production of a large part of his Buddhist texts. For this subject as well as some related topics, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the works of Kobayashi Takeshi,³⁶ Peng Chunling, Lin Shaoyang, and Sakamoto Hiroko.³⁷ Besides, it is necessary to mention Ge Zhaoguang's study of the cultural and religious exchange between late Qing China and Japan, the focus of which was Buddhism.³⁸ In contrast to the fruitful researches on the Japanese context, those on the importance of India remain rare. Apart from the monograph of Lin Shaoyang which touched on this subject from a geopolitical angle, we have a precious essay by the acknowledged sinologist Rao Zongyi on Zhang's appreciation of Indian religion and culture.³⁹

The twelfth and last theme is Zhang Taiyan as an original thinker of modernity. While it has long been a common sense among Zhang-scholars that Zhang experienced and actively reacted to the radical transformation of Chinese society from traditional to modern, it is a relatively new subject that treats Zhang as a major Chinese spokesman encountering the Western ideological trends; these trends served as research topics for political philosophy, social theories, and cultural studies. Widely received in both the Chinese and English academic world, Wong Young-tsui highlighted cultural pluralism as the core of Zhang's critical reflection on modernity, though he discussed at the same time Zhang's rejection of Westernization, criticizing Social Darwinism in particular.⁴⁰ Confronting

³⁵ Zhang Zhiqiang, 2012.

³⁶ The dissertation chooses to write the Romanized Japanese names in the same way as the Chinese ones, i.e. family names ahead of given names, contrary to the conventional order.

³⁷ Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018. Peng Chunling, 2014 (among others). Lin Shaoyang, 2018. Sakamoto Hiroko 2019. Peng keeps close contact with Japanese colleagues whereas Lin pursued his PhD and has been teaching in Japan.

³⁸ Ge Zhaoguang, 2006.

³⁹ Rao Zongyi, 1998.

⁴⁰ Wong Young-tsui, 2003.

Wong's thesis, Wang Hui and Viren Murthy depicted Zhang as a thinker radically negating Western modernity. Resorting to Buddhist and Daoist ideas, Zhang, as the two scholars reinterpreted him, deconstructed the discourse of the "universal principle" (*gongli* 公理) which was becoming the predominant ideological premise among his pro-Western contemporaries.⁴¹ From the polemics between Wong and Murthy,⁴² we can perceive that their opposition was motivated by both academic and political divergences.

* Introducing the chapters of the dissertation *

In the previous section, I offer a panoramic retrospective of the scientific literature. A more in-depth and critical review of scientific results will be distributed to the chapters according to their subjects. Apart from such a review, each chapter will provide more detailed biographical and philological information about Zhang and his writings. What this section briefly introduces are the period, context, main content, and sources of the six chapters.

Chapter 1 deals with Zhang's views on Buddhism during his early political career from 1897 to 1900. Concentrating on the context of the so-called "New learning" (*xinxue* 新學) circulating within the social networks of reformist literati elites, this chapter reveals Zhang's apparently critical attitude towards Buddhism as being caused by his rejection of the problematic political application of Buddhist ideas, primarily promoted by the followers and sympathizers of Kang Youwei. It then traces the various intellectual sources of the New learning, based on which Zhang's divergence with the Kang Party shall be explained. In the last part, this chapter argues that Zhang's appreciation of Buddhist doctrines was higher than many have assumed, as proved by less-often discussed passages from several of his key texts of this period, and laid the foundation for his later Buddhist thought.

Chapter 2 proceeds to the period starting from mid-1900 (Zhang's turn to anti-Manchu revolution) until mid-1907 (one year after Zhang's third stay in Japan). In contrast to the conventional narrative underlining Zhang's dramatic turn to Buddhism due to his jail

⁴¹ Wang Hui, 2008. Viren Murthy, 2011.

⁴² Wang Young-tsu, 2012. Viren Murthy, 2012.

experience (1903-1906), this chapter intends to reveal the importance of the three years before Zhang's imprisonment (1900-1903), proposing that Zhang's increasing interest in "religion" (both as a neologism and a knowledge system) in this earlier period prepared him for the establishment of his Buddhist commitment. Based on the awareness of this correlation, we are able to develop a more in-depth understanding of Zhang's 1906 proposal for the combination of Religion (i.e. reformed Buddhism)⁴³ and "National Essence" (*guocui* 國粹) to facilitate the revolutionary movement. The more original part of the chapter interrogates the differentiated position of Religion and National Essence in Zhang's thought, as well as Zhang's ambivalent reception of evolutionism, and the relevance of his hostility towards Kang Youwei to his criticism against Confucius and Confucianism.

Focuses on a short period from mid-1907 to mid-1908, Chapter 3 investigates Zhang's Buddhist-inspired utopianism. Previous researchers often treated the year before and after mid-1907 as a whole, during which Zhang served as the chief editor of *The People's Journal* (*Minbao* 民報), and nationalism and Buddhism were two main themes of his publications there. This chapter, however, emphasizes the radical shift of Zhang's thought in mid-1907 due to his disappointment with his revolutionary comrades and his involvement with anarchist groups. The text central to this chapter is "On the Five Negations" (*Wuwu lun* 五無論), in which Zhang elaborated a five-stage utopian theoretical framework to transcend, instead of allying with, nationalism. Departing from the thread offered by a neglected letter from Zhang to Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), I intend to reveal Chinese anarchists as the implicit interlocutors of the former part of Zhang's text. The strong moral pessimism expressed in the latter part is contextualized in Zhang's critique of evolutionism based on his Buddhist philosophy.

Departing from Zhang's controversial attempt to become a monk in India during the turn of 1908, Chapter 4 sets out to explore the undiscovered side of Zhang's Buddhist engagement, including his recurrent urge to leave the profane world, his long-standing meditative practice, his dreams of the netherworld, and the Pure Land Buddhist ritual on his deathbed. Zhang's private letters are the crucial primary sources for this chapter,

⁴³ In the dissertation, the first letter of "religion" is capitalized when referring to the new version of Buddhism that Zhang conceived.

complemented by the recollections of his acquaintances, the documents, as well as public writings. Although most of the historical materials are fragmentary, assembled chronologically in a single chapter, they are rich and solid enough to support the argument that the practical aspect of Zhang's Buddhist engagement was continuous and consistent, in contrast to the relatively unstable aspect of his theoretical thinking, more susceptible to the changes in the political environment and scholarly influences. The main aim of the chapter is to rectify the conventional viewpoint that characterized Zhang's Buddhist passion as purely intellectualist. The curiosity and familiarity with the surrounding religious culture, and the self-cultivation in the private life, were actually prevailing among the late Qing literati elites, which drastically diminished among the more secularized intelligentsia of the next generation.

Chapter 5 studies the development of Zhang's scholarly and religious thought from 1908 to 1916. In contrast to the unsettled state of his social life, his thought was steadily oriented towards syncretizing Buddhism with Daoist masters' and Confucian teachings, the most sophisticated expressions of which can be found in *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal."* Since previous researches have adequately discussed how Zhang reinterpreted the *Zhuangzi* in line with his Buddhist theories, this chapter turns to a rarely trodden path, tracing Zhang's syncretism of the Three Teachings back to the growing syncretic tendency in his Buddhist thought through the study of the neglected 1908 essay of Zhang on the origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism along with its two appendices. Besides, the chapter attempts to reveal Zhang's critical reflection on the defects of his utopianism by reading between the lines of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal."*

Chapter 6 takes as its subject Zhang's relationship with Buddhist communities. Similar to Chapter 4, it establishes an overall perspective throughout Zhang's life but pays more attention to the Republican period. The chapter is divided into three sections: the first on Zhang's expectations for the role of Buddhism in Chinese society, Buddhist reforms, the relationship between monks and laity, and that between Buddhism and Confucianism; the second about Zhang's social networking with eminent Buddhist monks, the circle around Yang Wenhui, and young Buddhist scholars, as well as his position in Buddhist

associations; the third discussing Zhang's interaction with Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu, two of the most influential Buddhist figures in modern China. By covering a series of less-studied topics, this last chapter enables us to acquire a complete understanding of Zhang's Buddhist engagement.

Chapter 1. Zhang Taiyan among the New Learning Scholars: Buddhism in the Reformist Context

* Introduction *

This chapter deals with Zhang's views on Buddhism during his early political career as a reformist, beginning from his departure from the Gujing Jingshe Academy 詰經精舍 for Shanghai in January 1897 until mid-1900 when he turned to the path of anti-Manchu revolution. This is the first period in Zhang's life that provides us with considerable materials about Zhang's Buddhist engagement. We do have some of Zhang's earlier writings during his studies at the Gujing Jingshe Academy, but these were essentially the results of the academic training he received there, which had little relevance to Buddhism.

As we will see below, Zhang did not show much enthusiasm about Buddhism during this period. Rather than exploring Buddhist texts and their practical meaning by himself, Zhang's reading of and reflection on Buddhism were principally motivated by the need to respond to the intellectual climate around him, once he entered the staff of *Shiwubao Journal* 時務報 in Shanghai and joined in the reformist circles. It was the eve of the Wuxu Reform 戊戌變法 (or the Hundred Days' Reform), the spreading sense of crisis among literati elites had opened the doors for unconventional and Westernized ideas and had offered young intellectuals more possibilities to play a role in the coming political reforms. It was in this context that we witness the discourse of the “New learning” (*xinxue* 新學), circulating among the reformist intelligentsia, especially the followers of a radical young reformist, Kang Youwei. Alongside the New learning was a collective enthusiasm for Buddhism, shared by the so-called “Kang Party” 康黨 as well as several of Zhang's close friends, Song Shu 宋恕 (1862-1910) being the most outstanding example. Strongly oriented towards endorsing reformist agenda, this enthusiasm nonetheless manifested some traits of self-conscious beliefs.

Due to his limited interest in Buddhism, in Zhang's writings of this period, we see fewer contents related to Buddhism, and his Buddhist ideas were less sophisticated compared with later periods. The more difficult task is rather to contextualize this question

within current events and intellectual trends and reveal his interlocutors who were sometimes implicit. This chapter intends to understand Zhang's reactive views on Buddhism in the context of the short-lived reformist movement and the New learning, emphasizing his scholarly confrontation with the Kang Party as the main reason for his criticisms against Buddhism. It then proceeds to discuss the ambiguity and even appreciation in Zhang's attitude towards Buddhism; this positive side has largely been neglected by Zhang-scholars. To conclude, the chapter argues that Zhang's later enthusiasm for Buddhism can be partly seen as an intellectual and spiritual heritage that can be traced back to his interactions with the New learning scholars.

Comparative discussions about Zhang and the New learning scholars, especially Kang Youwei, already frequently appeared in the writings of Republican-period scholars. Liang Qichao, for example, wrote in 1920 the *Introduction to the scholarship of the Qing dynasty* (*Qingdai xueshu gailun* 清代學術概論), in which he describes Zhang as the “rear guard of the orthodox school of the Qing dynasty” 清學正統派的殿軍, as opposed to the New learning scholars including Liang himself.⁴⁴ An eminent historian, Lyu Simian 呂思勉 (1884-1957) wrote an inspiring article about Zhang, Kang, and Liang from an outsider's perspective.⁴⁵ Besides, in their respective studies of Zhang and Kang, Qian Mu and K. C. Hsiao 蕭公權 (1897-1981) have both implicitly undertaken a comparative perspective, and the role of Buddhism in their thought was underlined.⁴⁶ This is also the case for more contemporary researchers such as Charlotte Furth, Wong Young-tsu, and Wang Fansen who all paid close attention to the historical significance of the scholarly and political divergences between Zhang and Kang.⁴⁷ Moreover, there are more than a few researches on Zhang's relationship with Liang Qichao and other members of the New learning circles, notably the work of Lu Yin.⁴⁸ The research project on Liang Qichao, Meiji Japan, and the West, directed by Naoki Hazama,⁴⁹ also helps us to better apprehend the global context that Liang and Zhang shared around the turn of the 20th century.

Apart from the historians concerned with the political and ideological trends of

⁴⁴ Liang Qichao, 2010, pp. 141-144.

⁴⁵ Lyu Simian, 1986, pp. 170-186.

⁴⁶ Qian Mu, 2010, 2011, 2016. K. C. Hsiao, 2011, pp. 670-704, 833-869.

⁴⁷ Charlotte Furth, 1976, pp. 113-117, 147-148. Wong Young-tsu, 2006. Wang Fansen, 2012, pp. 169-221.

⁴⁸ Lu Yin, 2008.

⁴⁹ Naoki Hazama, 2001.

modern China, the scholars of Buddhism have also paid much attention to the Buddhist enthusiasm among the political reformists around the Wuxu Reform. Some grasp it as a thread for the Buddhist revival in modern China whereas others concentrated on the political and moral application of Buddhism. These two groups respectively correspond to the fourth and third themes of the Introduction, so it is not necessary to list the names here again. Their common ground is to treat such Buddhist enthusiasm as something distinguished from the conventional spiritual pursuit of the Buddhist laity, aiming at political mobilization and moral restoration in the face of the deepening national crisis. Recent researchers have extended the inquiry of the question by including more important figures into the scope. A good example is Douglas Gildow's study of Cai Yuanpei, one of the main promotor of Western secular education, and his little-known 1900 plan to save China through Buddhism.⁵⁰

Despite the fact that the Buddhist-motivated unconventional ideas of the late Qing literati elites served as an important academic theme and that Zhang was one of the most frequently cited figures, very limited emphasis has been given to his early views on Buddhism. It is the same situation among Zhang-scholars who usually traced Zhang's Buddhist engagement back to his three-year imprisonment (1903-1906). This chapter, however, intends to demonstrate that, despite his strong opposition to the political-oriented promotion of Buddhism, Zhang already showed his appreciation of and profound knowledge about Buddhism on many occasions, which laid the foundation for his later Buddhist thought. After I had written the present chapter, I accessed an article by Chen Jidong included in a 2019 volume of essays co-authored with Gong Jun.⁵¹ Based on his exhaustive studies of the *Book of Urgency (first edition)* (*Qiushu chukeben* 單書初刻本), Zhang's main work of this period, Chen has reached very similar conclusions to mine.⁵² My study below mainly cites Zhang's publications in journals, only several of which were included in the *Book of Urgency (first edition)*. As a result, the belated incorporation of Chen's work can considerably reinforce my arguments.

⁵⁰ Douglas M. Gildow, 2018.

⁵¹ Chen Jidong, 2019a.

⁵² Chen based his research on the previous works of his Japanese colleagues who recognized the ambivalence of Zhang's views on Buddhism earlier than the Zhang-scholars in mainland China. Chen Jidong, 2019a, pp. 187-188.

* The reformist context of Zhang Taiyan's early Buddhist thought *

I would like to start with Zhang's recollection noted in the 1897 entry of his *Chronological Autobiography* (*Ziding nianpu* 自訂年譜), where he refers to Buddhism for the first time in the book. The citation below reveals that Zhang's encounter with Buddhism happened during his involvement in the reformist movement; several names of his most important interlocutors are mentioned:

I was in Shanghai in the spring [of the Dingyou 丁酉]. Liang Zhuoru [Liang Qichao] and others then promoted the Confucian religion, with which I strongly disagreed. ... Meanwhile, Pingzi [Song Shu] of Pingyang county came to Shanghai. We highly appreciated each other after exchanging our thought. Pingzi showed me *An Exposition of Benevolence (Renxue)*, written by Tan Sitong of Liuyang county. Upset by the hybridity of its theory, I did not appreciate this book much. Pingzi then asked me: "Have you read Buddhist scriptures?" I responded: "I used to browse, among others, the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, and the *Nirvana Sūtra*, following Suiqing's [Xia Zengyou] recommendation. But I cannot think deeply into them." Pingzi said: "Why don't you try the 'Three treatises' (*sanlun* 三論)⁵³?" I finished reading them but did not appreciate them much either. The Confucian scholarship I was committed to at that time was founded on the teachings of Sunqing [Xunzi], which is why I did not like those who advocated empty words and shortcuts. By accident, I found the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. I felt enlightened at first reading and frequently cited it.

春時在上海，梁卓如等倡言孔教，余甚非之。……會平陽宋恕平子來，與語，甚相得。平子以瀏陽譚嗣同所著《仁學》見示，余怪其雜糅，不甚許也。平子因問：“君讀佛典否？”余言：“穗卿嘗勸購買，略涉《法華》、《華嚴》、《涅槃》諸經，不能深也。”平子言：“何不取‘三論’讀之。”讀竟，亦不甚好。時余所操儒術，以孫卿為宗，不喜持空論言捷徑者。偶得《大乘起信論》，一見心悟，常諷誦之。⁵⁴

⁵³ The “Three treatises” refer to three fundamental canonical works of Mādhyamaka Buddhism (*zhongguan xuepai* 中觀學派), i.e. the *Middle Treatise* (*Zhonglun* 中論 *Mūlamadhyamakārikā*), the *Treatise on the Twelve Gates* (*Shiermen lun* 十二門論 *Dvādaśadvāraśāstra*), and the *Hundred Treatise* (*Bailun* 百論 *Śatakaśāstra*).

⁵⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 22. This dissertation systematically offers the original Chinese texts of all citations since my English translations are preliminary and often unable to convey Zhang's sophisticated thoughts beneath his extremely

The passage gives us an impression that, despite his rapidly increasing knowledge about Buddhism, Zhang was by and large not interested in it. This chapter will demonstrate that a judgment based on this impression was partial. The reason I cite it is rather that it reveals the context of Zhang's Buddhist reading. The persons mentioned include Liang Qichao, Song Shu, Tan Sitong, and Xia Zengyou 夏曾佑 (1863-1924), all being prominent figures in the reformist circles. In contrast to Zhang's apparent indifference, they shared great enthusiasm for Buddhism with many more. These reformist intellectuals (or literati),⁵⁵ usually degree holders in the imperial exams system, were referred to as members of the "New Party" (*xindang* 新黨), and the new forms of scholarship they advocated were, as they called it, the "New learning."

In its broad sense, the New learning had two key tendencies. The first was the shift of paradigms from the indigenous traditions of classical, ethical, and ritual knowledge to the analytical and experimental methods of Western natural and social sciences. The second was the impact of Social Darwinism, following Yan Fu's 嚴復 (1854-1921) translation of Thomas H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (entitled "Tianyan lun" 天演論 in Chinese), published in April 1898. Once accepting Social Darwinism, the Chinese intellectuals were drawn into a worldview of ruthless competitions between the nations,⁵⁶ which implied that, far from being similar to value-neutral modern disciplines, the New learning served as a strong promotor for far-reaching social reforms and mobilization.⁵⁷ The emergence of the trends of the New learning can be traced back to 1861 when the Qing governors launched the Self-Strengthening Movement (*ziqiang yundong* 自強運動), now more commonly known as the Western Affairs Movement (*yangwu yundong* 洋務運動), toward the end of the civil war against the Taiping Rebellion 太平天國 (1850-1864). The chapter, however, refers to the narrow sense of the term, which was characterized by syncretizing diverse scholarly traditions, advocating the teachings of Mencius against those of Xunzi 荀子 (316?-237BC?), and strong involvements with religion.⁵⁸ The New

literary writing style.

⁵⁵ The dissertation uses alternatively "intellectual" and "literati" to designate Zhang Taiyan and many of his acquaintances according to the context.

⁵⁶ To have a general understanding of the tremendous influence of Darwinism on modern China, see James R. Pusey, 1983.

⁵⁷ Ji Zhe, 2017, p. 22.

⁵⁸ Lu Yin, 2008, pp. 199-201.

learning in this sense was short-lived. It circulated in a contentiously way during the reformist movement which gained its momentum in the aftermath of the First Sino-Japanese war 中日甲午戰爭 (1894-1895), and rapidly declined following the Coup of Wuxu 戊戌政變 (June-September 21, 1898). The main advocates of the New learning thus were narrowed down to the Kang Party and some close allies within their social networks. In the following discussions, they are referred to as New learning scholars instead of New Party members since what was at stake here were the scholarly and religious ideas of these people rather than their political activities.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to offer a brief introduction to the political context of the reformist movement. In the conventional narratives of this history, several groups of young literati, stimulated by the deepening national crisis, carried out the Gongche Shangshu Movement 公車上書 (Petition of the Examination Candidates) in 1895, which attempted to prevent the signature of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (*maguan tiaoyue* 馬關條約) and promote political reforms. Kang Youwei, the self-proclaimed leader of this movement, later got the appreciation of the Guangxu Emperor 光緒 (1871-1908) and played a crucial role in the Wuxu Reform in 1898. Despite its quick and tragic ending, this reform is widely considered as a turning point in the modern history of China for politics, economy, and (less noticed) religion.⁵⁹ According to a recent monograph of the eminent historian Mao Haijian, Kang Youwei, along with his disciple Liang Qichao, deliberately tampered with historical documents during their exile in Japan in order to amply their importance in the reformist movement and hide certain controversial intrigues they had planned.⁶⁰ On the contrary, the academics used to underestimate the crucial roles played by high-ranking officials (e.g. Weng Tonghe 翁同龢, 1830-1904) and provincial governors (e.g. Zhang Zhidong 張之洞, 1837-1909). Furthermore, the six martyred young literati (*wuxu liujunzi* 戊戌六君子), who deeply engaged in the decision-making process of the reforms and were executed during the Coup of Wuxu, were in fact the agents belonging to different political factions rather than Kang Youwei's followers.

While his reputation as a political reformer shrunk, Kang's prominence as an audacious and all-round thinker received more and more attention in the recent decades

⁵⁹ Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, pp. 43-47.

⁶⁰ Mao Haijian, 2009.

both in mainland China and elsewhere. Three subjects have been emphasized: Kang's thought and activities of the Confucian religion; his travel notes and observations in an age of globalization; and his exegesis and reinterpretation of classical texts.⁶¹ These scientific results help us to achieve a more complete understanding of Kang's profound influence over the late Qing intelligentsia and, in particular, the circles related to the New learning.

During the period treated by this chapter, Zhang had not yet become a public figure as influential as Kang and Liang. He remained a follower rather than a leader in the reformist movement. He had abandoned the narrow path of the State examinations after a breakout of epilepsy in 1883 without holding any degrees.⁶² Strictly, Zhang does not fit the category of literati since he did not hold any degree. However, he was received as a qualified individual within literati groups and shared with them the same knowledge system. So he was a member of literati in the broad sense. Even when pursuing his academic studies at the Gujing Jingshe Academy, Zhang was able to establish important personal relationships through familial and local bonds. One good case was Song Shu. The first recorded meeting between the two happened in 1897 when Zhang held a post in the *Shiwubao Journal* press.⁶³ However, they must have known each other well long before. Song became a disciple of Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821-1907, the chief director of the Gujing Jingshe Academy) in 1890, the same year as Zhang and they shared some common friends.⁶⁴ Moreover, Song was the person who introduced Zhang to Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848-1908), with whom Song had a marriage connection. Sun later became Zhang's most admired Han learning scholar of his time.⁶⁵ Another case was Xia Zengyou, whom Zhang got to know in 1894. Xia was born in Qiantang 錢塘, a neighboring county of Zhang's hometown Yuhang.⁶⁶ They probably came into contact through local bonds.

In addition, Zhang's social networking was facilitated by new associations (e.g. study societies) and the new media (newspapers in particular), which enabled him to access broader reformist circles. In 1896, Zhang donated 60 silver dollars and registered in the

⁶¹ See respectively: Tang Wenming, 2012; Gan Chunsong, 2012; Huang Jinxing, 2015. Zhang Yongle, 2011; Wang Mingming, 2019; Pablo Blitstein, 2016. Two ongoing research projects, one by Béatrice L'Haridon, the other by the Kang Project of KU Leuven (led by Carine Defoort).

⁶² Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 4.

⁶³ Jiang Yihua, 2011, p. 654.

⁶⁴ Song Shu, 2014, p. 544, 546.

⁶⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 230.

⁶⁶ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 13.

Study Society of Self-Strengthening (Qiangxuehui 強學會). Founded by Kang Youwei in Beijing in 1895, this society later established branches in Shanghai and other cities. In January 1897, he left the Gujing Jingshe Academy in Hangzhou and went to Shanghai to work for the *Shiwubao Journal* press.⁶⁷ The introducer for this employment was probably Wang Kangnian 汪康年 (1860-1911), one of the main founders of the *Shiwubao Journal*, who served as an agent of Zhang Zhidong to overlook this journal. In one of his early essays, “On Living Alone” (*Dujiji* 獨居記), written in September 1894, Zhang referred to a countryman, Wang Zengwei 汪曾唯 (dates unknown), with high respect. Having a marriage connection with Zhang, Wang Zengwei was the uncle of Wang Kangnian.⁶⁸ During Zhang’s term of office, the *Shiwubao Journal* was largely under the control of Liang Qichao and other followers of Kang Youwei. Tan Sitong, after reading Zhang’s articles in the *Shiwubao Journal*, highly praised the latter.⁶⁹

However, Zhang’s relationship with the Kang Party was full of tension from the beginning. What was at stake was Zhang’s strong opposition against the “Confucian religion” (*kongjiao* 孔教), which was related to his disagreement with Kang’s scholarly ideas as well as his hostility towards the latter’s ambition as a religious hierarch. The second aspect was revealed in one of Zhang’s letters to Tan Xian 譚獻 (1832-1901), a professor at the Gujing Jingshe Academy, written on April 20, 1897:

The persons of virtue in the Kang Party treat Changsu [Kang Youwei] as the Confucian hierarch as well as the Sage of the Southern Sea. They believe that their master will receive an “omen” within ten years and depict Kang as someone having eyes with a piercing gleam. These are raving words unworthy to be sneered at.

康黨諸大賢，以長素為教皇，又目為南海聖人，謂不及十年，當有符命，其人目光炯炯、如巖下電。此語病狂，不值一嗤。⁷⁰

Zhang’s unreserved dissatisfaction with the Kang Party finally resulted in a physical fight. Zhang and a friend were outnumbered and it became unbearable for him to stay at his post.⁷¹ So he turned to the social networks of his fellow countrymen from Zhejiang

⁶⁷ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 15-16, 21.

⁶⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 13.

⁶⁹ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 26

⁷⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 14.

⁷¹ The anecdote was recorded in the same letter from Zhang to Tan Xian. See Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 14.

Province for support. The result was the foundation of the “Reviving Zhejiang Society” (*Xingzhehui* 興浙會) and the initial issue of the *Jingshibao Journal* 經世報 in August 1897. Also in this month, Zhang began to serve as the chief editor of the *Shixuebao Journal* 實學報. These actions aimed to counter the influence of the New Learning circles by diffusing the ideas rooted in the academic tradition of Zhejiang which was more affiliated to the Han learning 漢學, a philology-oriented Confucian school occupying the predominant position in the Qing dynasty.⁷² Among his peer countrymen, Zhang got on the best with Song Shu and Sun Baoxuan 孫寶瑄 (1874-1924). Despite his profound divergences with the New learning scholars (just as Zhang),⁷³ Song nonetheless shared the latter's enthusiasm for Buddhism. Thanks to Song's recommendation, Zhang began to read Buddhist texts as well as Tan Sitong's *An Exposition of Benevolence* (*Renxue* 仁學), as manifested in both the earlier citation from the 1897 entry of Zhang's *Chronological Autobiography* and his biographies of Sun Yirang and Song Shu.⁷⁴ Sun Baoxuan was also enthusiastic about Buddhism. In his *Diary of the Wangshan Cottage* (*Wangshanlu riji* 忘山廬日記),⁷⁵ written from 1893 to 1908 (the content of certain years was lost), Sun made detailed records of the conversations about Buddhism within the reformist circles, some of which concerned Zhang Taiyan. In the *Taiyan wenlu bubian* 太炎文錄補編 (Collected Works of Taiyan, supplementary book), we can find seven conversations between Sun Baoxuan and Zhang Taiyan, extracted from the former's diary, of which one concerns Buddhism.⁷⁶ The two persons shared similar views on Buddhism in many ways.⁷⁷

Shortly after, in the spring of 1898, Zhang made another big decision. He accepted the invitation of Zhang Zhidong, then the Governor-General of Hubei and Hunan Provinces (*huguang zongdu* 湖廣總督), and went to Wuchang, serving as an editor for the *Zhengxuebao Journal* 正學報 in preparation. Among the high-ranking Han Chinese officials, Zhang Zhidong had a huge reputation as a literary scholar and a generous sponsor for educational and academic affairs. As the key node in an extensive social network, he

⁷² Lu Yin, 2008, pp. 199-200. The confrontation between Zhang and the Kang Party can be partly explained by the different regional traditions of Confucianism for Zhejiang and Guangdong Provinces. See Yang Nianqun, 1997.

⁷³ To know more about this topic, see the discussions of Zhu Weizheng (1980) about a letter from Xia Zengyou to Song Shu.

⁷⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 230-232.

⁷⁵ See Jiang Hainu, 2012, 90-112.

⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, pp. 45, 59-51, 60-61, 63.

⁷⁷ Chen Jidong, 2019a, p. 191.

was capable of influencing the intellectual trends among the late Qing literati.⁷⁸ In the reformist movement (1895-1898), Zhang Zhidong represented a more moderate path,⁷⁹ which dialogued and confronted Kang Youwei's radical and full-scale reformist agenda, concerning the orientations and approaches to “preserve the Chinese nation” (*baoguo* 保國) and “preserve the Chinese teaching” (*baojiao* 保教).⁸⁰ Hiring Zhang Taiyan to promote the orthodox Han learning was just one of his many actions to resist the impact of the “abnormal and weird ideas” 非常可怪之論⁸¹ that the New learning scholars advocated.⁸² Despite their scholarly common ground, Zhang Zhidong was an institutionalized and sophisticated scholar-official loyal to the Manchu monarchy in contrast to Zhang Taiyan who was bookish, with a strong sense of morality, and did not disguise his disrespect for monarchy, as revealed by a widely-known anecdote (backed by biographical archives). It concerns Zhang's response to the inquiry of Liang Dingfen 梁鼎芬 (1859-1919), a senior assistant to Zhang Zhidong, about whether Kang Youwei had the secret ambition to be an emperor: “I heard that Kang had the ambition to become the hierarch [of the Confucian religion], not the emperor. It is natural for people to imagine themselves becoming the emperor. Considering as the [coming] hierarch, in contrast, is inordinate vanity.” 我聞其欲為教皇，未聞皇帝也。其實帝王思想人皆有之，而以教皇自居，未免想入非非矣。⁸³ It is hence inevitable that Zhang's service for Zhang Zhidong soon came to an end.

On the other hand, Zhang soon restored his relationship with the Kang Party, defending their political stance despite the unsolved scholarly disputes. Quoting his own words: “Despite the divergence of scholarship, [we] keep the friendship and have similar political ideas.” 論學雖殊，而行誼政術自合⁸⁴ The tragic ending of the Wuxu Reform made him more sympathetic towards the radical wing of political reformism. He wrote a letter to Kang to express his support and appreciation during his exile in Taiwan after the

⁷⁸ Lu Yin (2015) has dedicated a monograph to this subject.

⁷⁹ A recently published monography has extensively illustrated the role Zhang Zhidong played during the Wuxu Reform. See Mao Haijian, 2014.

⁸⁰ Douglas M. Gildow, 2018, p. 126.

⁸¹ Zhang Zhidong, 1998, p. 80.

⁸² Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 34.

⁸³ Included in Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 580-581.

⁸⁴ Jiang Hainu, 2012, p. 213.

Coup of Wuxu,⁸⁵ and also a series of poems in commemoration of the six martyred young literati.⁸⁶ He was especially touched by Tan Sitong's fearless martyrdom. So, his friendship with the Kang Party continued until mid-1900, during the Siege of the International Legations. Zhang's connection with Zhang Zhidong did not terminate either. At the end of 1907, disappointed by his revolutionary comrades and intrigued by the prospect of becoming a monk in India, Zhang entrusted a friend to obtain financial aid from Zhang Zhidong for his trip (see Chapters 3 & 4).

* The New learning and Buddhism *

As introduced above, there emerged an enthusiasm in Buddhism among the late Qing intellectuals, especially those who advocated the New learning, and we have good reasons to suggest that the tension between Zhang and the New learning scholars correlated with their different attitudes towards Buddhism. Before examining Zhang's views on Buddhism and the New learning, I find it necessary to first introduce and discuss several topics including the context and sources of the New learning, its characteristics, and the role Buddhism played in it.

The task of presenting the context of the New learning is combined with tracing its indigenous and foreign sources. Among the indigenous intellectual sources, the most important ones were the studies of pre-Qin masters (*zhuzixue* 諸子學) and the New-Text school (*jinwen jingxue* 今文經學), two trends of uncanonical studies progressively reviving from the mid-Qing dynasty. As is well known, the mainstream scholarship of the Qing dynasty was the Han learning, also named the Qianjia School (*qianjia xuepai* 乾嘉學派) since it reached peak stage during the reigns of Qianlong 乾隆 (1735-1795) and Jiaqing 嘉慶 (1795-1820). It was a school oriented towards philological and historiographical studies of Confucian classics and, in later stages, non-canonical texts, emphasizing the empirical methodology instead of theoretical speculation. The New learning (in its narrow sense) was “new” in terms of its comparison with and criticisms against the Han learning. Apart from Kang Youwei, whose importance has been underlined

⁸⁵ Peng Chunling, 2014, pp. 435-436.

⁸⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 1997b, pp. 232-234.

on several occasions above, Xia Zengyou's role within this small circle of reformist literati deserves to be mentioned. The 1924 essay of Liang Qichao, entitled "In Remembrance of My Late Friend Xia Suiqing" (*Wangyou Xia Suiqing xiansheng* 亡友夏穗卿先生) [Xia Suiqing was the courtesy name of Xia Zengyou], offers us a glimpse into the historical significance of this forgotten figure. Although he was relatively independent from the political and ideological activities of the Kang Party, Xia exerted tremendous influence on the intellectual development of Liang and Tan. The initiator for the anti-Xunzi movement, Xia was also the person becoming aware of the unique values of Yogācāra Buddhism ahead of others in this group. He served as an invisible tutor for Liang and Tan in reading Buddhist scriptures and other non-canonical texts.⁸⁷

The relevance between the studies of pre-Qin masters and the New learning now becomes clearer. Initiated by mid-Qing scholars like Wang Zhong 汪中 (1745-1794), such studies gradually gained weight within the Han learning tradition and finally appeared as an independent research field. The studies of pre-Qin masters were in vogue in the late Qing period even among orthodox scholars. Yu Yue, for example, dedicated a book to this domain entitled *Impartial Treatise of pre-Qin masters* (*Zhuzi pingyi* 諸子平議).⁸⁸ The reformist intellectuals inherited the academic achievement of these predecessors but did not approve of the teachings of all pre-Qin masters without distinction. On the contrary, they held opposite attitudes towards Mozi 墨子 (468?-376BC) and Xunzi 苟子, both masters that were especially promoted following the revival of the studies of pre-Qin masters.⁸⁹ While enthusiastically embrace the egalitarian Mohism, some of them launched severe attacks against Xunzi, accusing him to be responsible for imperial governance of "Confucianism on the surface and Legalism inside" (*rubiao fali* 儒表法裡) throughout two millennia.⁹⁰ As Xunzi occupied a preeminent position in the scholarly genealogy of the Han learning, such attacks delivered a strong message of breaking with the orthodoxy.⁹¹ Initiated by Xia Zengyou, the anti-Xunzi movement was later taken over by Liang Qichao

⁸⁷ Liang Qichao, 1974, pp. 583-587.

⁸⁸ Carine Defoort has carried out several research projects related to Mohism and its modern reception, including an article (2015) focusing on the case of Sun Yirang.

⁸⁹ Wang Fansen, 2012, pp. 26-31.

⁹⁰ Such was the idea that Xia Zengyou put forward during his dispute with Song Shu (and Kang Youwei). To know more about this dispute, see Zhu Weizheng, 1980.

⁹¹ Liang Qichao, 1974, p. 585.

and Tan Sitong.⁹²

The relevance between the New-Text school and the New learning might be more direct. According to Liang's *Introduction to the scholarship of the Qing dynasty*, most of the New learning scholars turned from the Old-Text school (*guwen jingxue* 古文經學) to the New-Text school. As two Confucian academic traditions, the confrontation between the two schools can be traced back to the early Western Han dynasty 西漢 (206BC-9AD). In the aftermath of “burning books and burying scholars” (*fenshu kengru* 焚書坑儒) during the reign of the First Emperor of the Qin dynasty 秦始皇 (259-210BC), Confucian scholars endeavored to gather the scattered Confucian classics and rediscover the once lost ones. Divergences emerged during this process because of the differences in transmission lineages and attitude towards texts written in archaic characters (the so-called “Old-Text”),⁹³ which resulted in the formation of the two confronted schools. In the first half of the Qing dynasty, the Old-Text school seized advantage since the Han learning scholars largely inherited the approaches of philology and exegesis of their Western Han predecessors. In the mid-Qing, however, Zhuang Cunyu 莊存與 (1719-1788) and Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿 (1776-1829), among others, brought about the revival of the New-Text school. Later scholars such as Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 (1792-1841) and Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857), pioneers of political reformers who were sensitive towards the approaching crisis, also contributed to the revival of New-Text school and its political reputation. During the years leading to the Wuxu Reform, the single most important figure in this regard was Kang Youwei, whose controversial book *A Critical Study of the Forged Texts in the Scholarship of the Xin dynasty* (*Xinxue weijing kao* 新學偽經考), once published in 1891, radicalized the confrontation of the two schools and gave this confrontation strong political implications. This book came to the conclusion that the Old-Texts had been systematically falsified by Liu Xin 刘歆 (50BC?-23AD), a major scholar of the short-lived Xin dynasty 新朝 (9AD-23AD). This audacious accusation, possibly ruining the legitimacy of the Old-Text school, provoked strong unease and objections among scholar-

⁹² Wang Fansen, 2012, p. 33.

⁹³ The Old-Text classics were written in the Large Seal script (*shizhou* 史籀 or *dazhuan* 大篆), the more archaic style of calligraphy, whereas the New-Text classics were written in Clerical script (*lishu* 隸書), current in the Western Han dynasty.

officials and academics, both Zhang Taiyan and Zhang Zhidong were good examples. Kang's unconventional thought, on the other hand, was received with enthusiasm within the radical wing of reformism; many of its members approved of the New learning.

Among the foreign sources of the New learning, the predominant forces were referred to by the general term “the Western learning” (*xixue* 西學), which covered a wide range of scholarly traditions, both practical and theoretical, secular and religious. The introduction of the Western learning can be traced back to the late Ming 明朝 (1368-1644) and the early Qing dynasty, during which Jesuit missionaries, represented by Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇 (1552-1610) and Ferdinand Verbiest 南懷仁 (1623-1688), played a crucial role. The scientific and religious knowledge that they introduced, through close collaboration with Chinese scholars, constituted an early stage of the indigenization of the Western learning.⁹⁴ The humiliating military defeats of the two Opium Wars against the British and French Empires, followed by the catastrophic devastation caused by the civil war against the Taiping Rebellion and others, forced the Qing ruling elites to bring out top-down reform and opening-up policies, generally referred to as the Self-Strengthening Movement. The guiding principle of the movement revealed itself in a slogan put forward by Zhang Zhidong that “the Chinese learning as the essence and the Western learning for application” (*zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong* 中學為體，西學為用). During the following several decades, hundreds of Western books were translated into Chinese, most of which provided introductory knowledge to basic and applied sciences. Despite the pragmatic orientation of the translation enterprise, the Christian missionaries' role continued to be important. As the most prominent case, John Fryer 傅蘭雅 (1839-1928) translated 129 scientific works in collaboration with his Chinese colleagues at the Translation House of the Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau (Jiangnan Zhizaoju Fanyiguan 江南製造局翻譯館).⁹⁵ Moreover, missionaries like John Fryer and Timothy Richard 李提摩太 (1845-1919) established a close relationship with Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong, among others, and exerted a considerable influence on their understanding of Western sciences, Christianity, and the relation of the two.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Benjamin A. Elman, 2016, pp. 140-195.

⁹⁵ Benjamin A. Elman, 2016, pp. 453-454.

⁹⁶ Chang Hao, 1988, p. 93; Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, pp. 46, 70.

The defeat of the First Sino-Japanese war hugely undermined the appeal of the utilitarianism endorsed by Zhang Zhidong and other high-ranking scholar-officials, to the benefit of radical reforms and ideological alternatives. Among the New learning scholars, the Western learning gained a more prominent position than being mere “applications.” Compared with the leaders of the Self-Strengthening Movement, they largely revitalized the late Ming and early Qing modes in receiving the Western learning, oriented towards intellectual aims rather than utilitarian agenda. The aforementioned shift paradigm towards Western sciences can be found in Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong’s interest in mathematics, geometry, and astronomy. This fact, nonetheless, did not mean that they abandoned the indigenous epistemological terms and systems, but rather led to bolder attempts of developing integral discourses (if not theories), to be further discussed below. Furthermore, Kang and Tan were much more open towards foreign religious and moral traditions, Christianity in particular. In comparison to Confucianism and Buddhism, the advantage of Christianity, in Kang’s eyes, lay in its straightforwardness and concentration of attention and energy. “[Christianity] preaches one single doctrine in a profound and clear way, such as the brotherhood and equality of human beings. Originating from the transcendental truth and being feasible for operational use, this doctrine is most useful for saving the human beings.” 單標一義，深切著明，曰人類同胞也，曰人類平等也，皆上原于真理，而下切於實用，於救眾生最有效焉。⁹⁷ It should be noted that Kang praised Christianity as an ideological resort for social mobilization which did not contradict his extensive absorption of secular Western knowledge.

Another source of foreign intellectual influence was provided by the Meiji Japanese intelligentsia which served as the crucial intermediary for the introduction of the Western learning. The Meiji Restoration led to the restoration of direct imperial rules and full-scale reforms during which Japan rapidly industrialized and extensively adopted Western knowledge and ideas. Launched in 1868, seven years later than the Self-Strengthening Movement, the Meiji Restoration was nonetheless proved to be much more successful by Japan’s striking victory in the First Sino-Japanese War. Thereafter, Japan became not only the main reference for China’s political reformists but also the cultural medium of the

⁹⁷ Liang Qichao, 1998, p. 427.

Western learning. A large proportion of Western books was actually translated into Chinese from their Japanese editions, which covered wide-ranging subjects. As a strong proof of such impact, most of the Western scientific terminologies were introduced in the form of *kanji*, mostly by Chinese scholars staying in Japan. The affinity of the languages of the two countries facilitated such translingual activities. Transplanted neologisms, such as “science” (*kexue* 科學), “physics” (*wulixue* 物理學), “society” (*shehui* 社會), and “religion” (*zongjiao* 宗教), vitalized and empowered the discourse of the New learning but also caused tension with the traditional knowledge system.⁹⁸ One way to reconcile heterogeneous systems of thought was offered by the Japanese Buddhist philosopher, Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858-1919). According to his proposal, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, and Kant should be venerated as four sages of the world. He even built a Philosophy Hall with the images of these figures to consecrate them.⁹⁹ Enryō’s ideas inspired many Chinese reformist intellectuals, including those who later turned revolutionary.¹⁰⁰

To conclude, the New learning was a short-lived wave of new thinking that converged and synthesized various systems of thought from both within and outside of China. The revival of the New-Text school, the studies of Buddhism and pre-Qin masters offered indigenous alternatives to the orthodox paradigm of the Han learning, thus undermining the predominance of conventional teachings and opening more space for foreign knowledge and ideas including secular Western learning, Christianity, and Japanese reformists. The interaction and integration of these diverse systems of thought brought about tremendous changes to the Chinese intellectual and religious landscape. The New learning can be partly considered as an effort to transplant the Western model of scientific disciplines, but it was above all a discourse aimed to endorse the political reform. Following the rapid transformation of the political situation and more authentic knowledge constantly introduced from the West, this discourse became dated and critical reflections appeared. For example, Liang Qichao points out, in the *Introduction to the scholarship of the Qing dynasty*, that the main defects of Chinese scholars were “depending their scholarly

⁹⁸ For the translingual importation of the Western learning, see Lydia H. Liu, 1995; Lackner, Michael, Iwo Amelung, and Joachim Kurtz eds. 2001. *New Terms for New Ideas. Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China*. Leiden, Nederland: Brill. For the reconstruction of traditional Chinese thought, see Wang Hui, 2008.

⁹⁹ Noriko Mori, 2001, pp. 193-195.

¹⁰⁰ For Enryō’s influence on Liang Qichao (and other reformists), see Noriko Mori, 2001, pp. 194-200. On revolutionaries, Cai Yuanpei, see Douglas M. Gildow, 2018; Zhang Taiyan, see Peng Chunling, 2018a.

ideas on the authority of the ancient sage (in this context, Confucius)” 好依傍 and “confusing the names and realities” 名實混淆. Liang’s criticism aims at not only the Qing scholars of the Han learning but also his master Kang Youwei.¹⁰¹ More severe criticisms came from the eminent historian Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927) who briefly worked for the *Shiwubao Journal* press. In his 1905 essay entitled “Discussions about the Recent Development of Chinese Academia” (*Lun jinnian zhi xueshujie* 論近年之學術界), Wang launches harsh attacks on Kang’s Confucian religion, Tan’s *An Exposition of Benevolence*, and Liang’s introduction to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The common defect of their publications, in his eyes, is their eagerness to apply the new scholarship to practical affairs at the cost of academic rigor.¹⁰²

Now, let us proceed to the important role Buddhism played in the intellectual trend of the New learning. And I would like to discuss below the relevance of Buddhism to the New learning. Ever since its spreading to China at the end of the Eastern Han dynasty 東漢 (25AD-220AD), Buddhism had gone through a longstanding process of sinicization. Before the massive importation of the Western learning from the second half of the 19th century, receiving Buddhism constituted the main Chinese experience of cultural otherness and integration. Within the scope of this study, the revival of Buddhism among Confucian elites and gentries also occurred in the mid-Qing period, the most well-known representative of which was Peng Shaosheng 彭紹升 (1740-1796). Later advocates of the New-Text school, like Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 and Wei Yuan 魏源, attached importance to Buddhism as well. The correlation between the two trends was retaken by the late Qing reformist intellectuals, as illustrated by Liang’s words: “There was an undercurrent among the late Qing intelligentsia, namely Buddhist studies. … The New learning scholars of the late Qing were unexceptionally interested in Buddhism, and the true [Buddhist] believers all converted to Buddhism under Yang Wenhui.” 晚清思想界有一伏流，曰佛學……晚清所謂新學家者，殆無一不與佛學有關係，而凡有真信仰者率皈依文會。¹⁰³ Along with the studies of pre-Qin masters and the New-Text school, Buddhism played a role in weakening the authority of the Han learning to the benefit of the New learning.

¹⁰¹ Liang Qichao, 2010, p. 132.

¹⁰² Wang Guowei, 2010, pp. 122-123.

¹⁰³ Liang Qichao, 2010, pp. 149-150.

The Buddhist revival among the late Qing literati was reinforced by the religious exchange between China and Japan. On the one hand, Japanese Buddhist associations, notably the Higashi Hongan-ji (東本願寺, Eastern Temple of the Original Vow), one of two dominant sub-sects of Shin Buddhism, were eager to carry out missionary activities in China. Such missions, motivated to cope with their own crisis following the withdrawal of governmental support during the Meiji era, nonetheless succeeded in convincing many Chinese intellectuals that Buddhism was still thriving in Japan and had been playing an important role since the Meiji Restoration. Song Shu and Sun Baoxuan, both close friends of Zhang and active members within the reformist circles, were just two of many cases.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, frequent personal exchanges led to the circulation of Buddhist texts from Japan to China, some of which were originally Chinese texts but later lost there. The case on which previous researchers have focused is Yang Wenhui's collection thanks to the help of Nanjo Bunyu 南條文雄 (1849-1927), a Japanese Buddhist scholar affiliated to the Higashi Hongan-ji. Yang was widely considered as the major pioneer of the Buddhist revival in modern China. Yang and Nanjo met each other for the first time in Britain. The former served as an entourage of the Chinese ambassador to Britain and the latter the student of Max Müller in the University of Oxford. Yang and Nanjo's longstanding friendship was a perfect example of the intercultural interaction between China, Japan, and the West.¹⁰⁵

Among the Buddhist texts reintroduced to the Chinese intelligentsia, there were *Commentary notes on the Treatise on Establishing the Theory of Consciousness-only* (*Cheng weishi lun shuji* 成唯識論述記) and *Annotations of the Treatise on the Authentic Doctrines of Hetuvidya* (*Yinming ru zhengli lun shu* 因明入正理論疏), elaborated by Kuiji 窺基 (632-682), one of the main disciples of Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664). Xuanzang and Kuiji's works were of the first importance for the introduction of Yogācāra Buddhism (*yujiaxing xuepai* 瑜伽行學派 or *faxiang weishi xuepai* 法相唯識學派) to China. The transmission of this Indian Buddhist school, nonetheless, ceased shortly after. It did not regain its vigor until the late Qing partly because of the reintroduction of the scriptures

¹⁰⁴ Ge Zhaoguang, 2006, pp. 47-52.

¹⁰⁵ To know more about Yang Wenhui's career and historical importance, see Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001; Chen Jidong, 2019c & 2019d.

above from Japan.

Buddhism constituted an inseparable part of the New learning for a variety of reasons, of which two were essential.¹⁰⁶ The first reason was the intellectual support that it provided to the New learning scholars concerning the construction of a comprehensive worldview. The Buddhist history and doctrines largely served as an intermediary between Confucian China and the West whose cultural background, mode of thinking, and conceptual systems were too distinct from each other. The telling revival of Yogācāra Buddhism in the late Qing period could partly be explained by its advantage in providing a rich repertoire of sophisticated concepts which were systematically structured. As the second reason, besides the epistemological significance, Buddhism offered the New learning scholars an ethical alternative that promoted universal compassions and “non-self” (*wuwo* 無我, *anātman*). Along with the Mohist “universal love” (*jianai* 兼愛), Buddhist teachings empowered the egalitarianism underlying the utopian vision of Kang’s Confucian religion and Tan’s reinterpretation of benevolence (*ren* 仁). From such point of view, the hierarchical and patriarchal order of the empire, legitimated by the Confucian ethics *gangchang* (綱常/三綱五常, three fundamental bonds and five constant virtues), was ultimately produced by the “illusionary differentiation” (*wangsheng fenbie* 妄生分別) and needed to be surpassed.¹⁰⁷ It is in this context that we come to apprehend Tan Sitong’s advocacy of “eliminating the (conceptual or interpersonal) dualistic opposition” (*poduidai* 破對待) and “breaking through the traps” (*chongjue wangluo* 衝決網羅). The traps to be broken through were arranged in eight phases, from the trap of wealth and position to the traps of monarchy and *gangchang* (among others), finally to the trap of Buddhist doctrines.¹⁰⁸ While breaking through the trap of Buddhist doctrines served as the ultimate prospect to achieve complete freedom, breaking through the traps of monarchy and *gangchang* was the most provocative proposition for the ruling class.¹⁰⁹

Buddhism was deeply incorporated into the New learning. To further illustrate this, I would like to briefly present four characteristics of the New learning and their correlation

¹⁰⁶ As one of the early researches on the cultural and intellectual meanings of the Buddhist enthusiasm among reformist literati during the Wuxu Reform, see Ge Zhaoguang, 2006, pp. 102-113.

¹⁰⁷ Wang Fansen, 2014, pp. 100-102.

¹⁰⁸ Tan Sitong, 2010, p. 43.

¹⁰⁹ Chang Hao, 1988, pp. 136-140.

with Buddhism. The first characteristic was pragmatism. As mentioned above, the New learning had ideological implications. It was a practical, engaged, and politicized system of discourse rather than a neutral scientific trend. The Buddhist engagement among these reformist elites (or this group itself) was referred to as “applied Buddhism,” “political Buddhism,” or “Buddhists by voluntarism” (*Bouddhistes par volontarisme*),¹¹⁰ hence very different from the Buddhist studies of academic scholars that would later follow in the Republican era.

The second and the third characteristics of the New learning were both driven by the urge of constructing a comprehensive and integral discourse (if not a coherent theory) to convincingly explain the natural, socio-ethical, and spiritual phenomena in a new era. I use the term “hybrid” to indicate the attempts of resorting to heterogeneous foreign knowledge and ideas to bring new life to indigenous teachings or even assimilating the former into the latter. What underlines such efforts was the assumption that politics, knowledge, and religion (the domains more and more differentiated during modernization)¹¹¹ always shared the same fundamental principles.

The second was the analogical method. This term means, in this context, the attempt to seek presupposed correspondences between two differentiated, even heterogeneous, domains. It was Kang Youwei who initiated this method in his “Comprehensive treatise of the true principles and the universal law” (*Shili gongfa quanshu 實理公法全書*). In this essay of 1888, Kang distinguished two categories, “true principles” (*shili 實理*) and “universal law” (*gongfa 公法*). The clarification of the former, i.e. the results of mathematics and natural sciences, according to him, would establish the foundation of the latter, i.e. the political and social institutions. All through this essay, Kang demonstrated how to apply geometrical reasoning to reframe various institutions such as marriage, filial relationship, teacher and student, monarch-subject relationship, ritual, etc.¹¹² Such analogical methods were applied even more boldly by Tan Sitong in his *An Exposition of Benevolence*.¹¹³ Besides, we see the analogical view established by Liang Qichao in terms

¹¹⁰ Jiang Hainu, 2012, pp. 9-17. Chan Sin-wai, 1985, p. 77. Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001, p. 19.

¹¹¹ I adopt the theoretical framework proposed by Ji Zhe (2009, 2017).

¹¹² Kang Youwei, 2015. pp. 23-40.

¹¹³ Similar attempts of analogical methodology had occurred in the West in the 18th and 19th centuries. See I. Bernard Cohen, 1994.

of Confucian and Buddhist genealogies. In an 1899 essay presented in front of Japanese Buddhist scholars, Liang divided the Confucian teaching into the school of “well-off” (*xiaokang* 小康) represented by Xunzi, and the school of the Great Unity (*datong* 大同) represented by Mencius. He then employed the analogical method to equate the relationship between the two with that between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna.¹¹⁴

Going further on the basis of the analogical method, we see the third characteristic, the hybrid ontology. Again initiated by Kang Youwei and developed by Tan Sitong.¹¹⁵ The former proposed, in *Hermeneutics of Mencius* (*Mengzi wei* 孟子微), the assimilation of various heterogeneous notions, benevolence (*ren* 仁), electricity (*dian* 電), and ether (*yitai* 以太).¹¹⁶ The latter, in his turn, added one more notion, the “power of thought” (*xinli* 心力), which had its indigenous root in the Philosophy of Mind (*xinxue* 心學) and Buddhism.¹¹⁷ These notions, belonging to heterogeneous domains of ethics, sciences, and religions, were treated as elements confirming each other and referring to an ultimate source of the universe. The syncretism underpinning the methodological and cosmological ideas had complicated origins. In terms of foreign influence, apart from the imprint left through their contact with Christian missionary priests (e.g. Timothy Richard),¹¹⁸ the Chinese translation (by John Fryer) of Henry Wood’s (1869-1944) *Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography* also exerted an important influence. Partly based on the reading of this book, Tan put forward the concept “mental force” (*xinli* 心力), crucial for “breaking through the traps.”¹¹⁹

The fourth point, strictly speaking, is not a characteristic of the New learning but rather its relationship with the Confucian religion. The Confucian religion appeared in both the original texts cited above, namely the extract of the 1897 entry of Zhang’s *Chronological Autobiography* and that of his letter to Tan Xian. Zhang’s antipathy towards the Confucian religion intermingled with his criticism against the New learning and was

¹¹⁴ Noriko Mori, 2001, p. 192.

¹¹⁵ Chang Hao, 1988, pp. 49-51, 115-123.

¹¹⁶ Chang Hao, 1988, p. 63.

¹¹⁷ Wang Fansen, 2014, p. 94.

¹¹⁸ The missionaries’ introduction of the new results of the natural science was highly selective, motivated to reinforce the truthfulness of the Christian natural theology and hence facilitate their missionary work. Their introduction of the later refuted concept of ether was one example that served to establish an integral theory for physical and spiritual spheres. Benjamin A. Elman, 2016, pp. 388-393, 501-506.

¹¹⁹ Tan Sitong, 2010, p. 221; Hiroko Sakamoto, 2019, pp. 14; Wang Fansen, 2014, pp. 88-103.

correlated to his negative attitude towards Buddhism. Since the Confucian religion will be further studied in the next chapter, the discussion here would be limited to its relation to the New learning. The Confucian religion was a proposal in the period in question (and later an association) initiated by Kang Youwei to systematically transform Confucianism in terms of institutions and ideas.¹²⁰ Different from the wide range of interests in the New learning shared within the reformist circles, the idea about the Confucian religion was much more unconventional and even provocative, whose direct influence was limited to a group of partisans often referred to as the Kang Party. Compared with the advocates of the New learning, the partisans that promoted Confucian religion were bound to more restricted aims and directed by concrete political agenda.

Despite these differences, the Confucian religion overlapped with the New learning in both background contexts and characteristics. To be brief, for common background contexts, on the one hand, the New-Text school constituted the main intellectual source from which the Confucian religion derived. On the other, the utopia of the Great Unity drew inspiration from Christianity, Buddhism, and secular Western learning.¹²¹ For similar characteristics, in line with the syncretic tendency, Kang reinterpreted Confucius as the “Divine Sage King” (*shenming shengwang* 神明聖王) and the “Hierarch of the Earth” (*dadi jiaozhu* 大地教主), thus turned him into a salvationist figure homogenized with Jesus and Buddha, as seen in the preface to *Studies of Confucius’ Institutional Reform* (*Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考).¹²² Reflecting the image of Confucius the savior was a charismatic religious reformer, namely Kang Youwei himself, who “is not envious of the Pure Land (*jingtu* 净土) nor afraid of the Hell; not just unafraid but rather permanently staying in Hell; not just permanently staying in Hell but rather taking delight in staying there. … That is why he is occupied with the cause of saving the nation and the people every day.” 不歛淨土，不畏地獄；非惟不畏也，又常住地獄；非惟常住也，又常樂地獄……以故日以救國救民為事。¹²³ Kang was depicted here as an avatar of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva (*dizang pusa* 地藏菩薩). For the members and sympathizer of the Kang Party, their ideas of the New learning often had implications for the Confucian

¹²⁰ For a general knowledge of this topic, see Huang Jinxing, 2015.

¹²¹ For the less evident impact from secular Western learning, see Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 768, 773.

¹²² Kang Youwei, 2013, p. 1.

¹²³ Liang Qichao, 1998, p. 427.

religion.

* The confrontation between Zhang Taiyan and the New learning scholars *

In the context presented above, we can better understand the confrontation between Zhang and the New learning scholars. This section explains such confrontation by discussing Zhang's affiliation to the Old-Text school, his rejection of the New learning scholars' application of analogical method and hybrid ontology, his defense of Xunzi against the anti-Xunzi movement, and his criticisms against the Confucian religion.

First, Zhang's affiliation to the Old-Text school which confronted the New-Text school. The seven-year studies at the Gujing Jingshe Academy lay the foundation of Zhang's scholarship. As has been presented, the Han learning scholars largely inherited the philological approach of Old-Text scholars from the Western Han dynasty. The principles of the approach were generalized in the following phrases: “examining the relation between names and reality, focusing on proofs, keeping away from arbitrary implications, observing general rules, restraining emotions, and eliminating any flashy writing style.” 畲名實、重佐證、戒妄牽、守凡例、斷感情、汰華辭。¹²⁴ Such objectivism and empiricism explained why the Han learning was also commonly referred to as the “Plain learning” (*puxue* 樸學). Therefore, Zhang's commitment to this academic tradition must have contributed to his objection against Kang's more free manner in interpreting the “esoteric/subtle words” (*weiyan* 微言) in Confucian classics. However, the importance of Zhang's academic affiliation should not be overestimated. Despite the position of the Gujing Jingshe Academy as a major stronghold of the Han learning, the scholars there were generally more tolerant towards the disputes between the two schools. Yu Yue, for example, approved of the value of the *Commentary of Gongyang* (*Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳), one of the three commentaries of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋) and a fundamental text for the New-Text school, and disagreed with Zhang's certain criticisms against one of Liu Fenglu's early works.¹²⁵ Tan Xian also held an inclusive attitude towards the two schools. Again, in the case of Sun Yirang, despite his support of Zhang's defense of Liu Xin and

¹²⁴ Wang Fansen, 2012, p. 25.

¹²⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 17.

the authenticity of the Old-Texts, was unwilling to engage in public debates.¹²⁶ Arguably, Zhang's opposition against the revived New-Text school was partly motivated by his sense of competition with Kang Youwei who rapidly earned a reputation (though controversial) by advocating daring ideas.¹²⁷

To start with, during his editorship for the *Shiwubao Journal*, Zhang shortly adopted certain ideas that were typically Kang's development based on the New-Text school,¹²⁸ showing that he had tried to narrow their scholarly divergences. Following the bodily conflict, Zhang launched open criticisms against a wide range of Kang's ideas related to classical readings of “esoteric/subtle words.” For example, he rejected the theory of the “Three Ages” (*sanshi shuo* 三世說) of a historical evolution starting with the “Age of Disorder” (*juluanshi* 據亂世), moving to the “Age of Increasing Peace” (*shengpingshi* 升平世), and ending with the “Age of Great Peace” (*taipingshi* 太平世).¹²⁹ For him, even the *Commentary of Gongyang* offers no solid evidence in support of this theory.¹³⁰ Years later, Zhang's criticism went further as he claimed that “Confucius was an outstanding historian in ancient times. … After his death, the only scholar with an equivalent reputation and competence was Liu Xin in the Han dynasty.” 孔氏，古良史也……孔子死，名實足以伉者，漢之劉歆。¹³¹ It is evident that Zhang's high praise of Liu Xin was aimed at Kang's attacks on Liu in *A Critical Study of the Forged Texts in the Scholarship of the Xin dynasty*, whereas his evaluative assertion about Confucius as a mere historian was aimed at Kang's *Studies of Confucius' Institutional Reform* which portrayed Confucius as a pioneer political reformer. Moreover, Zhang also criticized scholars who, drawing from the New-Text school, were advocates of the New learning. For instance, when evaluating Xia Zengyou's ideas on the *Commentary of Gongyang* and the *Qi Poetry of Odes* (*qishi* 齊詩), Zhang used expressions such as “affected and weird” (*jiaoguai* 矯怪), “strange and absurd” (*guidan* 詭誕).¹³²

¹²⁶ Wang Fansen, 2012, p. 45.

¹²⁷ To have a more direct impression of Zhang's thoughts and psychological states, see the 1896 entry of Zhang's *Chronological Autobiography* concerning Kang Youwei. Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 17. Besides, the different personality of the two also helps to explain Zhang's sense of competition. See Wong Young-tsu, 2006, preface.

¹²⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 24-25.

¹²⁹ Hsiao K. C., 2014, pp. 49, 53.

¹³⁰ Lu Yin, 2008, p. 220.

¹³¹ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 180.

¹³² Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 13, 16.

Second, Zhang's rejection of the New learning scholars' application of analogical method and hybrid ontology. The rejection of the analogical method had already appeared when Zhang was receiving academic training at the Gujing Jingshe Academy¹³³ and was perfectly summarized in the 1897 entry of Zhang's *Chronological Autobiography*:

It was the time when the New learning just began to spring up. The political essayists often combined their talking on mathematics, physics, and political affairs. I always stood against such an approach arguing that expertise/knowledge (*ji*) and politics were two distinguished domains. Zhuoru [Liang Qichao] and others had little basic knowledge of mathematics and physics. However, they liked to borrow scientific terminologies to support political ideas. In my opinion, this was an updated version of the writing style for the imperial exams system.¹³⁴

時新學初興，為政論者輒以算數物理與政事並為一談。余每立異，謂技與政非一術，卓如輩本未涉此，而好援其術語以附政論，余因為科舉新樣耳。¹³⁵

Zhang kept that distinction between expertise/knowledge and politics and developed it later in his life.¹³⁶ Among Zhang's critiques of the analogical method, there was a short essay, entitled “Two Cases of contradiction between the *Surangama Sūtra* and Physics” (*Zhai Lengyan jing buhe wulixue liangtiao* 摘《楞嚴經》不合物理學兩條), which was published in the *Taiwan Riri Xinbao Journal* 台灣日日新報 on February 19, 1899. Resorting to the advanced physical knowledge of the West, the essay criticizes some conclusions in this Buddhist scripture as “exclusively applying idealist speculations without the support of experimentation” 專崇理想而未憑實驗.¹³⁷ Zhang's critical attitude towards *An Exposition of Benevolence*, as another example, aimed at both the analogical method and hybrid ontology that Tan Sitong applied in an attempt to integrate various notions from heterogeneous knowledge systems. That is why, during his communication with Song Shu, Zhang labeled Tan's Buddhist studies as “hybrid” 雜糅,¹³⁸ and later on as “mixed and

¹³³ Chen Jidong, 2019a, p. 189.

¹³⁴ Following the New Reform (*qingmo xinzhen* 清末新政) from 1901, the “treatise of strategies” (*celun* 策論) substituted the “eight-legged essay” (*baguwen* 八股文) as the new style of the imperial examinations. It was a fashion then to borrowing scientific terminologies as arguments in writing the treatise of strategies.

¹³⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 22-23.

¹³⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 196.

¹³⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 122.

¹³⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 22.

disorderly” 拉雜失倫.¹³⁹

Third, Zhang’s defense of Xunzi against the anti-Xunzi movement. Among the issues discussed here, the attitude towards Xunzi was the point of highest tension between Zhang and the New learning mainstream. Zhang defended Xunzi without reservation, in some cases aimed at his opponents in a provocative way. For instance, against the accusation that the scholar and political tradition originated from Xunzi obscured the true meaning of Confucius’ teaching,¹⁴⁰ Zhang claimed, in an essay entitled “The Subsequent Sage” (*Housheng* 後聖), that “[the Confucian scholars] in accord with Xunzi also accord with Confucius; [those] in disaccord with Xunzi also disaccord with Confucius.” 同乎荀卿者與孔子同，異乎荀卿者與孔子異。¹⁴¹ Moreover, Zhang placed the essay “Esteem of Xunzi” (*Zunxun* 尊荀) as the first chapter of the *Book of Urgency* (first edition).¹⁴²

Zhang’s esteem of Xunzi was related to three of his scholarly tendencies. First, the empirical approach of scholarship, which corresponded to the fact that Zhang had been trained as an academic Han learning student. Second, the defense of the Confucian *lijiao* 禮教 (norms of ritual and etiquette). In contrast to Tan’s will of breaking through the trap of *gangchang*, Zhang remained a conservative reformer in terms of ethical and political institutions.¹⁴³ Consequently, among the collected works of Xunzi, the essays he considered as the most valuable were “On Rectifying the Name” (*Zhengming* 正名) and the “Discussions on the Ritual” (*Lilun* 禮論).¹⁴⁴ Third, materialism. Zhang’s philosophical ideas during his reformist period were characterized by his approval of materialism, principally shaped by his readings of the Western natural sciences.¹⁴⁵ Among the indigenous academic schools that Zhang was acquainted with, the teachings of Xunzi were particularly capable to dialogue with secular Western learning and reframe a native theory of materialism and empiricism. Zhang’s emphasis on materialism went against the idealist tendency of the Confucian religion and should be apprehended therefrom.

The opposite attitudes towards Xunzi were correlated to the difference regarding

¹³⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 453.

¹⁴⁰ Wang Fansen, 2012, p. 34.

¹⁴¹ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 39.

¹⁴² Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴³ Charlotte Furth, 1976, pp. 139-150.

¹⁴⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 37.

¹⁴⁵ This issue has been extensively studied by Chinese scholars in the Mao era and the 1980s. See, e.g. Li Zehou, 1979, pp. 382-420; Tang Wenquan & Luo Fuhui, 1986, pp. 148-172.

Buddhism. I have cited, at the outset of the studies of this chapter, a passage from the 1897 entry of Zhang's *Chronological Autobiography* concerning his academic exchange about Buddhism, one sentence explained the reason why he did not share the Buddhist enthusiasm of his friends: "The Confucian scholarship I was committed to at that time was founded on the teachings of Sunqing [Xunzi], that is why I did not like those who advocated empty words and shortcuts." This self-statement revealed the crucial fact that Zhang's negative attitude aimed rather at the political application of Buddhism than the Buddhist doctrine itself.

Before proceeding to the fourth reason, I would like to discuss one particular case in which the three reasons above overlap with each other. It appeared in "Impartial Discourse (part 3)" (*Gongyan xia* 公言下), the ninth chapter of the *Book of Urgency (first edition)*. In this chapter, Zhang criticized a recent academic opinion according to which Mahāyāna Buddhism came into being only after Nāgārjuna 龍樹 (c.150-c.250CE) since the Mahāyāna scriptures were written in Sanskrit whereas the Hīnayāna ones were in Pali. He then turned to the disputes between the Old-Text and New-Text schools, partly originating from the difference in the calligraphy styles of the two schools' texts, and treated it as similar to the controversy on the Buddhist history of India. Unsurprisingly, Zhang's opinion regarding these two topics were the same, that was, reaffirming the authenticity (and even superiority) of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Old-Text school vis-à-vis their respective counterpart.¹⁴⁶ It is easy to see the relevance of this case to the three reasons above. Firstly, Zhang defended the legitimacy of the Old-Text school against the challenge from a new generation of New-Text school scholars. Secondly, despite his criticism against the analogical method, Zhang did introduce a paralleled perspective in this case, which, in a sense, could be considered as a concession to this method.¹⁴⁷ Thirdly, as presented above, Liang had established an analogical view between the Confucian genealogy in China and the Buddhist genealogy in India, the objective lies in the devaluation of Xunzi's scholarship. Zhang's entrance into this analogical perspective, however, served opposite purposes, namely, the privileged position of the Old-Text school of which Xunzi was one of the main initiators.

¹⁴⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 15.

¹⁴⁷ Li Qingxin, 1999, p. 111.

Fourth, Zhang's criticisms against the Confucian religion. The three points above, especially the divergences between the Old-Text and New-Text schools, were all related to the question here. The issue to focus on here, however, is Zhang's criticisms against Kang's mystification and sanctification of Confucius. In addition to the models borrowed from Christianity and Buddhism, Kang probably adopted certain mystified sources and branches within Confucianism in order to promote his religious reforms, such as the so-called "weft texts" (*chenwei* 識緯, prognostication texts) popular among Confucians in the Han dynasty, and the Taizhou school (*taizhou xuepai* 泰州學派), a sub-branch of Wang Yangming's 王陽明 (1472-1529) Philosophy of Mind.¹⁴⁸ Against Kang's approval of "establishing the teaching through the way of gods and spirits" (*shendao shejiao* 神道設教),¹⁴⁹ a series of essays that Zhang published during this period stressed atheism and materialism. The most important one among them was "On the True Meanings of Confucianism" (*Rushu zhenlun* 儒術真論), an extended essay with two appendices, "On Observing the Universe" (*Shitian lun* 視天論) and "On Bacteria" (*Jun shuo* 菌說), published in installments in the *Qingyi Journal* 清議報 from August 1899 to February 1900.¹⁵⁰ A large proportion of the Buddhist ideas in these texts had appeared in Zhang's letter to Song Shu written on February 19, 1899, half a year earlier.¹⁵¹ But nuanced differences existed, suggesting that Zhang's views on Buddhist doctrines became more positive in the meanwhile.

This essay declares that the only reason for Confucius' superiority to thousands of other sages, including Yao 堯, Shun 舜, and Duke of Zhou 周公 (11th century BC), is because of his ideas of "viewing Heaven as unenlightened/impersonal" 以天為無明 and "negating the existence of ghosts and gods" 無鬼神.¹⁵² The essay does not sufficiently demonstrate this unconventional argument. The Confucian scholar Zhang mostly refers to was Gong Mengzi 公孟子, a purported disciple of Confucius appearing in the chapter "Gong Meng" 公孟 of the *Mozi*. The conversation between Gong Mengzi and Mozi offered unusual support for Zhang's atheist reinterpretation of Confucius' thought. Beyond

¹⁴⁸ Tang Wenming, 2012, pp. 95-96. Lu Yuchen, 2019, pp. 201-202.

¹⁴⁹ To know more about Kang's critical ideas about Confucianism as a religion, see Tang Wenming, 2012; Sébastien Billiou & Joël Thoraval, 2014, Chapters 5-6.

¹⁵⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 118-144.

¹⁵¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 25-27.

¹⁵² Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 120.

this ancient text, Zhang has to, as he himself admits at the beginning of the essay, rely on the studies of pre-Qin masters and the Western learning to reinforce his argumentation. For the studies of pre-Qin masters, Zhang most frequently referred to Mozi and Xunzi. For the Western learning, Zhang's ideas are extensively demonstrated in the two appendices which respectively correspond to Zhang's reinterpretation of Confucius' two views. "On Observing the Universe" resorts to Western astronomy in order to "view Heaven as unenlightened/impersonal" whereas "On Bacteria" relies on Western microbiology to "negate the existence of ghosts and gods." We can see here that the updated discoveries of the natural science serve as a major benchmark to reevaluate the theories of knowledge in Confucian texts. It is based on this benchmark that Zhang further distinguishes the "truth Confucianism" from the "fake Confucianism," the latter label is used to designate the mythical trends of Confucian teachings from the Han dynasty. This distinction, according to contemporary researchers, also implicitly aims at the thought of Zhang's contemporary adversaries, especially Kang Youwei's Confucian religion and Tan Sitong's *An Exposition of Benevolence*.¹⁵³

* The criticisms of Zhang Taiyan against Buddhism *

The above section discussed Zhang's criticism on some key features of the New learning. The relevance of this section with Zhang's views on Buddhism has been demonstrated through his criticisms against two Buddhist cases of the analogical method and on Tan Sitong's Buddhist studies, as well as his self-statement that ascribed his disapproval of Buddhism to his appreciation of Xunzi. To further demonstrate this relevance, I would like to undertake in-depth studies below in two parts respectively related to two terms, "the pursuit of the truth" (*qiushi* 求是) and "the application for practical purposes" (*zhiyong* 致用). As is well known, "the pursuit of the truth" and "the application for practical purposes" were, in Zhang's eyes, two functional dimensions of scholarship.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ There are disputes on the main target of Zhang's essay. According to Lu Yin's study (2008, p. 22), it was Tan's book. Jiang Yihua (2011, pp. 315-319), however, proposed Kang's Confucian religion. I agree with the latter's view since Tan's thought was decisively founded on the theoretical framework of the latter, and that it was Kang that Zhang regarded as his main opponent.

¹⁵⁴ To know more about Zhang's general ideas about these two terms and their relations, see Chen Pingyuan, 1998, pp. 23-58.

Hence, the first part concerns Zhang's critiques of the untruth of Buddhist doctrines and the second Zhang's rejection of the political application of Buddhism.

The first part is about Zhang's criticisms in line with "the pursuit of the truth." To start with, Zhang inherited the conventional approach of the Han learning treating the Buddhist literature as historical materials to be exploited for the sake of empirical studies. Quoting his own words: "I am not opposed to Buddhist texts. The content related to the 'dragon lake' (*longchi*) and 'Mountain of Sumeru' (*xumi*) could be used to study geography; the content related to the 'Yaksa' (*yechā*) and 'Asura' (*axiuluo*) could be used to identify the ethnicities." 浮屠氏之書，吾無訾謾焉。龍池、須彌，吾據之足以考地望；夜叉、阿修羅，吾據之足以辨種族。¹⁵⁵ Following the expansion of his scholarly scope, Zhang more and more used the Buddhist texts to facilitate his understanding of the Western scientific results about astronomical, biological, social, and linguistic phenomena. His frequent references to Buddhist texts, however, did not mean that Zhang became aware of the ethical or theoretical values of Buddhism.¹⁵⁶

On other occasions, more relevant to the studies here, Zhang extensively referred to the new results of Western science to question the validity of the knowledge in Buddhist texts. For instance, he pointed out an error in optics concerning the shadow metaphor in the *Nirvana Sūtra* (*Niepan jing* 涅槃經). After comparing this error with the illusionary conception of primitive humans based on the advanced results of social anthropology, Zhang criticized his contemporaries for "liking to speculate physical principles via Buddhist doctrines" 多喜以浮屠書求物理.¹⁵⁷ Along with his criticism of the *Surangama Sūtra* in disaccord to Physics mentioned above, they well manifested how Zhang rejected the analogical method applied between Buddhism and the natural science. As a supplementary comment, Zhang commonly referred to Buddhism by the term "futu" 浮屠 rather than "fojiao" 佛教 during this period, especially in the context treating Buddhism as an academic resource for new knowledge.

A focus of Zhang's criticism centered on concepts closely associated with Buddhist beliefs, such as soul (*linghun* 靈魂) and ghost (*gui* 鬼). Zhang considered the belief in

¹⁵⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 18.

¹⁵⁶ Chen Jidong, 2019a, pp. 188, 220.

¹⁵⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 32.

these concepts as superstitious. According to him, both the soul of an organism and physical phenomena like electricity could not exist without relying on a material point (*zhidian* 質點). In the case of human beings, once the blood circulation ceased, the soul disappeared and the man died.¹⁵⁸ The materialism Zhang advocated confronted with Kang and Tan's ideas that approved of the truthfulness of spiritual forces alongside material ones, and hence confronted with the latter's hybrid ontology.

The second part is about Zhang's criticisms according to "the application for practical purposes." Compared with criticism of the authenticity of Buddhist doctrines, Zhang put more emphasis on the negative effects of the political and social applications of Buddhism. Again, I would like to start with Zhang's inheritance of conventional ideas, alerting the Buddhist monks' "erosive" impact towards the political life and customs 政俗, as seen in his praise of Fan Zhen 范鎮 (450-510), a scholar in the Southern dynasties of Qi 南齊 (479-502) and Liang 南梁 (502-557) celebrated for his rejection of Buddhization under governmental promotion.¹⁵⁹ In the context of the late Qing reformist movement, what Zhang was most concerned with was the negative moral effect of Buddhist engagement, especially among the literati elites. One of the main targets he chose was Gong Zizhen who considerably contributed to the Buddhist revival of the late Qing. Zhang criticized Gong as a representative of the "rhetorical writers" 詞章之士. Gong's appreciation of Tiantai Buddhism (*tiantai zong* 天台宗) was, in his eyes, due to the ornate diction rather than the doctrines of this Buddhist school.¹⁶⁰

Similar ideas were expressed in "Admonition on the Reform" (*Bianfa zhengyan* 變法箴言), published in the *Jingshibao Journal* in August 1897.¹⁶¹ In this essay, Zhang pointed out two defects among the intellectual elites of political reformism, i.e. "flashy and pedant" 華妙 and "impulsive and reckless" 猥暴. The term "flashy and pedant" was aimed at those "sheltering themselves in Buddhism" 有志之士而遁匿於佛者. Zhang was discontented with their crush on Chan Buddhism, similar to the situation among the late Ming literati. Such crush, according to his reflection on the lessons of history, could not cope with the changing political issues, such as the intelligence about the enemy, the status

¹⁵⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017, p. 50.

¹⁵⁹ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 49.

¹⁶⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 387.

¹⁶¹ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 17-24.

of military strength, the military topography, and the financial condition. What is more, a political reform could not be successful without the martyr spirit of the reformers, as shown in the case of the Meiji Restoration. The vogue of Chan Buddhism among the Chinese literati, however, served as a spiritual entertainment and hence harmed their moral uprightness 娛樂於禪學以日銷其骨鯁.¹⁶² These ideas in “Admonition on the Reform” had an evident correlation with Zhang’s admiration of Xunzi and his critical attitude towards “those who advocated empty words and shortcuts.” It also resonated with Zhang’s criticisms against the defect of vanity through the case of Gong Zizhen. According to Lu Yin’s study, Zhang’s real target was Tan Sitong and Xia Zengyou who advocated “spiritual” and “religious” things,¹⁶³ which is a reasonable analysis.

While “Admonition on the reform” focused on the erosive effect of Buddhism on morality, another essay published in the same month of 1897 stressed the negative impact of egalitarian ideology based on Buddhism. Entitled “On Equality” (*Pingdeng lun* 平等論),¹⁶⁴ this essay criticized the “foolish ones who apprehended the [Buddhist] doctrine dogmatically” 愚者滯其說. They advocated, based on such dogmatic understanding, the equalization between monarch and subject, father and son, man and woman. Zhang’s criticism, without any doubt, was aimed at Tan Sitong’s thought of breaking through the trap of *gangchang*, and Kang Youwei’s thought developed from the “Comprehensive treatise of the true principles and the universal law” to the *Book on the Great Unity* (*Datong shu* 大同書).¹⁶⁵¹⁶⁶ One thing to note for this essay is that Zhang approved of the value of Buddhist egalitarianism in its original background, namely, the Caste system in India. It also played a positive role in the Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝 (420-589) in breaking through the stratified society based on the system of family status 門閥制度. However, Chinese society from the Tang and Song dynasties, according to Zhang, had come through a decisive transformation that eliminated any permanent social classes among the civilian population. Consequently, the egalitarian ideology was impracticably

¹⁶² Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 17-19.

¹⁶³ Lu Yin, 2008, p. 200.

¹⁶⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 25-27.

¹⁶⁵ Tang Wenquan & Luo Fuhui, 1986, p. 241.

¹⁶⁶ The *Book on the Great Unity* was officially published in the Republican era. However, the essential ideas of this book had come into being in the 1880s (Kang Youwei, 1992, p. 13) and been circulated among Kang’s disciples before the Wuxu Reform (Huang Zhangjian, 2007, p. 53).

in real politics. Furthermore, we should be aware of the nuanced difference in Zhang's attitude towards the three aspects of egalitarianism. Compared with his explicit rejection of the equalization between father and son, man and woman, Zhang's attitude towards that between monarch and subject was rather ambiguous, which has been revealed by the anecdote of his conversation with Liang Dingfen. Quoting his own words: "Although the equalization between monarch and subject is [theoretically] practicable, it is unwise to apply this principle to real politics." 君臣雖可平，而於事抑又無取。¹⁶⁷

This section allows us to further understand the correspondence between Zhang's criticisms of Buddhism and the New learning. For the part of "the pursuit of the truth," we see his rejection of the analogical method applied between Buddhism and the natural sciences. Resorting to the new scientific results, complemented by the ideas of native scholars from Xunzi to Fan Zhen, Zhang put forward a theory of knowledge with strong materialist characteristic, confronting the hybrid ontology. For the part of "the application for practical purposes," Zhang's rejection of practical Buddhism reflected his idea that expertise/knowledge should not be directly applied to politics. Such direct and simplified application was, quoting his own terms, merely "empty words and shortcuts." In addition, the close link between Zhang's criticisms against Buddhism and the New learning was also revealed by the fact that the persons targeted in the two occasions largely overlapped one another.

* The Buddhist ideas of Zhang Taiyan, the positive side *

In previous sections, I contextualize Zhang's negative attitude towards Buddhism within the circle of reformist intellectuals as well as the New learning that they advocated. It concludes that Zhang's criticism of Buddhism was aimed at its application to realistic issues rather than the Buddhist doctrine itself. Similar viewpoints have been repeatedly put forward in previous researches,¹⁶⁸ with which I totally agree. What has not been adequately discussed is the positive side of Zhang's views on Buddhism. This section intends to demonstrate that Zhang's appreciation for Buddhism during this period was

¹⁶⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 27.

¹⁶⁸ See, e.g. Tang Wenquan & Luo Fuhui, 1986, pp. 238-243.

higher than many have assumed, and even his criticisms were often softened by subsequent praises. Such nuances and the underlying ambivalence in Zhang's attitude should not be overlooked.

To begin with, several cases show that Zhang's criticism of Buddhism was often accompanied by words of appreciation. The first case concerns the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Dacheng qixinlun* 大乘起信論). In the extract of the 1897 entry of Zhang's *Chronological Autobiography* that I cited at the beginning of this chapter, Zhang recalled his indifference towards the enthusiastic interest in Buddhism around him. Even so, he still found one Buddhist scripture intriguing. Citing here again: "By accident, I found the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. I felt enlightened at first reading and frequently cited it." Zhang's intellectual interest in this canonical work persisted throughout his life. Its significance for Zhang's Buddhist thought will be explored in Chapter 5.

The second case is "Two Cases of contradiction between the *Surangama Sūtra* and Physics." This essay in fact confirms some cases of accordance alongside the two cases of contradiction. For instance, the *Surangama Sūtra* refers to, as a metaphor, the phenomenon that a patient with eye diseases or a healthy man keeping staring at something would have certain visual illusions. According to Zhang, this observation is in line with the optical principle. He then praises "Sakyamuni's knowledge on the light wave which seems to surpass Newton, not to mention Jesus, Muhammad, and others." 釋迦早知光浪，似已高出奈瑞 [牛頓]。信乎耶穌、穆罕默德諸子不足當其芥子也。¹⁶⁹ From this essay, we can see that although rejecting the hasty application of the analogical method between Buddhism and the natural science, he was indeed motivated to defend Buddhist legitimacy against the challenges from the advanced scientific results. More doubtlessly was his preference of Buddhism over other religions in this period.

Furthermore, Zhang's criticism of Buddhism is milder in several other cases. The first case appears in "On Equality." As has already been presented, Zhang approved of the value of Buddhist egalitarianism directing at the Caste system although he disapproved of the principle of egalitarianism. As a clarification of potential misunderstandings, he explained the Buddhist equality of all beings as an "overcorrection,"¹⁷⁰ meaning that in

¹⁶⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 125.

¹⁷⁰ Zhang used a metaphor to illustrate this hypercorrection: "To make a bent wood straight, [we] have to rectify it in

order to offset the abuse of the excessive social inequality, Sakyamuni had to preach a doctrine that was improper in principle. In effect, this clarification defended the authority of the founder of Buddhism but maintained his criticisms against his contemporary advocates of egalitarianism who, in Zhang's eyes, misunderstood the true spirit of the ancient Indian sage which resulted in their “failure to see the wood for the trees.”¹⁷¹

The next three cases come from “On the true meanings of Confucianism” and one of its appendices, “On bacteria.” The first concerns the Buddhist belief in ghosts. As discussed above, Zhang negated the existence of ghosts after death, which, in this context, mainly targeted Buddhist beliefs and rituals. Interestingly, instead of continuing to attack Buddhism from this angle, Zhang turned to explain why Buddhism contained such “superstitious impurities.” He presented in the first place the materialist view of death within the Buddhist tradition by referring to the doctrine of the four elements, i.e. earth, water, fire, and air 地，水，火，風. The death was thus apprehended as the decomposition of these four elements. Now that Buddhists had long understood the falsity of the belief in ghosts but they hung on to it. To explain this, Zhang asserted that the ancient Buddhist scholars preserved this belief in order to enable the establishment of the concept “embryo of the *tathāgata*” (*rulaizang* 如來藏, *tathāgata-garbha*): “Once the ‘embryo of the *tathāgata*’ was established as the transcendental reality separated from the body, [the ancient Buddhist scholars] had to approve of the existence of ghosts separated from the body [in order to avoid the self-contradiction].” 蓋既言真者離身而有如來藏，則不得不言妄者離身而為鬼。¹⁷² The “embryo of the *tathāgata*,” also named the “nature of Buddha” (*foxing* 佛性), describes the germ containing the essential, universal, and immortal nature that exists in all sentient beings. At the core of various Buddhist scriptures and schools and crucial for Zhang’s Buddhist thought in later periods, this concept had not yet gained Zhang’s explicit approval during his reformist period. Back to the discussion, just as revealed by the above cases, Zhang carefully avoided criticizing Buddhism as a whole. In fact, he seemed to be more motivated to justify the value of Buddhist teachings

excess.” 揉曲木者，不得不過其直. Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 25.

¹⁷¹ Zhang’s original expression was “targeting the soft hair but losing sight of the wall” 儀毫而失墻. Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 25.

¹⁷² Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 122.

than subordinating them to the materialist dimension of his thought.

The second is about the concept of the minimal entity (*jiwei* 極微). In discussing the dynamics at the atomic level, Zhang described the attractive and repulsive forces as driven by the intrinsic likes and dislikes of the atom.¹⁷³ He then asserted that “despite their stupidity, the air and the metal also have minimal awareness/cognition (*zhi* 知). Contemporary people only recognize plants as having awareness, which was a further mistake.” 空氣金鐵雖頑，亦有極微之知。今人徒以植物為有知者，益失之矣。¹⁷⁴ Now we can see that, far from being a thorough materialist, Zhang shared, to some extent, the pantheist cosmology with Tan Sitong and others. Interestingly, Zhang stated later, referring to the *Surangama Sūtra*, that Buddhists also knew the ability of cognition/perception of minerals. The Buddhists did say that the minerals were without cognition/perception, but that only meant that they were benightedness. As basic knowledge, the Buddhist mainstream excluded plants from the sentient beings (*youqing zhongsheng* 有情眾生), not to mention the mineral. So we have to suggest that Zhang’s appreciation and recognition of Buddhism were deeper than he was willing to recognize.

The third case concerns the notion of the “six realms of transmigration” (*liudao lunhui* 六道輪迴 *Samsāra*), which reflected Zhang’s ambivalent and unsettled views on Buddhism and materialism. To be noted, Zhang kept a lifelong interest in this subject as well as the previous one about the minimal awareness/cognition, which provides us with a window into his changing ideas about Buddhism vis-à-vis the new knowledge of the natural science. As has been discussed above, Zhang negated the existence of the ghost after death. This might lead some of us to suppose that he would further negate the belief in transmigration. However, it was not the case. His original statement was that “[the sentient beings in] the six realms after death were not all in the form of the ghost, [the real transformation] can be roughly described by the notion of the ‘materialization of the vital force’.” 死後六道，不盡為鬼，則亦與精氣為物之義相近。¹⁷⁵ In which we find a pantheist reinterpretation of this belief rather than viewing it as purely superstitious. What

¹⁷³ This image was probably shaped by the physical theory of ether which attempted to settle the basis for an integral explanation of material and spiritual phenomena. Popular among Western physicists at the end of the 19th century and later refuted, this theory was introduced into China by Christian missionaries. Benjamin A. Elman, 2016, pp. 504-506.

¹⁷⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 131.

¹⁷⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 122.

is more impressive were the lengthy investigations that Zhang carried out in both texts in order to reconcile transmigration (as a Buddhist notion) and evolutionism. As a conclusion, he said in “On bacteria” that:

In sum, the doctrine of transmigration, to some extent, reveals the ultimate truth.

Its flaw lies in the belief in the soul, rather than biological elements, as the unity of transmigration/transformation. The up-going and down-going between the six realms were due to the up-going and down-going of the “will/mentality,” this Buddhist point of view approximates that of biological evolution. [However, in biological evolution,] the transformation happens between a human being and his offspring, which is distinguished from the Buddhist notion of the soul which goes up and down between different realms. Therefore, idealist speculations explore more of the abrupt change than the progressive one whereas experimental studies focus on the progressive change instead of the abrupt one.

總之，輪迴之說，非無至理，而由人身各質所化，非如佛家所謂靈魂所化也。

六道升降，由於志念進退，其說亦近，而所化者乃其胤胄，非如佛家謂靈魂墮入諸趣也。故理想之學，少漸多頓；實驗之學，有漸無頓。¹⁷⁶

Instead of comparing transmigration and evolutionism in terms of, e.g. mythical vs. empirical, other-worldly vs. biological, circular vs. linear, Zhang used “abrupt” (*dun* 頓) and “progressive” (*jian* 漸), a dichotomy originating from the sectarian disputes in the history of Chan Buddhism. According to its conventional narrative, the “abrupt enlightenment” of the Southern lineage was superior to the “progressive enlightenment” of its Northern counterpart. So, using the two terms could mean an implicit recognition of the superiority of Buddhism over evolutionism. Back to Zhang’s effort to reconcile Buddhism and biological evolutionism, it is worth noting that, at the time, the latter was rapidly becoming the theoretical basis for one of the most influential intellectual trends in China. Zhang’s reinterpretation proposed a shift of the picture from the fluctuant destiny of an individual across consecutive lives to the accumulative mutations of individual features through the generations,¹⁷⁷ which, in effect, tried to shift the concern of the common

¹⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 135.

¹⁷⁷ Liang (2001, pp. 75-79) has reinterpreted the Buddhist transmigration in a very similar way, possibly under Zhang’s influence, in his essay “On Non-Self” (*Shuo wuwo* 說無我).

people from his own merit in the afterlife to the situation of his offspring. Reaffirmed on several other occasions,¹⁷⁸ this mode of reinterpretation was maintained following Zhang's radical turn towards revolution and facilitated his combination of Buddhism and nationalism.

The six cases above are sufficient to demonstrate the nuances and ambivalence in Zhang's attitude towards Buddhism. The Chinese scholars of the Mao era (e.g. Li Zehou and Hou Wailu) highlighted the materialist tendency in Zhang's early thought. While approving of the value of their studies, it may be improper to overestimate the significance of this dimension and even treat Zhang as a precursor for the more secularized intellectuals during the Republican period. More important to my dissertation, this section helps to rectify the over-simplified image which explained the dramatic establishment of Zhang's Buddhist commitment by what he experienced in jail. We now see that as early as his reformist period, Zhang already accomplished comprehensive knowledge about Buddhism and recognized its importance in coping with the challenges of the Western learning towards the indigenous knowledge systems.

* Revisiting Zhang Taiyan's attitude towards the Kang Party, a conclusion *

It is time to conclude this chapter and suggest its relevance with the dissertation as a whole. Zhang's reformist period is the first period that provides us with enough texts related to Buddhism. Many of these texts seem to show that Buddhism gave Zhang a negative impression. The chapter has demonstrated that this is only a part of the picture. Zhang's views on Buddhism cannot be separated from his thoughts about his fellow reformist literati, especially the small group that I label as the New learning scholars. Zhang's real attitude towards just Buddhism, just as towards these scholars, was complicated and kept evolving. His criticisms against Buddhism, in effect, aimed rather at the proposal of applying Buddhism to practical affairs than at Buddhist doctrines. His appreciation of the latter was more significant than many have assumed. As a result, it is time to change the neglect towards this period among academics. The proper way is to treat

¹⁷⁸ As one example, see Chen Jidong, 2019a, pp. 194-195.

it as the first stage of Zhang's Buddhist engagement instead of a mere "prehistory." Based on this awareness, we should revise the conventional narrative that describes Zhang's commitment to Buddhism during the three-year imprisonment in a dramatic manner, paying more attention to the continuity (and even the consistency) between his Buddhist thought before and after the jail experience. Chapter 2 will extend this approach in studying the second stage (1900-1903).

In the last section, I confirm the main viewpoint of Chen Jidong' article that, during his reformist period, Zhang's views on Buddhism were multifaceted and ambiguous rather than purely critical. We see the harsh attacks he launched on Buddhism based on his stance as a Han learning scholar and an advocate of Xunzi's teachings, intermingling with his strong appreciation of the insights in Buddhist texts. Similarly, we see that, on the one hand, he resorted to the natural science to reveal the flaws in Buddhist theories; on the other, however, he defended the latter's overall values and attempted to reconcile them with the former; on several occasions, the two aspects appeared in the same paragraphs. It is clear that Zhang's attitude towards Buddhism remained ambivalent and undetermined. Despite his confrontation with the New learning scholars, he could not resist the intellectual trend that introduced Buddhism as a valuable intellectual and spiritual alternative in coping with the cultural collision between the Confucian China and the West.

The renewed image of Zhang's views on Buddhism before mid-1900 leads us to reevaluate the origins of his Buddhist ideas and commitment. Indeed, the results achieved in this chapter suggest that, although Zhang's principal Buddhist texts were written from 1906 onwards, both their concrete ideas and general tendencies, as well as the underlying concerns, can partly be traced back to the years of his involvement in Buddhist reading and debates. However, when assessing the intellectual heritage of Zhang's reformist period, we should take into consideration not only Zhang's own writings related to Buddhism but also those of his acquaintances in the reformist circles. During his engagement in the reformist movement, Zhang supported the political struggles of the Kang Party but failed to resolve their scholarly divergences (including the divergence concerning Buddhism). In contrast, following his radical turn to revolution, Zhang, consciously or unconsciously, adopted some essential traits of the Buddhist ideas of the New learning scholars while confronting

Kang and his followers politically. The connections between this chapter and the next ones will be more and more clear following the progress of the dissertation, it is nonetheless possible to suggest four threads.

The first thread concerns Yogācāra Buddhism. The New learning scholars' praise of Yogācāra Buddhism greatly facilitated the revival of this school in the late Qing era. Xia Zengyou even considered it as the ultimate expression of the genuine Buddhist truth. Influences also came from Zhang's other acquaintances, including Yang Wenhui, Song Shu,¹⁷⁹ and Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873-1958). A Buddhist layman widely known for authoring *A History of Chinese Buddhism* (*Zhongguo fojiao shi* 中國佛教史), Jiang was at the same time an influential promotor of his version of meditative practice. It was him who managed to send the *Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra* (*Yujia shidilun* 瑜伽師地論, *Treatise on the Foundation for Yoga Practitioners*), the fundamental text of Yogācāra Buddhism, to Zhang during the latter's imprisonment (1903-1906) following the Subao Case (*Subao an* 蘇報案).¹⁸⁰ Jiang's help enabled Zhang to read systematically Yogācāra texts. We can see that the intellectuals in broad reformist circles shared the interest in Yogācāra Buddhism. Despite the time lag, Zhang finally reached a total agreement with Xia about the exceptional value of Yogācāra texts,¹⁸¹ and he went farther than most of his contemporaries in studying these texts upon which he constructed the theoretical system of his own.

The keyword of the second thread is “practical Buddhism.” In 1897, Zhang used to think that Buddhism could do little good to the reformist movement. In the aftermath of the Wuxu Reform, Zhang changed his opinion. In his letter to Song Shu, written on February 19, 1899, Zhang shares his thoughts after reading again Tan Sitong's *An Exposition of Benevolence*. In contrast to his critical attitude two years earlier, Zhang highly praises Tan's Buddhist ideas for “they can facilitate overcoming the fear for death and transcending the selfishness of trivial cleverness.” 其義可以振怯死之氣，而泯小智

¹⁷⁹ Chen Jidong, 2019c, p. 123; 2019d, p. 162. Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 231.

¹⁸⁰ Jiang Weiqiao, 2009, p. 159.

¹⁸¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 191.

之私。¹⁸² Zhang then regretted Tan's death, wishing to debate with him in dreams.¹⁸³

This citation suggests that, despite the continuing divergences in theoretical thought, Zhang switched his attitude towards the moral and political application of Buddhism. Rupturing politically with most of his former reformist comrades in mid-1900, Zhang nonetheless approved more of the urge to establish a new religion for revolutionary mobilization and ethnic solidarity. In his 1906 “Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo” (*Dongjing liuxuesheng huanyinghui yanshuoci* 東京留學生歡迎會演說辭), a text I will undertake an in-depth study in Chapter 2, Zhang openly advocates the spirit of “madness,” a notion that clearly resonates with Tan’s “mental force.”

The third thread is about the shift of Zhang’s attitude towards Buddhism and the analogical method. We know that Zhang criticized the application of the analogical method to integrate politics, scholarship, and religion into an inclusive discourse. On certain occasions, we see some ambiguity in his attitude, as seen in the analogical perspective he proposed concerning the genealogies of Confucianism and Indian Buddhism. But even in this case, Zhang kept a clear distance from the way Liang applied the analogical method. Years later, following the shift of his attitude towards Buddhism and religion, Zhang explicitly adopted the method he had once rejected. In the aforementioned 1906 speech, Zhang put forward a three-stage evolutionary framework for politics and religion. On the one hand, the political system transforms from aristocracy to monarchy and finally to republic. On the other, religion gradually evolves from polytheism to monotheism and finally to atheism.¹⁸⁴ It is clear that Zhang applies the analogical method here, proposing in effect Buddhism (as an atheist religion, according to him) as the suitable religion for the establishment of the republican system in China. At the cost of academic rigor, Zhang intentionally advocated his version of practical Buddhism. Apart from the analogical method, Zhang also developed his syncretic theory at the ontological level, which will be extensively discussed in Chapter 5.

The fourth thread aims at the complicated relationship between Zhang’s views on

¹⁸² In Chapter 25 “Sowing Seeds” (*Bozhong* 播種) of the *Book of Urgency* (first edition), Zhang expresses his high respect for the spirit of martyrs, which presumably refers to Tan and several other fellow literati executed following the coup of Wuxu. Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 55.

¹⁸³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 25-26.

¹⁸⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, pp. 4-5.

Buddhism (and religion) and Kang Youwei's Confucian religion. On the one hand, Zhang launched more unreserved attacks against the Confucian religion following the deepening of their political divergence. Upset by the Siege of the International Legations, Zhang harshly criticized himself for his concessions to certain ideas of Kang, as revealed by his revision of the *Book of Urgency*.¹⁸⁵ Zhang's hostility against Kang on a moral basis was further relevant to his radicalized critique of Confucius and Confucians. Such critique, while resonating with Tan Sitong's call of "breaking through the traps," signified at the same time a deviation from his once commitment to orthodox Confucian scholarship and ethics. This deviation resulted in Zhang's awareness of the necessity to seek an alternative religion to Confucianism. This awareness, consciously or not, revealed the impact of Kang's proposal of "changing a teaching/religion" (*bianjiao* 變教) and "founding a new teaching/religion" (*chuangjiao* 創教). So, on the other hand, we see Zhang's tacit acceptance of the general ideas underlying Kang's efforts of religious reformation, despite his intensified criticisms against the Confucian religion. This thread is situated at the core of Chapter 2.

Besides the topics of the four above threads, there are several other important ones which Zhang encountered during his contact with the New learning scholars and other acquaintances: evolutionism, the debates with the New-Text scholars in historical studies, the studies of the pre-Qin masters, Christianity, and the Western natural science, etc. While the New learning as a premature discourse soon faded away and the reformist circles disintegrated, these topics continued to be major intellectual concerns in his later life.

¹⁸⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 65-69, 120. Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 86-87.

Chapter 2. Establishing a New Religion: Buddhism, National Essence, and Ethnic Revolution

*** Introduction ***

This chapter deals with Zhang Taiyan's thought about religion and Buddhism from mid-1900 to mid-1907. At the outset of this period, Zhang was determined to be an anti-Manchu revolutionary. In the end, he became one of the most influential propagandists for this goal. This is a period of turbulence and glory in his life. He was arrested and faced the death penalty. But he also gained a great reputation as a revolutionary scholar, a productive writer of combative essays and original ideas. No wonder that it has drawn much attention from academics. Since his attitude towards Buddhism considerably shifted during this period, which accompanied his revolutionary turn, it has become the most studied period in his life-long Buddhist engagement. Extensively absorbing previous scientific results, this chapter attempts to offer a comprehensive picture as well as some original views.

This seven-year period can be divided into three phases: Phase 1, the beginning of Zhang's revolutionary career (1900-1903); Phase 2, trial and imprisonment (1903-1906); Phase 3, the first year during his third exile in Japan (June 1906-June 1907). Previous researchers have described that during the three-year imprisonment, Zhang dramatically changed from a Han learning scholar who appreciated the most the teachings of Xunzi and Han Feizi 韓非子 (ca.280-233BC) to an enthusiastic advocate of Buddhism, even a Buddhist devotee in some sense. This picture is supported by Zhang's own words in retrospect. Due to the lack of historical materials for Phase 2, scholars commonly refer to his Buddhist writings during the few years after he was released from prison to explain why and how did this change happen. The essays that they repeatedly discussed were published in *The People's Journal* (*Minbao* 民報), of which Zhang served as the chief editor. These texts are very rich and continue to serve as important sources for Zhang-scholars interested in his Buddhist thought. Nonetheless, I intend to bring some less well-known materials, mainly in Phase 1, into consideration, hoping to cast new light on these much-studied topics.

The 1900-1903 phase, just as Zhang's reformist period, has long been neglected among researchers. It seems that during that period Zhang did not devote much time to studying Buddhism nor did he express his appreciation for it. Recent researchers from both China and Japan, especially Kobayashi Takeshi and Peng Chunling, have considerably contributed to renewing our knowledge about Zhang's views on religion during 1900-1903, largely facilitated by his second stay in Japan in 1902. These studies have helped me to connect Zhang's ideas about religion and Buddhism before and after his imprisonment. Similar to my arguments in Chapter 1, they show that the continuity in Zhang's thought was underestimated, which made his Buddhist turn appear more dramatic and sharp than it actually was.

For this period from mid-1900 to mid-1907, I shift not only its beginning time but also its ending time to an earlier date. Conventionally, Zhang's Buddhist writings from 1906 to 1908 were treated as homogenous.¹⁸⁶ My study, however, attempts to emphasize change instead of continuity. The reason lies in Zhang's unsolved difficulty in applying Buddhism to real politics. As revealed in his "On the Five Negations," published in September 1907, Zhang had critically reflected on the combination between Buddhism, National Essence, and ethnic revolution by then and showed the will to transcend the stage of nationalism. In other words, Zhang changed his ideas of "practical Buddhism" earlier than we used to suppose. To be sure, mid-1907 does not constitute any definite boundary. In the next chapter, I will cite several texts during 1900-1907, especially those reflecting on evolutionism.

My study makes more efforts to provide a comprehensive and dynamic picture of Zhang's Buddhist thought rather than detailed doctrinal discussions about his Buddhist texts, for there are already some high-level studies in the latter aspect.¹⁸⁷ This chapter chooses to do a careful reading of one text, "Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo," especially the part on religion. This speech is important because Zhang put forward, for the first time, "religion" and "National Essence" (*guocui* 國粹) as

¹⁸⁶ For example, Jiang Hainu (2012, pp. 209-243) has divided Zhang's Buddhist thought into three stages. Stage 1 (1894-1899), the early period; Stage 2 (1900-1908), Buddhism as an intellectual instrument for a revolutionary morality; Stage 3 (1909-1916), the convergence of Buddhism and Zhuangzi's thought.

¹⁸⁷ See, primarily, Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying, 1989, pp. 358-384; John Makeham, 2012; Jiang Yihua, 2011, pp. 377-423.

indispensable means for the success of the anti-Manchu revolution. In his eyes, only transformed Buddhism was capable of restoring morality in the new age.¹⁸⁸ Though it was not until 1906 that Zhang formally established Buddhism as the new religion, he had begun to employ two neologisms during 1900-1903. Replacing the conventional notion *jiao* by *zongjiao* on the one hand,¹⁸⁹ and transforming the paradigm of Confucian scholarship into that of National Essence on the other, Zhang laid the foundation for his radical new thought in the 1906 speech. That is what makes Phase 1 important.

As a brief introduction to the structure of this chapter. It is divided into two parts. The task of the first part is to present the activities and events in Zhang's political and intellectual career, provide philological information, and introduce some of his main publications. The second part is organized around three themes, respectively on Zhang's reception of evolutionism, his reevaluation of various religions (centered on Confucianism), and the twofold foundation of his new version of Buddhism. Although mainly based on in-depth analyses of the 1906 speech (especially the part on religion), my investigations take the texts and contexts of all the three phases into consideration.

* The revolutionary and intellectual career of Zhang Taiyan *

To begin the biographical introduction, I would like to present Zhang Taiyan's revolutionary turn during the summer of 1900.

After the failure of the Wuxu Reform, the Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835-1908), the de facto supreme leader of the empire, attempted to change the heir presumptive. The plan failed due to strong opposition from senior officials and foreign ambassadors.¹⁹⁰ The diplomatic tension thus accumulated. In June 1900, encouraged by the conservative officials in power, the Empress decided to launch an anti-foreign campaign, taking advantage of the momentum of the Boxer Rebellion (Yihetuan Movement 義和團運動), an anti-Christian and anti-imperialist peasant uprising fast spreading in several Northern

¹⁸⁸ *Zongjiao* is polysemic in Zhang's vocabulary. In some cases, it designates religions and religious phenomena in general; in others, it designates the new religion to come in the modern era. For Zhang, the best option was the version of Buddhism that he established based on systematic reinterpretations. To avoid confusion, I will capitalize the first letter of "religion" for the latter cases.

¹⁸⁹ For background information of this replacement, see, e.g. Sébastien Billioud & Joël Thoraval, 2014, pp. 168-169.

¹⁹⁰ Sang Bin, 2004.

provinces of China. The Western powers reacted by sending a troop of Eight-Nation Alliance which soon occupied Beijing and forced the Qing government to sign the humiliating Boxer Protocol. This event, known to the West as the Siege of the International Legations and commonly referred to in China as the “invasion of the allied forces of eight foreign countries” (*baguo lianjun qinhua* 八國聯軍侵華), severely undermined the legitimacy of the Manchu regime and greatly benefitted the revolutionary leagues.¹⁹¹

During the Siege of the International Legations, several governor-generals in southern provinces, including Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823-1901), Liu Kunyi 劉坤一 (1830-1902), and Zhang Zhidong, made a peace agreement with foreigners, later entitled the Mutual Protection of Southeast China (*dongnan hubao* 東南互保). Endorsed by the Han officials, a political association of reformist elites appeared in Shanghai by the name of the Chinese Parliament (*zhongguo yihui* 中國議會). Zhang Taiyan attended its meetings on July 26, 1900, but was strongly opposed to the loyalist stance of its members. Leaving midway, he cut off his braid and wrote the essay “On Untying My Braid” (*Jie bianfa* 解辯髮) to show his determination to overthrow the Manchu regime.¹⁹² The following year (1901) during his teaching post at Soochow University 東吳大學 in Suzhou, Zhang paid a visit to Yu Yue. The latter severely reproached him for “violating the loyalty to the monarchy and the filial piety” 不忠不孝. Zhang responded by writing an essay entitled “Declining My Own Master” (*Xie benshi* 謝本師).¹⁹³ The monarch, the parents, and the teacher, along with Heaven and Earth (*tian di jun qin shi* 天地君親師), were five objects of worship for the Confucian rituals.¹⁹⁴ Zhang’s provocative publication against his master’s reproach was a significant event in his rupture with the ethics of *gangchang*.

After engaging in anti-governmental activities, Zhang’s life entered a period of

¹⁹¹ According to Wong Young-tsui (2006, pp. 94-96), what underlay Zhang’s anti-Manchuism was the concern of Western imperialism. The Siege of the International Legations triggered Zhang’s despair towards the capacity of the Manchu regime to protect the Chinese nation.

¹⁹² Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 63-64. Zhang later placed “On Untying My Braid” at the end of the *Book of Urgency (revised version)* (Chapter 63). According to this essay, he changed to wear European clothes and hat brought by a friend after cutting off his braid. The reason is that “[the habitants in] Europe had a close relationship with Romans during the Han dynasty and shared the same [linguistic] root with Indians.” 歐羅巴者，在漢則近大秦，與天毒同柢。 Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 351-352.

¹⁹³ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 67, 70-71.

¹⁹⁴ One of the early accounts comes from the chapter “On Ritual and Etiquette” (*Lilun* 禮論) of *Xunzi*. Xunzi, 2007, pp. 161-162.

extreme unrest. His name was frequently put on the wanted list and he had to seek shelter in the houses of his literati friends,¹⁹⁵ in the Shanghai concessions, and even abroad in Japan. One of the most influential disciples of Zhang, Lu Xun used to praise the revolutionary determination of his master that did not change after “being chased seven times [by the police] and put in prison three times” 七被追捕，三入牢獄.¹⁹⁶ Most of the chase happened during the three years following Zhang’s engagement in the revolutionary movement. During the first phase, Zhang frequently sought temporary shelter from relatives and friends facing the publicly announced searches by police. To elude an urgent arrest, he fled to Japan for the second time in February 1902. This five-month stay turned out to be intellectually fruitful.

First of all, Zhang extensively absorbed the scientific results of Western learning during the journey, essentially by translated texts in Japanese and introductory works of Japanese scholars. Compared with the earlier period, Zhang’s reading interest largely shifted from natural sciences to social sciences and humanities.¹⁹⁷ Also during this journey, Zhang read extensively the academic publications written or translated by Japanese scholars and hence received the impact of advanced scientific results and various intellectual trends.¹⁹⁸ Among them, scholars of Buddhist studies and social evolution were particularly influential.

For the scholars of Buddhist studies, the distinguished figures were Inoue Enryō and Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治 (1873-1949). Enryo has been presented in Chapter 1 as the builder of the Philosophy Hall. He was the first Japanese scholar who attempted to transform Buddhism into a philosophical religion, capable to dialogue with Western philosophy as a rationalized worldview.¹⁹⁹ Partly under his influence, Zhang began to develop his own theory of general history based on the evolutionary framework.²⁰⁰ Anesaki, widely considered as the founding father of religious studies in Japan,²⁰¹ exerted

¹⁹⁵ One of these friends was Wu Baochu 吳保初 (1869-1913). Zhang’s letters to Wu during this period (Zhang Taiyan, 2017, pp. 111-123) contain important materials concerning Zhang’s religious ideas and practices.

¹⁹⁶ Lu Xun, 2009, “Several remembrances on Master Taiyan” (*Guanyu Taiyan xiansheng ersanshi* 關於太炎先生二三事), p. 39.

¹⁹⁷ Jiang Yihua, 2011, p. 349.

¹⁹⁸ For a comprehensive understanding of this topic, see Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, Chapters 1-2.

¹⁹⁹ Noriko Mori, 2001, pp. 198, 216.

²⁰⁰ Viren Murthy, 2011, pp. 146-150.

²⁰¹ Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, p. 53; Peng Chunling, 2012, p. 103.

a decisive influence on Zhang's understanding of various topics including religious history in India, comparative studies of religion, and primitive religious phenomena. Anesaki had spent three years in Europe studying with German and English scholars, especially with Paul J. Deussen (1845-1919), on Sanskrit and the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Anesaki actively introduced Schopenhauer into Japanese intelligentsia, which induced Zhang to establish connections between German and Indian philosophies.²⁰²

The impact from the above Buddhist scholars should be contextualized in the general spiritual and intellectual circumstances. In the first decade of the 20th century, a wave of religious fever arose in Japanese society.²⁰³ Correspondingly, we witnessed a New Buddhist Movement by Buddhist scholars and laymen who assembled around the *New Buddhism Journal*, initiated in July 1900. Its members advocated radical anti-clericalism, rejecting many of the current Buddhist institutions and rituals. They promoted a new form of Buddhism which was “universalistic, this-worldly, scientific, and moral,” based on critical reflections on Buddhism and other religions. The traditional Buddhism, in contrast, was characterized as “individualistic, other-worldly, material, unscientific, and unmoral.”²⁰⁴

For the scholars of social evolution, we have Aruga Nagao 有賀長雄 (1860-1921) and Kishimoto Nobuta 岸本能武太 (1866-1928), both studying social history from an evolutionary perspective. Aruga's work on religious evolution constituted one of the three volumes of his sociological studies, which provided Zhang with abundant materials about religious phenomena, for instance, totemism among primitive tribes. Kishimoto was a close friend of Anesaki Masaharu. Zhang appreciated him more than Aruga, as proved by Zhang's choice to translate his introductory book about sociology instead of a counterpart by Nagao.²⁰⁵ This Chinese edition, more of a condensed summary than a literal translation, was published by Guangzhi Shuju 廣智書局 (Broadening Wisdom Bookstore) in July 1902, entitled “Shehuixue” 社會學 (literally “studies of the society”) in Chinese. Replacing Yan Fu's “qunxue” 群學 (literally “studies of the masses”), this term has ever

²⁰² Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, pp. 60-61, 65-67.

²⁰³ Peng Chunling, 2012, p. 103.

²⁰⁴ Chen Jidong, 2019c, pp. 124.

²⁰⁵ Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, p. 61.

since been used as the Chinese translation for “sociology.”²⁰⁶ Both Nagao and Kishimoto owed a great deal to Franklin H. Giddings (1855-1931), an American sociologist whose influence exceeded Herbert Spencer’s during the period in question;²⁰⁷ the difference between Giddings and Spencer will be discussed later.

During this stay, Zhang resided for some time at the office of the *Xinmin Congbao Journal* 新民叢報 (New Citizen Journal) in Yokohama and spent time talking with its chief editor Liang Qichao. He was glad to find that Liang had radically changed his political stance, becoming more sympathetic to the revolution, and greatly advanced in scholarship.²⁰⁸ Because of this, they communicated fruitfully on a wide range of subjects. If Japanese intelligentsia served as the mediator between Western learning and Chinese thinkers, Liang, in turn, greatly contributed to Zhang’s access to and adoption of such intellectual resources.²⁰⁹ A common environment of knowledge plus their converging political stance, no wonder that the two showed similar tendencies and even reached a consensus during this short period. For instance, they were both motivated to write a general history of China²¹⁰ and an intellectual history of the Qing dynasty.²¹¹

The similarity and consensus between Liang and Zhang also concerned Buddhism. One of Liang’s main interests in 1902 was religion in general and Buddhism in particular, a natural result of his contact with Japanese intelligentsia. He produced at least two essays in this direction: “On the Relations between Buddhism and the Governance of Society” (*Lun fojiao yu quanzhi de guanxi* 論佛教與群治的關係) and “On the Gain and Loss of the Religionist and the Philosopher” (*Lun zongjiaojia yu zhuxuejia zhi changduan deshi* 論宗教家與哲學家之長短得失). In the first essay, Liang emphasized the importance of collective belief regarding the governance of Chinese society. Then, he advocated

²⁰⁶ Kang Youwei and Yan Fu translated the term “sociology” by 群學. The translation as 社會學 appeared firstly in Tan’s *An Exposition of Benevolence*. However, Zhang was the first who used this term to indicate the discipline of sociology. Chen Shude, 1981, p. 139.

²⁰⁷ Bastid-Bruguière, 2001, pp. 429-431; Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, p. 38.

²⁰⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 75.

²⁰⁹ Another important introducer was Song Jiaoren 宋教仁 (1882-1913), one of the main leaders within the revolutionary league and a co-founder of the Chinese Republic. Song was an avid learner of Western and Japanese scholarship during his exile in Japan (Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, p. 77). His frequent intellectual exchange with Zhang left traces in his private diary (Song Jiaoren, 2014).

²¹⁰ Lu Yin, 2008, pp. 181-193.

²¹¹ According to Zhou Yuntong’s study, Liang’s *Intellectual History of the Past Three Hundred Years* (*Jinsanbainian xueshushi* 近三百年學術史) was considerably influenced by Zhang’s “On Confucian Scholars of the Qing dynasty” (*Qingru* 清儒), a chapter in the *Book of Urgency* (revised version). Zhu Weizheng, 2008, p. 132.

Buddhism to serve as such a common belief rather than the Confucian religion or Christianity. Afterward, he put forward six principles as the precondition of his turn to Buddhism: (1) Buddhist belief was based on truthful knowledge rather than superstition 佛教之信仰乃智信而非迷信; (2) Buddhist belief was motivated by compassion rather than self-interests 佛教之信仰乃兼善而非獨善; (3) Buddhist belief was this-worldly rather than misanthropic 佛教之信仰乃人世而非厭世; (4) Buddhist belief was unlimited rather than limited 佛教之信仰乃無量而非有限; (5) Buddhist belief was characterized by egalitarianism rather than discrimination 佛教之信仰乃平等而非差別; (6) Buddhist belief relies on oneself rather than relies on external forces 佛教之信仰乃自力而非他力.²¹² These principles were clearly influenced by the New Buddhist Movement in Japan. In the second essay, Liang firstly recalled and rejected his previous view on religion as superstitious. Then he pointed out the fact that the great men in world history were often religious believers but rarely philosophers. The reason for this contrast, in his eyes, lied in the difference that “philosophy emphasizes doubt whereas religion emphasizes belief” 哲學貴疑，宗教貴信. However, it was the belief, not the doubt, that led to the will to act and social mobilization.²¹³ Advocating Buddhism as an alternative to Confucianism was merely a short-lived episode in Liang’s ever-changing intellectual life. He soon partly returned to the Confucian religion, attempting to associate it with the civil morality.²¹⁴ However, his self-statement about Buddhist belief and his comparative views on religion and philosophy left an imprint on Zhang or at least helped the emergence of the latter’s similar tendencies.²¹⁵

Another important meeting during this stay in Japan was between Zhang and Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866-1925). The first meeting between the two happened in mid-1899 in Yokohama, where Liang Qichao introduced Zhang to Sun. Nonetheless, it was three years later that they became revolutionary comrades. To welcome Zhang, Sun prepared a grand ceremony with military music and a drinking party which impressed Zhang a lot.²¹⁶ Zhang’s support was one of the first and rare ones that Sun received from the intellectual

²¹² Liang Qichao, 1936b, pp. 45-51.

²¹³ Liang, 1936a, pp. 44-49.

²¹⁴ Peng Chunling, 2014, pp. 290-291.

²¹⁵ Jiang Hainu, 2012, pp. 177, 179, 182.

²¹⁶ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 48, 74.

elites. Zhang appreciated Sun's determined will to anti-Manchuism, in contrast to the prevalent ambiguous attitude towards the Qing regime among the Confucian literati. Nonetheless, he did not feel optimistic about the success of Sun's revolutionary activities.²¹⁷

In 1900-1903, Zhang's most important intellectual work lied in revising the *Book of Urgency*. Shortly after the publication of its first edition (between the end of 1899 and July 1900), Zhang had become unsatisfied with many of its ideas based on the reformist stance. The two essays placed in the front pages of the revised edition, “On Correcting the Erroneous View on the ‘Guest Emperor’” (*Kedi kuangmiu* 客帝匡謬) and “On Correcting the Erroneous View on the Local Forces” (*Fenzhen kuangmiu* 分鎮匡謬), were written in 1900. In these essays, Zhang offered harsh self-critiques of two chapters in the *Book of Urgency (first edition)*, Chapter 29 “On the ‘Guest Emperor’” (*Kedi* 客帝) and Chapter 31 “On the Local Forces” (*Fenzhen* 分鎮), determined to renounce his earlier approval of those who promoted reformism but did not renounce loyalty to the Manchu regime.²¹⁸ However, it was not until the spring of 1902, during his stay in Japan, that his new ideas matured.²¹⁹ Although published by a Japanese publishing house in Tokyo in 1904, most chapters of the book were revised or rewritten in 1902 following his return from Japan. The revised edition differed considerably from the first edition. Thirteen chapters were removed or reorganized, while twenty-six new chapters were elaborated.²²⁰ His attitude towards historical figures from the pre-Qin masters to recent Qing scholars, and his viewpoint on current affairs (politics, economy, military, and education), had all gone through important shifts in this revised edition.

The changes in the revised edition that should concern us primarily in this chapter were the three following topics: the general history of China; the Chinese nation; and religion. For the first topic, Zhang placed two extended appendices at the end of Chapter 59 “Lament for the Historiography of the Qing dynasty” (*Ai qingshi* 哀清史), entitled

²¹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 1.

²¹⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 55, 64. While rejecting the proposal of treating the Qing emperors as guests, Zhang had not yet abandoned its theoretical foundation, the idea of lifting Confucius as the “uncrowned king” (*suwang* 素王) as well as the common and permanent lord of Han Chinese (Xu Fu, 2000, p. 882). This continuity, nonetheless, did not stop Zhang from developing a more and more critical attitude towards Confucius and Confucian classics (Peng Chunling, 2014, p. 117).

²¹⁹ Zhu Weizheng, 1983, p. 58.

²²⁰ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 83-86.

“Brief Guide to the General History of China” (*Zhongguo tongshi lueli* 中國通史略例) and “Catalogue of the General History of China” (*Zhongguo tongshi mulu* 中國通史目錄). In the first text, Zhang referred to sociological terminology to illuminate his intent: “Western sociology can be divided into static and dynamic sociology. The former serves to preserve the past whereas the latter serves to understand the future. So is the case for the general history.” 西方言社會學者，有靜社會學、動社會學二種。靜以臧往，動以知來。通史亦然。²²¹ In Zhang’s original plan, the catalog of *dian* 典 (reference book)²²² was meant to preserve the past whereas the catalog of *jizhuan* 紀傳 (biography) was meant to intervene in the future since it had the effect of inspiring morale and arousing emotion. The proposal of elaborating a general history of China was crucial to his project despite its preliminary condition. A part of the *Book of Urgency (Revised edition)* can be seen as its preliminary attempt.

For the Chinese nation, one of the most relevant and significant chapters was Chapter 17 “On the Ethnic Nature (Part 1)” (*Xu zhongxing shang* 序種姓上), in which Zhang adopted the contentious theory of Sino-Babylonianism. Put forward by the French orientalist Terrien de Lacouperie (1845-1894)²²³, this theory was received with enthusiasm within Japanese intelligentsia and shortly after by Chinese scholars, in particular among Han nationalists.²²⁴ According to Zhang’s introduction of this theory, the Xia 夏 ethnicity originated in Babylon²²⁵. The Han tribes entered the Chinese territory passing through the Congling 蔥嶺 mountain ridge and engaged in long-term battles with indigenous ethnicities such as *jiuli* 九黎 and *sanmiao* 三苗. The final triumph came during the reign of Yu 禹, the purported founder of Xia dynasty (ca.2070-1600BC).²²⁶ Thus was the image Zhang depicted regarding the origin of the (Han) Chinese nation, also exhibited in Chapter 16 “On the Origin of Human Beings” (*Yuanren* 原人).

²²¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 334.

²²² *Dian* refers to reference books of a particular subject with materials taken from various sources, e.g., “zhongzu dian” 種族典 (*dian* of ethnicity), “shihuo dian” 食貨典 (*dian* of food and goods), and “zongjiao dian” 宗教典 (*dian* of religion). Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 336.

²²³ Referred to by the Chinese translation of “Kepaili” 科派利 in the *Book of Urgency (revised version)*.

For primary knowledge of his theory, see Terrien de Lacouperie, 1894.

²²⁴ For the disputes between Japanese and Chinese scholars on this theory, see Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, pp. 47-51. For a general history of the influence of Sino-Babylonianism in modern Japan and China, see Hon Tze-ki, 2015, pp. 49-73. Consulting, in particular, the pages 60-61 to grasp its political implication against the Manchus.

²²⁵ Referred to by the Chinese translation of “Jiaerteya” 加爾特亞 in the *Book of Urgency (revised version)*.

²²⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 169-170.

For religion, the key chapter was Chapter 47 “On the Origin of the Teaching/Religion (Part 1)” (*Yuanjiao shang* 原教上). In this text, Zhang criticized the hierarchical view of religious history held by the Christian missionaries. In contrast, he praised Anesaki Masaharu’s studies that “equalize things and ideas and remove the distinction between high and low.” 齊物論而貴賤泯。²²⁷ Now it is clear that this chapter was essentially a translation work based on Anesaki’s *Introduction to Religious Studies*. Zhang appreciated Anesaki to such an extent that he substantially borrowed the latter’s religious ideas in Chapter 15 “On Augury” (*Tongchen* 通讖) and Chapter 25 “On Writing System” (*Dingwen* 訂文).²²⁸ Similar to some extent with the topic of ethnicity, both the second parts of “On the Ethnic Nature” and “On the Origin of the Teaching/Religion” had already been written for the first edition²²⁹ whereas the first parts were newly elaborated adopting the scientific results of newly-introduced disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and comparative study of religions. By such endeavors, Zhang intended to probe the obscure origin of ethnicity and religiosity beyond the limitations set by the lack of written records.

From the discussions of the general history of China, the Chinese nation, and religion in the *Book of Urgency (Revised edition)*, we can see that Zhang had largely surpassed the traditional realms of Han learning or any other Confucian school. This intellectual “away from home” was mainly inspired by the advanced scholarship of the West through the intermediary of Japanese scholars reshaped by the theoretical framework of evolutionism. These new visions, established in 1902, laid the foundation of Zhang’s thought of National Essence and Religion.

In July 1902, Zhang returned to his hometown in secret to take care of his first wife who was critically ill.²³⁰ In March 1903, he accepted Cai Yuanpei’s invitation and served as a teacher in the Patriotic Society of Education (Aiguo Xueshe 愛國學社) in the British

²²⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 286.

²²⁸ Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, pp. 60-65.

²²⁹ “On the Ethnic Nature (Part 2)” was originally entitled “On Distinguishing the Family Names” (*Bianshi* 辨氏) and did not appear in the published text. Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 85.

²³⁰ Born into a poor family, Madam Wang 王氏 used to be a maid servant of Zhang’s mother. Failing to find a good match from a family from the same social background, the latter arranged the marriage between her son and her maid servant. Zhang later described Madam Wang as *qie* 妾 (concubine) since their marriage was without an official ceremony. Madam Wang gave birth to four daughters. She died in 1903. Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 9. Zhang Nianchi, 1995, p. 25.

Concession of Shanghai.²³¹ The Patriotic Society of Education received dozens of students enrolled in campus upheavals and expelled from their original schools. Despite differences in social background, most of the teachers there were inclined to anti-Manchuism. Also at this place, Zhang met and rejoined many of his close friends, three of whom are introduced below in detail.

Firstly, Cai Yuanpei. Cai was originated from Shaoxing 紹興 county of Zhejiang Province. At the age of 25, he achieved the *jinshi* 進士 title, the highest degree in the hierarchical system of the state examinations, and was selected as a member of the Hanlin Imperial Academy 翰林院. Cai's turn to the revolutionary path occurred during similar periods to Zhang's. In 1904, they co-founded, along with several other people, the Restoration Society (Guangfu hui 光復會), an anti-Manchu group mainly active in the Jiangnan area. The deep friendship between the two was best manifested by Cai's serving as the chief witness for the wedding between Zhang and Tang Guoli 湯國梨 (1883-1980), his second wife, on June 15, 1913. Besides the similarity of social background and political trajectory, Cai and Zhang were affected by the same intellectual trends from Japan and the West. On the subject of religion, Cai translated the pandect of Inoue Enryō's *Lecture Notes of Mystery Studies* (*Yaoguaixue jiangyi* 妖怪學講義). Generally considered as one of the most influential advocates of secularism, Cai put forward the famous proposal to replace religion with aesthetic education at the beginning of his presidency of Peking University (1917-1927). Despite this later intellectual stance, Cai had once, around 1900, conceived a plan to protect the Chinese nation through Buddhist teachings.²³²

Secondly, Huang Zongyang 黃宗仰 (1865-1921), also known as Wumu shansen 烏目山僧. Born into a merchant family in Changshu 常熟 county, Jiangsu 江蘇 Province, Huang received the Buddhist ordination in 1884 and was given the clerical name Yongren 用仁 at the Jiangtian Temple 江天寺 near Zhenjiang 鎮江.²³³ Elected as the chairman of the Chinese Society of Education (Zhongguo Jiaoyuhui 中國教育會), Huang considerably contributed to the revolutionary activities in Shanghai using his social connections with, for example, Liza Roos 羅迦陵 (1864-1941), a Chinese citizen with a

²³¹ Zhang Nianchi, 1995, p. 26.

²³² See Douglas M. Gildow, 2018.

²³³ Huang Zongyang, 2011, p. 225.

French father who had converted as his disciple as early as 1892, and her Jewish husband, Silas A. Hardoon (1851-1931), a wealthy businessman widely known in Shanghai by his Chinese name Hatong 哈同.²³⁴ Zhang kept a lifelong friendship with Huang, much more profound than that with other Buddhist monks. Zhang frequently sought Huang's opinions on Buddhism as shown by their long-term correspondence.²³⁵ Inversely, Huang's view on Buddhism was reshaped under Zhang's influence.²³⁶

Thirdly, Liu Shipei 劉師培 (1884-1919). Liu was born into one of the most preeminent families for the Old-Text school of the Qing dynasty, the Liu family of Yizheng county 儀征劉氏, Jiangsu Province. In June 1903, one month after his failure in the state examinations, Liu went to Shanghai and joined the intellectual circle of the Chinese Society of Education and the Patriotic Society of Education. He soon turned into a radical revolutionary, renaming himself as [Liu] Guanghan 光漢 (restoring the Han nation).²³⁷ Liu kept a particularly close relationship with Zhang for several years, similar to some extent to the relationship between Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei.²³⁸ Just as Zhang, Liu was more affiliated to the orthodox Han learning but more radical politically, compared to Kang and Liang. Liu was a productive writer of both anti-Manchu propaganda and scholarship. For the latter aspect, he produced a series of textbooks on Chinese history, which can be regarded as a popularized version of Zhang's idea about the general history of China. He was also an active advocate of Sino-Babylonianism and the National Essence Movement.²³⁹ However, unlike Zhang and his contemporaries, during this period he did not show a strong interest in religion. Liu's relevance to my dissertation will mostly be revealed in Chapter 3.

The relentless anti-Manchu propaganda finally got Zhang into severe trouble. On June 30, 1903, the Qing government closed the Subao 蘇報 Press and issued arrest warrants for several of its editors and writers including Zhang. What touched the nerve of

²³⁴ Huang Zongyang, 2011, pp. 226-229.

²³⁵ See Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 146-161.

²³⁶ "On Promoting Buddhism as the Key Issue of Improving the Citizens' Morality Today" (*Lun zunchong fojiao wei jinri zengjin guomin daode zhi qieyao* 論尊崇佛教為今日增進國民道德之切要), published on February 1, 1913. Huang (2011, pp. 45-49) borrowed in this essay the principal ideas from Zhang's 1906 speech, the central text of this chapter.

²³⁷ Chen Qi, 2007, pp. 40-41.

²³⁸ Zhu Weizheng, 2008, pp. 121-122.

²³⁹ For a general introduction to this topic, see Martin Bernal, 1976, "Liu Shih-p'ei and National Essence."

the government were two texts published by this press. One was Zou Rong's 鄒容 (1885-1905)²⁴⁰ *The revolutionary army* (*Geming jun* 革命軍), a pamphlet calling for radical revolutions, the other was Zhang's essay entitled “Refuting Kang Youwei Concerning the Revolution” (*Bo Kang Youwei lun geming shu* 駁康有為論革命書)²⁴¹ in which the author discussed the Guangxu Emperor with blasphemous words. Among the people wanted, only Zhang stayed in the press, determined to face a possible death penalty. Shortly later, Zou Rong gave himself up to the concession police following Zhang's call.²⁴² The trial in the concession court lasted for more than five months. Because of the interference of the British ambassadors, Zhang was sentenced to merely three years in prison and Zou Rong to two years. Zhang and Zou's provocative anti-Manchu writings, along with their fearless performance in the court, set off a firestorm of public debates especially among those sympathetic with revolutionaries. This series of events was later named the Subao Case (*Subao an* 蘇報案).²⁴³

The term of imprisonment formally began on May 21, 1904, nearly a year later after being arrested. In jail, Zhang became a passionate reader of the canonical works of Indian Buddhism, especially of Yogācāra Buddhism. As recalled in his *Chronological Autobiography*, Zhang began to carefully read the *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra* and the *Treatise on Establishing the Theory of Consciousness-only* (*Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論), among others. Zhang had bought the former book during his first trip to Japan but he engaged in social activities since then and did not finish reading it. The edition of the latter was reprinted by the Jinling Scripture Carving House (Jinling kejingchu 金陵刻經處) under Yang Wenhui's direction. Both were sent to him in prison by his friends. Zhang recited and studied these texts in the morning and evening in the spare time of forced labor.

²⁴⁰ Zhang Taiyan, Zou Rong, along with Zhang Shizhao 章士釗 (1881-1973) and Zhang Ji 張繼 (1882-1947), became sworn brothers in 1903. To know more about Zou Rong's relationship with Zhang and his role in the revolutionary movement, see Feng Ziyou 馮自由, 2011, “Biography of Zou Rong, author of *The Revolutionary Army*” (*Gemingjun zuozhe Zou Rong* 《革命軍》作者鄒容), in *Corpus of Zou Rong* (*Zou Rong ji* 鄒容集), pp. 68-73.

²⁴¹ It targeted Kang's essay “In Reply to Chinese Businessmen in North and South America on the Argument that China Could Only Apply Constitutionalism, Not Revolution” (*Da Nanbeimeizhou zhuhuashang lun Zhongguo zhikexing lixian bunengxing geming shu* 答南北美洲諸華商論中國只可行立憲不能行革命書), partly published in *Xinmin Congbao* in March 1902. Kang Youwei, 2015, pp. 291-319.

²⁴² Zou Rong, 2009, pp. 158-159; Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 621.

²⁴³ For more details of the Subao Case, see Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 95-109. Again, to comprehend more directly the sensation that it caused, see the records in the private diaries of Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (1873-1958) and Sun Baoxuan as well as the memories of Chen Fan 陳范 (1860-1913), the owner of *Subao* Journal. Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 620-621.

Resulting from the reading and speculation in such circumstances without any distraction, Zhang had a feeling of enlightenment towards the doctrines of Mahāyāna Buddhism.²⁴⁴

Although enormously suffering both physically and mentally, Zhang got considerable freedom not only to read but even to write and circulate his writings. One of the few remaining texts written in jail was “Notes on Reading Buddhist Texts” (*Du fodian zaji* 讀佛典雜記), published in the *National Essence Journal* (*Guocui xuebao* 國粹學報) on April 24, 1905. This essay was composed of three notes or rather three extended commentaries that respectively treated the topics of (1) happiness vs. suffering, (2) freedom vs. enforcement, and (3) selfishness vs. sociality. Instead of manifesting the direct results of his Buddhist reading, these notes implicitly show us his motives and mode of thinking. In the first place, the Western philosophers had become potential interlocutors when Zhang was reading the Buddhist texts, as proved by his mention of Aristotle at the beginning of the essay.²⁴⁵ In the second place, the newly-introduced theoretical concepts, from the terminological repertoires of both Buddhism and Western philosophy, helped him make sense of his jail experience,²⁴⁶ thus reducing the degree of suffering and even transforming it into a stimulus for his intellectual and spiritual self-cultivation. According to one of his visitors in prison, Zhang said that “it is because of the support of Buddhist studies that I rarely fell ill and kept an imperturbable manner in jail” 吾在獄中所以鮮疾病而神態能如是泰然者，皆得力於佛學也. To Zhang’s regret, Zou Rong failed to sustain the inner peace by reading Buddhist texts and died in prison shortly before the expiration of his two-year sentence. Zhang explained Zou’s death by the fact that he was too young and too irritable, which finally caused his illness.²⁴⁷

Besides “Notes on Reading Buddhist Texts,” we have a letter from Zhang to Huang Zongyan that manifested the advancement of his Buddhist reading and thinking. Written on October 26, 1905, this letter might be the first text in which Zhang systematically resorted to Yogācāra terminology to probe the human consciousness and mentality. Similar to the essay written half a year earlier, the discussion was mainly driven by the need to

²⁴⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 110, 114.

²⁴⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, pp. 251-252. Aristotle was referred to by the Chinese translation of “Yalisituode” 亞歷斯陀德.

²⁴⁶ Viren Murthy, 2011, p. 109.

²⁴⁷ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 110, 629.

relate Buddhism and the Western philosophers (in this text Kant and Schopenhauer²⁴⁸) but processed in more in-depth. In addition, Zhang mentioned at the beginning of this letter his practice of Buddhist meditation.²⁴⁹ Contrary to the common scholarly opinion, Zhang's religious self-cultivation began years before the jail phase and lasted up to his later life. This side of Zhang's Buddhist engagement will be studied in Chapter 4.

Apart from Buddhism, Zhang's major concern in jail was the fate of National Essence, as intensively exposed in "Autobiographical Account from Prison in the Year of *Guimao*" (*Guimao yuzhong manbi* 癸卯獄中漫筆), written in 1903 and published in the *National Essence Journal* on September 18, 1905. The essay informs us about the guilty Zhang feels that "being entrusted by Heaven to preserve and carry forward the [Chinese] National Essence, I am imprisoned by the Manchu rulers and unable to fulfill my mission. ... I am guilty for letting the transmission of the magnificent Chinese scholarship (concerning the national history and the social norms) lost in my hand." 上天以國粹付余……又將官其財物，恢明而光大之。懷未得遂，累於仇國……至於支那閥碩壯美之學，而遂斬其統緒，國故民紀，絕於余手，是則余之罪也。²⁵⁰ The tone of self-accusation in this text implied Zhang's regret for his passion for martyrdom. While enormously encouraging the anti-Manchu enthusiasm, he now considered this behavior as irrational and irresponsible for his fulfillment of a more important mission.

The neologism "National Essence" was coined by Japanese scholars to translate the English word "nationality" and was later introduced among the Chinese intelligentsia, just as happened in the cases of "religion," "society" (*shehui* 社會), and "science" (*kexue* 科學). In contrast to many other cases, the rise of the National Essence Movement, in both Japan and China, reflected not just the preponderance of Western discourses and terminologies but more of the sense of crisis among native elites yearning to protect their cultural identity. In the case of China, in the aftermath of the catastrophic Siege of the International Legations, the Qing government launched the New Policies (Qingmo Xinzheng 清末新政) from 1901, implementing reforms in a wider range and on a larger

²⁴⁸ Kant and Schopenhauer were respectively referred to by the Chinese translations of "Kande" 堪德 and "Xiaobinhuoyeer" 削賓霍野爾.

²⁴⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 146-148.

²⁵⁰ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 109.

scale than the Wuxu Reform. Inspired by a desperate wish to keep the Manchu regime in power, the New Policies resulted in the rapid loss of cultural confidence and even the emergence of radical proposals of wholesale westernization. As a reaction against this tendency, more and more scholars and political activists stood out, appealing for the preservation and adaptation of traditional culture and scholarship.²⁵¹

It was in this situation that the National Essence Movement, the outset of which was the inauguration of the Society of National Learning Preservation (Guoxue baocun hui 國學保存會) by Deng Shi 鄧實 (1877-1951) and Huang Jie 黃節 (1873-1935) at the beginning of 1905 and the release of *National Essence Journal* shortly after. As the key promoters, Deng and Huang's ideas were considerably reshaped by the revolutionary scholars in the Chinese Society of Education. Despite the apparent cultural conservatism, the National Essence intellectuals took an ideological stance distinguished from the other two groups represented respectively by Zhang Zhidong and Liang Qichao. For Zhang Zhidong, his advocacy of preserving National Essence was oriented towards maintaining Confucianism and particularly its ethical principles around *gangchang*, hence reaffirming the legitimacy of the current imperial monarchism.²⁵² For Liang Qichao, his discourse emphasizing the dimension of "culture" was aimed to downplay the Sino-barbarian distinction (*huayi zhibian* 華夷之辨), hence endorsing progressive constitutionalism against ethnic revolution.²⁵³ The National Essence Movement, in contrast, was oriented towards the goal of cultural restoration which was inseparable from the political and ethnic restoration, as claimed by Zhang Taiyan replying to a journalist, published in *Subao* Journal on July 6, 1903.²⁵⁴ Besides being one of the main contributors of the *National Essence Journal*, Zhang was also capable of influencing the decision-making process of the editorial office even during imprisonment.²⁵⁵ Because of his superior level of scholarship and his fearless martyrdom, Zhang gained a distinguished reputation in both the Society of National Learning Preservation and the Restoration Society.

Released after serving his sentence and being expelled from the Chinese territory on

²⁵¹ Zheng Shiqu, 1997, pp. 31-33; Chang Hao, 1988, p. 163. See also Laurence A. Schneider, 1976, "National Essence and the New Intelligentsia."

²⁵² Zheng Shiqu, 1997, pp. 1-2, 7-9, 12.

²⁵³ Wang Hui, 1999, pp. 990-992.

²⁵⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 99-100.

²⁵⁵ Zheng Shiqu, 1997, pp. 19-21.

June 29, 1906, Zhang went to exile in Japan for the third time and did not return to his homeland until the success of Wuchang Uprising 武昌起義 in October 1911. The Chinese revolutionaries organized a welcome party on July 15, 1906, shortly after his arrival in Tokyo. Hundreds of his comrades, as well as young students, attended the party during which Zhang gave a famous speech. This was the moment when Zhang felt ready to put forward to the public his own version of Buddhism providing a renewed worldview. It was also the first time when he explicitly associated Religion with National Essence and ethnic revolution. The record of the speech was published on July 25 the same year in No. 6 of *The People's Journal*, the official newspaper of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (Tongmeng hui 同盟會). Zhang then served as its chief editor until October 19, 1908, when it was banned by the Japanese government. Some of his most important Buddhist texts were published in *The People's Journal* during this period, several of which will be presented and discussed below.

* Key texts of Zhang Taiyan's Buddhist writings *

All the texts presented below were written during the first year of Zhang's third stay in Japan. Alongside his activities of revolutionary propaganda, Zhang prepared for teaching seminars of National learning. In his original curriculum project, Buddhism was arranged as a part by the title of "Inner Scripture learning" (*neidian xue* 內典學), as shown by the "Advertisement for the Revitalization Society of National learning" (*Guoxue zhengqishe guanggao* 國學振起社廣告) and the record in Song Jiaoren's 宋教仁 (1882-1913) private diary, *A Personal History of Mine* (*Wo zhi lishi* 我之歷史).²⁵⁶ Furthermore, we have the "Preface to the Academic Society of National learning" (*Guoxue jiangxihui xu* 國學講習會序), published in No. 6 of *The People's Journal* on October 1, 1906, an essay that responded to and promoted Zhang's proposal to establish an Academic Society of National learning. In this text, the author asserted that "Master Zhang is particularly proficient in Buddhist studies, and he intends to transform the world by Buddhist studies. Hence it is also a key point in his teaching program." 先生治佛學尤精，謂將以佛學易

²⁵⁶ Song Jiaoren, 2014, p. 234.

天下。臨講之目，此亦要點。²⁵⁷

As the chief editor of *The People's Journal*, Zhang contributed dozens of essays to the journal, one of the main themes of which was Buddhism. I would like to introduce here the essential ideas of five key essays by chronological order: “Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo,” “On Atheism” (*Wushen lun* 無神論), “On Establishing Religion” (*Jianli zongjiao lun* 建立宗教論), “On the Non-Self of Human Beings” (*Ren wuwo lun* 人無我論), and “Letter in Reply to Tiezheng” (*Da Tiezheng* 答鐵錚). These texts were published between July 1906 and June 1907, one year that corresponded to Phase 3. It is necessary to mention another two essays of the same period which will be studied in Chapter 3. The first was “On the Five Negations,” published on September 25, 1907, in which I find a significant shift regarding his ideas about the relationship between Buddhism and ethnic revolution. The second was “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution” (*Jufen jinhualun* 傑分進化論). Though published as early as September 5, 1906, this essay was preoccupied with ethical issues relative to evolutionism. Hence, it shared more the concern of “On the Five Negations” than that of the other texts.

What I offer below is the outline of the five texts, followed by in-depth discussions of the first text (also the central text for the chapter), especially the part on religion.

Text 1, “Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo.”²⁵⁸ The circumstance of this speech and its publication has been presented above.

As stated at the outset of the speech, Zhang intended to share his ideas on two issues, i.e., a retrospective of his life course, and the means required by the revolutionary cause in the short term. For the first issue, relatively brief, Zhang recalled how his anti-Manchuism was rooted in the experiences of his youth, his meeting with Sun Yat-sen, and his gratification witnessing the thriving situation of revolutionary activities in subsequent years, before approaching the main topic of this part, “madness” (*fengdian* 癲癇). Zhang confessed that he had been suffering from a nervous disorder²⁵⁹ and considered himself a mad man. However, he said that he would feel glad hearing others talking about his

²⁵⁷ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 124-125.

²⁵⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, pp. 1-8.

²⁵⁹ Undoubtedly, this nervous disorder was biologically based on his epilepsy.

madness because “[without being a mad person,] one cannot reflect on unconventional and strange ideas, let alone advocate them. Even if he advocates them, when meeting with difficult situations, without being a mad person, he will not be capable to face a hundred setbacks without turning away and alone apply his [unconventional and strange] ideas in real life.” 大凡非常古怪的議論，斷不能想，就能想也不敢說。說了以後，遇著艱難困苦的時候，不是神經病人，斷不能百折不回，孤行己意。²⁶⁰ Then Zhang listed six famous historical figures, four in foreign history and two in Chinese history,²⁶¹ as examples to prove that only neurotic persons could make great accomplishments in scholarship and politics.

For the second issue, the means for the revolutionary cause in the short term, Zhang first put aside the current issues such as politics, law, and (military) strategy, for these had been well studied by other revolutionaries. What he considered as primary was emotion, which was rooted in nervous systems (and thus resonated with the topic of madness). Then, what were the means to reshape the collective emotions of the Chinese people? Zhang responded by advocating two things: “First, using Religion to arouse faith in order to improve the citizens’ morality; second, using National Essence to stimulate ethnic awareness in order to improve the patriotic eagerness.” 第一，是用宗教發起信心，增進國民的道德；第二，是用國粹激動種姓，增進愛國的熱腸。²⁶²

Zhang discussed his religious thought first. In the first place, he criticized Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)²⁶³ and Herbert Spencer for their advocacy of utilitarianism and indifference towards religion. Then he commented on and devaluated Confucianism, Christianity, and current Chinese Buddhism mingled with beliefs and practices from popular religion. After rejecting all these, Zhang put forward his proposal of a reformed Buddhism principally by combining two Buddhist schools, Huayan 華嚴 and Yogācāra. He regarded this version of Buddhism as superior in both morality and theory. Then, Zhang

²⁶⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 2; the second half of the translation was adopted from Viren Murthy, 2011, p. 129.

²⁶¹ Socrates (ca.470-399BC), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Muhammad (ca.570-632), and Bismarck (1815-1898); Xiong Tingbi 熊廷弼 (1569-1625) and Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 (1812-1885). The four foreign persons were respectively referred to by the Chinese translations of “Suogeladi” 頃格拉底, “Lusuo” 路索, “Mohanmode” 摩罕默德, and “Bishimake” 畢士馬克. Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 2.

²⁶² Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 3.

²⁶³ The term in the original text is “Bindan” 賓丹, probably a Chinese translation for Bentham but this has not yet been verified.

answered three questions concerning the practical effects of Buddhism: (1) Why Buddhism did not make a difference after entering China for two thousand years? (2) Why the Indians people, as the most devout believers of Buddhism, were conquered and lost their sovereignty? (3) How could Buddhism, with egalitarianism as its fundamental doctrine, endorse ethnic nationalism?

Afterward, Zhang turned to the notion of National Essence. The aim, he claimed, lied in treasuring the history of the Han nation instead of venerating Confucius' teachings. It is worth noting that, instead of conventional ones such as *ruxue* 儒學 or *rushu* 儒術, Zhang used here the term *kongjiao* 孔教 to refer to Confucianism, identical to the term used by Kang Youwei to designate the Confucian religion. Zhang then turned to the "history" (by the broad sense of this word), asserting that Chinese history was composed of three aspects: (1) language and writing system; (2) degrees, regulations, and institutions (*dianzhang zhidu* 典章制度); (3) biographies of historical figures. Then he discussed these three aspects in sequence, depicting the contour of National Essence and highlighting its value. At the end of the speech, Zhang returned to the topic of madness expressing his hope that his comrades could be "infected" by his neurotic passion and then spread it among their four hundred million compatriots.

Text 2, "On Atheism."²⁶⁴ This essay was published in No. 9 of *The People's Journal* on November 15, 1906. At the outset, Zhang classified Indian and Western philosophies and religions into three categories, i.e., theism (*weishen* 惟神), materialism (*weiwu* 惟物) and solipsism (*weiwo* 惟我). Among these three metaphysical stances, what Zhang appreciated was solipsism because of its proximity to Yogācāra Buddhism. Nonetheless, materialism also shared some common ground with Buddhism since the former negated the existence of soul and spirit, thus agreeing with the essential Buddhist concept "non-self." Theism, in contrast, was the main target since "materialism is still close to equalitarianism whereas theism preaches the worship of one single God, hence extremely far from equalitarianism." 惟物之說，猶近平等；惟神之說，崇奉一尊，則與平等絕遠也。²⁶⁵

Then, as the main body of the text, Zhang launched critiques of three

²⁶⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 414-423.

²⁶⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 415.

religions/philosophies related to theism, i.e., Christianity, Vedānta (*feitanduo* 哺檀多), and pantheism. In his eyes, the ontology of Christianity was full of self-contradiction, far inferior to that of Vedānta. However, he devoted most pages to criticizing the Christian doctrines on the omniscience and omnipotence of Jehovah. It revealed Zhang's concern with the expanding influence of Christianity in China, even among the revolutionary league. In the last part, about pantheism, Zhang commented on three Western philosophers, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).²⁶⁶ Zhang praised their new ideas concerning theism which made the concept of God unnecessary and insignificant. But still, he was unsatisfied with the ambiguous attitude of Kant on whether God exists or not. The essay ended by clarifying the meaning of two Buddhist concepts, the “suchness” (*zhenru* 真如, *tathātā*) and the “nature of *dharma*” (*faxing* 法性).

Text 3, “On Establishing Religion.”²⁶⁷ This essay was published in No. 9 of *The People’s Journal* on November 15, 1906. It was the longest among the five texts in question. Along with “On Atheism” and “On the Non-Self of Human Beings,” they laid the theoretical foundation of Zhang’s Buddhist worldview. While “On Atheism” and “On the Non-Self of Human Beings” contributed to this task by deconstructing the “self” of prevalent ontologies in terms of supernatural entities and of human beings, “On Establishing Religion” undertook the more delicate task of constructing a new worldview. So, the latter text can be considered as the main body whereas the former two served as its two wings.

Zhang’s new worldview was grounded on the “three natures” (*sanxing* 三性, *trisvabhāva*), basic concepts for Yogācāra Buddhism. First, the “nature of existence produced from attachment to imaginatively constructed discrimination” (*bianjisuzhi zixing* 遍計所執自性, *parikalpita-svabhāva*), wherein things are incorrectly comprehended based on conceptual construction, hence are attributed with intrinsic existence. Second, the “nature of existence arising from causes and conditions” (*yitaqi zixin* 依他起自性, *paratantra-svabhāva*), which is the dependently originated nature of the causal flow of phenomena,

²⁶⁶ They were respectively referred to by the Chinese translations of “Sibinuosa” 斯比諾莎, “Heertuman” 赫爾圖門, and “Kangde” 康德.

²⁶⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 423-441.

often erroneously confused into the conceptualized nature. And third, the “nature of existence being perfectly accomplished” (*yuanchengshi zixin* 圓成實自性, *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva*),²⁶⁸ which is the experience of the “consummated nature” of things discovered in meditation unaffected by conceptualization. Based on this theoretical framework, Zhang felt capable of reevaluating the existing religions and philosophies and putting forward his religious project. For the former aspect, he undertook an analysis of the adherents of monotheism and pantheism in a more in-depth way than in “On Atheism.” In the latter essay, Zhang dialogued with Christianity, Vedānta, and pantheists, refuting their self-contradictory points from his viewpoint. In “On Establishing Religion,” he proceeded to explain the reasons for their erroneous stance by employing Yogācāra terminology. He concluded, in the middle of the essay, that “the adherents of (mono-)theism have made the mistake of ‘erroneous imputation’ (*zengyizhi* 增益執)” because they constructed various entities by the “nature of existence produced from attachment to imaginatively constructed discrimination”²⁶⁹ whereas the theories of pantheism, though sophisticatedly elaborated, reduced the individual self to add to the external realm due to their unawareness of the “nature of existence arising from causes and conditions.”²⁷⁰

Though criticizing precedent ontologies, Zhang affirmed that “without exception, those who talked about philosophy or set up a religion established something as the ‘fundamental reality.’ Although the actual content of each may differ in detail, formally they are identical. Hence, the need to establish the ‘nature of existence being perfectly accomplished’ has been recognized by previous sages.” 言哲學創宗教者，無不建立一物以為本體。其所有之實相雖異，其所舉之形式是同。是圓成實自性之當立，固有智者所認可也。²⁷¹ Both Plato’s concept *idea* and Kant’s concept *thing-in-itself* were referred to demonstrate this need though Zhang was not satisfied with both the concepts.²⁷²

²⁶⁸ I borrow many translations of terminology and passage related to Yogācārin Buddhism from John Makeham (2012, pp. 103-115), and Viren Murthy (2011, pp. 113-118).

²⁶⁹ Besides the monotheists, the materialists (whether in ancient India or modern Europe) also made the mistake of “additive misconception” since they believed that there existed minimal entities like atom (*atun* 阿屯) or others. Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 427.

²⁷⁰ Similar to “On Atheism,” this text expressed more approval towards pantheism (than monotheism) which “can serve as resources for establishing a new religion though these theories are not religions themselves.” Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 424, 431, 436.

²⁷¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 424. Here again, I adopt John Makeham’s (2012, p. 108) translation and make minor modifications.

²⁷² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 424-425, 428. The two concepts were respectively referred to by the Chinese translations

Only in the Buddhist concepts of suchness, the “*dharma* realm” (*fajie* 法界, *dharmadhātu*), and *nirvāṇa* (*niepan* 涅槃), that Zhang found the authentic conception of the fundamental reality. Treated by Zhang as synonyms of the “nature of existence being perfectly accomplished,” these terms refer to a true realm appearing following the disappearance of the “*ālaya*-consciousness” (*alaiye shi* 阿賴耶識, *ālaya-vijñāna*). The *ālaya*-consciousness is the eighth and the all-encompassing level within the conceptual framework of the “eight consciousnesses” (*bashi* 八識),²⁷³ also known as the “storehouse consciousness” (*cangshi* 藏識) since it accumulates all potential energy as seeds for the mental and physical manifestation of one’s existence as well as its recurrent rebirth.²⁷⁴ The *ālaya*-consciousness, though relevant to the fundamental reality, contained “polluted seeds” which impeded access to the “nature of existence being perfectly accomplished.”

We can see that relying on Yogācāra terminology, Zhang established in this essay an abstract, systematic, and comprehensive theory upon which he intended to establish his version of the new religion. It was a religion aimed at the salvation of all beings instead of that of oneself since it treated all beings as “sharing a common suchness and *ālaya*-consciousness.” 一切眾生，同此真如，同此阿賴耶識。²⁷⁵ In the latter part of the essay, Zhang answered two questions concerning the religiosity of his religious project: (1) How could Zhang’s project be regarded as religious so long as it worshiped neither ghosts nor gods? (2) Should this religion be charged exclusively to monks or be popularized among laymen? For the first question, Zhang advocated a kind of worship ritual that venerated Buddha as the founding master of superior teachings rather than as a supernatural god or a provider of other-worldly rewards. For the second question, Zhang argued that monks and laymen had their respective duties and should collaborate.²⁷⁶

Text 4, “On the Non-Self of Human Beings.”²⁷⁷ This essay was published in No. 11

of “yidieye” 伊跌耶 and “wuru” 物如.

²⁷³ The eight consciousnesses, along with the three natures, constituted two theoretical mainstays of Yogācāra Buddhism. The importance of the former was less significant for the text in question, so a terminological explanation in detail will be reserved for future studies.

²⁷⁴ Zhang’s reinterpretation of the store-house consciousness was considerably reshaped by Kant’s concept of *twelve categories* (*shi’er fanchou* 十二範疇) and *archetypes of ideas* (*yuanxing guannian* 原型觀念) by Anesaki Masaharu. This topic has been discussed by various researchers, see, e.g., Cai Zhidong, 2013, p. 49; Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, pp. 69-70.

²⁷⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 436.

²⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 438-440.

²⁷⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 441-453.

of *The People's Journal* on January 25, 1907. At the outset of the discussion, Zhang distinguished two types of “self-clinging” (*wozhi* 我執, *ātma-grāha*) of human beings: the one is the self-clinging arisen from the creation (*jusheng wozhi*, 俱生我執), the one in common sense and was rooted in the “nature of existence arising from causes and conditions”; the other is the self-clinging out of deviated views (*xiejian wozhi*, 邪見我執), which belongs to the “nature of existence produced from attachment to imaginatively constructed discrimination.” The former corresponds to the “afflictive hindrance” (*fannaozhang* 煩惱障), to which every human being is attached from his birth. The latter corresponds to the “epistemological hindrance” (*suozhizhang* 所知障), due to the belief in “a permanent self, a solid and stable self, and an unchangeable and indestructible self.” 恒常之謂我；堅住之謂我；不可變壞之謂我。²⁷⁸ In other words, the belief in the intrinsic existence of conceptual constructions.

Zhang first undertook critiques of the self-clinging out of deviated views employing the reasoning methods of the Buddhist logic (*yinming xue* 因明學, *hetuvidyā*). Then he turned to the self-clinging arisen from the creation undertaking analysis of various phenomena in the human society: suicide, greed for money, preservation of physical force, and the affection between family members, etc. Zhang asserted that all these human behaviors and tendencies were triggered by the self-clinging human nature, even in the extreme case of suicide. Following the demonstration of the non-self nature in these two directions, Zhang concluded that “the self is an illusionary existence whereas the *ālaya*-consciousness is true. The *ālaya*-consciousness is also named the ‘embryo of the *tathāgata*.’ The two terms are different from each other because the former is polluted whereas the latter is purified.” 我謂幻有，而阿賴耶識為真。即此阿賴耶識，亦名為如來藏。特以清淨雜染之分，異其名相。²⁷⁹ The essay ended by defending his proposal of establishing Buddhism as the new religion, especially by the publication of “On Establishing Religion.”

Text 5, “Letter in Reply to Tiezheng.”²⁸⁰ This letter was published in No. 14 of *The People's Journal* on June 8, 1907. The self-defense at the end of “On the Non-Self of Human Beings” was aimed at the objection from revolutionary comrades in the Chinese

²⁷⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 441.

²⁷⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 450.

²⁸⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 386-393.

Mainland that the Buddhist scriptures were too hard to understand for ordinary people, hence unsuitable to the urgent task of ethnic revolution. Judged by Zhang's letter in reply, Tiezheng²⁸¹ raised similar criticisms and advocated Confucianism, especially Yangmingism, as a better alternative. Although disagreeing with Tiezheng's intellectual stance, Zhang considered him as a worthy interlocutor. So he took the opportunity of replying Tiezheng's letter to extensively elucidate his thought, focusing particularly on the topic of the relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism.

This text commented at length on a multitude of Confucian and Buddhist schools, however, it centered on the single idea that "the Chinese moral teachings, despite the difference of the paths trodden, share a common principle, namely, 'relying on oneself instead of relying on external forces' (*yizi bu yita*)."²⁸² 支那德教，雖各異途，而根原所在，悉歸於一，曰“依自不依他”耳。²⁸² This principle was underlined in several places of the text serving as the fundamental criterion to appraise the value of a particular school. For Confucianism, he praised various Confucian scholars for their rejection of worshiping ghosts and gods. Nonetheless, he also alerted the common weakness among Confucians, which was the attachment to the officialdom and salary. For Buddhism, he approved of Chan Buddhism and disapproved of Pure Land Buddhism for the former valued its inner spiritual forces whereas the latter resorted to supernatural forces. These viewpoints had been expressed elsewhere earlier but were regrouped and demonstrated here in a comprehensive manner.

Considering Tiezheng's advocacy of Yangmingism, Zhang put this Confucian school in a special position in this text. On the one hand, he pointed out the proximity between Yangmingism and Chan Buddhism, both having the advantage of self-esteem and straightforwardness. The moral value of Yangmingism in social struggles had been proved by the anti-Manchu movement at the end of the Ming dynasty as well as the Meiji Restoration. On the other hand, he suggested to the advocates of Yangmingism to eliminate their sectarian prejudice against Buddhism and to pay attention to its two defects, i.e., the relaxation of precepts and the arrogance out of self-clinging.²⁸³

²⁸¹ Tiezheng was probably the penname of a pro-revolutionary intellectual whose real identity remains unknown.

²⁸² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 386.

²⁸³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 386, 388, 393.

* Zhang Taiyan's reception of evolutionism *

Now begins the second part of this chapter. I will undertake an extended discussion and in-depth analysis based on a careful textual reading of "Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo," especially the part on religion.

There are three reasons why I chose this text. First, Zhang delivered this speech in a colloquial manner which makes his ideas much more accessible than his elaborated Buddhist texts. The occasion and the level of audiences did restrict him from touching on scholarly problems, nonetheless, Zhang did not hesitate to articulate his key ideas and explicitly indicate his proposals. Second, the record of this speech was the first publication after his release from prison. In this text, we can see several themes that appeared most frequently in the writings of the whole period. In other words, it served as a connecting link suitable for intertextual references. Third, the two main keywords of the speech, religion and National Essence, constituted, in my eyes, the keywords of the whole period in question.

It is also by repeated reading of this text that I arrive at two guiding questions below: (1) What was the principal consideration that underlay Zhang's advocacy of Religion (Buddhism) and National Essence? More precisely, against what did Zhang put forward these alternatives? (2) What was the relationship between Religion and National Essence? How did these two notions relate to each other and integrate into an integral discourse? Did Zhang have a preference between the two? These two questions will be answered as the investigation advances, which contributes to demonstrating my original ideas.

The discussions below deal with three themes crucial for understanding Zhang's thought in 1900-1907 which converged in the 1906 speech: (1) Zhang's reception of evolutionism; (2) Zhang's views on religions, especially Confucianism and Christianity; (3) the twofold foundation of the new religion (beyond the limits of National Essence). For each theme, I will firstly introduce the relevant content from the part on religion of the 1906 speech.

Theme 1, Zhang's reception of evolutionism.

At the outset of the part of the speech that discussed religious issues, Zhang criticized Bentham and Spencer for their utilitarianism and indifference towards religion. For him, it was an erroneous attitude since “there is no way to improve morality without religion. The survival competition results in egoism, [to rectify this abuse] we need to unite ourselves. [A nation without religion] is just as the dry wheat flour, how is it able to roll into wheaten food?” 但若沒有宗教，這道德必不得增進。生存競爭，專為一己，就要團結起來，譬如一碗的乾麪子，怎能團成麵？ He then introduced “*Sociology by ‘Najiade’* 那伽得²⁸⁴ in which Spencer’s theory has been thoroughly refuted”.²⁸⁵

To grasp the relevance of evolutionism for Zhang’s religious ideas, it is necessary to present the process of his reception of evolutionism. As a contextual background, I have mentioned in Chapter 1 Yan Fu’s translation of Huxley’s *On Evolution* in 1898. It was one of the most influential events in the intellectual history of modern China. The evolutionary discourse strongly endorsed the reformist movement and soon became prevalent among the late Qing Chinese intelligentsia. Unlike the discourses of the New learning, the influence of evolutionism did not fade away in the aftermath of the failed Wuxu Reform. Instead, fueled by the deepening national crisis, it turned out to be a predominant theoretical perspective underpinning the construction of diverse worldviews and radical ideologies.²⁸⁶

Instead of Huxley or Charles Darwin, it was Herbert Spencer who became the most influential figure for this intellectual trend, and also the main representative for the newly-introduced discipline of sociology. A British sociologist highly reputed for his universal theory of human evolution at the time, Spencer was criticized decades later as a main advocate of the stigmatized Social Darwinism. It was in the context of Social Darwinism that Zhang linked survival competition with national egoism. During his reformist period, Zhang translated a book entitled *Collected Works of Spencer* (*Sibinsaier wenji* 斯賓塞爾文集) in collaboration with Zeng Guangquan 曾廣銓 (1871-1940) who served as the interpreter of the original text whereas Zhang was responsible for the written translation

²⁸⁴ This “Najiade” might be an alternative translated name for Giddings (usually translated as “Getonggesi” 葛通哥斯). Before I can verify this, it is better to treat him as a sociologist belonging to the same school as Giddings.

²⁸⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 3.

²⁸⁶ The ever-lasting impact of evolutionism throughout modern China was a well-studied subject. See, for example, James R. Pusey, 1983, *China and Darwin*.

since he did not understand English.²⁸⁷ Composed of two treatises,²⁸⁸ this translation work was published in installments in *Changyanbao Journal* 昌言報 from August 17, 1898.

During the 1900-1903 phase, Zhang turned away from Spencer's paradigm and became an advocate of the so-called "Psychological school," a representative of which was Giddings. This was the main reason for Zhang's translation of Nobuta Kishimoto's *Sociology*, as demonstrated by the translator's preface to this work:

At its outset, sociology emphasized the experimental method of physics and rejected the belief in supernatural forces.²⁸⁹ It was Spencer who began to introduce the psychological perspective and refer to enormous historical materials. However, he did not have time to explore abstruse issues. Moreover, his studies focused on history but were rarely concerned with the future. So, the advantage of his work lies in preserving the past rather than understanding the future. The American scholar Giddings proposed the concept "consciousness of kind" to explain the origins of the society. ... This concept belongs to the category of psychology and should not be mixed with physiological terms. ... Later we have Kishimoto who adopted excellently and concisely the advantages of Spencer and Giddings.

社會學始萌芽，皆以物理證明，而排拒超自然說。斯賓塞爾始雜心理，援引浩穰，於玄秘淖微之地，未暇尋也。又其議論，多蹤跡成事，顧鮮為後世計，蓋其藏往則優，而匱於知來者。美人葛通哥斯之言曰社會所始，在同類意識……屬諸心理，不當以生理術語亂之……其後有岸本氏，卓而能約，實兼取斯、葛二家。²⁹⁰

By promoting the sociological approach of the Psychological school, Zhang expressed his disapproval towards Spencer and his Chinese spokesman, Yan Fu,²⁹¹ who discredited religion (or other spiritual institutions) concerning the survival struggle between nations.²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Peng Chunling has carried out a series of studies on Zhang's translation of Spencer's works: the philological background (2017), its translingual and transnational context (2018b), and the nuanced difference of intellectual concerns between the author and the translator (2019).

²⁸⁸ The first treatise, entitled "On Evolutionary Principles" (*Lun jinjing zhi li* 論進境之理), introduced general knowledge of human evolution, whereas the second, entitled "On Ritual and Etiquette" (*Lun liyi* 論禮儀), focused on the subject of rites and religions and their political implications (Zhang, 2015a, pp. 3-41). Selecting these subjects of translation reflected on the translators' interest rather than the tendency of the author's scholarship.

²⁸⁹ The main representative of this stage was Auguste Comte (1798-1857).

²⁹⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2015a, p. 45.

²⁹¹ To know more about this subject, see Huang Ko-wu & Han Chenghua, 2013, "Wanqing shehuixue de fanyi jiqi yingxiang." As additional information, according to Huang and Han (p. 160), the shift of Zhang's sociological approach had been influenced by German idealism.

²⁹² According to Peng Chunling's study (2019, p. 23), Spencer aimed to establish a comprehensive theory of human evolution that gets rid of the teleological view centered on human beings. Zhang's translation, however, reversed

In contrast, the Psychological school of sociology attributed significant importance to the ideological building of “nation” as a historical agent in the evolutionary course. The next question is, by what means can the Chinese “consciousness of kind” be consolidated and mobilized?

Zhang’s preface to *Sociology* gave us a hint about this question. Besides the neglect of religion, he criticized Spencer for his disadvantage in understanding the future. The dichotomy between preserving the past (static sociology) and understanding the future (dynamic sociology) has been mentioned above in introducing Zhang’s ideas about the general history of China. The knowledge of the reference books corresponded to the former category whereas that of the biographies of great figures corresponded to the latter. Once accepting this distinction, Zhang was obliged to surpass the scope of Han learning since the latter principally focused on textual research of classics as well as relevant reference books. What he sought was knowledge and belief that aroused emotions to break the routine and mobilize the people. His emphasis on the value of madness in the speech clearly showed such considerations.

It is easy to see a continuity between the emphasis of the biographies (which represented Zhang’s ideas in 1902-1903) and the promotion of National Essence to “stimulate ethnic awareness in order to improve the patriotic eagerness” (in his 1906 speech). That is one of the reasons for my argument that Zhang’s matured thought of Religion and National Essence should be apprehended in the context of evolutionism. The limits of National Essence compared with religion will be analyzed later. The next task here concerns the role of religion in human evolution.

Just as expressed in the 1906 speech, Zhang attributed to religion the function of uniting the people of a nation and consolidating their national identity. I want to argue, however, that religion mattered not only for pragmatic reasons but also for its theoretical value. To be precise, Zhang’s speculation about religion (in this case, Buddhism) had contributed to his reflection on culture, ethnicity, and evolution. In contrast to the narrow view on his ethnic nationalism, Zhang did underline the importance of culture in the evolutionary transformation of a nation, despite his objection against Liang Qichao’s

Spencer’s original idea and regarded human will and capacity as the pivot of progress. We can see that this misinterpretation was in line with Zhang’s own intellectual tendency years later.

cultural thought which endorsed progressive constitutionalism under the Manchu regime. According to Zhang's understanding, biological evolution was not irreversible, as frequently manifested in the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*. Apes could evolve into humans, humans could also possibly degenerate into apes if the cultural transmission was interrupted. Among the cases referred to as evidence, there was the ethnicity of Maliu 馬留/馬流. Their ancestors were soldiers stationed in the remote mountainous area of Sichuan 四川 Province in the Han dynasty. Isolated from the more civilized Chinese community, they later turned out to be dark-skinned and less sensitive in thinking.²⁹³ We can see that for Zhang culture was not merely a superstructure upon the biological nature but rather an active force capable of reshaping the latter. It is necessary to apprehend in this context Zhang's claim that, to preserve and restore the Han ethnicity, the political and cultural tasks had to be accomplished together.²⁹⁴

Upon what theoretical basis did Zhang develop his ideas on the relationship between cultural and biological? It might have been affected by the French evolutionist, Jean-Baptiste de Lamarck (1744-1829) to whom Spencer owed a considerable debt.²⁹⁵ The former's hypothesis of the inheritance of acquired traits was later disproved by the newborn discipline of genetics. However, it is plausible that Zhang's Buddhist ideas also contributed to lay the foundation of his thinking about culture and biology. In chapter 1, a citation of "On bacteria" shows how Zhang reinterpreted the notion of transmigration and made it in line with (and even superior to) evolutionism. This reinterpretation, on the one hand, reaffirmed the legitimacy of Buddhist doctrines in a scientific era, on the other, attempted to switch the believers' concern from their personal religious merit after death to the well-being of their offspring, since a person's *karma* would be inherited by his descendants and hence affect their life. We can see that as early as 1899, several years before his systematic assertion about culture, ethnicity, and evolution, Zhang had already perceived the reactive force of cultural elements through the generations.

To conclude, now we have a better understanding of the significant relevance of evolutionism to the subject of this chapter. Partly because of the turn towards the

²⁹³ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, pp. 306-307.

²⁹⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 99-100.

²⁹⁵ Charlotte Furth, 1976, p. 131.

Psychological school of sociology, Zhang became more and more concerned with the ideological issues which, from his viewpoint, largely determined the future of a nation in a world seemingly yielding to Social Darwinism. Zhang's theoretical construction of nation as a historical agent, to some extent, did base on Xunzi's ideas against the "mandate of Heaven" (*tianming* 天命) at the collective level.²⁹⁶ However, the Confucian *lijiao* (to which Xunzi adhered) no longer satisfied Zhang's need for a more dynamic and mobilizing form of *jiao* (teaching). It was in this situation that Zhang made efforts to seek an alternative.

* Zhang Taiyan's views on Confucianism and other religions *

Now let us proceed to the second theme. Following the criticism of Bentham and Spencer, Zhang turned to discuss and choose a suitable religion for China of his time. He first commented on Confucianism. Despite its rejection of mythical beliefs, Confucianism had a severe defect in its root, i.e., it oriented a person towards pursuing wealth, high status, profit, and an official's salary 富貴利祿. For Zhang, the life career of Confucius himself gave us such a lesson. Gathering and educating three thousand disciples, Confucius had the ambition to compete with the nobles in securing an official post. Nonetheless, he never had the will to overthrow the aristocracy by uniting the lower classes. His ambition diminished bearing the setbacks during his travels through the kingdoms, and finally he was reduced to depend on the Ji family 季氏.

Then, Zhang turned to criticize Christianity by three points. Point 1, the conversion of the Chinese to Jesus Christ, in Zhang's eyes, was motivated by the veneration of the "Lord of the West" 西帝 rather than the "Lord on High." 上帝 Point 2, based on European history, Christianity was helpful to civilize the barbarian people like the Germans but was harmful to civilizations with a high culture like Ancient Rome since it impeded the freedom of thought and scholarship. Point 3, many of the Christian doctrines were absurd by philosophical standards.

Despite his enthusiastic advocacy of Buddhism, Zhang launched severe attacks on

²⁹⁶ Chang Hao, 1988, p. 153.

the “impurity” mingled into current Chinese Buddhism, as seen in the case of Pure Land Buddhism, the favorite among “stupid men and women” 愚夫愚婦. He cursed those clinging to the ranks of the imperial examinations who added into Pure Land Buddhism various ridiculous things that the Buddhist canonical works did not mention: on the one hand, the beliefs from the *Treatise On the Response by the Lord on High* (*Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇) and the *Book of Hidden Virtues of Imperial Sovereign Wenchang* (*Wenchang dijun yinzhi wen* 文昌帝君陰陽文); on the other, the practices such as burning paper money, chanting (Buddhist or Daoist) penance litanies to dissolve their sins (*baichan* 拜懺), spirit writing, etc. “That is why,” asserted Zhang, “the current Buddhist believers only had base and odious expressions instead of bold and fearless spirit.” 所以信佛教的，祇有那卑鄙惡劣的神情，並沒有勇猛無畏的氣概。²⁹⁷ In Chapter 4, we will see Zhang burning a note requesting for leave in order to get rid of the troubling dreams of the netherworld, which reveals the gap between his intellectual tendencies towards religion and his recourse to religious practice in times of personal crisis.

Zhang’s critique of these religions (and religious activities) resonates with a variety of his texts before and after this speech. These issues are complicated and dispersed, so I choose to focus on Confucianism, especially the dispute concerning Confucius’s morality since it is crucial for revealing an important purpose behind Zhang’s seemingly academic discussions. The other religions will be touched only when necessary.

For Zhang’s critique of Confucianism, a major issue was the moralized criticism of Confucius’ personality and activities. This kind of criticism gradually intensified along with the radicalization of Zhang’s revolutionary stance. During Phase 1, Zhang’s attitude towards Confucius, though unconventional, remained ambivalent, as seen in “Reevaluation of Confucius” (*Dingkong* 訂孔), the added Chapter 2 in the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*. Zhang asserted in this text that “as to the competence of scholarship, both Mencius and Xunzi are superior to Confucius. But they cannot compare to the latter in pragmatist talent. That is why they did not achieve throughout their life Confucius’ status as the premier minister of the Lu Kingdom and the latter’s merits in educating three thousand disciples.” 夫孟、荀道術皆踰絕孔氏，惟才美弗能與等比，故終身無魯相之政，三千

²⁹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 4.

之化。 Zhang then explained why Xunzi paid tribute to Confucius as his master despite the superiority of his scholarship by introducing an analogical perspective between Confucian and Buddhist history: “It is similar to [the early history of Indian Buddhism.] Sakyamuni’ primary teaching was proximate to [the concept] ‘burn down to ashes.’²⁹⁸ It was not until Aśvaghoṣa 馬鳴 (ca.80-150CE) and Nāgārjuna that Mahayanism was particularly preached. Nonetheless, they still paid tribute to Sakyamuni as their master.” 此則如釋迦初教，本近灰滅，及馬鳴、龍樹，特弘大乘之風，猶以釋迦為本師也。

²⁹⁹ By such reevaluation, Zhang deviated from the convention of genealogical narratives within both Confucianism and Buddhism. Despite praising Confucius as “an outstanding historian,” Zhang held the view that the real strong point of Confucius was his practical talent rather than his competence of scholarship.

However, Zhang’s suspicion of Confucius’ morality implicitly emerged at the same time. In an earlier instance of “Reevaluation of Confucius,” we see him deconstructing Confucius’ authority as the editor of the six Confucian classics (*liujing* 六經): “In earlier times, Laozi, Mozi, and others did not bother to edit and formalize the Six Classics, which allowed Confucius to monopolize the prestige. Following the ‘burning of books and burying of scholars’ and the recovery of classical texts [in early Western Han dynasty], the crucial items were naturally in the hand of [the disciples of] Confucius. Correspondently, the other pre-Qin masters were marginalized, as a result.” 異時老、墨諸公，不降志於刪定六藝，而孔氏擅其威。遭焚散復出，則關軸自持於孔氏，諸子卻走，職矣。³⁰⁰ Later in this text, Zhang returned to discuss the destiny of the pre-Qin masters in later history sighing for the extent to which the fictitious reputation had distorted the reality. Though this discussion did not equal an explicitly criticism against Confucius, it showed Zhang’s strong intent to desacralize Confucius as the superior sage.

Zhang’s criticism against Confucius and Confucianism hardened and moralized during Phase 3, as seen in “Brief discussion on the Teachings of the Pre-Qin Masters” (*Zhuzixue lueshuo* 諸子學略說), an extended and controversial essay published in No. 8-

²⁹⁸ The metaphoric term “burn down to ashes” 灰滅 is the literal meaning of *nirvana*, the ultimate spiritual goal in Buddhism. Zhang used it here to characterize, however, the early Indian Buddhism as thoroughly negating the value of life and rebirth within the six realms and merely seeking individual deliverance.

²⁹⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, p. 49.

³⁰⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, p. 45.

9 of *National Essence Journal* on July 20 and Autumn 20, 1906. This schematic text proposed a radically anti-traditional perspective to reevaluate the main scholars of the Eastern Zhou dynasty 東周 (770-256BC). Confucianism was degraded as one of the competing schools rather than the orthodox one. Zhang reaffirmed his opinion expressed in the 1906 speech that the critical defect of Confucianism was its penchant to pursue wealth, high-status, profit, and an official's salary. The discussion was more in-depth in the later essay to demonstrate that due to this penchant, the Confucians tended to act by the stratagem of convenience instead of adhering to moral principles. This criticism was aimed at Confucian scholars in general, including Mencius, Xunzi, and the ones in later dynasties.³⁰¹

A much more severe accusation towards Confucius appeared in the part discussing Laozi. Based on the anecdotic history that Confucius had sought knowledge from Laozi, among other historical materials, Zhang proposed a conspiracy theory concerning the relationship of the two: “Laozi passed on the knowledge of tactics to Confucius, also, the ancient books he collected were all seized by the latter through fraudulence. On trickery, Confucius was even superior to Laozi. Confucius' scholarship was originated from Laozi, however, because of the distinction between the Confucian and Daoist schools, he was unwilling to pay tribute to Laozi as his master. And he was afraid that Laozi would release the concealed past.” 老子以其權術授之孔子，而征藏故書，亦悉為孔子詐取。孔子之權術，乃有過於老子者。孔學本出於老，以儒道之形式有異，不欲尊奉以為本師，而懼老子發其覆也。³⁰² Zhang then explained Laozi's traveling west through the Hangu Pass 函谷關 by the need to escape a death threat. The disciples of Confucius had spread over eastern China but not in the region of Qin. That is why Laozi felt safe to write the *only after the journey to the west.*

How should we make sense of the unusual moral attacks on Confucius and Confucianism by Zhang in his revolutionary period? And what is its relevance to Zhang's religious reinvention? First of all, we can resort to the principle which Zhang stressed in reevaluating religions, i.e., “relying on oneself instead of relying on external forces,” expressed intensively in “Letter in Reply to Tiezheng” but also in other texts. Indeed, it

³⁰¹ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 289-291.

³⁰² Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 292.

was the common principle throughout Zhang's rejection of Confucianism, Christianity, and the popularized Buddhist schools as the candidate for the new religion. For Confucianism, the pursuit of an official post and salary determined that the Confucians dared not promote civil rights against the imperial and bureaucratic power. For Christianity, in theory, it was no match to Confucianism since it relied on a mythical God, to which Zhang sneered as "placing hands on the wall for support." 扶牆摸壁 In practice, according to Zhang's observation, most of the Chinese converting to Christianity just wanted to take advantage of the resources and protection of the Christian churches. For Pure Land Buddhism and its worship of Amitābha (*Amituofo* 阿彌陀佛), it was the same reason underlying Zhang's criticism.

As a further thesis, the principle of "relying on oneself instead of relying on external forces" was established based on Zhang's experience as an anti-institutional revolutionary rather than any specific religious doctrine. The decisive time for establishing this principle was in mid-1900 when he publicly cut off his braid and wrote "On Correcting the Erroneous View on the 'Guest Emperor'" and "On Correcting the Erroneous View on the Local Forces." He later reaffirmed this anti-institutional stance on several occasions, e.g., in "Speech for the Commemoration of the First Anniversary of *The People's Journal*" (*Minbao yizhounian jinianhui yanshuoci* 民報一週年紀念會演說辭), given on December 2, 1906, and published in No. 10 of *The People's Journal* on December 20, 1906.³⁰³ In this speech, Zhang focused on discarding the hope of relying on local Han governors to overthrow the Manchu regime. Zhang's argumentation was not carried out at the tactical level. It should rather be seen as a moral discourse aimed at the weakness of "the rebellion of scholars" 秀才造反.

Nonetheless, to fully grasp the purposes behind this principle and Zhang's moralized criticism against Confucius, among other issues, it is necessary to reveal against whom these ideas were put forward. As far as I can tell, in many of Zhang's academic writings, especially (but not limited to) those written in a combative context (whether intellectually or politically), his criticism was directed, more implicitly than explicitly, at his contemporaries or current affairs. For the topic here, I would like to argue that the person

³⁰³ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 328-331

to whom Zhang alluded as the main target was Kang Youwei. Zhang's criticism of Confucius' moral defects, to a large extent, was inspired by his understanding of Kang rather than his knowledge of Confucius in history.

I have already revealed, in Chapter 1, that Zhang's seemingly negative attitude towards Buddhism was closely associated with his critical viewpoint of Kang and other New learning scholars. Zhang's mindset treating Kang as his main rival was reinforced following his revolutionary turn whereas Kang rapidly shifted to the opposite side of anti-Manchuism. The personal relationship between the two broke down after the former's "Refuting Kang Youwei Concerning the Revolution" in 1903. In the combative texts published shortly after his release from jail, such as "Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo" and "Brief discussion on the Teachings of the Pre-Qin Masters," I perceive strong critical reflections, though subtly and implicitly, on the changes and contrast between Kang's words and deeds. Former researchers have well studied Zhang's reaction against Kang on politics and scholarship,³⁰⁴ nonetheless, the attention they paid to the moral aspect of Zhang's criticism was not systematic enough.

The part below proceeds to analyze the correlation between Zhang's moralized criticism against Confucius and its implication for Kang Youwei in two directions: first, Confucians' general moral defects; second, purported plagiarism.

First, Confucians' general moral defects, namely their institutionalized character. To be concrete, I mean the commitment to monarchy and bureaucracy, the attachment to the officialdom and salary, and replacing adherence to moral principles by the stratagem of convenience. It was exactly in these three directions that Zhang launched his attack in "Refuting Kang Youwei Concerning the Revolution." After refuting at length against Kang's essay advocating constitutionalism and rejecting the ethnic revolution, Zhang raised the question of whether the latter's erroneous ideas were due to the lack of intelligence and insight. He answered by tracing the trajectory of Kang's political career:

According to my observation, Changsu [Kang Youwei] has frequently shifted his political stance in the past two decades. At one time when Sun Wen [Sun Yat-sen] advocated anti-Manchuism in Guangzhou, Changsu sent Chen Qianqiu (1869-1895) and

³⁰⁴ See, for example, Lin Yü-sheng, 1998, pp. 156-160; Wong Young-tsu, 2006; and Peng Chunling, 2014, p. 125. See also the relative content in Chapter 1.

Lin Kui (dates unknown) there establishing secret communications. Later in founding the Society for the Protection of the Country, [Kang Youwei] also claimed to protect China rather than protect the Manchu regime, which showed his initial aspiration of revolution. Shortly after, covetous for wealth, high status, profit, and an official's salary, he attempted to adapt his initial aspiration to these desires. Therefore, [we witnessed] his coming to power during the Wuxu Reform advocating reformism. Following the failure of the Wuxu Reform and the exile [to Japan], he forged the secret edict of the Guangxu Emperor and founded the Society for the Protection of the Emperor in order to gain people's support. [Despite these shifts,] during the unaccomplished uprising in Hankou in the Gengzi year [1900], he still made secret arrangements with Tang Caichang (1867-1900) and others in the name of restoring the sovereignty of the Guangxu Emperor, which in the end was frustrated by Zhang Zhidong. At that time, his initial aspiration remained, having not totally faded away. Following Tang Caichang's death, the Society for the Protection of the Emperor was also disintegrated and scattered gradually. Changsu realized that the revolution was no longer feasible, and again covetous for wealth, high-status, profit, and official's salary. However, it was not as easy as before to achieve these today. That is why he published this essay ["In Reply to Chinese Businessmen in North and South America on the Argument that China Could Only Apply Constitutionalism, Not Revolution"].

吾觀長素二十年中，變易多矣。時孫文倡義於廣州，長素嘗遣陳千秋、林奎往，密與通情。及建設保國會，亦言保中國、不保大清，斯固志在革命者。未几，瞞於富貴利祿，而欲與素志調和，於是戊戌柄政，始有變法之議。事敗亡命，作衣帶詔，立保皇會，以結人心。然庚子漢口之役，猶以借遵皇權，密約唐才常等，卒為張之洞所發。當是時，素志尚在，未盡澌滅也。唐氏既亡，保皇會亦漸潰散。長素自知革命不成，則又瞞於富貴利祿，而今之得此，非若疇昔之易，於是宣佈是書。

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The historical facts referred to in this cited paragraph have essentially been confirmed by contemporary historians.³⁰⁵ The proximity between Zhang's criticisms of Confucius' and

³⁰⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 207.

³⁰⁶ For the revolutionary intention of the Kang Party before the Wuxu Reform, see Huang Zhangjian, 2007, *Wuxu bianfa shi yanjiu*. For the Movement of Restoring the Emperor's Sovereignty, see Sang Bing, 2004, *Gengzi qinwang yu Wanqing zhengju*. For Kang's systematic manipulation of his personal history, see Mao Haijian, 2009, *Cong jiawu dao*

Kang's moral characters is clear, no need for further explanation. What is more, in Zhang's narratives, both Confucius and Kang bore a series of setbacks that resulted in the gradual degradation of their initial ambition. It was probably based on Kang's career trajectory rather than Confucius' that Zhang alerted in his 1906 speech that "today we want to carry on a revolution and advocate civil rights. If there is a little bit of thought relative to wealth, high status, profit, and an official's salary mingling [into our will to revolution, sooner or later] it will do damage to the whole body like tiny insects and fungus. That is why we should in no way apply Confucius' teaching." 我們今日想要實行革命，提倡民權，若夾雜一點富貴利祿的心，就像微蟲黴菌，可以殘害全身，所以孔教是斷不可用的。

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Second, purported plagiarism. In comparison to manipulating the historical records concerning his political career, Kang was more frequently accused, within the late Qing intelligentsia, of the purported plagiarism of his scholarship. As a consensus among many of his contemporary scholars, some of Kang's critical scholarly ideas had plagiarized the academic results of Liao Ping 廖平 (1852-1932), a New-Text scholar in Sichuan Province.³⁰⁸ Two years after Liao Ping's death, his grandson requested Zhang to write an epitaph for him. In this text entitled "Epitaph for Mr. Liao, Professor of Former Long'an Municipal School of the Qing Dynasty" (*Qing gu longanfuxue jiaoshou liaojun muzhiming* 清故龍安府學教授廖君墓誌銘), Zhang praised both the scholarship and morality of Liao Ping whereas Kang was mentioned as a negative contrast: "Mr. Liao had a solid basis of scholarship, he also had a comprehensive knowledge of both the ancient and recent scholarship of Confucian classics, in contrast to Mr. Kang who committed plagiarism [in his scholarship]. The way Mr. Liao got along with people was decent and gentle, again in contrast to Mr. Kang who regarded himself as sage³⁰⁹ and took this honor for granted." 君學有根柢，於古近經學無不窺，非若康氏之剽竊者；應物端和，又非若康氏自擬玄聖居之不疑者也。³¹⁰ Throughout his life, Kang never responded to the accusation of

wuxu.

³⁰⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 3.

³⁰⁸ As an example, the great historian Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) has commented in *Zhongguo jinsanbainian xueshushi* (2011, p. 716) that Kang's *A Critical Study of the Forged Texts in the Scholarship of the Xin dynasty* was not an original work but rather based on his plagiarism of the Sichuanese scholar Liao Ping's work.

³⁰⁹ The term *xuansheng* 玄聖 conventionally refers to Confucius.

³¹⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014c, pp. 298-299.

plagiarism against him. Within the circle of his partisans, he had long enjoyed the title of “Sage of the Southern Sea.” In his early years, he had even considered himself as Confucius following an enlightened experience of silent meditation.³¹¹ Plausibly, Zhang’s moralized criticism of Confucius’ trickery alluded to Kang’s similar acts. Among the passages cited, we have seen, “Laozi, Mozi, and others did not bother to edit and formalize the Six Classics, which allowed Confucius to monopolize the prestige.” And more severely, “Laozi passed on the knowledge of tactics to Confucius, also, the ancient books he collected were all seized by the latter through fraudulence. … Confucius … was unwilling to pay tribute [to Laozi] as his master. And he was afraid that Laozi would release the concealed past.” Besides, Zhang declined, in this epitaph for Liao Ping, the accusation from Kang’s partisans that Liao had received bribery from Zhang Zhidong for renouncing his earlier ideas [which Kang’s scholarship was based on]. Correspondingly to some extent, in the conspiracy theory that Zhang proposed, we have seen the threat to Laozi from Confucius’ disciples.

To confirm the correlation between Zhang’s moralized criticism against Confucius and its implication for Kang Youwei, I would like to refer to a much later text, i. e. Zhang’s letter, wrote on June 15, 1922, in reply to a letter of Liu Yizheng 柳詒徵 (1880-1956), an eminent scholar of National studies whom Zhang highly respected. Zhang apologizes for his early criticisms against Confucius, using the term “arrogant and treacherous” 狂妄逆詐 to criticize his viewpoints concerning Confucius in “Brief discussion on the Teachings of the Pre-Qin Masters.” He then informs Liu that this essay has been deleted from the 1915 *Collection of the Works of Zhang Taiyan* (*Zhangshi congshu* 章氏叢書). In the last part of this letter, Zhang ascribes his earlier excessive and moralized attacks on Confucius to his hostility towards Kang Youwei’s promotion of the Confucian religion.³¹² Zhang’s own words strongly confirm the arguments made in the two aforementioned points.

Now, I would like to extend the analysis above and reveal the links between Zhang’s religious ideas and his attitude towards Kang in a broader perspective. Kang’s influence did not only reinforce Zhang’s moralized criticism against Confucius but also considerably rechanneled the latter’s reevaluation of Confucius. As discussed in Chapter 1 and earlier

³¹¹ Mao Haijian, 2009, p. 15.

³¹² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 970-972.

in this chapter, Zhang qualified Confucius as an outstanding historian, not as “Divine Sage King” or “Hierarch of the Earth.” Confucius’ teaching, correspondingly, had its basis in historical studies, not in the universalized concepts of the “Three Ages” and the “Three Grand Traditions” (*santong* 三統).³¹³³¹⁴ These hostile reactions against Kang’s theory partly resulted in Zhang’s radicalizing anti-traditional stance during the period in question. As a piece of minor but suggestive evidence, Zhang used the unconventional term *kongjiao* 孔教 in the 1906 speech when referring to and criticizing Confucianism. This term was probably intentionally chosen, implicitly targeting Kang Youwei’s Confucian religion.

Zhang’s hostility against Kang and his religious reinvention, furthermore, was also relevant to his rejection of Christianity and popular religious practices. Two essays are most helpful to demonstrate this thesis, “Refuting the Proposal to Found the Confucian religion” (*Bo jianli kongjiao yi 駁建立孔教議*) and “Opposition to Establish the Confucian religion as the State Religion, an Essay for the Students of the Society of National Learning” (*Fandui yi kongjiao wei guojia pian, shi guoxuehui zhusheng 反對以孔教為國教篇，示國學會諸生*). The first was published in the *Yayan Journal* (雅言 valued advice) in December 1913 and the second during the same period. These two essays were published to respond against Chen Huanzhang’s 陳煥章 (1880-1933) proposal to establish the Confucian religion as the state religion. Chen was a disciple of Kang and the director-general of the Confucian Association (*Kongjiao hui* 孔教會), founded in 1912 and expanded rapidly in the following years.³¹⁵ Despite the time difference, the ideas to which I refer to from these two texts can roughly be transferred to the context studied here.³¹⁶

For Zhang’s rejection of Christianity and its correlation to Kang, we can find proof in “Refuting the Proposal to Found the Confucian religion.” Zhang denied at the outset that Confucius or other ancient sages had actually “governed through cults and civilized the realm through the gods.” He later turned to criticize those “contemporaries who, with a

³¹³ Initiated by Dong Zhongshu, a Confucian scholar of the Western Han dynasty, this notion indicated three grand traditions of rituals and institutions, respectively represented by the three dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou. It was embedded in a mythical and cyclical conception of history.

³¹⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 388-389.

³¹⁵ Sébastien Billioud & Joël Thoraval, 2014, pp. 171.

³¹⁶ There is a critical difference between the two, i.e., the negative turn of Zhang’s attitude towards religion, a topic to be studied in Chapter 6. Nonetheless, for the issues discussed here, the time difference does not cause a problem.

lowly mentality, witnessed the gradual penetration of the teaching by Jesus and Martin Luther (1483-1546) in China, and hence intended to establish the Confucian religion to confront it. Such an act is like [someone] with no scars making scars by burning himself for no reason.” 今人猥見耶蘇、路德之法，漸入域中，乃欲建樹孔教以相抗衡。是猶素無創痍，無故灼以成瘢。 Moreover, he criticized the mystification of the Confucian religion based on a comparative perspective with the history of Daoism: “[Dong] Zhongshu (179-104BC) [advocated “establishing the teaching through the way of gods and spirits”] in the name of Confucius, just as Gong Chong (dates unknown) and Zhang Daoling (traditionally 34-156CE) did in the name of Laozi. The advocates of the Confucian religion today, in their turn, imitated Zhongshu to carry out their religious plan.” 夫仲舒之託於孔子，猶宮崇、張道陵之託於老聃；今之倡孔教者，又規摹仲舒而為之矣。³¹⁷ Zhang’s opposition to the assimilation of Christianity into Confucianism was not only related to his rejection of mystification in principle but also caused by his vigilance towards the increasing danger of the Western “cultural colonization” in China. In “My Concerns about the Chinese Teachings” (*Youjiao* 憂教), Chapter 50 of the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*, Zhang first downplayed the threat of the Christian missions in the past, which, though backed by the Western military power, provoked more and more native resistances following its expansion. What Zhang was concerned with was a new strategy that he himself had conceived: it was proposed by the Westerners familiar with Chinese culture and Chinese people, which highlighted the mythical trends within Confucianism. This new strategy enabled the missionaries to reinterpret the “authentic” teachings of Confucius for the benefit of their activities in China.³¹⁸

In Chapter 1, I have touched on Kang’s introduction of Christian elements into his plan of the Confucian religion, concerning utopian and messianic ideas, clerical institutions, and liturgical rites. Kang’s close contact with Christian missionaries had aroused rumors during the Wuxu Reform that he had converted the emperor to Christianity,³¹⁹ so it is natural to propose a connection between the Christian influence on Kang and Zhang’s vigilance towards Christianity. What is less evident is the connection between the influence

³¹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 200-202.

³¹⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, pp. 700-704.

³¹⁹ Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, p. 46.

of popular religion on Kang and Zhang's rejection of popular religion. As is well known, Kang had proposed to expropriate the temple property of the “improper cults” (*yinsi* 淫祀) to the benefit of the Confucian churches. This proposal echoed Zhang Zhidong's proposal to “build schools with temple property” (*miaochan xingxue* 廟產興學) and heralded the “anti-superstition” campaigns (*fanmixin yundong* 反迷信運動) during the Republican era.³²⁰ Despite his opposition to popular religion, Kang did absorb certain mythological elements from prognostication texts (*chenwei* 譏緯) of Western Han Confucianism.³²¹ This was also the case for the liturgical reinvention of the Confucian religion, as expressed in Zhang's observation in “Opposition to Establish the Confucian religion as the State Religion, an Essay for the Students of the Society of National Learning.” Zhang recalled in this text what he had heard from Xu Qin 徐勤 (1873-1945), an early disciple of Kang Youwei. According to his memory of Xu's report of his master's words:

[According to Kang Youwei, they] should open the gates of the Confucian church to the people, allowing men and women to line up to pay homage [to Confucius] and pray for his blessing. The common people should all pay tribute to the Confucian priests by licking their feet. [If the Kang Party succeeds in turning such ideas into reality,] Confucius would become a synonym to Hongjun Laozu (Great Primal Ancestor) and Huanglian Shengmu (Holy Mother of the Yellow Lotus) whereas the hosts of the Confucian religion would be identical to the big brothers [of popular religions like the Boxers].

謂當大啟孔廟，男女羅拜，禱詞求福；而為之宗主者，人人當舐足致禮。則是孔子者，乃洪鈞老祖、黃蓮聖母之變名；而主持孔教者，亦大師兄之異號耳。³²²

This report from Xu Qin probably represented his master's idea during a certain period of the late Qing, but I am not sure whether Zhang had heard about it when he wrote the draft for the 1906 speech. So what I can propose here is an assumption that Kang's adoption of certain elements from popular religion might have reinforced Zhang's disgust towards popular religion, as seen in his attacks on the “impurity” mingled into Pure Land Buddhism in the 1906 speech.

As a conclusion to Theme 2, for Zhang's rejection of Confucianism, Christianity,

³²⁰ Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, pp. 46-47.

³²¹ Tang Wenming, 2012, pp. 95-96.

³²² Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 264.

and popular religious elements in Buddhism, there existed an underlying principle, i.e., “relying on oneself instead of relying on external forces.” This principle, established along with Zhang’s experience as an anti-institutional revolutionary, aimed implicitly to expose Kang’s moral defect and the problems of the Confucian religion. This unstated intent was intensively shown in Zhang’s moral criticism against Confucius but may also have reinforced his hostility towards Christianity and popular religion. The hostility and critical reflections on Kang accelerated Zhang’s dissatisfaction towards the Confucian *lijiao* and resulted in his declining Confucianism as the new religion. Zhang’s advocacy of Religion (Buddhism), along with National Essence, should be regarded as the alternatives put forward against Kang’s Confucian religion. This is my answer to the first guiding question. We shall see in the next part the particularity of Zhang’s religious innovation which concerns the second guiding question.

* Founding the new religion alongside National Essence *

Finally, the third theme 3, which concerns the twofold foundation of the new religion (beyond the limits of National Essence).

After rejecting Confucianism, Christianity, and traditional Buddhism mixed with popular religion, Zhang proposed his version of the new religion on the basis of Huayan Buddhism and Yogācāra Buddhism. “What Huayan Buddhism preaches is to deliver all the sentient beings from the torment of ceaseless transmigration at any cost, handing out even the head, the eyes, and the brains to others. [So the doctrine of Huayan Buddhism] is the most beneficial for morality. What Yogācāra Buddhism preaches is the ‘consciousness-only’ (weishi 唯識, *vijñapti-mātra*) of all *dharma*. The physical phenomena and the invisible conceptual dirt in this world are merely illusory perception or conceptualization instead of reality.” 這華嚴宗所說，要在普度眾生，頭目腦髓，都可施捨與人，在道德上最為有益。這法相宗所說，就是萬法惟心。一世有形的色相、無形的法塵，總是幻見幻想，並非實在真有。³²³

Zhang then resorted to two recent German philosophers, Kant and Schopenhauer,

³²³ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 4.

arguing that the ideas of the two, who had been honored worldwide as the sages of philosophy, were identical to Buddhist doctrines. Kant's theory of the *twelve categories* (*shi'er fanchou* 十二範疇) strictly corresponded to the “perceived appearance [of the object]” (*xiangfen* 相分, *nimitta-bhāga*), a concept of Yogācāra Buddhism. So was Schopenhauer's idea that regarded the phenomenal world as the product of a blind and insatiable metaphysical will, which, according to Zhang, corresponded to the “twelve-fold chain of dependent creation” (*shi'er yuansheng* 十二緣生, *pratītyasamutpāda*). He even claimed that the Germans today esteemed Buddhism because it was most suitable to contemporary philosophy.

Introducing the German philosophers was meant to demonstrate the superiority of Buddhist theories. After that, Zhang switched to emphasize the moral function of this reformed Buddhism in terms of courage and solidarity. The crucial effect of Huayan and Yogācāra Buddhism together lied in the indiscrimination of the individual self, Buddha, and sentient beings. In this condition, “relying on Buddha is still relying on one's own heart.”³²⁴

The content presented above is helpful to reveal two issues: (1) Zhang's criterion to evaluate a religion; (2) the comparison between Religion and National Essence.

For the first issue, what Zhang had established was a twofold criterion, which was expressed most explicitly in “On Establishing Religion:” “One cannot determine *a priori* whether a religion is base or exalted. I take as a standard that religion should not lose truth above and it should be beneficial to people's morality below.” 宗教之高下，不容先論。要以上不失真，下有益於生民之道德為其準的。³²⁵³²⁶ In the 1906 speech, Zhang praised Huayan Buddhism to be “the most beneficial for morality” whereas Yogācāra Buddhism was superior in terms of the theoretical truth. Also in the speech, Zhang said that “the Buddhist theory is capable to convince the most intelligent people; the Buddhist precepts is capable to arouse the belief among the most fatuous people. Buddhism thus connects the upper and the lower levels and is most applicable.” 佛教的理論，使上智人不能不信；

³²⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 4.

³²⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 429.

³²⁶ Liang had expressed similar views at this period, arguing that Buddhism could improve people's morality and increase their wisdom. Tang Wenquan & Luo Fuhui, 1986, p. 249.

佛教的戒律，使下愚人不能不信。通徹上下，這是最可用的。³²⁷ It is clear that Zhang's evaluation of religion relied on two dimensions: the one was the normative dimension which concerned morality, social rules, and further with emotions; the other was the epistemological dimension which concerned theory, worldview, and the transcendental truth. This twofold criterion was established not only in Zhang's religious thinking but also in his scholarship, as manifested in Chapter by the dichotomy of "the pursuit of the truth" vs. "the application for practical purposes."

For the second issue, as introduced earlier, Zhang attributed the task of "improving the citizens' morality" to Religion whereas that of "improving the patriotic eagerness" to National Essence. Indeed, morality had almost always been the central concern for Zhang's thought of religion/teaching, moreover, it was indeed one of the central concerns throughout Zhang's life. Previous researchers tended to assume that Zhang attributed equal importance to Religion and National Essence, both facilitating the ethnic revolution though in different ways. This chapter, in contrast, intends to suggest that Zhang assigned more important tasks to Religion compared to National Essence, being aware of the limit of the latter.

The investigation is organized into four parts: (1) the limit of National Essence in the normative dimension; (2) the advantage of religion in the normative dimension; (3) the limit of National Essence in the epistemological dimension; (4) the advantage of Religion in the epistemological dimension.

Part 1, the limit of National Essence in the normative dimension.

In the 1906 speech, Zhang said at the outset of the part on National Essence that what he aimed at was treasuring the history of the Han nation instead of venerating Confucius' teaching. There were clear links between the ideas about the general history of China and National Essence, which allows me to introduce the dichotomy of "preserving the past" vs. "understanding/intervening in the future"³²⁸ to examine the three aspects of National Essence. Two of them, i.e. (1) language and writing system and (2) degrees, regulations, and institutions, primarily belonged to the knowledge that preserved the past. Only

³²⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 4.

³²⁸ What Zhang meant by the term *zhilai* 知來 was rather the capability to intervene in the future than a better understanding of what will happen.

biographies of historical figures corresponded to the ends of intervening in the future. And we already know that Zhang was seeking in this period the type of knowledge that aroused emotions to break the routine and mobilize the masses. That is why he underlined the significant importance of biographies during his close communication with Liang Qichao around the general history of China in 1902. It also helps us to grasp Zhang's words at the end of the part on National Essence that "in order to improve the patriotic eagerness, it is necessary to select several great historical figures in politics or scholarship and keep them in mind. This is the most crucial thing." 若要增進愛國的熱腸，一切功業學問上的人物，須選擇幾個出來，時常放在心裏，這是最緊要的。 Then, he reaffirmed the value of other parts of National Essence since "those historical figures, events, and sites irrelevant [to the situations today] also facilitate the patriotic emotions." 就是沒有相干的人，古事古蹟，都可以動人愛國的心思。³²⁹ Despite such reaffirmation, he remained regretful that the larger part of National Essence had no direct relevance to the social struggles.

The disadvantage of National Essence in intervening in the future also lied in the loss of the sacredness following (1) Zhang's attacks on *gangchang* and (2) "revering Heaven and demonstrating the [existence of the] ghosts" (*jingtian minggui* 敬天明鬼). For the former issue, we have "Refuting Kang Youwei Concerning the Revolution" in which Kang's declared loyalty to the Guangxu Emperor was denounced as "motivated by his long-established attachment to a superior official post and salary, which resulted in his confusing dogs and lambs as the same species [as human beings]" 由其高官厚祿之性素已養成，由是引犬羊為同種。³³⁰ This citation implied two things. First, Kang's self-claimed loyalty to the monarch was treated as hypocritical and reduced to immoral motives. Second, the bond of loyalty, among other bonds and virtues of *gangchang*, became subordinate to the struggle for ethnic independence. Consequently, the sacredness of *gangchang* was largely undermined. For the latter issue, Zhang's thought of "viewing Heaven as unenlightened/impersonal" and "negating the existence of ghosts and gods" was explicitly expressed in "On the True Meanings of Confucianism" for the first time, and was reinforced throughout the period in question. He directly fought against the grand Confucian tradition, as well as Kang's religious ideas, that revered Heaven and affirmed

³²⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 8.

³³⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 196.

the existence of the ghosts. The frequent references to Heaven (*tian* 天) in Confucian classics, especially in the *Book of Document* (*Shangshu* 尚書) and the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經), were criticized as the residue of myths and cults in prehistory.³³¹ The loss of the sacredness of *gangchang* and Heaven, while threatening the existing ethical and supernatural hierarchical order, posed a question to the National Essence scholars: how to substitute for the lost sacredness and fulfill the moral effect of this new type of scholarship?

Part 2, the advantage of religion in the normative dimension.

I do not capitalize the first letter of religion because the advantage discussed here is shared by all kinds of religions rather than the reformed Buddhism alone. The realization of this advantage was based on Zhang's renewed knowledge of world religious history, which was intensively manifested in "On the Origin of the Teaching/Religion (Part 1)" of the *Book of Urgency (revised version)*. As introduced earlier, Zhang introduced Anesaki's religious ideas and advocated an egalitarian view of religions. By the intermediary of Anesaki and others, Zhang approached the works of German scholars on comparative religious studies, anthropology, and oriental studies.³³² Plausibly, it was based on his knowledge of the German scholarship of Sanskrit and Indian Buddhism that Zhang talked about the Germans' esteem of Buddhism in the 1906 speech. Relying on this renewed knowledge, Zhang succeeded in getting rid of the picture imposed by the Christian missionaries, which had largely dominated the religious understanding of Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong. When Zhang said, at the beginning of the text, that "until today, some people argue that there is no religion/*jiao* in China" 至於今日，或言中國無教,³³³ the persons that he implied as interlocutors were probably Kang and Tan. Tan had expressed his deep concerns for the lack of a religion/*jiao* in Chinese society³³⁴ whereas the notion of religion that Kang advocated in his early career was exclusively based on the Christian model, excluding even Buddhism and Daoism.³³⁵

³³¹ Peng Chunling, 2014, p. 114.

³³² One example was Max Müller (1823-1900), one of the founding fathers of comparative religious studies. Zhang referred to him by the Chinese translation of "Makessimoula" 馬科斯牟拉 in the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*. Based on second-hand knowledge of Müller's scholarship, especially the concept of symbolism (translated as "biaoxiang zhuyi" 表象主義), Zhang renewed his understanding of the origins of language and religion. Zhang Taiyan, 2000, p. 394.

³³³ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, p. 665.

³³⁴ Tan Sitong, 2010, p. 213.

³³⁵ Vincent Goossaert, 2003, p. 434.

For Zhang, religion was a category of cultural phenomena much broader than what the Christian missionaries had suggested, indeed, it was an essential aspect of human nature. He called for respect for the primitive religions vis-à-vis the developed religions, the popular religions vis-à-vis the institutional religions. This egalitarian attitude towards all kinds of religions, reaffirmed in later texts like “On Establishing Religion,” did not mean, however, that Zhang truly approved of the primitive and popular forms of religion. Based on his acceptance of evolutionism, he believed that these forms would diminish along with the civilizing process. Based on the Buddhist theory he established, he criticized animism as clinging to the “nature of existence produced from attachment to imaginatively constructed discrimination.” The egalitarian attitude that Zhang held in this period rather meant “tolerating the coexistence for the moment” 姑容而並存之。³³⁶ This tolerance did not contradict his hostility towards the magical and mythical elements in Buddhism and Confucianism.

Zhang’s egalitarianism was limited, nonetheless, it facilitated his interest in Chinese popular religion, as recorded in Song Jiao’s private diary. During the conservation of the two on September 26, 1906, they talked about the so-called “heterodox teachings/religions” (*yijiao* 異教) as well as Daoism:

Meishu [Zhang Taiyan] talked about the Great Vehicle Teachings (Dacheng Jiao), a Buddhist-derived sectarian movement existing in Taizhou county of Jiangsu Province. Recently, there existed in Zhenjiang county the Tianxin Teachings, probably a branch derived from the White Lotus Teachings (Bailian Jiao). [The Tianxin Teachings] treats the position above the bridge of the nose and in the middle of the eyes as the entryway of their self-cultivation. Once opened up, the breath can pass through this entryway which leads to religious enlightenment; etc. [Zhang] again talked about the three current Daoist schools: the first is the Qizhang school [Quanzhen Dao], with the White Cloud Temple in Beijing as its ancestral court; the second is the Way of the Celestial Masters (Tianshi Dao), with Dragon and Tiger Mountain as its ancestral court; the third is the Maoshan school [Shangqing Pai], with Mao Meng (courtesy name Chucheng) as its patriarch, about which much is to be known.

³³⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, pp. 666, 674-675. Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 429.

枚叔言江蘇泰州一帶有大乘教，為佛教之別起。於近時者，鎮江一帶有天心教，大概為白蓮教之別派，以鼻樑上部兩目中間之處為玄關修煉，至開通此玄關後，則呼吸皆可由此出入而得道矣云云。又謂道教現今最行世者不過三派：一丘長派，即北京白雲觀為之宗主；一天師派，即龍虎山為之宗主；一茅山派，起於秦時，茅濛字初成其宗主，尚未及知云。³³⁷

While we know nothing about how and when Zhang had gained such knowledge, it is safe to say that the mid-1900s was the period when Zhang showed interest in popular religions and sects. This interest was partly explained by his renewed knowledge of religion but also partly resulted from practical considerations.

This practical motive was revealed by the dramatic turn of Zhang's attitude towards augury (*chen* 識) between the two editions of the *Book of Urgency*. At the end of Chapter 49 “On the Single Sage” (*Du sheng shang* 獨聖上), the last topic of the first edition, Zhang questioned the mysterious origin and function of the human “spirit” (*ling* 靈). The same passage, after being revised, appeared at the beginning of Chapter 15 “On Augury” of the revised edition. In the new context, the implication of the question shifted from doubt to reaffirmation.³³⁸ It was based on this reaffirmation that Zhang carried out his discussion of the mobilizing function of augury. “History is meant to preserve the past whereas augury was meant to intervene in the future.” 史者為藏往，識者為知來。³³⁹ This concluding sentence clearly showed the advantage of religion in comparison to National Essence (with history as its main body) in the revolutionary context. Furthermore in “On Augury”, Zhang referred to historical uprisings to demonstrate the function of augury in mass mobilizations. On one occasion, he touched on the prophecy associated with Maitreya (*mile* 彌勒), the future Buddha in Buddhist eschatology, pointing out that the rebellious leaders frequently claimed themselves to be an avatar of Maitreya. He then offered an example, Han Shantong 韓山童 (1313-1351) and his son Han Liner 韩林儿 (1340-1366), two leaders of the Red Turban Rebellion (*hongjing qiyi* 紅巾起義) and also the precursors of Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398).³⁴⁰ Considering the attention Zhang paid to augury, we can better understand his interest in popular religion, as shown in his preface to Hirayama Shu's 平

³³⁷ Song Jiaoren, 2014, p. 235.

³³⁸ Peng Chunling, 2012, p. 112.

³³⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 163.

³⁴⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 163.

山周 (1870-1940) *The History of Secret Societies in China* (*Zhongguo mimi shehui shi* 中國秘密社會史), written in 1908. In this preface, Zhang discussed, though not without some reservation, the ways of making use of the popular organizations, like the White Lotus Teachings and the Society of Heaven and Earth (*tiandihui* 天地會), to facilitate the ethnic revolution.³⁴¹

Corresponding to Zhang's shifting attitude towards popular religion, he also shifted his view on the moral effect of religion towards elites. In the 1897 essay "Admonition on the Reform," he criticized the literati's interest in Chan Buddhism as a spiritual entertainment harming their moral uprightness. In the 1907 essay "Letter in Reply to Tiezheng," however, his idea turned to assert that "those who resolvedly resisted against the Manchu at the end of Ming were either the ones affiliated to the Chan meditation or the partisans of Yangmingism." 明之末世，與滿洲相抗、百折不回者，非耽悅禪觀之士，即姚江學派之徒。³⁴² As a comparison, what the approval of popular religion emphasized was social solidarity and mobilization, as manifested by the metaphor Zhang used in the 1906 speech, "[A nation without religion] is just as the dry wheat flour, unable to roll into wheaten food." The reaffirmation of the moral effect of religion towards elites, in contrast, was aimed at revitalizing and strengthening the spiritual force of the individuals in charge.

Indeed, mental stimulation was one of the central tasks for the late Qing revolutionaries. From Song Jiaoren's studies of psychology³⁴³ to Tao Chengzhang's 陶成章 (1878-1912) learning of hypnotism,³⁴⁴ from Cai Yuanpei's translation of Inoue's *Lecture Notes of Mystery Studies* to Zhang Taiyan's notion of "the all-powerfulness of spirit" (*jingshen wanneng* 精神萬能),³⁴⁵ we see a variety of methods applied for a similar objective.³⁴⁶ The new religion that Zhang advocated should be grasped in this context. For Huayan Buddhism, it was most useful for a selfless and compassionate mentality. For Yogācāra Buddhism, though what Zhang underlined in the 1906 speech was its value in

³⁴¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, pp. 358-359. Shu Hirayama was a Japanese political activist deeply enrolled in the Chinese revolution. He even joined the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance in 1905.

³⁴² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 386.

³⁴³ Song Jiaoren, 2014, pp. 206-243.

³⁴⁴ Peng Chunling, 2012, p. 115.

³⁴⁵ Song Jiaoren, 2014, pp. 294-295.

³⁴⁶ As a precursory case, we see Tan Sitong's enthusiastic reading of Henry Wood, already introduced in Chapter 1. As a subsequent case, we see the enthusiasm of the "spiritual studies" (*lingxue* 靈學) among intellectual elites and lay Buddhists in early Republican Shanghai, which combined the practice of spirit writing and the newly-introduced knowledge and activities such as psychology, mystery studies, and hypnotism. Huang Ko-wu, 2007.

the epistemological dimension, it also laid the theoretical foundation for his notion of “the all-powerfulness of spirit.” As cited earlier, “what Yogācāra Buddhism preaches is the consciousness-only of all *dharma*. The physical phenomena and the invisible conceptual dirt in this world are merely illusory perception or conceptualization instead of reality.” Despite the side-effect of arrogance out of self-clinging, Zhang sustained his advocacy of individualistic heroism described as “indifferent to life and death, neglecting the opinion of others, wearing cotton clothes and hempen shoes, and going alone indulgently.” 排除生死，旁若無人，布衣麻襪，徑行獨往。³⁴⁷

The two parts above have demonstrated the advantage of religion over National Essence in the normative dimension. Since morality can roughly be included in the normative dimension, this comparison does partly explain why Zhang attributed the task of “improving the citizens’ morality” to Religion rather than National Essence. Then, what is the relevance of the epistemological dimension to morality? The reason is simple. The legitimacy of moral systems is always underpinned by a comprehensive theory, a coherent worldview. Zhang put it in this way: “The utility of Religion consists in preaching ‘non-creation’ (*wusheng*, *anutpattika*) above and instructing the ten virtues below. Domesticating the people is just its subordinate function. … Without this superior source [in Religion], however, its subordinate function cannot be activated.” 宗教之用，上契無生，下教十善，其所以馴化生民者，特其餘緒……而非有此至高者在，則餘緒亦無由流出。³⁴⁸

In the epoch that Zhang lived in, the validity of the orthodox theory and worldview was being radically undermined. Consequently, the corresponding moral system was obliged to transform itself, seeking a new foundation to rebuild its meaning and order. This partly explains the revival of unconventional native intellectual trends in order to provide “creative explanations” of the traditional worldview, facing the massive importation of foreign knowledge systems.³⁴⁹ The movement led by the Kang Party to “changing a *jiao/religion*” or “founding a *jiao/religion*” should also be put into this context, for *jiao/religion* meant more than normative forces, it was also the “means of pursuing

³⁴⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 393. Just before this cited sentence, Zhang referred to Nietzsche’s concept of superman to explain this heroism, only rejecting the latter’s tendency of aristocratism.

³⁴⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 440.

³⁴⁹ Wang Hui, 1999, p. 57.

knowledge” (*qiuzhi zhifang* 求知之方).³⁵⁰ Earlier than Sun Yat-sen’s famous motto that “pursuing genuine knowledge is more difficult than taking actions” (*zhinan xingyi* 知難行易), Tan had expressed the idea that thought always preceded action. The two parts below will proceed to demonstrate the advantage of Religion over National Essence in the epistemological dimension.

Part 3, the limit of National Essence in the epistemological dimension.

As discussed above, Zhang’s ideas about National Essence resulted from systematic transformations of Confucian scholarship and directed at Kang Youwei’s proposal of Confucian religion. These ideas, however, were characterized by the tendency of (1) historicism and (2) cultural pluralism. Consequently, they failed to provide the theoretical foundation for a universalist moral discourse.

Firstly, historicism. By this term, I mean the idea of attributing meaningful significance to space and time, such as historical period, geographical place, and local culture. What it deconstructs and rejects are the notions based on universal, fundamental, and immutable interpretations, usually based on canonical texts. As a general background of the topic here, we witnessed the intellectual transformation that historicized and relativized the values of Confucian classics and beliefs,³⁵¹ which was reflected in Zhang’s thought during the period in question. The three aspects that Zhang differentiated for National Essence (language and writing system; degrees, regulations, and institutions; biographies of historical figures) already showed a breakthrough from the traditional categories of classics (*jing* 經), histories (*shi* 史), masters (*zi* 子), and collections (*ji* 集). The critical change consisted in the negation of fundamentalism based upon the Confucian classics, as demonstrated by the difference between the two editions of the *Book of Urgency*. The first edition started from Chapter “Esteem of Xunzi” (*Zunxun* 尊荀), which, though unconventional, was still affiliated to the Confucian *lijiao* and classics. The revised edition, in contrast, placed a newly-elaborated Chapter “On the Origin of Scholarship” (*Yuanxue* 原學) at its outset. Zhang put forward, in this text, a three-fold perspective for intellectual studies, including geography (*diqu* 地齊), politics and custom (*zhengsu* 政俗), and natural

³⁵⁰ Tan Sitong, 1998, p. 238.

³⁵¹ Among the outstanding scientific works, see e.g. Joseph R. Levenson, 1965; Wang Hui, 2008.

endowment (*caixing* 材性).³⁵² It can also be considered as the methodology that Zhang proposed for the studies of National Essence. The Confucian classics, thereafter, can no longer monopolize the power of interpreting the transcendental truth. Along with the pre-Qin Confucian masters and their life-world, they more and more became the object of study.

This critical transformation for Zhang was under the influence of native scholars such as Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738-1801), widely known for his views that treated all the six Confucian classics as historical records. Zhang's historicism concerning National Essence probably targeted Kang Youwei who tried to maintain the universality of these sacred texts by revitalizing the idea of "accomplishing a thorough understanding of Confucian classics and applying them to practical affairs" (*tongjing zhizhiyong* 通經致用).³⁵³ However, the Western social sciences and humanities that Zhang newly received may have exerted more influences. The current Western scholarship, while leading Zhang to establish a new paradigm that underlined the temporal and spatial particularity of the object of study, did provide him with a comprehensive and universal theory, i.e., evolutionism.³⁵⁴ Against his contemporaries like Kang Youwei who resorted to the image of universal progress offered by evolutionism to rescue Confucianism from the danger of being degraded to a local teaching,³⁵⁵ Zhang argued, especially in "On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution," that what evolutionism brought about was an immoral worldview, resulting in suffering and conflict rather than happiness and moral improvement. Therefore, he had to turn his eyes away from the Western secular sciences in seeking the theoretical foundation for a universalist moral discourse.

Secondly, cultural pluralism. By this term, I mean the idea that individual ethnic and religious groups have a right to exist on their own terms within a larger world while retaining their unique cultural heritages. In Zhang's case, what historicism did to Confucian classics resulted in the decentralization against the imperial concept "All-under-Heaven" (*tianxia* 天下).³⁵⁶ Based on his reading of Western scholarship, Zhang established

³⁵² Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 131.

³⁵³ To know more about this topic, see Lu Yin, 2008, sections 3-4; Wang Fansen, 2012, pp. 196-197;

³⁵⁴ Viren Murthy, 2011, p. 142.

³⁵⁵ James R. Pusey, 1983, pp. 15-27.

³⁵⁶ As a complementary remark, during the 1900-1903 phase, Zhang held on to the Sino-barbarian distinction, reshaping it according to the new globalizing world. The Han Chinese, along with the Caucasians, were considered as the more cultivated ethnicities, whereas Manchus were devaluated into the category of barbarians (Zhang Taiyan, 2000, pp. 194-214). This self-adaptation to the vision of ethnic and cultural evolution was renounced during 1906-1908, to be

comparative perspectives not only for religion but also for literature, custom, and history. His reaffirmation of the value of National Essence did not orient towards its universal significance. Rather, he claimed that these cultural heritages were most suitable and meaningful to us as Chinese, as seen in the part on National Essence of the 1906 speech. As an example, in discussing literature, Zhang asserted that “the people from a particular land are always fonder of the literature of this land. I wonder whether the Greek and *Rigveda*³⁵⁷ poets are better than their Chinese counterparts, like Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca.340-278BC) and Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), or not. Anyhow, from our standpoint, the native literature is naturally more beautiful.” 究竟甚麼國土的人，必看甚麼國土的文，方覺有趣。像他們希臘、梨俱的詩，不知較我家的屈原、杜工部優劣如何。但由我們看去，自然本種的文辭，方為優美。 As another example, touching on historical figures, he advised the audience to follow the eminent examples among their ancestors since “it is scarcely possible to resemble the models in European and American history; so why don’t we follow the Chinese historical figures and preserve our original nature?” 與其學步歐、美，總是不能像的；何如學步中國舊人，還是本來面目。³⁵⁸

In “Personal Statement of My Academic Career” (*Zishu xueshu cidi* 自述學術次第), a retrospective essay written in 1913, Zhang concluded that “the scholarships on mental and physical issues are underpinned by universal principles beyond the difference between countries, whereas language, writing system, and history are characterized by their national particularity. Hence, the rule is evident that we should follow the models from our own country instead of following foreign models.” 凡在心在物之學，體自周圓，無間方國，獨於言文歷史，其體則方，自以己國為典型，而不能取之域外，斯理易明。³⁵⁹ This reference clearly showed that National Essence was, for Zhang, a scholarship that based on and investigated the particularity of Chinese history and culture. That is why it was capable of stimulating ethnic awareness and improving patriotic eagerness. As to Zhang’s view on morality, however, a moral discourse should be universal to be validated which demanded a comprehensive theoretical foundation.

studied in Chapter 3.

³⁵⁷ The *Rigveda* is an ancient Indian collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns. It is the oldest known among the four sacred Vedic Sanskrit texts.

³⁵⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 7.

³⁵⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 196.

Part 4, the advantage of religion in the epistemological dimension.

We have already known by now the final result of Zhang's search for the theoretical foundation of a universal morality, which was based on Yogācāra Buddhism. Nonetheless, it is necessary to take other "scholarship of mental and physical issues" into consideration, including modern science, evolutionism, and Western philosophy. In advocating the superiority of Yogācāra Buddhism and the necessity of its moral application, Zhang had always been concerned with the challenge from the theories of knowledge of these scholarships. Only by establishing a comparative perspective between Yogācāra Buddhism and its Western adversaries can we grasp its superiority over other Buddhism schools, Confucian scholarship, and National Essence.

Based on cited original texts, I will undertake an analysis of two issues below: (1) the theoretical advantage of Yogācāra Buddhism over its native counterparts facing the challenge of modern sciences; (2) its theoretical advantage facing the challenge of Western philosophy.

Issue 1, the theoretical advantage of Yogācāra Buddhism over its native counterparts facing the challenge of modern sciences.

We have seen in Chapter 1, especially through the discussion around "On the True Meanings of Confucianism," that Zhang's acceptance of the natural science constituted a major reason for his critique of Buddhist doctrines. During the period in question, despite his shifting attitude towards Buddhism, the challenge from natural and social sciences continued to affect Zhang's selection between various Buddhist schools. In the landscape of Buddhist monasticism of the Qing dynasty, there were Pure Land Buddhism, Tantrism, and Chan Buddhism. Also, we see a sequential revival of interest, among the Buddhist laymen and literati, in Tiantai Buddhism, Huayan Buddhism, and Yogācāra Buddhism. Unsurprisingly, Pure Land Buddhism and Tantrism were rejected by Zhang for their lack of bold and fearless spirit.³⁶⁰ As to the other four schools, Zhang's preference for Yogācāra Buddhism can largely be explained by his concern with the challenge from modern sciences.

For Chan Buddhism's defect in comparison to Yogācāra Buddhism, Zhang explained,

³⁶⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 387.

in “In Reply to Tiezheng,” as follows:

Chan Buddhism is indeed unflinching. However, its low-level inheritors followed the same pattern and just practiced *jifeng* (sharp-witted remarks). The high-grade ones, despite their firmness and self-dependence, often ignored the ultimate doctrine of consciousness-only. It is regretful that they achieved [consciousness-only] in practice but lost it in theoretical thinking. For this reason, Yogācāra should be the core of Buddhism since it conveys the original spirit of Buddhist teachings.

雖然，禪宗誠斬截矣，而末流沿襲，徒事機鋒，其高者止於堅定無所傍依，顧於惟心勝義，或不了解，得其事而遺其理，是不能無缺憾者。是故推見本原，則以法相為其根核。³⁶¹

Zhang, in the same text, proceeded to discuss the importance of Yogācāra Buddhism in his time:

There is a good reason for my esteem reserved for Yogācāra Buddhism. Modern [Chinese] scholarship has been gradually oriented towards the path of “seeking verification in actual events.” The detailed analysis carried out by Han learning scholars [of the Qing dynasty] was far superior to the results the Ming Confucian scholars had achieved. With the beginnings of science [massively introduced into China in the late nineteenth century],³⁶² scholars applied themselves with even greater precision. It is for this reason that the Yogācāra learning was not inappropriate to the situation in China during the Ming dynasty but most appropriate in modern times. This was brought about by the trends that have informed the development of scholarship.

然僕所以獨尊法相者，則自有說。蓋近代學術，漸趨實事求是之途，自漢學諸公分條析理，遠非明儒所能企及。逮科學萌芽，而用心益復縝密矣。是故法相之學，於明代則不宜，於近代則甚適，由學術所趨然也。³⁶³

We can see that Zhang’s reservation about Huayan and Tiantai Buddhism was also due to his concern with the academic tendency. This concern was also revealed in Zhang’s reference to Gui Bohua’s 桂伯華 (1861-1915) change of thought. Also known as Gui

³⁶¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 387.

³⁶² Modern natural science emerged in the 16-17th centuries in the West. However, it was massively introduced into China only during the second half of the 19th century. That is why Zhang placed it after Han learning in his chronological narrative.

³⁶³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 387.

Nianzu 桂念祖 (his original name), Gui was one of the early and most important disciples of Yang Wenhui.³⁶⁴

At first, Gui Bohua preferred Huayan Buddhism and did not like Yogācāra Buddhism.

Later, he told me that “in our time, the theories based on scientific studies are becoming more and more advanced. I am afraid that Huayan and Tiantai Buddhism will be neglected by the audience. Only Yogācāra Buddhism could guide [the audience to establish belief in Buddhism.] … Over the recent three hundred years, the scholarly approach has become radically different from that of the Song and Ming dynasties. The philological studies of the Han learning have been the forerunner of the science; the science, in turn, will be the forerunner of Yogācāra scholarship. [My judgment] is based on the fact that these three scholarships all require verification in accordance with the reality as well as the completeness in theoretical argumentation. Hence, they share the same nature [in methodology].

桂伯華初好華嚴，不喜法相，末乃謂余曰：“今世科學論理日益昌明，華嚴、天臺，恐將聽者藐藐，非法相不能引導矣……近世三百年來，學風與宋明絕異。漢學考證，則科學之先驅，科學又法相之先驅也。蓋其語必徵實，說必盡理，性質相同爾。”³⁶⁵

By repeating Gui’s words, Zhang expressed his own idea that the theory of Yogācāra Buddhism not only revealed the ultimate truth but also best adapted to the age of science.

Zhang’s criticism of other Buddhist schools implicitly aimed at his contemporaries’ alternative approaches, to name a few, Yang Wenhui who advocated Huayan and Pure Land Buddhism,³⁶⁶ Gong Zizhen for Tiantai Buddhism,³⁶⁷ Kang Youwei and Tan Sitong for Huayan and Chan Buddhism.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁴ For a short introduction to Gui, see Yu Lingbo, 1995, pp. 322-327.

³⁶⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 192. I adopt John Makeham’s (2012, p. 105) translations for this passage and the previous one and make minor modifications.

³⁶⁶ For Huayan Buddhism, see Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 365. For Pure Land Buddhism, Zhang (2014b, p. 392) criticized the “old man of virtue” 而今宿德 who, concerned with the abuse of utilitarianism, advocated Pure Land Buddhism. By “old man of virtue,” Zhang probably referred to Yang. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that, while advocating the native Pure Land school, Yang criticized its Japanese counterpart, Shin Buddhism, for relying on external forces rather than on oneself (Hiroko Sakamoto, 2019, p. 24). This reveals the common ground that Zhang and Yang shared.

³⁶⁷ Zhang criticized Tiantai Buddhism to be “less delicate and profound in thought compared to Yogācāra Buddhism and less straightforward in practice compared to Chan Buddhism.” 於思想則不能如法相之精深，於行事則不能如禪宗之直截。 Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 387.

³⁶⁸ According to Li Qingxin (p. 122), Kang was most inspired by Chan Buddhism. He had access to Buddhism via

Despite the considerable attention paid to modern science, Zhang did not approve of it to be a knowledge system capable of pursuing the ultimate truth. Rather, he reaffirmed, in a 1906 letter on native and Western scholarships, his old idea in “On the True Meanings of Confucianism” that modern science had advantages in experimental studies whereas Buddhism had an advantage in approaching the ultimate truth.³⁶⁹ Furthermore, he even questioned the validity of science in experimental studies, as seen by his 1905 letter to Huang Zongyang: “what [the scientists] have grasped today is limited to the earth. They have not yet caught a glimpse of the Huayan realm. So, the scientific results should not be considered at once as undoubted truth.” 今之所見不過地球，華嚴世界本所未窺，故科學所可定者，不能遽認為定見。³⁷⁰

Issue 2, the theoretical advantage of Yogācāra Buddhism over its native counterparts facing the challenge of Western philosophy.

While the challenge of modern science led Zhang to re-appraise various Buddhist schools, that of Western philosophy helped him to reflect on the defects of Confucian scholarship. While modern science undermined some mythical beliefs of Buddhism, Western philosophy urged Zhang to develop an academic approach more abstract, more systematic, and more coherent. To have a basic understanding of this, I will present Zhang’s criticism of two neo-Confucian scholars, Wang Yangming and Yan Yuan 顏元 (1635-1704). The academic approaches of the two were opposed to each other. While Yangmingism constituted the bridge to Chan Buddhism for Kang Youwei, Yan Yuan’s scholarship contributed to laying the foundation of the Han learning, within which Zhang had been trained.

The critical reflections that Zhang carried out appeared in two chapters of the *Book of Urgency (revised version)*. As a reminder, Zhang’s extensive reading of Western philosophy began just during the same time when he wrote this book. In Chapter 10 “The Scholarship of Wang Yangming” (*Wangxue* 王學), Zhang pointed out that Wang’s scholarship was far too thin in theoretical construction. Except for “accomplishing innate knowledge of the good” (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知), his other concepts were borrowed from

Yangmingism and regarded Huayan Buddhism as the ultimate. Tan’s case was similar.

³⁶⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 232.

³⁷⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 147.

previous scholars. Moreover, these concepts were organized in Wang's theory in an unsystematic manner.³⁷¹ In the next chapter, Chapter 11 "The Scholarship of Yan Yuan" (*Yanxue* 顏學), Zhang appreciated Yan's efforts in promoting empirical studies based on critical reflections on the defects of Yangmingism. However, he regretted that Yan limited his studies to concrete affairs and the pragmatic approach, and hence lacked abstraction and conceptualization. In this direction, his scholarship was no match for Western scholarship nor Buddhism.³⁷²

We can turn to Zhang's critical reflection on the Han learning smoothly from that on Yan Yuan. By the first issue above, we have seen that Zhang qualified the Han learning and modern sciences both as evidence-based scholarship. It was rather under the challenge of Western philosophy that the Han learning exposed its weakness in theoretical thinking. In retrospect, Zhang recalled that "I once reflected on the scholars in the recent hundred years. They usually considered the studies of Confucian classics and history as the only [valuable] scholarship. As to the texts of pre-Qin masters and Buddhism, they merely collected their polished words and the anecdotes, yet vilified their concepts and theories." 嘗意百年以往，諸公多謂經史之外，非有學問。其於諸子佛典，獨有采其雅馴，摭其逸事，於名理則深甚焉。³⁷³ This was also Zhang's attitude towards Buddhism when he just left the Gujing Jingshe Academy at the beginning of 1897. This attitude gradually changed, which many did not realize, and finally reversed following the apprehension of Yogācāra doctrines. At the end of the *Esoteric Discourse of Zhuohan Chamber* (*Zhuohan weiyan* 莖漢微言), a book elaborated and collected in 1916, Zhang talked about his new thoughts:

During my imprisonment in Shanghai, I did not meet people for three years and devoted myself to studying the canonical works by Maitreya and Vasubandhu.³⁷⁴ The scholarship of this [Yogācāra] school begins by analyzing concepts and ends by dispelling

³⁷¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, pp. 110, 113.

³⁷² Zhang Taiyan, 2000, pp. 120, 124, 129. Though Buddhism might make up the disadvantage of Yan Yuan's scholarship, Zhang pointed out two of its shortages, i.e., the lack of evidence-based studies and the frequent incoherence in its theory. The extensive reading of Yogācāra canonical works showed Zhang an option to overcome these two shortages.

³⁷³ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 197.

³⁷⁴ Along with his half-brother Asaṅga 無著 (fl. 4th century CE), Vasubandhu 世親 (fl. 4th to 5th century CE) was considered as one of the main founders of Yogācāra Buddhism. According to traditional hagiographies, Asaṅga received Yogācāra teachings from Maitreya, the future Buddha.

them. Its approach is similar to that of the Plain learning [i.e. the Han learning] in which I had been specialized, which made it more accessible to me. Ever since having mastered Yogācāra doctrines, I succeeded in apprehending the deep meanings of Mahāyāna Buddhism. I personally considered that the abstruse words of Sakyamuni were superior to those of the late Zhou masters [i.e. pre-Qin masters] by measureless degrees. The neo-Confucians from the Cheng Brothers³⁷⁵ and Zhu Xi (1130-1200) down were not worth comparing. After being released from prison, I went east to Japan and spared no effort in restoring the Han nation. During my spare time, I read the Japanese translations of Greek and German philosophers' works. ... Measuring [these philosophical works] by the benchmark of Mahāyāna Buddhism, I promptly found their advantages and flaws and was aware of how Western philosophy evolved.

及囚繫上海，三歲不覲，專修慈氏世親之書。此一術也，以分析名相始，以排遣名相終，從入之途，與平生樸學相似，易於契機，解此以還，乃達大乘深趣。私謂釋迦玄言，出過晚周諸子不可計數；程朱以下，尤不足論。既出獄，東走日本，盡瘁光復之業。鞅掌餘閒，旁覽彼土所譯希臘、德意志哲人之書……格以大乘，霍然察其利病，識其流變。³⁷⁶

I have three comments on this passage about the relationship between Yogācāra Buddhism and (1) the Han learning, (2) Western philosophy, and (3) Chinese scholarship in general.

First, the relationship between Yogācāra Buddhism and the Han learning. By the first issue above, we have already seen the methodological proximity, raised by Zhang, between the Han learning, modern sciences, and Yogācāra Buddhism. Here, he further explained how the expertise of the Han learning facilitated his access to Yogācāra doctrines which had long been extremely obscure to the Chinese mentality.³⁷⁷

Second, the relationship between Yogācāra Buddhism and Western philosophy. In contrast to the lack of abstract concepts of those native scholars who practiced plain and solid studies, and also in contrast to the incoherent and unsystematic manner of other Buddhist schools,³⁷⁸ Yogācāra Buddhism offered Zhang the theoretical toolbox and also

³⁷⁵ Namely Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107).

³⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 71.

³⁷⁷ Mastering Yogācāra doctrines, in its turn, contributed to Zhang's linguistic studies. Hou Wailu, 2014, pp. 1262-1263.

³⁷⁸ As well as those contemporary scholars who relied their Buddhist studies on these schools, such as Tan Sitong and

the confidence to carry out critical dialogues with the leading Western philosophers. More than that, he even used it as an impartial and transcendental measure to assess different Western philosophical ideas and trends, as extensively manifested in “On Atheism” and “On Establishing Religion.” Despite his admiration of Western philosophers like Kant and Schopenhauer, Zhang had been motivated to demonstrate to his fellow Chinese intellectuals that Buddhist teachings, as an assimilated part of Chinese scholarship, was superior to Western philosophy, as revealed by the record of his conversation with Qi'an Daoren 栖庵道人 on August 15, 1911.³⁷⁹

Third, the relationship between Yogācāra Buddhism and Chinese scholarship in general. The time when Zhang advocated Buddhism as the new religion was also the time when he devaluated most heavily Chinese scholars in theoretical thinking, including the pre-Qin masters, the neo-Confucians, and also the most eminent Qing scholars. As a consequence, National Essence, as a scholarship in charge of Chinese cultural heritage, was no match for this new religion in the epistemological dimension.

Above, I have demonstrated (1) how Zhang followed a twofold criterion (normative and epistemological) to evaluate a religion and (2) the advantages of Religion over National Essence, according to this criterion, in restoring morality. These two issues, put forward at the outset of Theme 3, have found clear answers. Now I would like to conclude the whole theme by citing and analyzing a long passage at the end of “On the Non-Self of Human Beings.” In this passage, Zhang exposed without reservation the concerns underlying his advocacy of a new religion:

In our time, people's morality has more severely degenerated than ever before.

The words of King Wen [of the Zhou Dynasty] and Confucius no longer have the power to restore it. Nor is neo-Confucianism capable of preserving morality. Furthermore, scholarship incessantly advances and wisdom increases. The advocates of the competition [between nations] are the contemporary successors of those preaching “harmful ideas against the upright teaching.” The advocates of utilitarianism are the

Xia Zengyou.

³⁷⁹ This record was published in No. 566 of *Japan and Japanese* (*Riben yu ribenren* 日本與日本人) on September 15, 1911. Presumably, it is the record of a conversation by writing between the two. Inferring from the text, Qi'an Daoren was a Japanese monk but I cannot find more information about him. Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, pp. 365-366.

contemporary successors of “unorthodox Epicureanism.” The evil wisdom deepens and morality degenerates correspondingly. To rectify such abuses, some people turn their eyes to religion, considering it indispensable. However, it is base to worship the celestial gods; neither is it appropriate for an ambitious man to convert to Pure Land Buddhism. ... Some Chinese people even proposed to follow the model of Japanese Buddhism, permitting Buddhist monks to get married and eat meat. How could monks set the example without observing precepts themselves? [As far as I can see,] only the theory of Yogācāra Buddhism and the conduct of Huayan Buddhism can subdue the evil wisdom and clean the tainted custom. As to the admonitions in *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the words of Yan Yuan and Dai Zhen (1724-1777), they are capable of social sanctions but can only play a supplementary role in restoring morality. Without Mahāyāna Buddhism as the mainstay, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is nothing different from the *Laws of Manu* whereas Yan Yuan and Dai Zhen are similar to “unorthodox epicureans.” This is the only thing that I am genuinely concerned with. As to Tan Sitong’s *An exposition of benevolence*, I am upset with its theory which is mixed and disorderly as a somniloquy.

民德衰頹，於今為甚，姬、孔遺言，無復挽回之力，即理學亦不足以持世。且學說日新，智慧增長，而主張競爭者，流入害為正法論；主張功利者，流入順世外道論。惡慧既深，道德日敗。矯弊者，乃憚然於宗教之不可泯絕。而崇拜天神，既近卑鄙；歸依淨土，亦非丈夫幹志之事……至欲步趨東土，使比丘納婦食肉，戒行既亡，尚何足為軌範乎？自非法相之理，華嚴之行，必不能制惡見而清汙俗。若夫《春秋》遺訓，顏、戴緒言，於社會制裁則有力，以言道德，則纔足以相輔。使無大乘以為維綱，則《春秋》亦《摩訶法典》，顏、戴亦順世外道也。拳拳之心，獨在此耳！至如譚氏《仁學》之說，拉雜失倫，有同夢囈，則非所敢聞矣。³⁸⁰

We can divide this passage into four parts. In the first part, Zhang pointed out the lack of power from Confucianism facing the moral degeneration today before revealing the cause, i.e., the rapid increase of evil wisdom represented by evolutionism and utilitarianism. In Theme 1, I have presented how Zhang had received these two intellectual trends. This topic will be studied in-depth in Chapter 3.

To remedy the abuses brought out by evolutionism and utilitarianism, Zhang turned

³⁸⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 452.

to discuss various efforts resorting to religion in the second part. Although realizing himself that religion was indispensable to restore morality, Zhang disapproved of several current options, including Christianity (advocated by Western missionaries as well as the Chinese Christian communities), Pure Land Buddhism (popular among both monks and laymen), and the model of Japanese monasticism (promoted by the Japanese Buddhist missionaries in China). Zhang's objection can be summarized into one sentence: the type of morality these groups tried to restore did not suit the age of revolution.

Then in the third part, Zhang put forward his alternative, namely, the theory of Yogācāra Buddhism and the conduct of Huayan Buddhism, in order to subdue the evil wisdom and clean the tainted custom. Evidently, both the proposal and the function are twofold in terms of the epistemological and normative dimensions.

The fourth part shows us that for Zhang, morality was something superior to social sanctions. It might be astonishing that one of the five Confucian classics, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, was degraded to the level of the *Laws of Manu*.³⁸¹ This negation of sacredness was most intensively manifested in "On the Five Negations." As a result, the sages and the scholars in the Confucian tradition found themselves in a secondary position, so was it the case for National Essence, in comparison to Religion since only the latter had achieved the transcendental truth and set it as the "mainstay" of its moral discourse.³⁸²

* Conclusion *

This chapter touches on a vast scope of topics from politics to scholarship and religion. During the seven-year period, Zhang struggled to cope with various political forces, scholarly paradigms, and religious models (both native and foreign) which competed with each other. Without adequate knowledge about these intertwining and ever-

³⁸¹ As to Yan Yuan and Dai Zhen, their criticism of "heavenly principles" (*tianli* 天理), a key notion for neo-Confucians of the Song dynasty, had been utilized by certain late Qing intellectuals to legitimate "human desires" (*renyu* 人欲). This may be the reason that Zhang considered them as similar to "unorthodox epicureans."

³⁸² Zhang Zhiqiang (2012, p. 113) identified Religion as "transcendental" (*zhen* 真) and National Essence as "mundane/secular" (*su* 俗). *Zhen* and *su* were two key notions that Zhang developed in a later period. Zhang Zhiqiang's idea implied the superiority of Religion over National Essence, to which I agree. However, I disagree with him on identifying Religion with *zhen*, because Religion not only accessed the transcendental truth but also exerted normative influences at the level of *su* (e.g. revolutionary mobilization).

changing contexts, it is difficult to understand why and how Zhang struggled to establish Buddhism as the new religion. My study, on the one hand, tries to grasp such dynamic phenomena, on the other, aims to demonstrate the logic underlying Zhang's renewed views on religion and Buddhism, hence uncover the continuity of the period in question.

To fulfill this task, I highlight “religion” and “National Essence” as two keywords. Retracing Zhang’s adoption of the two neologisms during 1900-1903, this chapter illuminates his endeavor to transform the Confucian notions of scholarship and teaching, mainly under the influence of the advanced results of Western social sciences and humanities. Upset by the ideological implications of evolutionism (or rather social Darwinism), the theory underlying most of the Western scholarship of the time, he was very reluctant to incorporate it into his thought in developing a comprehensive theory. Consequently, we see in Phase 1 his increasing interest in religious history and popular religion, in search of mental forces for ethnic solidarity and revolutionary mobilization. The interest then was largely stimulated by normative concerns. In contrast, we see a decisive epistemological breakthrough thanks to the jail experience, which enabled Zhang to put forward an alternative to Confucianism as well as evolutionism and Western philosophy. After that, *zongjiao* was not just a general category; it designated more of his reformed version of Buddhism which guided moral conduct and reveal the ultimate and transcendental truth.

After sketching an overall picture of these seven years, the chapter proceeds to more original discussions following the two guiding questions. To sum, Zhang’s proposal of National Essence and Religion aimed at Kang’s thought of the Confucian religion. Nonetheless, Zhang’s proposal did not mirror the earlier counterpart of Kang but rather followed a twofold schema. For National Essence, by underlining the importance of historical studies, it fought against Kang’s idea of “establishing the teaching through the way of gods and spirits.” As a product of historicism and demystification, National Essence alone was not capable to be a counterpart of the Confucian religion. The awareness of the limits of National Essence leads me to reevaluate Zhang’s endeavor to establish a reformed Buddhism, to which he attributed both normative and epistemological superiority. Despite the difference in their orientations, Zhang in effect followed the path Kang had explored in

founding a new religion. In other words, the two rivals shared some essential ideas about the teaching/religion, its history and functions, and the role they wished it to play in an age of profound transformation and unprecedented crisis.

Chapter 3. Moral Pessimism and Dystopia:³⁸³ Between Buddhism, Evolutionism, and Anarchism

*** Introduction ***

This chapter sets out to explore Zhang’s Buddhist thought from mid-1907 to mid-1908. Similar to the situation of Chapter 2, this exploration has to base itself on a comprehensive understanding of the political and social contexts. Despite the brevity of the period in question, it concerns intensive events and texts of in-depth thought, and can only be sufficiently grasped by frequently referring to the periods before and after.

From mid-1907, Zhang was involved in ideological and power struggles within the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance against Sun Yat-sen and his partisans. Along with some comrades, many of whom later re-established the Restoration Society, he engaged in the rapidly rising anarchist movement in Tokyo. However, Zhang’s relationship with the Chinese anarchists was full of tension and trouble. During the first half of 1908, he broke up with Liu Shipei, his intimate friend and the central figure of Chinese anarchists in Japan. Meanwhile, his debates with the Chinese anarchists in Paris ended up with inextricable mutual hostility.

Compared to the disappointment of the revolutionary movement, there is a more direct reason for the transformation of Zhang’s Buddhist thought, i.e. the negative feedback from his comrades towards his proposal of promoting the revolutionary enterprise through Buddhism. The setback of his proposed practical Buddhism, along with his new appraisal of the revolutionary prospect and the fruitful interactions and debates with anarchists, constituted the contextual background of Zhang’s principal writings in this period, represented by “On the Five Negations.” These texts are characterized by pessimism about the moral potential of human beings, a strong will to transcend nationalism and anarchism,

³⁸³ I use the term “dystopia” instead of “utopia” because the latter conventionally refers to an imagined society that possesses highly desirable or nearly perfect qualities for its citizens. In this sense, Kang Youwei’s *Book on the Great Unity* conveys typical utopian ideas. Zhang in his essay “On the Five Negations,” in contrast, declines any existing progressive process towards the advent of a utopia. Despite its strong pessimism, Zhang’s dystopia is not, by any means, apocalyptic.

and thorough critiques of utopianism based on evolutionism.

Despite apparent continuity with previous periods, Zhang's Buddhist writings from mid-1907 to mid-1908 present significant developments and changes. The alliance between Buddhism and National Essence as well as ethnic revolution ceases to be present. We see not only the relativization of the value of nationalism but also critical reflections on culture in general, including religion. For Zhang, Buddhism no longer serves as a model for future religion. It rather provides a transcendental theory to re-evaluate all kinds of cultural heritage.

Previous researches relatively overlooked Zhang's Buddhist thought this year, in comparison with that during the previous year from mid-1906 to mid-1907. Some considered it as retrogressive and divergent from the revolutionary mainstream.³⁸⁴ Moreover, the difference between Zhang's Buddhist thought this year and the previous year has hardly been made explicit.³⁸⁵ Nonetheless, there have been quite a few valuable scientific works which enable me to deal with several remaining problems. Instead of making scattered references throughout the chapter, I prefer to review some of them at the outset and add my commentaries.

First of all, in Hsiao K. C.'s studies of Zhang's political thought, individualism, along with nationalism and civil rights, were considered as three key subjects. His study of Zhang's individualism is mainly based on his comprehensive discussions of Zhang's essays in this period.³⁸⁶ Furthermore, based on his in-depth research of Kang Youwei, Hsiao suggested a comparative perspective for Kang and Zhang's utopian ideas.³⁸⁷ Wong Young-tsui, Hsiao's student, developed more comparative angles in studying Kang and Zhang following his teacher's path.³⁸⁸

Hsiao and Wong's works applied a repertoire of terminology borrowed from Western political science and philosophy. As a disadvantage, the difference between Zhang's "individualism" and its western counterpart remains unclarified. It is Wang Hui who made

³⁸⁴ For example, in *Zhang Binglin pingzhuan*, Jiang Yihua's (2011) introduced most of Zhang's major works but did not touch on "On the Five Negations" or other essays of this period.

³⁸⁵ For example, Jiang Hainu (2012, p. 209) treated 1900 to 1908 as an integral stage during which Zhang utilized Buddhism as an intellectual instrument for a revolutionary morality. Another example is John Makeham (2012, p. 106), who refers to Zhang's Buddhist essays in 1906 and 1911 treating them as homogeneous.

³⁸⁶ Hsiao K. C., 2011, pp. 834, 854-860.

³⁸⁷ Hsiao K. C., 2011, pp. 868-869.

³⁸⁸ Wong Young-tsui, 2006.

more accurate assertions on this issue. He regarded Zhang's apparent individualism as a temporary stage against the sanctification of the state and the nation, which gives way to a cosmology based on non-self and transcendental universalism at the higher stage of the five Negations.³⁸⁹ Moreover, Wang's discussions on why Zhang neglected the society in his dualistic discourse of individual and state³⁹⁰ cast new light on "On the Five Negations" in terms of the negation of the community. Influenced by Wang Hui and some (left-wing) Japanese scholars, Viren Murthy published a remarkable monograph on Zhang as a distinguished political philosopher. Chapter 4 of this book, entitled "Transfiguring Modern Temporality: Zhang Taiyan's Critique of Evolutionary History," largely shared the concerns and aims of this chapter and undertook its interrogations on a similar textual basis to mine.³⁹¹ Although sharing his passion for political philosophy and critical social theories, I choose a different approach from Murthy's, trying to contextualize Zhang's thought with his interlocutors and concurrent events and apprehend it on his own terms. I wish that such efforts could be beneficial for future scholars interested in the dynamic relationship between the plural modernities of China and the West.

Wang Yuanyi contributed one of the most reliable articles on Zhang's utopian ideas. In the section on "On the Five Negations,"³⁹² Wang correctly revealed the elimination of self-clinging as the overall principle underpinning Zhang's negation of the state and the further negation of human individuals. However, he treated the content of "On the Five Negations" as homogeneous to that of earlier writings and quoted, improperly in certain cases, the passages from different texts to explain each other. As a consequence, the change in Zhang's ideas of revolution and morality in the course of 1907 was neglected. Wang Fansen may be the historian who best summarized the anti-traditional impacts of Zhang's thought. Although focused more on Zhang's criticism of Confucius and advocacy of unorthodox intellectual traditions, Wang did touch on Zhang's negation of the state and its influence on Lu Xun.³⁹³ Compared with Wang, Sakamoto Hiroko dug deeper into the anti-traditional implications of Zhang's thought and paid more attention to the relevance of

³⁸⁹ Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 1011-1046.

³⁹⁰ Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 1047-1077.

³⁹¹ Viren Murthy, 2011, pp. 135-168.

³⁹² Wang Yuanyi, 1999, pp. 230-234.

³⁹³ Wang Fansen, 2012, pp. 210-212.

Buddhism to this issue.³⁹⁴

In addition, I owe a debt to Peter Zarrow and Lin Shaoyan, both had close collaboration with Japanese academics and accomplished solid studies of the Chinese anarchism in the 1900s. Compared with Arif Dirlik, Zarrow paid more attention to the role Zhang played in the anarchist movement. Besides, his study revealed the influence of Kang Youwei's utopia of the Great Unity on the Chinese anarchists.³⁹⁵ Lin's work helps reveal the geopolitical concerns and efforts of Zhang during his involvement in anarchist activities. Also inspiring are his discussions about Zhang's critique of Hegel in terms of state-building, anarchism, and evolutionism.³⁹⁶

This chapter is composed of three sections. Section 1 presents the historical events and Zhang's activities, especially the negative feedback towards his practical Buddhism, his involvement in the internal conflicts, and his engagement in the anarchist movement. This section also introduces Zhang's publications, contextualizing them in the aforementioned events and activities. Section 2 provides a general introduction to the four major texts related to the theme of this chapter. The context is also presented when necessary. Section 3 is the principal and original section of this chapter. Focusing on "On the Five Negations," this section is organized by three themes. The first follows the threads offered by Zhang's letter to Cai Yuanpei in 1911. The second intends to demonstrate Zhang's critical reflections on National Essence and ethnic revolution from a transcendental standpoint based on Buddhism. The third deals with Zhang's critique of evolutionism by comparing Zhang's dystopian ideas with the utopianism represented by anarchism as well as Kang Youwei's *Book on the Great Unity*. By these three themes, I attempt to touch on some problems insufficiently studied by previous researches and reveal the relations between this chapter and Chapters 2, 4, and 5.

* Zhang Taiyan's involvement in the power struggle and anarchist movement *

³⁹⁴ Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, pp. 48-52.

³⁹⁵ Peter Zarrow, 1990, pp. 78-79, 87. See also the conference he gave at the Collège de France in 2019 entitled "The Ambiguous Utopianism of Kang Youwei" (<https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/anne-cheng/guestlecturer-2019-05-21-14h30.htm>).

³⁹⁶ Lin Shaoyang, 2018, pp. 225-289.

In Chapter 2, I have undertaken an analysis of the major texts between mid-1906 and mid-1907, especially the “Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo.” Through these texts, Zhang put forward his proposal to facilitate ethnic revolution by Religion and National Essence. It is clear that he wished to establish his own version of practical Buddhism, replacing the precedent ones, especially the one of Tan Sitong expressed in his *An exposition of benevolence* and Kang Youwei’s religious reform plan. However, in “On the Five Negations,” an essay published in September 1907, we see the tension between Zhang’s Buddhist thought and his views on National Essence and ethnic revolution, which will be studied in the third section of this chapter. Zhang’s attempt at developing a practical Buddhism encountered a severe setback, if not a total failure, because of his readers’ and comrades’ negative feedback.

In the first place, the readers’ negative feedback was exposed by Zhang’s self-defense in two of his essays. In the last part of “On the Non-Self of Human beings,” published in January 1907, Zhang mentioned that “I recently published ‘On Establishing Religion.’ Certain Mainland comrades feel that Buddhist texts and Sanskrit terminology are obscure and difficult to understand, hence unsuitable for ordinary people.” 余前作《建立宗教論》，內地同志或謂佛書梵語，暗昧難解，不甚適於眾生。³⁹⁷ At the outset of “Letter in Reply to Tiezheng,” published in June 1907, Zhang addressed a similar criticism that described Buddhist teachings as unfamiliar to the Chinese and impractical. In the latter part of this essay, moreover, he responded to the objection of Chinese Christian communities following the publication of his “On Atheism” in November 1906.³⁹⁸

The debate continued in 1908 highlighted by the polemic between Zhang and Meng’an 夢庵, which is the penname of Takeda Hanshi 武田範之 (1863-1911). A rōnin (浪人, Wanderer) and passionate reader of Buddhist texts, Takeda had a close relationship with Chinese revolutionaries in Japan. In the essay published in No. 2 of *Eastern Asia Monthly Magazine* (*Dongya yuebao* 東亞月報)³⁹⁹ in June 1908, he criticized Zhang’s

³⁹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 452.

³⁹⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 386, 392-393.

³⁹⁹ *Eastern Asia Monthly Magazine* is a magazine in Chinese. Its editor, Gondo Seikyo 權藤成卿 (1868-1937), was a close friend of Takeda. Zhang had a conversation in writing with the two in January 1907, the record of which is collected in the new edition of *The Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan* (2017b, pp. 268-272). This record is composed of seven sections touching on topics such as revolution, literature and art, their Chinese and Japanese contemporaries, and a little bit of Buddhism.

editorship claiming that “*The People’s Journal* should deliver the people’s voice instead of the Buddhist voice.” 《民報》宜作民聲，不宜作佛聲。⁴⁰⁰ Zhang fought back with his “Letter in Reply to Meng’an,” published in No. 21 of *The People’s Journal* on June 10, 1908.⁴⁰¹ Takeda extended his objections in No. 4 of *Eastern Asia Monthly Magazine*. Zhang, however, abruptly ended this polemic by adding a one-sentence response in No. 23 of *The People’s Journal* on August 10, 1908, “Is it worth discussing with people like you concerning the governance?” 公等足與治乎？⁴⁰²

Takeda’s letter reveals a critical problem, i.e., the potential conflict between Zhang’s practical Buddhism and the six principles of *The People’s Journal*, put forward by Hu Hanmin 胡漢民 (1879-1936), the former chief editor. As development of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義), the six principles are (1) overthrowing the current odious [Qing] government; (2) building a republican regime; (3) maintaining the true peace of the world; (4) land nationalization; (5) uniting the people of China and Japan; (6) asking the countries of the world to approve of the political renovation of China.⁴⁰³ Takeda pointed out in his first letter that the Buddhist message Zhang delivered was incompatible with principles such as maintaining the world’s peace and nationalizing the land. Compared to the criticism of the general readers, the dissatisfaction from within the high level of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance was a much larger threat to his position and reputation.

The dissatisfaction from Sun Yat-sen and his partisans toward Zhang’s political ideas and stance must have reached a considerable degree, for once an opportunity came, they took actions to take the editorship away from him. On October 19, 1908, the Japanese government banned *The People’s Journal* following the request of the Qing government. Shortly after, Wang Jingwei 汪精衛 (1883-1944), on behalf of Sun Yat-sen, edited No. 25 and 26 of *The People’s Journal*, which were secretly published in Japan while pretending to have transferred the place of issue to Paris. The *New Age Journal* (*Xinshiji* 新世紀), an anarchist newspaper based in Paris, published an announcement in its N. 114 issue promoting this new version of *The People’s Journal*. It then satirized the former chief

⁴⁰⁰ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 664.

⁴⁰¹ See Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 320-326.

⁴⁰² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 326.

⁴⁰³ Hsiao K. C., 2011, p. 828.

editor, i.e. Zhang, for his advocacy of National Essence and “back-to-the-ancients” (*fugu* 復古). Zhang became very angry at the news, publicly accusing the newest issues as “a fake *People’s Journal*” (*weiminbao* 偽民報) and attacking Sun Yat-sen for having reacted negatively toward the request for financial aid to sustain *The People’s Journal*.⁴⁰⁴

A year later, in November 1909, the group around Sun Yat-sen fought back harshly. An essay, entitled “In Reply to the Readers’ Letters concerning Zhang Binglin’s Betrayal of the Party” (*Wei Zhang Binglin pandangshi dafu touhu zhujun* 為章炳麟叛黨事答復投書諸君), was published in the *China Daily* (*Zhongguo ribao* 中國日報) in Hong Kong and reprinted in the *Zhongxing Journal* 中興報 in Singapore. This essay raised five accusations against Zhang:

- (1) Since Zhang’s collaboration with Liang Qichao to run the *Shiwu Journal*, his relationship with the royalist party has never broken off. [During the polemic between *The People’s Journal* and *Xinmin Congbao*,] Zhang did not contribute any essay due to his deep friendship with Liang Qichao.
- (2) Zhang Binglin occupied a large part of *The People’s Journal* with his sophomoric and tedious Buddhist writings as if *The People’s Journal* is the official newspaper of his private Buddhist learning.
- (3) Zhang Binglin published “On Atheism,” rejecting Jesus’ teaching. As a result, many internal and external comrades suspected *The People’s Journal* to be an official newspaper rejecting Christianity. There is nothing worse than this in shaking and perplexing the public feeling.
- (4) Due to personal grudge, Zhang Binglin made use of *The People’s Journal* as an aggressive weapon to fight with the *New Age Journal* (*Xinshiji*). ... thus harming the comrades’ feelings and making them the laughing stock of outsiders.
- (5) The Japanese government never intervened in *The People’s Journal* following its publication. It is due to Zhang Binglin’s advocacy about restoring [sovereignty to] Taiwan and Korea as well as that about assassination that the Japanese [government] had bad feelings and issued an injunction forbidding its distribution.

一、章與梁啟超同辦《時務報》以來，與保皇黨之關係未嘗斷絕。[《民報》

⁴⁰⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 164-167, 175-176.

與《新民叢報》筆戰之時，] 章以與梁啟超交厚故，未有一文之助力。

二、章炳麟以其一知半解、乾燥無味之佛學論，佔據《民報》全冊之大部，一若以《民報》為其私有佛學之機關報者。

三、章炳麟創為《無神論》，以排斥耶穌之道，以致內外同志多疑《民報》為排斥耶穌之機關報，搖惑人心，莫此為甚。

四、章炳麟以個人私怨，竟藉《民報》為攻城之具，日向《新世紀》宣戰……傷害同志之感情，徒貽外人之笑柄。

五、《民報》出版以來，日政府絕不干涉，乃章炳麟倡言恢復台灣、朝鮮之義，又鼓吹暗殺，以挑動日人之惡感情，遂故有停止發行之命令。⁴⁰⁵

These accusations, though unilateral and emotional, sufficiently expose the hostility toward Zhang from certain revolutionary factions. Points 1, 3, 4, and 5 have been or will be referred to elsewhere. As to the second point concerning Zhang's Buddhist writings, on the one hand, it is far from the truth to attack them as "sophomoric;" on the other, it probably was many readers' impression that they were "tedious" and occupied an excessive proportion of the journal. This essay in *China Daily* was published at the end of 1909. Nonetheless, there is evidence that, in the course of 1907, Zhang had gradually become aware of these objections. Although continuing to publish his Buddhist writings in *The People's Journal*, Zhang no longer tried to articulate his political and Buddhist ideas with the Three Principles of the People and its followers. The long essay, "On the Five Negations," published on September 25, 1907, marked his turn from establishing a practical Buddhism to exploring a political dystopia underpinned by his Buddhist thought.

Why did Zhang's political and religious ideas encounter such a major setback within the revolutionary league? I would like to offer some suggestions here.

First of all, though engaging in the revolutionary movement, Zhang's adherence to the literati group did not change. By cutting off his braid and revising the original edition of the *Book of Urgency*, Zhang became one of the few Confucian intellectuals who early on decisively broke with the regime and endorsed Sun Yat-sen's revolution. Nonetheless, by establishing reformed Buddhism as the new Religion, he still treated peer literati as his main interlocutors, like Kang Youwei, Tan Sitong, Liang Qichao, or Yang Wenhui, instead

⁴⁰⁵ Jiang Yihua, 2011, p. 109

of his revolutionary comrades. Despite his attacks on the Confucian community's attachment to the monarchy and the officialdom, it proved much harder for him to shift to a new personal identity, new social networks, and a new intellectual repertoire. This was the principal cause of the controversy. As for instance concerning social networks, the 1909 essay in the *China Daily* accused Zhang of his fence-sitting stance between his comrades and Liang Qichao. Zhang, in contrast, regarded Hu Hanmin and Wang Jingwei's criticism against Liang as "similar to hurling abuse" 辭近詬諱 and tried to hold a more neutral viewpoint.⁴⁰⁶ As a case revealing Zhang's personal identity and discontent with the revolutionary leaders, we have his letter to Liu Shipei in 1909 (or later): "Those unconstrained figures rising from the common people have never been educated. They are self-conceited and boastful, insulting and neglecting men of deep insight." 脣澤諸豪，素昧問學，誇大自高，陵儂達士。⁴⁰⁷ The Chinese Revolutionary Alliance assembled people from diverse social backgrounds. Even though morally discredited for the betrayal of his comrades (to be presented below), Liu Shipei continued to gain Zhang's understanding and support, largely because of the similarity of their family and scholarly background.

Closely related to Zhang's adherence to the literati class is another issue, i.e. his intellectual elitism, which was manifested in various documents. For example, on November 25, 1908, Zhang appeared in court for the prohibition of *The People's Journal*. According to the record of Zhang's reply to the Japanese chief judge, he qualified this journal as "reserved for the Chinese scholars" 我是給學者看的, considering his writings to be "the most prominent in China, which are accessible only for the scholars, not the other people [Chinese commoners or Japanese]." 我的文章海內第一，只有學者可以懂的，別的人就不能懂。⁴⁰⁸ Moreover, we have the record of a conversation between Zhang and Qi'an Daoren.⁴⁰⁹ Qi'an Daoren praised the former's "On Establishing Religion" but

⁴⁰⁶ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 121.

⁴⁰⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 140. According to the *Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan*, this letter was written in 1907. However, Zhang mentioned in it the death of Wang Gongquan 汪公權 (unknown-1909). Wang was the younger cousin of Liu's wife, He Zhen 何震 (1886-unknown). Wang and He committed adultery and were, according to several accounts of involved persons, partly responsible for the break of friendship between Liu and Zhang Taiyan as well as for Liu's betrayal of revolution in 1908. Wang was assassinated in April 1909, so this letter should be dated in mid-1909 or later. Chen Qi, 2007, pp. 253-274.

⁴⁰⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 674.

⁴⁰⁹ The same as a reference to Qi'an Daoren in Chapter 2, the conversation quoted here comes from the record published in No. 566 of *Japan and Japanese (Riben yu ribenren* 日本與日本人) on September 15, 1911.

then pointed out the inaccessibility of Yogācāra doctrines for the ordinary Chinese. Zhang replied that “those ignorant common people have possessed nothing [of knowledge], they can accept whatever is given to them. … Now I want to talk about the Religion capable of impressing the men of deep insight, the doctrine capable of convincing the wise men.” 彼等愚民本來一無所有，對給與他們的任何事物都是能接受的……現在我想談的是能使有識之士折服的宗教，是能說服智者的宗旨。⁴¹⁰ It is clear that Zhang’s discourse about establishing Religion lies in gaining the recognition of the intellectual elites despite his awareness of the critical role that popular religion plays in terms of social mobilization and solidarity. He embraced populism in politics but elitism in scholarship. This scholarly elitism discords with the general tendency of his revolutionary comrades.

There are two further reasons relative to Zhang’s character traits. The first concerns his talent for theoretical thinking which sometimes was divorced from practice. As was pointed out by Tao Chengzhang 陶成章 (1878-1912), one of the main organizers of the Restoration Society, “Mr. Zhang Taiyan is a talented person. However, he is only capable of giving counsel rather than implementing them in practice. He has a long-term vision and far-reaching aspirations” 章君太炎，其人並非無才之人，不過僅能畫策，不能實行，其立心久遠，志願遠大。⁴¹¹ The second concerns Zhang’s moral integrity and sensitivity which obliged him to always make independent judgments and even serve as an eternal dissenter. This is the case for his career as a reformist within the circles of the New learning scholars and as a revolutionary working with Sun Yat-sen’s faction which promoted a political agenda of Westernization. Consequently, despite the high praise and respect for him, Zhang endured solitude and sighed that he “sings alone with little accompaniment and feels sorrow from within.” 獨唱寡和，悲從中來。⁴¹²

To conclude, as an ideological reinvention aiming at attracting a following, Zhang Taiyan’s practical Buddhism turned out to be a failure in comparison to Kang Youwei’s Confucian religion. The latter was appealing to many literati candidates, the former, in contrast, was not able to impress and convince his revolutionary comrades and the younger students in Tokyo, because both groups were more Westernized and secularized than

⁴¹⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 365.

⁴¹¹ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 701

⁴¹² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 386.

Confucian intellectuals. His comrades appreciated his anti-Manchu propaganda whereas his disciples were more interested in studying National Essence rather than Religion.⁴¹³ Following this setback, Zhang's Buddhist thought rapidly disconnected from current struggles, shifting to conceive a far-reaching and dystopian political philosophy. As a result, he redefined Buddhism several years later as proximate to philosophy instead of religion.⁴¹⁴ This change of categorization will be investigated in the Conclusion of my dissertation.

The controversy around Zhang's editorship of *The People's Journal* is merely an aspect of the ideological and power struggles within the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance from 1907 to 1909. To begin with, let me provide a brief presentation of the formation of this revolutionary society. Founded on August 20, 1905, the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance united many anti-Manchu groups, three of which were of greater importance, i.e., the Revive China Society (Xingzhong hui 興中會), the Restoration Society, and the Chinese Revival Society (Huaxing hui 華興會). The Revive China Society, under Sun Yat-sen's leadership, assembled the revolutionaries from the Cantonese region and overseas Chinese communities. The Restoration Society, briefly introduced in Chapter 2, principally took action in the Jiangnan area. The Chinese Revival Society, whose main representatives were Huang Xing 黃興 (1874-1916) and Song Jiaoren, was most influential in the provinces of the middle Yangtze River. The regional difference, along with those of class, family, and education, largely caused the internal conflicts from 1907 to 1909 which finally led to the split of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance and the re-establishment of the Restoration Society in February 1910.⁴¹⁵ The main confrontation took place between Sun Yat-sen's party and the former members of the Restoration Society like Zhang Taiyan, Tao Chengzhang, Liu Shipei, and Zhang Ji 張繼 (1882-1947). As to the members of the Chinese Revival Society, their attitudes became divided. While Huang Xing endeavored to reconcile internal conflicts and maintain Sun's leadership,⁴¹⁶ Song Jiaoren temporarily joined the anti-Sun campaign.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹³ For instance, we have Zhou Zuoren's 周作人 (1885-1967) recollection (2013, pp. 277-278) of his student experience learning from Zhang in the press of *The People's Journal*.

⁴¹⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 102.

⁴¹⁵ See Yang Tianshi & Wang Xuezhuang, 1979, pp. 176-214.

⁴¹⁶ Yang Tianshi & Wang Xuezhuang, 1979, pp. 177, 183

⁴¹⁷ Song Jiaoren, p. 328; Yang Tianshi & Wang Xuezhuang, 1979, p. 177.

What concerns most directly the subject of this chapter is the first internal conflict in mid-1907 around two issues, (1) whether it is appropriate for Sun Yat-sen to accept the money given by the Japanese government, (2) the choice between purchasing many low-quality weapons (Sun Yat-sen's proposal) and purchasing fewer but higher-quality weapons (Zhang's proposal).⁴¹⁸ Later on, the confrontation between the two sides sharpened due to the divergence in other issues: (3) Sun's party was preparing to launch uprisings in the border regions of southern China during 1907-1908; Tao and Zhang, in contrast, recommended the Yangtze river basin as the prior target.⁴¹⁹ (4) The leaders of the Restoration Society disapproved of letting newly recruited members engaging at the front line. Instead, they focused on individual revolutionary activities,⁴²⁰ shown by Xu Xiling's 徐錫麟 (1873-1907) assassination of Enming 恩銘 (1846-1907), the Manchu governor of Anhui 安徽 Province on May 26, 1907. (5) In September 1908, Tao Chengzhang traveled around the Chinese diasporas of Southeast Asia to raise funds. Tao's effort was frustrated by Sun now that they became competitors for this critical financial source.⁴²¹

Disappointed with the setback of his practical Buddhism, the ceaseless power struggles, a series of failed uprisings, and the moral corruption of certain revolutionaries,⁴²² Zhang began to keep a distance from Sun Yat-sen and his political line from the second half of 1907. In a telegram, entitled “Telegraph Letter to the Zhejiang Branch of the Unity Party” (*Yu Zhejiang Tongyidang zhibu dian* 與浙江統一黨支部電), on June 6, 1912, Zhang recalled his situation of this period: “Later witnessing the increasing corruption of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, I was indignant and wished to be a monk and to learn Sanskrit in India. I also co-founded the Asian Solidarity Society (Yazhou heqin hui) along with the Vietnamese and Korean students [in Japan]. Hearing of the Indian revolutionaries who had outstanding talent and firm aspiration, I planned to carry food with me and follow

⁴¹⁸ Yang Tianshi & Wang Xuezhuang, 1979, pp. 177-181.

⁴¹⁹ Jiang Yihua, 2011, p. 111.

⁴²⁰ Tang Wenquan, 1981b, p. 62.

⁴²¹ Jiang Yihua, 2011, p. 111 ; Tang Wenquan, 1981b, p. 61.

⁴²² As pointed out by Zhu Weizheng (2008, pp. 100-101), Zhang's essay, “On Revolutionary Morality” (*Geming zhi daode* 革命之道德), is mainly aimed at the moral defect of Sun Yat-sen and his partisans. This essay, published in No. 8 of *The People's Journal* (Minbao 民報) on October 8, 1906, is one of the most important writings during his editorship. It is renamed as “Geming daode shuo” 革命道德說 in the *Taiyan wenlu chubian* 太炎文錄初編 (*Selected Works of Taiyan, book. 1*), published for the first time in 1915.

them, which allowed me to observe their activities.” 後見同盟會漸趨腐敗，憤欲為僧，以求梵文於印度。又與安南、朝鮮諸學生立亞洲和親會，聞印度革命黨才高志堅，欲裹糧以從之，得所觀法。⁴²³ Zhang had the plan to be a monk in India around the end of 1907 and the beginning of 1908, but this wish had certainly emerged months earlier. I will turn to this topic in Chapter 4. What we need to know here is that, by planning to go to India, cofounding the Asian Solidarity Society,⁴²⁴ and the effort to establish new revolutionary networks separate from Sun Yat-sen’s, Zhang started off seeking both political and ideological alternatives. His engagement in the anarchist movement should be apprehended in this context. Though short and full of bitter conflicts, this episode offers a valuable window into that fast-transforming stage of modern China. Still more important, we cannot fully understand Zhang’s “On the Five Negations” without knowing his views on anarchism.

The emergence of anarchism in modern Chinese history coincided with Zhang Taiyan’s third stay in Japan. In mid-1907, Chinese intellectuals abroad organized two groups, within months of each, devoted to the propagation of anarchism.⁴²⁵ One in Tokyo, cofounded by Liu Shipei and his wife He Zhen 何震 (1886-unknown), who distributed the first issue of the *Tianyi Journal* 天義報 (Natural Justice Journal) on June 10, 1907, which is the first Chinese anarchist newspaper. The other in Paris, marked by the initiation of the *New Age Journal* shortly after on June 22, 1907, whose chief editors were Wu Zihui 吳稚暉 (1865-1953), Li Shizeng 李石曾 (1881-1973), and Zhang Jingjiang 張靜江 (1876-1950). Wu Zihui, as the central figure of this group, had worked together with Zhang Taiyan in the Chinese Society of Education. He fled to Paris escaping from the police during the Subao Case. All three became influential senior members of the Chinese Nationalist Party in the 1920s-1930s. Corresponding to the establishment of these two newspapers, they inaugurated anarchist societies to attract revolutionaries and young students abroad to join in. In Tokyo, we see the Society for Restoring the Women’s Right

⁴²³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 597.

⁴²⁴ For a comprehensive understanding of this issue, see Lin Shaoyang’s study (2018, pp. 177-224).

Underpinning Zhang’s promotion of an Asian Alliance is what he called the “doctrine of supporting the weak” (*furuo zhuyi* 扶弱主義). He frequently criticized Japan for abandoning its Asian brotherhood and turning to the imperialist and colonist route. The fifth accusation in the essay of the *China Daily* was directed at this aspect of Zhang’s thought.

⁴²⁵ Arif Dirlik, 1991, p. 47.

(Nüzi fuquan hui 女子復權會) and the Society for the Study of Socialism (Shehui zhuyi jiangxihui 社會主義講習會);⁴²⁶ in Paris, it is the Universal Society (Shijie she 世界社).⁴²⁷

Between these two centers of the early Chinese anarchist movement, Zhang was much more involved in the group of Tokyo whereas his debates with that of Paris were also relevant to this research. These two anarchist groups shared some common ground. First of all, they both advocated internationalism, thus denouncing all the boundaries imposed by political and social institutions, especially by the government. Then, they both enthusiastically introduced the theories of Russian anarchist thinkers like M. A. Bakunin (1814-1876) and P. A. Kropotkin (1842-1921). Besides, they both promoted Esperanto as the common language for the new age.⁴²⁸ Nonetheless, significant differences existed between the two, primarily caused by the difference in geographical locations. The Tokyo anarchists received Western anarchism by the intermediation of their Japanese comrades, just like the cases of other scholarly and ideological trends of that age. Also, their views towards practical issues were largely shaped by Kōtoku Denjirō 幸徳傳次郎 (1871-1911), better known by the pen name Kōtoku Shūsui 幸徳秋水.

Another question that distinguished the two early anarchist groups was their attitude towards Chinese culture and history. Generally speaking, the anarchists in Paris was much more Westernized, advocating evolutionism as a universal principle, based on which they promoted radical social reforms against the native institutions and customs, whereas those in Tokyo were much more affirmative toward the Chinese cultural heritage⁴²⁹ and more suspicious towards the progressivist worldview. More specifically, the anarchists in Paris approved of the dichotomy between culture and savagery. They rejected the religious, community, and family traditions of ancient China. Moreover, they attempted to abolish

⁴²⁶ Presumably, the initiation of the “Society for Restoring the Women’s Right” reflected the considerable influence that He Zhen exerted on her Husband. Besides being an anarchist, He Zhen is also one of the earliest advocates of feminism in modern China. As to the “Society for the Study of Socialism,” this name reveals its link with the “Society for the Study of Socialism on Friday” (Shehuizhuyi jinyao jiangyanhui 社會主義金曜講演會), organized by Kotoku Shusui. Though entitled after socialism, the two societies mainly diffused anarchist ideas. Chen Qi, 2007, p. 198.

⁴²⁷ Lin Shaoyang, 2018, pp. 228-229

⁴²⁸ Esperanto is the most widely spoken constructed international language, created by Polish ophthalmologist L. L. Zamenhof (1859-1917) in 1887. The original intent of Zamenhof was to create a universal second language to foster world peace and international understanding and to build a community of speakers. Anarchists had been very supportive in promoting the Esperanto movement in East Asia and elsewhere at the beginning of the 20th century. For more information, see Gotelind Müller-Saini & Gregor Benton, 2006.

⁴²⁹ See above all the first chapter of Peter Zarrow’s monograph (pp. 1-30).

the Chinese writing system, replacing it with the phonetic alphabet of Esperanto. Those in Tokyo, however, resorted to the Chinese classic scholarship to reinterpret anarchism, especially Laozi's ideas of "governing through 'non-action'" (*wuwei erzhi* 無為而治) and "small states with a small population" (*xiaoguo guomin* 小國寡民). Also, they stressed equalitarianism, a moral principle recognized especially by lower classes throughout Chinese history, considering it as a value prior to that of freedom. Furthermore, they tended to consider Esperanto and Chinese as compatible.⁴³⁰

It is no coincidence that the Chinese anarchist society of Tokyo was founded during the first round of the power struggle within the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, since anarchism provides, to the former members of the Restoration Party, an alternative to Sun's Three Principles of the People. Liu Shipei himself had adhered to the Restoration Party before. Several core members of the Party, including Zhang Taiyan, Tao Chengzhang, and Zhang Ji, frequented the seminars organized by the Society for the Study of Socialism.⁴³¹

Undoubtedly, Liu Shipei played a crucial role in introducing Zhang to the anarchist circle. The two persons met each other at the Patriotic Society of Education in Shanghai in 1903. But it is not until Zhang's exile stay in Japan from 1906 that they deeply communicated on scholarship and current affairs. Liu was 15 years younger than Zhang. Unlike his peers who attended Zhang's seminars during this period, Liu was capable of serving as an equal interlocutor rather than a mere student of Zhang. Zhang highly valued Liu's level of thought and cherished their friendship, as exposed in his letter to Liu mentioned above: "[I] have since always held the same scholarly ideas as yours, which occurs only once in a thousand years." 與君學術素同，蓋乃千載一遇。⁴³² Indeed, Zhang and Liu reached agreement on various subjects including affiliation to the Old-Text school, advocacy of National Essence, interest and preliminary practices to write a general history

⁴³⁰ Lin Shaoyang, 2018, pp. 230-232, 236-237, 240, 243. For a more advanced knowledge of Liu Shipei's thought, see, Chang Hao, 1988, pp. 200-262; Wang Fansen, 2001, pp. 197-219.

Or better, Liu Shipei, 2015, especially the essays below: (1) "On the Anarchist Thought of Equality" (*Wuzhengfu zhuyi zhi pingdengguan* 無政府主義之平等觀); (2) "On the Special Feasibility of Communism in China" (*Lun gongchanzhi yixingyu zhongguo* 論共產制易行於中國); (3) "On the Benefit of Chinese Language to the World" (*Lun zhonggu wenzi youyi shijie* 論中土文字有益於世界); (4) "Advice the Chinese to Learn Esperanto Immediately" (*Quangao zhongguo renshi yisuxi shijie xinyu* 勸告中國人士宜速習世界新語).

⁴³¹ Zhang and others' presence and lectures in the seminars were recorded in the diaries of Qian Xuantong and Zhu Xizu 朱希祖 (1879-1944), both were Zhang's disciples and have attended the seminars. See, e.g., Zhu Lechuan & Zhu Yuanxu, 2013, p. 21-22; Qian Xuantong, 2014, pp. 111-112.

⁴³² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 140.

of China,⁴³³ engagement in ethnic revolution, the tendency of “back-to-the-ancients,” approving Sino-babylonianism, and criticizing the parliamentary system.⁴³⁴ For most of these subjects, it is Zhang who exerted a larger influence on Liu than the opposite. But on the other hand, Liu’s thinking is more flexible and more susceptible to new intellectual trends. Now that Liu became an enthusiastic advocate of anarchism, Zhang had to cope with the challenge (and the charm) of this fast-rising ideology. A year before, he had tried to establish a version of practical Buddhism in line with ethnic revolution, National Essence, and the Republic. Now his focus shifted to conceiving a future society without societal structures, a future human existence without humanity, essentially based on his Buddhist thought.

Ever since the Society for the Study of Socialism was established, Zhang frequented its seminars. In the beginning, the seminars took place once a week, later reduced to once every two weeks. The participants include both Chinese and Japanese anarchists and also Chinese students in Japan, the number of which varied from several dozens to around a hundred for one session.⁴³⁵ The Society changed its name from the Society for the Study of Socialism to the Society of the Common People (Qimin she 齊民社) in October 1907. Meanwhile, its official newspaper, the *Tianyi Journal*, was distributed under a new name *Heng Journal 衡報* on April 28 the next year, both due to the persecution of the Manchu and Japanese governments.⁴³⁶ The Japanese held a much tougher attitude toward the Chinese anarchist group compared to the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance because the former had frequent interaction with their Japanese comrades.⁴³⁷

The influence that Zhang received from his engagement in the anarchist activities is

⁴³³ Liu produced a series of textbooks on Chinese history in the 1900s, which can be regarded as a popularized version of Zhang’s idea about the general history of China.

⁴³⁴ Some further references on Liu’s side. In the corpus of Liu Shipei (2015): (1) on the Old-Text school (and rejection of Kang Youwei’s scholarship), see “On the Irrelevance between Confucian Religion and Politics” (*Lun Kongjiao yu zhongguo zhengzhi wushe* 論孔教與中國政治無涉); (2) on the critique of parliamentary system, see “Parliamentary Abuse” (*Yihui zhi bi* 議會之弊). Referred to in secondary literature: (1) on “back-to-the-ancients,” see “Elucidating the Abstruse Ideas of Bao Jingyan 鮑敬言” (*Baosheng xueshu fawei* 鮑生學術發微), in Chang Hao, 1988, p. 236. (2) on Sino-babylonianism, see Liu’s textbooks of early Chinese history, in Hon Tze-ki, 2015, pp. 43–45, 65.

⁴³⁵ Wang Fansen, 2001, p. 207.

⁴³⁶ Chen Qi, 2007, pp. 211, 250.

⁴³⁷ On January 17, 1908, the Japanese government arrested some hard-liners in the Japanese Socialist Party, several of which frequented Liu Shipei’s seminars. Also due to this arrest, Zhang Ji was forced to flee from Japan for Paris. The repression of the Japanese government reached its peak in 1911. Kotoku Shusui, along with 11 comrades, were executed for treason. Lin Shaoyang, p. 258.

manifested by his writings in this period. For example, he wrote prefaces for two Western anarchist works, i.e., “Preface to *Treatise on the General Strike Alliance*” (*Zongtongmeng bagong xu* 《總同盟罷工》序) and “Preface to *Anarchism*” (*Wuzhengfu zhuyi xu* 《無政府主義》序). The second was written in January 1908 and published in No. 20 of *The People's Journal* on April 25, 1908. The first had probably been written at the same period. Both works had been translated by Zhang Ji. According to Zhang Taiyan's prefaces, Zhang Ji translated the *Treatise on the General Strike Alliance* from its Japanese edition, the translator of which was Kotoku Shusui. The *Anarchism*, written by the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta (1853-1932),⁴³⁸ was translated from the Japanese version as well.⁴³⁹ The influence of anarchism on Zhang's major writings, to be introduced later, is also evident and demonstrated by the first passage of “On the State” (*Guojia lun* 國家論). This essay was published in No. 17 of *The People's Journal* on October 25, 1907:

I used to put forward the idea of non-state in the seminars of the Society for the Study of Socialism. It is not just to anarchists that I addressed this idea. Rather, I wish that those favorable to the government also found this idea persuasive. However, most people are narrow-minded and consider my idea as excessive. So I would like to transcribe my previous idea below, followed by the new one [addressing those favorable to the government], hoping that the learners can achieve the middle-path vision.

余向者於社會主義講習會中，有遞撥國家之論。非徒為期望無政府者說，雖期望有政府者亦不得不從斯義。然世人多守一隅，以余語為非撥過甚。故次錄前論，附以後義，令學者得中道觀云。⁴⁴⁰

This passage clearly presents the writing context of this text. Its first half was transcribed from the lecture draft prepared for the seminars of the Society for the Study of Socialism. Its second half addresses political activists other than anarchists, which can be viewed as an extension of his anarchist thought.

Furthermore, Zhang also brought his ideas expressed in earlier writings into conversation with these anarchists, which contributes to reorienting these ideas. A passage

⁴³⁸ Referred to by the Chinese translation of “Maladieshida” 馬刺跌士達. Unfortunately, I have not yet found the original name of the author of the *Treatise on the General Strike Alliance*, referred to by the Chinese translation of “Luolie” 羅列. Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 402-404.

⁴³⁹ Peter Zarrow, 1990, p. 47.

⁴⁴⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 484.

in Zhu Xizu's 朱希祖 (1879-1944) diary offers us a hint on this issue.⁴⁴¹ This passage records the lecture Zhang gave during a seminar of the anarchist group on March 22, 1908:

In the afternoon, I went to the Qingfeng Pavilion [Refreshing Breeze Pavilion],⁴⁴² together with Mr. Qu, to attend Miyazaki Tamizo's⁴⁴³ lecture on socialist and anarchist schools. Liu Shenshu [Liu Shipei] lectured on the religious origin of law. [Zhang] Taiyan lectured on evil at the root of human nature. [This evil] resulted from the "will to win," or mutual exclusion, namely that two things cannot occupy the same position. Hence, [Zhang] asserted that evil increased as the men became more civilized and it diminished as the men were more barbarian. The Mongols have been keeping a nomadic life for thousands of years till now. Nonetheless, they are still no match for the Taiwanese barbarians. [The latter are less evil and have more freedom.] Nonetheless, the barbarians still have sexual desire and the propensity to violence in their human nature. It is only because the primitive humans were hunters of fish and animals, killing them by throwing stones, that they lived a more independent life. Though enjoying more freedom, [the life of these primitive humans] are not as good as that of apes. I propose that we follow the example of apes.

下午，偕屈君至清風亭聆宮崎明藏講社會主義及無政府主義派別。劉申叔講法律出於宗教說。太炎講人之根性惡，以其具好勝心，二物不能同在一處，即排斥性也，而斷定愈文明人之愈惡，愈野愈蠻其惡愈減。蒙古遊牧，數千年歷史至今不變，然猶不若臺灣之生番。然生番猶具淫殺性，惟其為原人之漁獵，以石投獸，生涯獨立，此其稍自由耳。然終不若猿之為善。吾輩擬猿可也。⁴⁴⁴

In this lecture, Zhang talked about the accumulating evil in human morality along with the civilizing process as well as the "will to win" which exists at the root of human nature. These two ideas were first put forward in "On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution" and later elucidated extensively and in-depth in "On the Five Negations." We

⁴⁴¹ Qian Xuantong also recorded this seminar in his diary (2014, p. 123), but Zhang's lecture was mentioned more briefly.

⁴⁴² Qingfeng Pavilion was one of the regular meeting places of the Society for the Study of Socialism (and the Society of the Common People). Inferred based on two entries in Chen Qi, 2007, pp. 216, 223.

⁴⁴³ Miyazaki Tamizo 宮崎民藏 (1865-1928), along with his brother, Miyazaki Toten 宮崎滔天 (1871-1922), were Japanese social activists who deeply engaged in the Chinese revolution. Miyazaki Toten is particularly known for his friendship with Sun Yat-sen. Zhu made a mistake in writing Miyazaki Tamizo's *kanji* name as 宮崎明藏.

⁴⁴⁴ Zhu Lechuan & Zhu Yuanxu, 2013, p. 21-22.

will see by the textual study below that the novelty of “On the Five Negations” principally comes from Zhang’s conversation with anarchists. Though Zhang’s lecture quoted above was given later than the writing of “On the Five Negations,” surely similar conversations had taken place before that.

To get a complete picture of Zhang’s interaction with Chinese anarchists, it is necessary to present his polemic with those in Paris, especially Wu Zihui. In contrast to Zhang’s deep friendship with Liu Shipei, his relationship with Wu was very poor ever since their meeting in the Chinese Society of Education. After the Subao Case, Zhang firmly believed that Wu Zihui had given secret information against Zou Rong and him to Yu Mingzhen 俞明震 (1860-1918), the Qing official in charge of this affair, several days before they were arrested, as he inferred from several pieces of indirect evidence.⁴⁴⁵ After being released in 1906, Zhang provoked the dispute by accusing Wu Zihui to be the black sheep within the revolutionary league. Irritated by Wu’s letter of self-defense, Zhang wrote three letters striking back in 1908. The first of them, published in No. 19 of *The People’s Journal* on February 25, 1908, depicts Wu as an opportunist without morality using pejorative words: “Following Kang Changsu [Kang Youwei] advocating reformism without success, [Wu Zihui] shifted to advocate revolution. Following Cai Jiemin [Cai Yuanpei] advocating revolution without success, he shifted again to advocate anarchism. Though oriented toward the higher objectives, your spirit has been contaminated to the extent that even strong acid cannot clean it.” 從康長素講變法不成，進而講革命；從蔡子民講革命不成，進而講無政府。所向雖益高，而足下之精神點汙，雖強水不可浣滌。⁴⁴⁶ Zhang’s scathing attacks on Wu Zihui upset many of his comrades and were referred to as evidence for Zhang’s betrayal of revolution in the essay of the *China Daily*.

However, Zhang’s criticism of Wu Zihui and the Chinese anarchists in Paris is far from merely “due to personal grudge” or moral-driven hatred but rather caused by their fundamental divergences of thought. There are two main points of divergence. The first

⁴⁴⁵ For Zhang’s accusation, see Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 146, 664-644; Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 308-310. For Wu Zihui’s self-defense, see Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 644-656; Wu Zihui, 2009, pp. 164-199.

As a party involved and a mutual friend of Zhang and Wu, Cai Yuanpei had long been concerned with the reality of this affair. He undertook textual researches in his later years based on the archives of Duan Fang’s 端方 (1861-1911) secret messages. Cai concluded that Zhang’s accusation against Wu was groundless. Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 657-659.

⁴⁴⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 309.

lies in the alternative between the Chinese writing system and Esperanto. Zhang launched comprehensive critiques of the Esperanto movement in the essay “Refuting the Proposal that China should adopt Esperanto” (*Bo zhongguo yong wanguoxinyu shuo* 駁中國用萬國新語說), published in No. 21 of *The People’s Journal* on June 10, 1908. To adapt the Chinese writing system to the threat of Esperanto (and the other alphabetic scripts), he develops in this essay a system of shorthand based mainly on the Seal script,⁴⁴⁷ which was later adopted as the basis of *zhuyin* 注音 (Mandarin Phonetic Symbols), the official Chinese transliteration system in the Republic of China.

The second concerns the legitimacy of ethnic revolution. The writers of the *New Age Journal* discredited ethnic revolution by identifying it with tribal revenge, hence inferior to the universal revolution promoted by worldwide anarchists.⁴⁴⁸ Zhang took these criticisms seriously and mainly responded by two essays, “On Whether Revenge Is Correct” (*Ding fuchou zhi shifei* 定復仇之是非),⁴⁴⁹ “Impartial Discussion of the Anti-Manchu Movement” (*Paiman pingyi* 排滿平議). Both were published in *The People’s Journal*, the first in its No. 16 on September 25, 1907, and the second in No. 21 on June 10, 1908. The *New Age Journal* writers wrote a critical review for each of Zhang’s essays,⁴⁵⁰ thus extending this polemic. As a final reply, Zhang wrote “Rectifying the *New Age Journal*” (*Gui xinshiji* 規《新世紀》), published in No. 24 of *The People’s Journal* on October 10, 1908.⁴⁵¹ Beyond these two points of divergence, anarchists like Wu Zihui also rejected the value of religion in an age of universal struggles, as manifested in his 1908 essay “Religious Morality and Socialism” (*Zongjiao daode yu shehuizhuyi* 宗教道德與社會主義).⁴⁵² Nonetheless, Wu’s criticism was not explicitly aimed at Zhang’s proposal and Zhang had no response to this issue.

⁴⁴⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 362-366.

⁴⁴⁸ See, e.g., “Anarchism Can Strengthen Revolutionaries’ Sense of Responsibility” (*Wuzhengfu zhuyi keyi jianjue gemingdang zhi zerexin* 無政府主義可以堅決革命黨之責任心). Wu Zihui, 2015, pp. 38-40.

⁴⁴⁹ It is renamed as *Fuchou shifei lun* 復仇是是非論 in *The Collected Works of Taiyan* (Vol. 1).

⁴⁵⁰ For the moment, I have only found the review of “Refuting the Proposal that China should adopt Esperanto” in Wu Zihui, 2015, pp. 33-37.

⁴⁵¹ Different from most of Zhang’s major writings during his editorship of *The People’s Journal*, this essay was not later included in *The Collected Works of Taiyan* (Vol. 1). It is lately arranged in supplement volume (2017b, pp. 321-339) by the editors of *The Complete Works of Taiyan*.

⁴⁵² According to Wu Zihui, socialism (anarchism) itself has contained moral principles such as non-self and philanthropism. Moreover, Wu divides “religion” (*zongjiao* 宗教) and “teaching” (*jiaohua* 教化). Taking the French Revolution as an example, he argues that the citizens’ morality will improve once we clean up the superstitious beliefs of religion mixed into previous moral teachings. Wu Zihui, 2015, pp. 20-22.

The polemic with Wu Zhihui and other writers of the *New Age Journal* damaged Zhang's relationship with the Chinese anarchist circle. In Tokyo, meanwhile, Zhang's friendship with Liu Shipei faced a severe crisis and broke up in April 1908. This issue is mingled with complex events like both persons' alienation from the revolutionary league and secret contacts with the Qing officials, and Liu's conjugal relationship. In brief,⁴⁵³ from the second half of 1907, Zhang became more and more intrigued by the prospect of going to India and becoming a monk there. Lacking money, he formed the plan to ask Zhang Zhidong to provide some financial aid in exchange for his breaking away from revolutionary engagement. As to Liu, his revolutionary spirit quickly diminished following the internal conflict of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance and the weakness of his moral consciousness exposed itself. From the end of 1907 to the beginning of 1908, his wife and he made several round trips between Japan and the Jiangnan area of China. Entrusted by Zhang to obtain financial aid for his Indian plans, this couple first attempted to establish contact with Zhang Zhidong but failed. They then turned to Duan Fang's 端方 (1861-1911), the Manchu governor-general of the two Yangtze provinces at that time. The negotiation did not work out. However, Liu and He themselves were bought over by Duan Fang and agreed to serve as spies monitoring the revolutionary activities in Tokyo. While the exact date of their betrayal is not clear, it is before their break-up with Zhang and during the period when he published anarchist essays. For the break-up between Zhang and Liu Shipei, it might have been caused by Zhang's intervention in Liu's personal life relative to the adultery between He Zhen and Wang Gongquan. Nonetheless, there exist only memoirs from indirect parties which can be unilateral and distorted.

This break-up has two major consequences. As an immediate consequence, Zhang no longer participated in the seminars of the Society for the Study of Socialism. He dropped out of the anarchist circle in Tokyo. Several of his essays after this break-up, e.g., "Impartial Discussion of the Anti-Manchu Movement," probably express his disappointment with the anarchist movement in general although these essays primarily fought against the writers of the *New Age Journal*. As a later consequence, He Zhen sent

⁴⁵³ For the following content of this paragraph, I primarily rely on Yang Tianshi's paper (2011, pp. 324-356) based on his textual research of Zhang's five letters to Liu Shipei and He Zhen. I also consult Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 597-598; Chen Qi, 2007, pp. 221-255; Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 152, 175-180.

Wu Zhihui Zhang's five letters to Liu Shipei and her about the negotiation for financial aid shortly after their break-up. Wu Zhihui, however, did not immediately publish these letters as the couple had wished.⁴⁵⁴ It is until during the internal conflict from October to December 1909 that Wu Zhihui decided to use these letters as a fatal tool against Zhang. At that time, Zhang was angrily attacking Sun Yat-sen's party for secretly seizing back the control of *The People's Journal* from him. Sun asked Wu for these letters and published them to undermine Zhang's reputation among the revolutionaries. Resulting from a series of conflicts during several years, the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance was finally torn apart, marked by two events in February 1910. First, Sun Yat-sen established the San Francisco branch of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, beginning to reorganize this alliance under the title of the Chinese Revolutionary Party (*Zhonghua geming dang* 中華革命黨). Second, the Restoration Party was restored in Tokyo, confirming Zhang Taiyan as its president and Tao Chengzhang as its vice-president.⁴⁵⁵

To summarize, Zhang's unpleasant experience engaging in the anarchist movement partly results in his negative tone toward anarchism in many of his major writings in 1908. But we should not neglect therefore the significant influence of anarchism on Zhang and the development of his Buddhist dystopia. The internal conflict not only severely damaged Zhang's reputation but also nourished his pessimism concerning morality and human evolution, which became the keynote of his thought from mid-1907 to the end of 1908.

* Key texts of Zhang Taiyan concerning Buddhism and anarchism *

Let me now provide a general introduction of the four major texts related to the theme of this chapter. The context is also presented when necessary.

Text 1, “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution.”⁴⁵⁶ Published in No. 7 of *The People's Journal* on September 5, 1906, this is Zhang's second publication in *The People's Journal*, just following “Speech for the Welcome Party of Overseas Students in Tokyo.” Its main idea had probably been matured during his imprisonment. At

⁴⁵⁴ Chen Qi, 2007, pp. 254-255.

⁴⁵⁵ Yang Tianshi & Wang Xuezhuang, 1977, pp. 202-207; Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 179-182.

⁴⁵⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 404-413.

the outset of the essay, Zhang introduces the genealogy of evolutionism, placing G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) as its herald. Subsequently, Charles R. Darwin (1809-1882) and H. Spencer adopted Hegel's theory on the evolution of the Reason in two respective domains, i.e., biological phenomena and sociological phenomena.⁴⁵⁷ Zhang's knowledge about the academic history of evolutionism is not adequate and reliable. Nonetheless, he precisely grasps its ideological influence in the late Qing China, which is the progressive view of history and the promise of a utopia of material abundance and moral perfection.⁴⁵⁸ Zhang then presents Schopenhauer's voluntarism as the opposition of Hegel's teleological progressivism, asserting that Schopenhauer had been influenced by Indian schools like Buddhism and Sāṃkhya (*sengqu* 僧佞性). Following the introduction of Western intellectual history, Zhang undertakes his critical reflection on evolutionism based on the concept *Jufen jinhua* 俱分進化 (universal and particular evolution), which means:

The evolutionary dynamic consists of the coevolution of two sides rather than one-sided evolution. The one-sided evolution only occurs in the intellectual domain. As to morality, the evil side co-evolves with the good side. As to livelihood, the side of suffering coevolves with the side of happiness. The two sides coevolve like the shadow following the body and the phantom pursuing the shadow. ... While affirming that evolution is a real process, we should not approve of the utility [that the advocates of evolutionary utopias promise].

進化之所以為進化者，非由一方直進，而必由雙方並進，專舉一方，惟言智識進化可爾。若以道德言，則善亦進化，惡亦進化；若以生計言，則樂亦進化，苦亦進化。雙方並進，如影之隨形，如罔兩之逐影……進化之實不可非，進化之用無所取。⁴⁵⁹

Afterward, Zhang devotes most of the pages to demonstrating the coevolution between good and evil, happiness and suffering resorting to cases in both the biological and social realms. For the social cases, he examines both those in Chinese history and those in foreign history. Other than the coevolution between good and evil, he also discusses the possibility of co-degeneration referring to the Chinese history after the Song dynasty 宋朝 (960-

⁴⁵⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 405.

⁴⁵⁸ To know more discussions, see Chang Hao, 1988, p. 186; Prasenjit Duara, 1995, Chapter 1; Lin Shaoyang, 2018, pp. 275-289.

⁴⁵⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 405.

1279).⁴⁶⁰

In the factual aspect, Zhang relies on his knowledge of history as well as his observation of both nature and society. In the theoretical aspect, he primarily counts on his thought on the basis of (Yogācāra) Buddhism. For the coevolution between good and evil, Zhang refers to (1) the mixed good and evil “seeds” (*zhongzi* 種子, *bījā*), which emerge and function along the evolutionary course at the level of “mental consciousness” (*yishi* 意識, *manovijñāna*); (2) the notion “self-importance (*woman* 我慢), based on which Zhang puts forward the “will to win” as the original evil of human nature. By coining this concept, Zhang criticizes the Greek philosophers’ conception of human nature, i.e., the will to truth, goodness, and beauty. For the coevolution between happiness and suffering, he mentions five opposite types of suffering and happiness.⁴⁶¹ At the end of the essay, Zhang discusses the misanthropic doctrine of Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906),⁴⁶² hoping it to be the treatment of the abuses of evolution (and evolutionism), which is followed by the promotion of socialism as a practical project in the near future: “Among the expected things relative to evolution, we should promote only those most compatible with [the doctrine of misanthropy]. [Based on this consideration,] I recommend socialism, which roughly conforms to egalitarianism, so long as there is no better alternative.” 為期望於進化諸事類中，亦惟擇其最合者而倡行之，此則社會主義，其法近於平等，亦不得已而思其次也。⁴⁶³

In sum, despite the influence of the Western scholarship underpinned by an evolutionary paradigm, Zhang was suspicious regarding evolutionism as a comprehensive discourse endorsing a utopian prospect.⁴⁶⁴ Zhang carries out his critical reflection on this discourse primarily on the basis of his Buddhist theory, leading to a dialectic and disenchanting view on the future of human condition. So here in “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution,” Buddhism serves as a remedy for abuses of evolutionism. The competitive relationship between the two is also manifested in “On the Non-Self of Human Beings,” at the outset of which Zhang presents two theories concerning

⁴⁶⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 405-411.

⁴⁶¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 408-409, 411.

⁴⁶² Referred to by the Chinese translation of “Heertumen” 赫爾圖門.

⁴⁶³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 413.

⁴⁶⁴ Viren Murthy, 2011, p. 142.

the definition and the origin of human beings: “The refined theory is the ‘twelve-fold chain of dependent creation’; the shallow one is that of natural selection.” 精者，則有十二緣生之說；粗者，則有自然淘汰之義。⁴⁶⁵

Text 2, the central text of this chapter, is “On the Five Negations.”⁴⁶⁶ Published in No. 16 of *The People’s Journal* on September 25, 1907, it is Zhang’s second-longest Buddhist publication in this newspaper only after “On Establishing Religion.” We see clear continuity between “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution” and this essay in rejecting evolutionary progressivism, examining evil in human nature, and advocating the doctrine of misanthropy. Nonetheless, the latter introduces a strong political dimension into its critical reflection responding to a variety of ideologies and political theories in vogue. While socialism is merely mentioned at the end of “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution,” anarchism gains, in “On the Five Negations,” a position of equivalent importance as Buddhism and evolutionism. It is based on the constructive as well as critical conversation with the anarchist movement that Zhang connects two subjects separated by their temporal distance, i.e., the current political struggles and the human existence in the distant future.

This essay can be roughly divided into three parts. The first part (pp. 453-455) concerns the political institutions and ideas in a time when government exists. The second part (pp. 455-459) proceeds to the phases of Five Negations beyond nationalism. The third part (p. 459-468) is the longest, in which the author criticizes the theory of the original goodness of human nature, extensively discusses the significant importance of the Negation of human beings, and rejects the promise of evolutionism in question-and-answer form.

At the outset of the first part, Zhang discusses the narrowness of the state and government, and, as an inference, the narrowness of the nation. Though acknowledging the limit of nationalism, what he aims at is the current statism which sanctifies the state while rejecting nationalism (and the revolution based on nationalism). From his viewpoint, “the state is just like a mechanic puppet; it is functional but without innate properties.” 國家

⁴⁶⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 441

⁴⁶⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 453-468.

者，如機關木人，有作用而無自性。⁴⁶⁷ On the other hand, although the nation as a social phenomenon is as narrow (and limited in time) as the state, nationalism, reinterpreted by Zhang, implies the moral responsibility of helping the weak nations to gain their independence. He names the nationalism in this broad sense *furuo zhuyi* 扶弱主義 (doctrine of supporting the weak) which contrasts with the narrow Sinocentrism.

Since a state and a government always coexist with a nation, Zhang is obliged to conceive a political system of fewer abuses. His answer at that moment is the republic. But at the same time, Zhang strongly fights against the parliamentary system, claiming that it will inevitably lead to the increasing privilege of the rich and prevalent corruption among the members of parliament. To maintain the egalitarian principle of the republic, he proposes four institutional designs: (1) “equally distributing the land in order that the peasants do not have to work for landlords” 均配土地，使耕者不為佃奴；(2) “establishing state-run factories in order that the employees can share the profits” 官立工場，使傭人得分贏利；(3) “restricting the inheritance of property to prevent the transmission of wealth between generations” 限制相續，使富厚不傳子孫；(4) “accountability against corrupt representatives so that the political party dare not accept bribes” 公散議院，使政黨不敢納賄。⁴⁶⁸ If these four designs (underpinned by socialism) are not implemented, the republic will result in the concentration of wealth and the abuses of representatives, and be worse than autocracy.

The phases of Five Negations are supposed to develop successively after a century or so on the condition that the Republic functions well in line with Zhang’s political project. These five phases are (1) the Negation of the government (*wu zhengfu* 無政府), (2) the Negation of the community (*wu juluo* 無聚落), (3) the Negation of human beings (*wu renlei* 無人類), (4) the Negation of all beings (*wu zhongsheng* 無眾生), and finally (5) the Negation of the world (*wu shijie* 無世界).⁴⁶⁹

Phase 1, the Negation of the government. What is negated for this phase consists of not only the worldwide governments and states but also the monetary and military institutions as well as marital and family bonds. The objective lies in ceasing the people’s

⁴⁶⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 453.

⁴⁶⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 454.

⁴⁶⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 455-456, 458.

envy of others rather than increasing their happiness.

Phrase 2, the Negation of the community. Zhang rejects the prediction that the war will disappear in a non-governmental age nor does he agrees that communism (property in common) is enough to cease conflicts because “the human beings are equal by nature while the lands they live in are not equal; humans can have their property in common while lands cannot sustain a large number of humans in a given place.” 人類本平等，而所依之地本不平等；人類之財產可以相共而容，而地方之面積不能相共而容。⁴⁷⁰ Zhang’s ideas are directed against the Chinese anarchists (in Paris) who enthusiastically introduce anarchism from Russia and France. He explains why the thinkers in these two countries dare to advocate anarchism. The reason is that the Russian land is cold and infertile whereas the French do not have enough land resources per capita. Referring to various cases in (colonial) history, Zhang asserts that it is always the people living in cold countries (or insufficient in natural resources) who invade those living in warm ones. Probably motivated to discredit his opponents of the *New Age Journal*, he stresses how the French, the initial advocates of freedom and equality, has unscrupulously violated these principles in Vietnam. For the problem that land cannot be shared like property, Zhang proposes delocalization as the solution: “Farmers become nomadic farmers, workers become nomadic workers, women become nomadic women. The habitants of cold and warm places change each year the land and house they live, taking turns to move to new places, in order that aggression and plunder no longer occur due to attachment [to a particular place.] [I have demonstrated above] why the Negation of the government must be practiced along with the Negation of the community.” 農為游農，工為游工，女為游女。苦寒地人與溫潤地人，每歲爰土易室而居，迭相遷移，庶不以執著而生陵奪。斯則無政府者，必與無聚落說同時踐行也。⁴⁷¹

Just as Phases 1 and 2 should be carried out together, so is the case for Phases 3 and 4. The Negation of human beings is necessary because the government, state, and community have no innate properties. Instead, they are constructed by human beings. The human being, in its turn, evolved from microorganisms.⁴⁷² So “if any beings continue to

⁴⁷⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 456.

⁴⁷¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 457-458.

⁴⁷² To be accurate, Zhang treats this evolutionary picture as conceptually constructed. The ultimate reality for this is

exist, the human being cannot definitively disappear. The newly emerged species will gradually evolve into primitive humans. Through long-term infiltration [in the cultural evolution], the society and state today will emerge again.” 要使一物尚存，則人類必不能斷絕。新生之種，漸為原人，久更浸淫，而今之社會、今之國家又且復見。⁴⁷³ Faced with this fundamental problem, Zhang counts on the advent of “superhuman masters” (*dashi chaorenzhe* 大士超人者) who preach the doctrine of “non-self” to gradually empty the “human realm” (*rendao* 人道). These masters preach, at the same time, the “doctrine of non-creation” (*wusheng zhuyi* 無生主義) for the beings in the three inferior realms, namely, the “animal realm” (*chusheng dao* 畜生道, *tiryagyoni*), the “hungry ghost realm” (*egui dao* 餓鬼道, *preta*), and the “hell realm” (*diyu dao* 地獄道, *naraka*), to assure there emerges no more new beings.

For Phase 5, the Negation of the world, it is simple. “The material world at this moment, the basis on which all beings depend, is a construction due to the shade in their eyes and the illness of their conception instead of the reality. … Therefore, once all beings achieve the emptiness of *dharma*, the world will disappear therewith. This is the ultimate phase of perfection.” 今之有器世間，為眾生依止之所本，由眾生眼翳見病所成，都非實有……是故眾生悉證法空，而世界為之消弭，斯為最後圓滿之期也。⁴⁷⁴ Clearly, this idea is underpinned by the Yogācāra doctrine of “consciousness-only.” The objective world is reduced to the subjective representation (through the visual perception and mental construction) of all beings caused by their common *karma*. Hence it will disappear entirely once the flow of transmigration comes to an end.

The third part occupies more than half of the total pages, in which Zhang makes in-depth argumentation to consolidate and broaden his thought of the Five Negations. I prefer to offer a brief introduction below, leaving the details to the thematic analysis of the second part of this chapter.

The argumentation of this part is undertaken in the form of questions and answers, of which the first two are more important. The first question is why the theory of the original goodness of human nature is not reliable and what is the origin of the fight between

the flow and transformation of the “suchness.” 名為進化，其實則一流轉真如。Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 458.

⁴⁷³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 458.

⁴⁷⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 459.

humans. From the passage above this question we can see that by answering this question Zhang intends to undermine the theoretical ground of anarchism: “As to some preeminent and compassionate people, they consider anarchism as the ultimate theory. Relying on the theory of the original goodness of human nature, they argue that by improving the facilities and enriching livelihood, and satisfying the sexual desire, people will be well-behaved even without the constraint of law.” 若夫倣儻愍世之材，以無政府為至極矣。堅信性善之說，則謂利用厚生，與夫男女隱曲之事，果無少缺，雖無法律而不為非。⁴⁷⁵ Despite such criticism, Zhang always treats anarchism as the pathway between the post-revolutionary government and the Five Negations (Phases 2-5). He supposes that in an anarchist society, conflicts will occur between ordinary people, hence less brutally than the organized violence in the age when governments exist. To demonstrate the original evil of human nature, Zhang reaffirms his previous idea in “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution” regarding the “will to win” as the original evil of human nature. Moreover, he refers to the thought of three ancient masters, Bao Jingyan 鮑敬言 (dates unknown),⁴⁷⁶ Xunzi, and Zhuangzi. It is arresting that his preference has significantly shifted from the Confucian *lijiao* to the Daoist ideas against governmental power and *lijiao*.

The second question is raised against Zhang’s Negation of human beings, based on the traditional idea of China that “the ultimate virtue of Heaven and Earth is the ‘creation/creation/birth’ (*sheng*). The mate between *yin* [women, female, or passive principle] and *yang* [men, male, or active principle] is the common property of all beings. We should not disobey the heavenly virtue and violate humanity.” 天地之大德曰生，陰陽匹偶，根性所同，不應背天德而違人道。⁴⁷⁷ Zhang harshly criticizes the notions of heavenly virtue and humanity (in its moral sense). For the former notion, he quotes a famous sentence from the *, “Heaven and Earth do not act from (the impulse of) any wish to be benevolent; they deal with all things as the straw dogs are dealt with.” 天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗。⁴⁷⁸ For the latter notion, he refers to various Buddhist texts to demonstrate that*

⁴⁷⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 459-460.

⁴⁷⁶ Bao Jingyan was a Daoist scholar of the Eastern Jin dynasty 東晉 (317-420). All his writings were lost, including the *Treatise on the Negation of the Emperor* (*Wujun lun* 無君論). We are able to access his thought only through indirect historical records, especially “Refuting Bao Jingyan” (*Jie Bao* 詰鮑), one of the Outer Chapters of the *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 ([Book of the] Master Who Embraces Simplicity) written by Ge Hong 葛洪 (284-364).

⁴⁷⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 464.

⁴⁷⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 464.

life is essentially suffering rather than happiness. Consequently, if Heaven and Earth were truly responsible for the human creation, we would rather feel resentment, not gratitude, toward them. After that, Zhang digs deeper into the darkness of humanity, asserting that human beings are driven, due to its nature, by sexual desire and the propensity to violence. The will to preserve humanity means that violence and killing can never end (even if sexual desire is not considered to be evil). Here, he refers to a multitude of myths and religious texts, including the *Book of Odes*, and reveals them as expressions of these two evils in human nature. It is in this intensified Negation of human beings that Zhang shows to us how far he has gone in the anti-traditional path and how pessimist he was, at that period, toward human nature.⁴⁷⁹

Following these two questions, Zhang replies to four more questions. The first three of them are related to the propensity to violence and sexual desire while the last returns to the polemic context of anarchism and evolutionism to maintain his dystopian ideas.

Text 3, “On the State.”⁴⁸⁰ As a neologism introduced from Japan, *guojia* 國家 is multivocal and can be translated as state, country, or nation.⁴⁸¹ This ambiguity is related to the translingual context of its translation and is utilized by different scholars to promote their respective projects of state/nation-building,⁴⁸² to be discussed later.

This essay has been presented above concerning its publication information and opening passage. For its two parts, the first addresses anarchists and the second, advocates of state-building. The structure is clear for both parts. For the first part (pp. 484-490), Zhang puts forward three theses and carries out argumentation one after another. (1) The innate property of the state is only illusory construction, not substantial existence; 國家之自性，是假有者，非實有者； (2) the function of the state is maintained out of necessity, not inherently legitimate; 國家之作用，是勢不得已而設之者，非理所當然而設之者； (3) the enterprise of state-building is the lowliest, not the most sacred. 國家之事業，是

⁴⁷⁹ As indicated by Sakamoto Hiroko (2019, pp. 51-52), Zhang’s negation of the “perpetual creation” (*shengsheng* 生生) as the ultimate virtue of Heaven and Earth does huge damage to the Chinese tradition thought. In comparison, Tan Sitong does not reject the “perpetual creation” despite his critique of the “mandate of Heaven.” Rather, he transforms this notion to interpret the neologism “ether.” So is the case for Kang Youwei.

⁴⁸⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 484-493.

⁴⁸¹ I choose “state” as the regular translation but the other two words are also used depending on the specific context.

⁴⁸² The most influential figure was Liang Qichao who established his theory of the state based on that of Johann Kaspar Bluntschli (1808-1881). See Charlotte Furth, 1976, p. 131; Marianne Bastid-Bruguière, 2003.

最鄙賤者，非最神聖者。⁴⁸³ Among these three theses, the first lays the theoretical foundation for two others and is the most important. Zhang resorts to the doctrine of the minimal entity based on *Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣa Śāstra* (*Apidamo dapiposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論),⁴⁸⁴ identifying it to the atomism of modern physics, then applies this theory to social phenomena:

All kinds of individuals are also assembled by smaller unities rather than substantial existence. Nonetheless, these individuals can be supposed as substantial existence relative to those they assemble which are illusory construction. Now that the state (country) is assembled by the people, so every single person can be supposed as substantial existence for the present whereas the state is not. Not just the state, all those villages and societies do not have any innate property either. The innate property belongs to the individual persons that assemble them. In sum, the individual is real but the group is illusory. It is a general principle.

凡諸個體，亦皆眾物集成，非是實有。然對於個體所集成者，則個體且得說為實有，其集成者說為假有。國家既為人民所組合，故各各人民，暫得說為實有，而國家則無實有之可言。非直國家，凡彼一村一落，一集一會，亦惟各人為實有自性，而村落集會，則非實有自性。要之，個體為真，團體為幻，一切皆然。⁴⁸⁵

We can see that Zhang's thinking here is distinguished from the Enlightenment thinkers who utilize individual liberalism as the cornerstone of civil society. Zhang supposing individual reality only serves to regain the isolated existence of individuals free from any social interference.⁴⁸⁶ Zhang calls this idea the “doctrine of living alone” (*duhuo zhuyi* 獨活主義), an intermediate stage between nationalism and the “doctrine of non-creation.”⁴⁸⁷ In various texts, Zhang refers to the doctrine of non-creation to generalize the essential ideas of “On the Five Negations.” As a comparison between “On the Five Negations” and “On the State,” while the former extends its horizon to fundamentally examine human nature and human evolution, the latter focuses on delegitimizing state and community

⁴⁸³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 484.

⁴⁸⁴ *Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣa Śāstra* is a fundamental text for the Sarvāstivāda (*shuoyiqieyou bu* 說一切有部), one of the early Buddhist schools established around the reign of Asoka (third century BCE).

⁴⁸⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 484-485.

⁴⁸⁶ In his outstanding studies, Wang Hui (2008, pp. 1061-1078) has explained why Zhang neglects the dimension of society in discussing the dichotomy between individual and state.

⁴⁸⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, pp. 326-327.

hence enhancing his negation of the first two phases in the former text. Furthermore, while the former reinterprets the Buddhist doctrines of the “twelve-fold chain of dependent creation” and the *nirvāṇa*, making them adaptable to reverse the evolutionary temporality, the latter develops a radical approach of nominalism against certain social scientific theories related to state-building. But after all, there is a common concept underpinning the theories of both texts, that is “non-self,” an essential concept for all Buddhist schools.

The second part of “On the State” (pp. 490-493) is also organized around these three theses. The difference is that Zhang makes concessions, admitting the necessity of the temporal existence of the state. He attempts to demonstrate that the ideas and efforts regarding patriotism, nation-building, and saving the nation are not incompatible with his theory. They are just relativized and disenchanted. Instead of introducing more details of Zhang’s argument, I prefer to reveal its implicit targets. On the one hand, the negation of the sacredness of the state is aimed at several scholars who advocate statism and criticize ethnic revolution such as Yan Fu and Yang Du 楊度 (1875-1931), maybe also Liang Qichao.⁴⁸⁸ Zhang refutes Yan Fu by “Critical Discussion on *A Full Account of Society*” (*Shehui tongquan shangdui* 《社會通詮》商兌) whereas his critique of Yang Du is carried out in “Explaining the Republic of China” (*Zhonghua Minguo jie* 中華民國解), both essays were published in *The People’s Journal* in 1907.

On the other hand, I see Zhang’s negation of the loftiness of political struggle which is probably aimed at the revolutionary leaders, especially Sun Yat-sen. This implication is of particular importance because it helps to explains (1) Zhang’s disappointment with the revolutionary movement and (2) his aspiration to transcend the level of nationalism. This negation can be found in both parts of “On the State,” above all in the passage below devaluating the enterprise of state-building:

Moreover, [leading] the national restoration does not only serve one’s self-interest.

However, people attribute high prestige to the leaders without knowing that this enterprise is achieved through collective efforts. [These leaders,] having the lowest capacity, vaunt their achievements and regard themselves as more honorable than the heavenly deity. As a consequence, those leading the national restoration are self-

⁴⁸⁸ For the implication with Yan Fu and Yang Du, see Sun Yingxiang, 2014, pp. 188-189; Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, p. 79. For that with Liang Qichao, see Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 1056-1061.

conceited and feel superior to others even when nothing has been done. Once the enterprise is achieved, they are crowned as the supreme leader. This is what makes me indignant and hateful! ... The only honorable ones here [concerning the national restoration] are the ones who assassinate [the enemy leaders] with a hidden dagger and who meet with difficult situations and a hundred setbacks without turning away [from their original goal]. These people are honorable because they take individual actions that are irreplaceable.

況於匡扶邦族，非專為一己而已。特世人執是以為高名，則不知集眾所成，其能力最為闡蕩，而自旌其伐，尊於帝天。遂令志其事者，豪毛未動，先有矜眾自貴之心；事之既成，又羣奉以為大長，斯最可忿者！……其間貴者，獨有密懷匕首，流血五步，與夫身遭厄困，百折而不回者。斯乃個人所為，非他能代，故足重耳。

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Combining with the first part of this chapter, it is now possible to see how Zhang's experience within the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance impacts his theoretical writings. Quoting again Zhang's letter to Liu Shipei⁴⁹⁰ in 1909 (or later): "Those unconstrained figures rising from common people have never been learned. They are self-conceited and boastful, insulting and neglecting men of deep insight." Evidently, the above passage of "On the State" targets the same persons as the letter does. Inferring from the contextual background presented in the first part of this chapter, the main target is Sun Yat-sen. Compared with other leaders of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, Sun is particularly talented in building social networks and self-advertisement. This gained him personal reputation which, in turn, enabled him to get a following and receive financial aid from overseas Chinese communities and elsewhere. All these, while extremely helpful to the revolutionary enterprise, arouses controversy and even anger among some of his comrades.

The second part of the passage, as a contrast, refers to the members of the Restoration Society who focus on individual revolutionary activities and have better personal morals.

⁴⁸⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 493.

⁴⁹⁰ Liu Shipei fully shares Zhang's discontent, revealed by his lecture for the inaugurating meeting of the Society for the Study of Socialism on August 8, 1907. In this lecture, Liu raises three points of view about why anti-Manchusim is inferior to anarchism. (1) Anti-Manchusim will inevitably result in ethnocentrism and risks in developing into ethnic-imperialism. (2) If Anti-Manchusim is not guided by anarchist principles, there will be the revolutionaries who covet political privileges after the success of revolution. (3) The anti-Machu movement today is only promoted by students and *huidang* 會黨 ("secret" societies), not by the working people. Therefore, the fruits of success will only be carved up among a few new elites. Chen Qi, 2007, p. 210.

Presumably, “assassinating [the enemy leaders] with a hidden dagger” implies Xu Xilin’s assassination of En Ming. As to “Meeting with difficult situations and a hundred setbacks without turning away [from their original goal],” it might be a self-description.⁴⁹¹

In this regard, “On the State” allows us to connect Zhang’s political ideas, Buddhist thinking, and moral pessimism, hence it is an important text.

Text 4, “On the Four Confusions” (*Sihuo lun* 四惑論),⁴⁹² published in No. 22 of *The People’s Journal* on July 10, 1908. In this essay, Zhang launches critiques of four things that his contemporaries consider as sacred, namely, “universal principle” (*gongli* 公理), “evolution” (*jinhua* 進化), “materialism” (*weiwu* 唯物), and “nature” (*ziran* 自然). Correspondingly, the text is divided into four parts, each begins with theoretical reflections and then proceeds to reject the ideological implications. “On the Four Confusions” is the most theoretical text Zhang wrote during his polemic with the Chinese anarchists in Paris.

The first part on the confusion of the universal principle (pp. 469-475) is the longest and the most important. Although these four notions are juxtaposed as targets, the other three can be seen as subordinate aspects of the meta-discourse of the universal principle.⁴⁹³ At the outset of this part, Zhang defines “the universal principle as the bounded realm commonly recognized. Just as the grid of lines in Go, commonly recognized by Go players as an infrangible bounded realm.” 公理者，猶云眾所同認之界域。譬若棋枰方卦，行棋者所同認，則此界域為不可逾。“However, this universal principle has no innate properties, nor is it an independent substantial existence in the universe. Rather, it is established through the embodiment of human *ideas*⁴⁹⁴ in things and affairs.” 然此理者，非有自性，非宇宙間獨存之物，待人之原型觀念應於事物而成。⁴⁹⁵ Zhang then examines the affinity between the universal principle and the “heavenly principle” (*tianli* 天理), a notion advocated by Song Neo-Confucians scholars, alerting that the discourse based on these notions can easily be monopolized by a few scholars who attach to rigid

⁴⁹¹ Zhang’s discussion of madness in his 1906 speech can be seen as indirect proof. Quote again: “[without being a mad person,] one cannot reflect on unconventional and strange ideas, let alone advocate them. Even if he advocates them, when meeting with difficult situations, without being a mad person, he will not be capable to face a hundred setbacks without turning away and alone apply his [unconventional and strange] ideas in real life.”

⁴⁹² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 468-484.

⁴⁹³ The polemic between the advocates of the universal principle and their opponents is an essential subject for the intellectual history of modern China. See, e.g., Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 831-1104 (the first part of Volume 2).

⁴⁹⁴ By the term *idea*, Zhang refers to Kant’s concept of *twelve categories*, introduced into the Japanese intelligentsia by Masaharu Anesaki. Zhang considers it as synonymous with the Yogācāra concept of store-house consciousness.

⁴⁹⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 469.

dogma. As a result, “the heavenly principle restrains people tighter than the law; however, the universal principle can restrain people even tighter than heavenly principle.” 天理之束縛人，甚於法律；而公理之束縛人，又幾甚於天理矣。⁴⁹⁶ This constraint can be particularly harsh for those who refuse to enroll in mutual aid,⁴⁹⁷ live in seclusion, or commit suicide. To counter such abuse, Zhang reaffirms the “doctrine of living alone,” claiming that “the human being is not born to serve the world, nor the society, nor the state, nor other people. No one has the right to interfere with another person even if the latter lacks emotion and gratefulness.” 人類非為世界而生，非為社會而生，非為國家而生，非互為他人而生，雖涼薄少恩，非他人所能干豫也。⁴⁹⁸

Then, for the confusion of evolution (pp. 475-478), Zhang resorts to one of the paradoxes of Zeno of Elea (c.495-c.430BC),⁴⁹⁹ which argues against the motion of the arrow, to demonstrate that evolution is just illusory as the motion of the arrow. After recalling his critique of evolutionism in “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution,” Zhang comes to reveal its other abuse, summarizing as follows: “If evolution is advocated as an ideology (-ism), coercion will be necessary to make people conform to its principles. Its advocates advertise freedom and anticipate evolution at the same time. [The two may conflict with each other,] so they construct deceptive rhetoric that ‘labor is a part of human nature.’ In this case, [what they advocate] can be properly named as the religion of evolution.” 若以進化為主義者，事非強制，即無以使人必行。彼既標舉自由，而又豫期進化，於是構造一說以誣人曰：“勞動者人之天性。”若是者，正可名進化教耳。⁵⁰⁰ Presumably, Zhang’s rejection of labor as a part of human nature, just as his criticism of mutual aid, is directed at certain Western anarchist thinkers.

The third and fourth parts on the confusion of materialism (pp. 478-481) and on that of nature (pp. 481-484) unfold in a similar way. In Part 3, Zhang discusses the limit of rigid materialism through a critical reflection on the philosophy of David Hume (1711-1776).⁵⁰¹ He criticizes, at the end of this part, the ones who subordinate themselves to things to seek

⁴⁹⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 469.

⁴⁹⁷ Mutual aid is a key notion raised by Kropotkin in his 1892 book *The Conquest of Bread*.

⁴⁹⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 472.

⁴⁹⁹ Zeno is referred to as a philosopher of the school “Yiliye” 伊黎耶派.

⁵⁰⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 478.

⁵⁰¹ Referred to by the Chinese translation of “Houmo” 吼模.

happiness, regarding them as even lowlier than those subordinating themselves to other people. By comparison, Part 4 deserves more attention since it reveals best the interweaving of the four confusions. First, what Zhang means here by “nature” is the natural principle, which constitutes the foundation for the discourse of the universal principle. Second, the natural principle that Zhang deals with is underpinned by the assumption that the innate properties belong to the object, hence overlapping with materialism. As to evolution, it is treated as an inevitable process determined by the natural principle. Indeed, Zhang’s criticism of the natural principle at the end of the part also concludes the whole essay. According to his retrospect, submitting one’s will to external rules is a mode of thinking with a long history. It first takes the form of worshipping gods, then the form of predestination, and finally the form of such confusions as revealed in this text. Now we can see the continuity between Zhang’s rejection of theism and of universal principles, both based on his strong insistence of “relying on oneself instead of relying on external forces.”

* The Dystopia of the Five Negations, an in-depth interrogation *

This third (and last) section will carry out in-depth studies of “On the Five Negations” around three themes. The first follows the threads offered by Zhang’s letter to Cai Yuanpei in 1911. The second proceeds to demonstrate how Zhang critically reflected on National Essence and ethnic revolution and transcended them by the doctrine of “non-creation.” The third deals with Zhang’s critique of evolutionism by comparing Zhang’s doctrine of “non-creation” with the utopian trends represented by Kang Youwei’s *Book on the Great Unity* (and anarchism). While the first theme relies on a later text to evaluate the importance of “On the Five Negations” in the general change of Zhang’s thought, the second and the third try to connect and contrast Zhang’s Buddhist-inspired dystopian thought with his earlier ideas around Religion and National Essence.

Theme 1, three threads in Zhang’s letter to Cai Yuanpei. This letter was written on June 21, 1911, shortly before the Wuchang Uprising. At that time, Cai was studying philosophy, psychology, and art history at Leipzig University. In the letter, Zhang updated

his situation and scholarly progress during the last three years. What he discussed in detail was the ongoing revision of the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*. This passage, despite its significant importance, has rarely been referred to apart from some studies of the *Book of Urgency*.

I wrote the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* in the past. Today, however, I am unsatisfied with half of its content. Deleting and supplementing, I have accumulated several tens of thousands of words for the redaction work. [A copy of] the original book is still at hand, but I no longer think it deserves to be read by wise people. I used to believe in Sino-babylonianism, disapprove of the scholarship of Laozi and Zhuangzi, and think that the parliamentary system is always superior to autocracy. Now I know that I was wrong about all three subjects. Once I have changed ideas about these major issues, my ideas about other minor issues naturally run in the opposite direction.

《訄書》是曩日著，由今觀之，不愜意者參半，涂乙增損，幾過數萬言，原書雖在，難為知者道也。向日信中國出巴比倫，又不信老莊學說，又謂代議政體必過專制，今皆知其不然。此數大端既異，其餘枝節，自相與僻馳也。⁵⁰²

The scholarly progress presented in this letter happened roughly from the end of 1908 to mid-1911, a period to be dealt with further in Chapter 5. During this time, Zhang wrote several academic works that he felt most proud of.⁵⁰³ The *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* is the only work that he was unsatisfied with although he had already revised the original edition of this book around 1902. From the letter, we know that Zhang had accumulated numerous drafts for a third edition,⁵⁰⁴ however, the revision work lasted until the end of 1914 when Zhang was put in house confinement by Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859-1916). Zhang changed the title of the final edition from “Book of Urgency” to “Book after Examination.”⁵⁰⁵ Compared to his other major academic works, the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* is characterized by the strong orientation of intervening in current affairs and the influence of Western and Japanese intellectual trends. Such characteristics are

⁵⁰² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 357.

⁵⁰³ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 191.

⁵⁰⁴ In 1975, a manuscript was found by Jiang Yihua in the Beijing Library. It is a manuscript full of manual corrections upon the text of the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*. According to Zhu Weizheng (1983, pp. 59-60), this manuscript was created between 1910-1903. So it may be the preparatory work talked about in Zhang's letter to Cai.

⁵⁰⁵ To examine the difference between the second, the third edition, and the intermediate version found in the Beijing Library, see Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 196-198, 278-283.

considerably reduced in the *Book after Examination*.

Instead of examining the difference between the second and third editions, I intend to associate Zhang's dissatisfaction towards the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* with "On the Five Negations." Although the revision work probably began from a later date, the change of his thought reveals itself in "On the Five Negations" and other texts of this period. By tracing the three threads in Zhang's letter to Cai, I set out to demonstrate (1) how "On the Five Negations" plays a transitional role from the ideas in the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* to the *Qiwu* philosophy (*Qiwu zhexue* 齊物哲學, "the philosophy that makes all things equal"); (2) why Zhang endeavored to transcend nationalism and republicanism towards the level of a Buddhist dystopia. We will see that the changes revealed by these threads were largely a result of Zhang's interaction with the anarchist groups, especially with Liu Shipei.

Thread 1, Sino-babylonianism. In the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*, Zhang introduces Sino-babylonianism as a reliable cutting-edge scientific result. He and Liu Shipei were the most influential figures among the first advocates of this theory. However, in the *Book after Examination*, the passages related to Sino-babylonianism are almost all deleted.⁵⁰⁶ Zhang's criticism of the initiator of this theory appeared in an earlier essay, "The Principle of Education Should be founded upon Patriotism and Individual Awareness" (*Jiaoyu de genben yaocong ziguo zixin fachulai* 教育的根本要從自國自心發出來), published in Vol. 3 of the *Vernacular Magazine of Education* (*Jiaoyu jinyu zazhi* 教育今語雜誌) on May 8, 1910. He said, "the French [scholar] has a theory that the [Han] Chinese were originated from Babylon. He also said that the original inhabitants of Chinese territory were the Miao people, later expelled by the Han people. I used to believe in this theory. Recently, however, I come to realize that it is not true following meticulous researches." 法國人有句話，說中國人種，原是從巴比倫來。又說中國地方，本來都是苗人，後來被漢人驅逐了。以前我也頗信這句話，近來細細考證，曉得實在不然。⁵⁰⁷ Zhang does not mention the French scholar's name, presumably, the person he implies is Terrien de Lacouperie.

Zhang's suspicion of the authenticity of Sino-babylonianism can be traced back to

⁵⁰⁶ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 278; Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018, p. 52.

⁵⁰⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2001, p. 97.

“On Whether Revenge Is Correct,” an essay published in the same issue of *The People’s Journal* as “On the Five Negations.”

Someone questions as thus: [The land of] China had been cultivated by the Han people. Coming from Ningguta, the Manchus robbed what the Han people had owned. That is why the Han people wished to expel the Manchus. However, before the arrival of the Han people, had not this [land of] China been cultivated by the Miao people? The Xia ethnicities came from the Pamirs highland and robbed what the Miao people had owned, did the Miao people not wish to expel the former? If the Han people have the right to expel the Manchus, don’t those Miao people have the right to expel the Han people? I reply as follows: The Manchus originating from Ningguta is a fact supported by historical records. [In contrast,] the Han people originating from the Pamirs highland has no such solid proofs but rather indirect speculative hypothesis based on abstruse archeological and mythical texts.

或曰：中國者，漢族所墾闢也，東胡之族自寧古塔來盜漢族所固有，則漢族欲排之。寧思漢族未至以前，此中國者，非苗族所墾闢耶？諸夏之族自帕米爾高原來，盜苗族所固有，而苗族曷嘗不思排之。漢人排滿為正義，彼苗人之排漢者亦獨非正義歟？答曰：滿洲自寧古塔來，歷史之明文然也；漢族自帕米爾高原來，特以彖書神話之微文展轉考索比度而得之，而歷史未嘗有其明據。⁵⁰⁸

A similar debate concerning the legitimacy of ethnic revenge appears in “Impartial Discussion of the Anti-Manchu Movement,” published later in June 1908. One minor difference exists between the two texts. In the latter essay, Zhang turns to defend the hypothesis that the Han people were originated from the Pamirs highland. Against the analogy between the Han people’s right of revenge and that of the Miao people, Zhang uses new tactics questioning the aboriginality of the Miao people and refuting the identity between the historically recorded Miao people and those alive in his time.⁵⁰⁹ The content of these two texts clearly shows that the Chinese anarchists were Zhang’s interlocutors of the debate. While the advocates of constitutionalism criticized ethnic nationalism by stressing the urgency of nation-building, some anarchists concentrated on revealing the paradox of ethnic revenge unavoidable if Sino-babylonianism is correct. Zhang was

⁵⁰⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 283.

⁵⁰⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 269.

probably more troubled by this issue than any other issue of his debates with the anarchists. This is reflected through (1) the considerable space Zhang devotes to defend the right of ethnic revenge in both essays, (2) Zhang's hesitation on whether to affirm the origin of the Han people from the Pamirs highland or not, and (3) the fact that Zhang shifts the hypothetical original place from Babylon to the Pamirs highland.

One of the major aspects that distinguish “On the Five Negations” from previous texts published in *The People’s Journal* is the author’s will to transcend nationalism. As above presented, Zhang considers the nation to be as narrow as the state and government. While continuing to promote ethnic revolution, he turns the nationalist ideology into a doctrine oriented towards mutual aid between the weak nations. We can see that Zhang then tries hard to draw the line between his thought and narrow-minded Sinocentrism. This nuanced adjustment can be well apprehended in the context of his debates with the anarchists. Furthermore, the second Negation of the community may also be influenced by Zhang’s new reflection on Sino-babylonianism since the Han people’s invasion of the Miao habitat occurred in a prehistoric period when institutions like the state and government had not formed yet. This hypothetical event is certainly not referred to in “On the Five Negations,” but it is indeed a better case than the cases concerning the Western colonizers in Asia to demonstrate the necessity of negating the community to cease conflicts. It is reasonable to suggest that when conceiving the Negation of the community, Zhang had Sino-babylonianism in mind concerning its authenticity and moral implications.

In sum, the change of attitude towards Sino-babylonianism strengthened Zhang’s will to transcend nationalism seeking an ultimate political and moral order. Correspondingly, Zhang’s Buddhist thought shifted to a new direction, as its tie with ethnic revolution and National Essence became loosened.

Thread 2, the parliamentary system. Just as his peer literati reformists, Zhang used to be an advocate of the parliamentary system, manifested in a variety of chapters of the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* including “On the Governance of Past Dynasties” (*Tongfa* 通法),⁵¹⁰ “On Bureaucratic Institutions (Part 3)” (*Guantong xia* 官統下), and “On Regional

⁵¹⁰ *Fa* 法 here means governance, not law.

Governance” (*Dizhi* 地治), among others.⁵¹¹ During his third stay in Japan, however, Zhang withdrew his approval of the parliamentary system and turned into a firm opponent of this political trend. The essay “On Whether the Parliamentary System should be Adopted” (*Daiyi ranfou lun* 代議然否論), published in No. 24 of *The People’s Journal* on October 10, 1908, represents the author’s matured thought on this subject. A controversial essay indeed, which made Zhang stand at the opposite side of not only his former literati friends but also the mainstream of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance.⁵¹² One of the rare support came from Liu Shipei, the two reached a consensus in rejecting political reforms following a Western model.⁵¹³

Zhang claims, at the outset of “On Whether the Parliamentary System should be Adopted,” that the parliamentary system is a variant of feudalism as the House of Lords (the Upper House) represents the interests of the aristocracy. This system suits the countries with a long feudal history like Britain and Japan. China, in contrast, has long got rid of feudalism and restrained the privilege of upper classes, hence is unsuitable to the parliamentary system. This essay shares its main ideas with “On the Five Negations” in revealing the polarization between the rich and the poor and the corruption of the representatives as inevitable under the parliamentary system. It nonetheless consolidates such ideas by resorting to abundant pieces of historical evidence from a comparative perspective. The difference between the two texts is more important. In “On the Five Negations,” despite the rejection of the parliamentary system, Zhang considers the republic as a political system of fewer abuses. In “On Whether the Parliamentary System should be Adopted,” however, he withdraws his support to the republic and binds it with the parliamentary system as the target of criticism. For the American model of the republic that he used to advocate, now he affirms only the presidency as a substitute of the monarchy. As to the parliamentary system, it is worse than autocracy regardless of whether it is controlled by the Manchus or the Han people, coordinated with monarchy or democracy. At the end of the essay, Zhang calls to surpass the dichotomy between republic and

⁵¹¹ Xufu, 2000, pp. 506-522, 552-564, 765-772,

⁵¹² Zhu Weizheng, 2008, pp. 100-101.

⁵¹³ To grasp the connection between parliamentary system, ethnic revolution, and anarchism, see Liu Shipei’s “A Comparative Discussion on the Gains and Losses of Ethnic Revolution and Anarchist Revolution” (*Lun zhongzu geming yu wuzhengfu geming zhi deshi* 論種族革命與無政府革命之得失). Chen Qi, pp. 211-212.

autocracy and search for a political system truly beneficial to the common people.⁵¹⁴

Just as in the case of Sino-babylonianism, “On the Five Negations” conveys transitional ideas in Zhang’s changing attitude towards the republican system. Merely fourteen months earlier in the 1906 speech, Zhang had put forward a three-stage schema of political and religious coevolution. In this framework, the republic is placed as the most developed political system compatible with the “atheist” Buddhism. So while the tie between Buddhism and nationalism was just in crisis, that between Buddhism and the republican system ceased to exist.

Thread 3, Daoist masters. Similar to the first two threads, the change of Zhang’s understanding of Daoist masters cast new light on the transformation of his Buddhist thought from 1906 to 1908. Moreover, this change foreshadows the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy afterward.

By Zhang’s *Chronological Autobiography*, we can see that Zhang began reading Laozi and Zhuangzi’s texts in 1883. Zhang had prepared this year for the entry-level imperial exams for children (*tongzi shi* 童子試) but did not participate due to a sudden breakout of epilepsy. As a result, Zhang’s father had to accept his son to abandon any further attempt in this path and allowed him to read as he wished.⁵¹⁵ Despite an interest at an early age, Daoist teachings did not occupy an important position in Zhang’s writing from his reformist period to the first years of his revolutionary period. Zhang’s thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi was principally expressed in a chapter of the *Book of Urgency*, “The Confucian and Daoist teachings” (*Rudao* 儒道). The content is identical for the two editions. At the outset of the text, the author refers to the conventional idea that the teachings of Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Emperor) and Laozi are capable of governing the realm All-under-Heaven whereas those of Zhuangzi is subversive to the order of All-under-Heaven. Zhang disagrees with both the judgments, depicting Zhuangzi as a cynic whose words are irrelevant to governance and social order, and Laozi as a teacher of schemers in later generations rather than a model of purity and tranquility. At the end of the text, Zhang reveals the phenomenon that people often use the term “hypocrite” to accuse a Confucian but never a Daoist. In his eyes, it is as erroneous as “preventing [a minor thief] who steals

⁵¹⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 316, 323.

⁵¹⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 4.

a cook while releasing a major thief [who steals a country]” 防竊鉤而逸大盜.⁵¹⁶

Zhang's ideas of Laozi and Zhuangzi remained stable in 1906 as seen by “Brief Discussion on the Teachings of the Pre-Qin Masters.” Interesting differences did exist. Laozi turns out to be no match for Confucius in trickery. He is also valorized for heralding the idea of natural evolution. Zhuangzi, in opposition to Laozi, is praised for keeping himself away from any involvement in political trickery.⁵¹⁷ Despite the difference that Laozi and Zhuangzi are appraised, both had not sufficiently associated with Zhang's life experience and the other aspects of his intellectual resources. In the 1906 speech, their teachings are not introduced as candidates to the status of Religion. The dramatic change occurred in the following two years when Zhang frequently referred to the texts of Daoist masters. It is worth noting that these references interact with anarchism and evolutionism first before the time is ripe for syncretic theoretic works combining Daoism and Buddhism. The influence of anarchism on Zhang's rethinking of Daoism is particularly demonstrated by the fact that both Zhang and Liu Shipei refer to Bao Jingyan as an unrecognized native herald of anarchism.⁵¹⁸ However, significant differences exist between Zhang and Liu. The latter, despite his tendency of favoring “back-to-the-ancients” contrasting with the *New Age Journal* writers, never echoed Zhang's critique of evolutionism. Also, Liu's references to Daoist masters largely aim at consolidating the legitimacy of anarchism.⁵¹⁹ Zhang, on the other hand, came to realize that Daoism can well be a substitute to anarchism which furthermore reconnects Buddhism with current affairs. This realization is offered at the end of a 1911 speech later entitled “On the Relationship of Buddhism with Religion, Philosophy and Reality” (*Lun fofa yu zongjiao zhexue yiji xianshi zhi guanxi* 論佛法與宗教、哲學以及現實之關係),⁵²⁰ to be discussed in Chapter 5.

I now introduce some of Zhang's references to Laozi and Zhuangzi which treat their teachings as superior to anarchism. For Laozi, I have introduced Zhang's quotation of a sentence from the *to reject the notion of heavenly virtue. At the end of “On the Five Negations” Zhang quotes another sentence from this book, “what makes me liable*

⁵¹⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 8-9.

⁵¹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 291-293.

⁵¹⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 458, 462-463. Liu Shipei, 2015, 367-369.

⁵¹⁹ To know more about the relationship between Daoist teachings and anarchism in Liu's thought, see Ishii Tsuyoshi, 2016, pp. 98-103.

⁵²⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 111.

to great calamity is my having the body [which I call myself].” 吾所以有大患，以有身故⁵²¹ This quotation is aimed to refute the idea of Kita Tarajiō’s 北輝次郎 (1883-1937), a Japanese anarchist and a friend of Zhang,⁵²² that following the advancement of chemistry human beings can feed themselves with minerals and cease to kill animals and plants for food. Kita furthermore conceived the removal of excretory and reproductive organs, which lifted human beings to the status of heavenly gods. Zhang declines Kita’s solution relying on techno-scientific developments. It is in this context that Zhang refers to Laozi’s words to consolidate his argument that the human’s propensity to violence and sexual desire can never be eliminated if the “illusion of selfhood” (*wolian* 我見) and “will to win” persist. To be sure, it is a Buddhist reinterpretation of the text of the *. More interestingly, Zhang proposes an analogy between the anarchist utopia and the practice and belief of Daoist religion: “The removal of excretory and reproductive organs is similar to *bigu* (abstention from cereals) and *huandan* (returning the semen inward to nourish the body); transforming minerals as imperishable food resonates with alchemical medication and the belief in deities and immortals.” 若夫斷便利，絕交會，則與辟穀還丹相似。大藥既成，入腹不腐，神仙之說固然。⁵²³ Clearly, Zhang maintains the distinction between the teachings of Daoist masters and the Daoist religion. His increasing admiration of the former does not extend to the latter, as will be further studied in Chapter 5.*

For Zhuangzi, Zhang referred to him much more frequently than Laozi. Contrary to his idea in the *Book of Urgency*, Zhang now considered Zhuangzi as a thinker of thorough insights into human nature and the nature of human society, particularly manifested by his advocacy of “making all things equal” (*qiwu* 齊物), the central concept of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal” (*Qiwu lun* 齊物論), one of the seven Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. Here I introduce two texts to reveal Zhang’s shifting attitude towards anarchism in terms of this concept. First, “Preface to *Anarchism*,” written at the beginning of 1908. What Zhang truly advocates in this preface is a Daoist way of life rather than anarchism.

⁵²¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 468.

⁵²² Kita Tarajiō, better known as Kita Ikki 北一輝, was a Japanese scholar and social activist. Joined in the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance in 1906, he was a close friend of Song Jiaoren and played a role in the movement against Sun Yat-sen. Although deeply enrolled in the Chinese revolution, Kita was at the same time a pioneering advocate of fascism in Japan.

⁵²³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 468.

In his eyes, the ideal state of lifestyle consists in “making equal the likes and dislikes of the common people and realizing that all things are present within his body/himself, [hence] does not experience either love when painted by perfume or hate when cut by a knife.” 平齊人之好惡，知一身之備物，刀割香塗，愛憎不起。Secondary to “making all things equal” is the “doctrine of living alone,” as depicted by Zhuangzi’s words: “For the fish [left upon dry ground when the pond dries up], mutually moistening with a little spittle of breath is not to be compared with returning to rivers and lakes and no longer remembering each other.” 魚之相濡以沫，不如相忘於江湖。⁵²⁴ Only at the end of the text, Zhang praises the Italian author of *Anarchism* for fighting against the privileged politicians and merchants and defending the disadvantaged common people. But still, he regrets that the latter has not reached the realm of “making all things equal.” Second, “Impartial Discussion of the Anti-Manchu Movement,” published in mid-1908. In contrast to the temperate criticism of the former text, Zhang’s attitude towards anarchism here is very harsh. According to him, the Chinese anarchists in Paris “seek upward for the universal principle and advocate it, which is similar to the ‘will of Heaven’ (*tianzhi*) of Mohism. Binding people by the discourse of the universal principle is [an ideology] far from Zhuangsheng’s [Zhuangzi’s] idea of ‘making all things equal.’” 向上言公理者，與墨子天志相類。以理縛人，其去莊生之齊物不遠尚遠。⁵²⁵

In sum, from 1907 to 1908, Zhang dramatically valorizes Laozi and Zhuangzi as insightful thinkers revealing the limit of anarchism and sharing common ground with Buddhism. An additional note for Laozi, Zhang used to consider him as a Chinese counterpart of Machiavelli (1469-1527). Years later, however, he reverses his idea viewing Laozi as a revealer of political trickeries to the common people, as seen in “On the Origin of the Chinese Culture and the Development of Its Modern Scholarship” (*Zhongguo wenhua de genyuan he jindai xuewen de fada* 中國文化的根源和近代學問的發達), published in Vol. 1 of the *Vernacular Magazine of Education* on March 10, 1910.⁵²⁶ As to Zhuangzi, the effort to integrate his teachings with Buddhism became the central task of Zhang’s intellectual life in the years to come. For the moment, the concept of “making all

⁵²⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 403-404.

⁵²⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 269.

⁵²⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2001, p. 69.

things equal” was still shadowed by the “doctrine of non-creation.” How Zhang regarded the relationship between these two concepts remains obscure.

Theme 2, transcending National Essence and ethnic revolution. Needless to say, continuity exists between “On the Five Negations” and Zhang’s earlier writings in *The People’s Journal*, especially “On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution.” Nonetheless, the central idea of “On the Five Negations,” i.e. the doctrine of “non-creation,” sharply differs from his previous effort of combining Religion with National Essence and ethnic revolution. Zhang no longer puts his Buddhist thought into the category of religion, on the contrary, he conceives a sequential politico-religious agenda transcending not only various enterprises at the nationalist stage but also all pre-existing religions and teachings. So what I discuss below concerns much more than the transcendence of National Essence and ethnic revolution, but critical reflections on the cultural heritage of China and elsewhere. We have seen above the influence of anarchism on the aforementioned transcendence. Now let’s see how Buddhism contributes to this transcendence in three ways: (1) providing a transcendental standpoint from which the value of nationalist enterprises is relativized; (2) offering an alternative or even an antithesis to Confucian cosmology; (3) endorsing a critical theory of the original evil of human nature.

First, the transcendental standpoint and relativist perspective suggested by the Buddhist cosmology. At the beginning of “On the Five Negations,” Zhang dismisses the significance of national conflicts by asserting that “the Earth existing in a cosmos composed of innumerable universes like [the number of] the sands in the Ganges River is just a grain of millet in the grand governmental granary.” 夫於恆沙世界之中而有地球，無過太倉之有稊米。⁵²⁷ Here Zhang resorts to the mythical Buddhist cosmology to minimize the practical interest human beings struggle for despite his hesitation on whether such cosmology can withstand the challenge of rapidly developing natural sciences. Besides Buddhism, Zhang also refers to an allegory in “Zeyang” 則陽, one of the eleven Miscellaneous chapters of the *Zhuangzi*, describing constant wars for territory between two kingdoms, the one ruled by the House of Chu 觸 (“Buffet”) on the left horn of a snail, the other ruled by the House of Man 蠻 (“Maul”) on the right horn of the same snail.⁵²⁸ For

⁵²⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 453.

⁵²⁸ Burton Watson, 1968, p. 284.

Zhang, the conflicts between states and nations are just as insignificant as those between the Houses of Chu and Man. As a result, if people “truly wish to pursue wide and great goals, [they] definitely should eliminate the ethnic boundary.” 誠欲廣大，固不當分種族。⁵²⁹

Furthermore, Zhang also applies this relativist perspective to Chinese language, an essential aspect of National Essence. This issue is briefly mentioned in the transitional passage between the Negation of the government and the Negation of the community. Quote: “[We] now discuss negating the government. A precondition to realize this is the simultaneous overthrow of all other governments. National boundaries should be removed, languages and writing systems should be unified, this is [the preconditions that] everyone knows [in order to cease the war and other calamities].” 今日無政府，固必與他政府同時俱盡。國界之當先破，語言文字之當先統一者，斯盡人所知也。⁵³⁰ This sentence has rarely drawn attention from previous researchers. Compared to the abundant writings Zhang devoted to defending Chinese language and writing system, this sentence is just unnoticeable. Considering the context that Zhang was then coping with radical attacks on Chinese language and writing system from the *New Age Journal* writers, it is understandable that he skips this topic and rushes to the next phase of Negation. Nonetheless, this brief assertion is enough to demonstrate that Zhang is fully aware of the necessity of unifying worldwide languages during the first two phases of Negations, which implies the unavoidable disappearance of Chinese language in the long term.

Second, the negation of the Confucian belief that “the ultimate virtue of Heaven and Earth is the ‘creation’ (*sheng 生*),” rooted in the *Yi Jing* 易經 (Book of Changes). I have touched on this topic in the general introduction of “On the Five Negations.” This negation is associated with Buddhism doctrines for Zhang refers to various Buddhist texts revealing sufferings (and evilness) as essential to human life. As a result, we do not need to be grateful to Heaven and Earth, but we should rather feel resentment. Sakamoto Hiroko has studied the damage Zhang’s negation did to the Confucian tradition at the intellectual level, including the damage to the notion of benevolence (*ren 仁*),⁵³¹ what I discuss here

⁵²⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 453.

⁵³⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 456

⁵³¹ Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, pp. 50-52.

concerns the social level. Regarding creation as the ultimate virtue of Heaven and Earth is a crucial belief because it lays the cosmological foundation for the fundamental bonds (*gang* 纲) between father and son, husband and wife. Once the value of creation is questioned and overturned, the individual gets rid of the eternal debt he owes to the world, the emperor (“Son of Heaven”), and his parents, hence undermining the ethic obligations of filial piety and marital relationship. This is what we have seen in the latter part of the Negation of the government of “On the Five Negations” where Zhang conceives the elimination of political, economic, and military institutions as well as marital and family bonds.

Furthermore, negating the value of creation is also accountable to the Negation of the community. The rural community of ancient China is characterized by the attachment to the native land and the unwillingness to leave it (*antu zhongqian* 安土重遷). Negating the fertile value of the Earth, however, cuts the organic ties between rural habitants and their land, which allows Zhang to imagine a world of nomadic and atomic individuals moving on to new places.⁵³² The picture Zhang depicts following the disintegration of the community reminds me of the lifestyle of wandering monks. This association is not groundless. In a passage of “On the Five Negations” criticizing the limit of anarchism, Zhang refers to the societies in Uttarakuru (Yudanyue zhou 鬻單越洲 or Beijulu zhou 北俱蘆洲), one of the four terrestrial spheres (continents; great island) in the Buddhist mythology. The people of Uttarakuru do not possess wives and concubines, land and estate, property, and technical items. That is why they “enjoy mental tranquility and longevity superior to the people of the other three terrestrial spheres, and also why Buddha did not appear in this terrestrial sphere. Don’t we have clear proofs today for this case [in the Buddhist mythology]?” 清寧耆壽，殊勝三洲，而佛亦不於是洲出世，此其事豈非明驗於今耶？⁵³³ It is a solid piece of evidence that Zhang’s negation of social institutions and bonds was influenced by Buddhism.

Third, critical reflections on cultural heritage and revolution underpinned by the theory of the original evil of human nature. From the general introduction of “On the Five Negations,” we have seen Zhang’s criticism of the Greek philosophers’ conception of

⁵³² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 455-457.

⁵³³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 460.

human nature. In fact, other advocates of the original goodness of human nature are also targeted including anarchism, Mencius, Rousseau, and even Schopenhauer.⁵³⁴ In addition to a multitude of cases of social and natural phenomena, Zhang refers to religious texts, myths, and literature of both China and abroad to demonstrate the dominance of the propensity to violence and sexual desire at the root of human nature:

Human nature reveals itself most in poetry, next in novels and myths. Taking the *Book of Odes* of China as an example, the “Airs of the States” (*Guofeng* 國風) express the sexual desire whereas the “Court Hymns” (*Ya* 雅) and the “Eulogies” (*Song* 頌) express the propensity to violence. The expression of sexual desire is embellished by verses like “the modest, retiring, virtuous young lady: for our prince a good mate she.” Whereas the expression of the propensity to violence is embellished by verses like “thou [king Wu] did’st vanquish Yin, and put a stop to its cruelties; effecting the firm establishment of thy merit.” ... As to the myth, in both Greek and Indian [myths], gods and goddesses exist side by side. Howling winds and driving rains are commonly regarded as battles between celestial gods. ... The teachings centered on Shiva and Vishnu [Shaivism] of Hinduism publicly preach the doctrine valorizing sexuality whereas the teachings of Islam publicly preach the doctrine encouraging violence. Therefore, I know that sexual desire and the propensity to violence are both rooted in human nature.

人之情性可見者，莫如詩；其次莫如小說、神話。中國之《詩》，風以道淫，雅、頌以道殺。而言淫者，以窈窕好逑文之；言殺者，以神武耆定文之……至於神話，希臘、印度皆立男女二神。而疾風驟雨，則羣指為天神戰鬪之事……而溼婆葦紐之教，則公言淫；天方之教，則公言殺。故知淫云殺云，皆人之根性也。⁵³⁵

This passage expresses one of the most unorthodox ideas not just in “On the Five Negations” but indeed in Zhang’s whole life. Moreover, it dramatically differs from his previous approval of National Essence and religions. The *Book of Odes*, whether considered as a masterpiece of literature or one of the Confucian classics, is at the core of National Essence. But now, references to it aims at revealing the original evil of human nature. As to the references of worldwide religious and mythical beliefs, there is a continuity between the underlying religious idea of this passage and that in “On the Origin of the

⁵³⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 459-460.

⁵³⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 465.

Teaching/Religion (Part 1)” of the *Book of Urgency (revised version)*. In the latter text, Zhang considers religion as a category of cultural phenomena that constitutes an essential aspect of human nature. Five years later, this viewpoint does not change. What has changed is Zhang’s ideas of human nature. Religions and myths, as expressions of this human nature, are subject to negative judgment, correspondingly. In contrast to the wide-ranging criticism of National Essence and religions, Buddhism is never targeted in “On the Five Negations.”

Another issue that dramatically opposes “On the Five Negations” and earlier texts is the attitude towards Xunzi. Xunzi is of particular importance in the early developments of Zhang’s scholarship. (1) He had considerable influence on the Han learning, to which Zhang was affiliated; (2) his scholarship served as a connection for Zhang’s studies of Western sciences; (3) he provided Zhang with the theoretical basis against Kang Youwei’s idea of “establishing the teaching through the way of gods and spirits;” (4) his idea of *qun* 群 (group) shaped Zhang’s thinking of national survival in an age of social Darwinism;⁵³⁶ (5) last but not the least, Xunzi’s theory of the original evil of human nature, relevant to the quotation below. In this passage from “On the Five Negations,” Zhang praises Xunzi for his insight into the original evil of human nature but then sets out to discuss the self-contradictions in Xunzi’s thought:

Among ancient advocates of the original evil of human nature, Xunqing [Xunzi] was the most preeminent. However, he still resorted to the ritual and law to govern the people [of original evil] ... which considerably contradicts his own premise. Why? Since [Xunzi] realized the original evil of human nature, he should have regarded the government in the same way as he regards the human being. Isn’t the nature of the government as evil as the human’s? [Xunzi resorts to] the ritual and law to restrict [the individual and governmental behaviors], however, the ritual and law are established by humans of the original evil. Even if [we recognize that] the ritual and law themselves are not evil, nonetheless, it is impossible to replace human officials with [puppets made by] wood carving. Hence, it is still the humans of the original evil who control the ritual and law.

古之言性惡者，莫如荀卿，其見非不卓絕，猶云當以禮法治之……而自語相違

⁵³⁶ The first three points have been sufficiently introduced in Chapter 1. As to Point 4, see Chang Hao, 1988, pp. 150-153.

實甚。何者？既知人性之惡，彼政府者亦猶人耳，其性寧獨不惡耶？檢以禮法，而禮法者又惡人所制也。就云禮法非惡，然不可刻木為吏，則把持禮法者，猶是惡人。

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We know by Chapter 1 that Zhang's admiration of Xunzi had contributed to his negative attitude towards Buddhism. Following the establishment of Zhang's Buddhist commitment, it is inevitable for him to reevaluate his previous scholarly standpoint. However, as far as I know, it is in this passage of "On the Five Negations" that Zhang explicitly criticizes Xunzi for the first time, arguing that Xunzi's approval of the government and state (regulated by the ritual and law) contradicts his theory of the original evil of human nature. We can see that this criticism follows the same logic as Zhang's criticism of cultural heritage and religions. The link between Zhang's criticism of Xunzi and his Buddhist commitment is best shown in a later work *Disquisitions on National Heritage* (*Guogu Lunheng* 國故論衡). Published in Japan in June 1910, this is Zhang's matured and most elaborated work on the traditional Chinese scholarship. In "Philosophical Clarification" (*Mingjian* 明見), a chapter of the third (and the last) volume of this book, Zhang reaffirms his criticism of Xunzi in "On the Five Negations," pointing out that "Sunqing [Xunzi] aims at maintaining the order of the mundane world, not concerned with transcending [this mundane world]. [His scholarship] is limited within the scope of the ritual, social norms, and law. Despite finite achievements, [his scholarship] is not sufficient to approach the ultimate *(transcendental truth). Now that [I] regard Buddhism as the ultimate measure, hence [I] evaluate [Xunzi's scholarship] to be 'superior in theory but inferior in practice'." 孫卿……意在持世，不務超越。居促於禮義、法度之間，雖已小成榮華，而不足以上契大道。今以浮屠為天樞，故曰“陳義高，經事庳”也。⁵³⁸ Clearly, Buddhism has served in Zhang's thought as the theoretical coordinate system to reevaluate all Chinese schools and scholars including Xunzi.*

Furthermore, examining the original evil of human nature leads Zhang to relativize the value of revolution. Just as the relativism of the Chinese language, this issue was generally neglected. The quoted passage below appears in the part criticizing the original goodness of human nature of "On the Five Negations":

⁵³⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 463.

⁵³⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011c, p. 762.

People in contemporary societies also have the will to win. But it is often restrained by the desire for profit [hence does not explicitly manifest itself and its abuses]. It is because of this reason that the recent promotor of people's morale aim at reducing the people's desire for profit and arousing the self-esteem of everyone in order that the people become bold and fearless. Once anarchism turns into a reality, [these promotor of people's morale] turn to be concerned with the will to win instead of the desire for profit.

蓋處今時之社會者，非無好勝之心也，而常為利欲所制。故近世欲作民氣者，在損其好利之心，使人人自尊，則始可以勇猛無畏。及無政府主義成就以後，其所患又在彼不在此。⁵³⁹

Based on my study in Chapter 2, it is clear that “the recent promotor of people’s morale” actually refers to Zhang himself. More precisely, it refers to Zhang’s advocacy of Buddhism as the new Religion to mobilize the people and improve their morality in 1906. Both the desire for profit and the will to win are rooted in human nature as different reflections of the “illusion of selfhood.” Now that Zhang was involved in intense communication and debates with anarchists, he began to speculate far-reaching problems. As a result, the focus of his concern shifted from the desire for profit towards the will to win. The previous alliance between Buddhism (limited in the category of religion) and ethnic revolution, on the one hand, contributes to reducing the desire for profit, on the other, temporarily stimulates the will to win. In other words, all pre-existent religions express some aspects of human nature, but what Zhang wished to establish is a teaching that truly transcends the boundaries of human nature. It is due to this consideration that he developed his Buddhist thought into the doctrine of “non-creation,” superior to the religious ideas expressed in his 1906 speech.

To conclude Theme 2, Zhang’s will to transcend National Essence and ethnic revolution, though without intention to negate them, brings about the strongest anti-traditional implications throughout his intellectual career. Compared to the radicalized criticism of Confucius in “Brief Discussion on the Teachings of the pre-Qin Masters,” frequently referred to by previous researches, the way Zhang carries out his critical

⁵³⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 461.

reflections in “On the Five Negations” has more significant impacts since it undermines the ethic foundation of cultural heritage in general. What’s more, in this case, anti-traditional thinking is not oriented towards revolution but rather transcending revolution. Underlying these two aspects of transcendence is Zhang’s pessimism about the possibility of reconstructing a moral social order whether through cultural restoration or violent revolution.⁵⁴⁰ During this short period characterized by moral pessimism, the dominance of Buddhism in Zhang’s intellectual and religious life becomes stronger than ever, leading him to fight against evolutionism in terms of the nature and future of humanity.

Theme 3, the critique of evolutionism, a comparative examination between Zhang’s dystopian thought with the utopian trends represented by Kang Youwei’s *Book on the Great Unity* (and anarchism). In Theme 2 I have demonstrated how the tension and imbalance between nationalism and Buddhism (discussed in Chapter 2) became explicit, the value of the former being relativized whereas the latter gaining a transcendent position. In Theme 3, I intend to develop a comparative perspective between Zhang and Kang Youwei’s religious ideas. In Chapter 2, I have revealed that Zhang’s moralized criticism of Confucius was largely directed at Kang. Furthermore, despite his rejection of Kang’s “establishing the teaching through the way of gods and spirits,” Zhang approved of Kang’s awareness of the necessity to change or found a teaching/religion. The new Religion (Buddhism), along with National Essence, was established as a counterpart of Kang’s Confucian religion. This section deals with the utopian aspect of the two persons’ religious ideas, i.e. Zhang’s doctrine of non-creation vs. Kang’s theory of the Great Unity. This comparison is contextualized in Zhang’s struggle with anarchism and evolutionism.

Before setting out to explore this issue, it is necessary to briefly discuss the writing process of *Book on the Great Unity* to ascertain whether it influenced Zhang’s utopian (or rather dystopian) thought. The *Book on the Great Unity* occupies a crucial place in Kang’s overall writings. Liang Qichao described the impact of this book, along with *Studies of Confucius’ Institutional Reform*, as great volcanic eruption and earthquake.⁵⁴¹ Nonetheless, the theory of the Great Unity had only limited circulation among Kang’s close disciples.

⁵⁴⁰ Charlotte Furth (1976, pp. 139-147) has revealed the connection between Zhang’s disillusion of a potential revolutionary morality, his ideas of the government and state, and his changing appraisal of Xunzi and Han Feizi.

⁵⁴¹ Liang Qichao, 2010, p. 119.

The book itself was not published until 1913 in *Buren Magazine* 不忍雜誌 by installments (of only the first third of the book). The complete publication of *Book on the Great Unity* was in 1935, 8 years after Kang's death. According to Kang's preface to the *Book on the Great Unity*, written in 1919, he began writing this book during the Sino-French War in 1884. Another self-account, from the sequel of Kang's chronological autobiography,⁵⁴² shows that the writing process was completed in 1902. Modern researchers tended to accept 1902 as the reliable completion time of the book while regarding 1884 as the time when Kang began to conceive the theory of the Great Unity and accumulate manuscripts.⁵⁴³

Now the question is if Zhang had been influenced by Kang's theory of the Great Unity and treated Kang as an implicit interlocutor in "On the Five Negations"? Although the *Book on the Great Unity* was completely written in 1902, Zhang could have been informed by Liang Qichao about this during his communication in Yokohama the same year. However, no evidence shows that he had ever read this book before 1911, which is understandable since Kang was very cautious about the social impact of its publication. Nonetheless, Zhang probably had known the basic ideas of the Great Unity as early as his reformist period. A strong proof comes from an 1897 essay "On Equality." As revealed in Chapter 1, the Kang Party was Zhang's target when he criticized the advocates of the equalization between monarch and subject, father and son, man and woman based on a dogmatic understanding of Buddhist doctrines. The egalitarian ideas circulated within Kang's followers probably originated from Kang's theory of the Great Unity. Liang Qichao's memoir provides good proof:

Although he wrote this book [*Book on the Great Unity*], [Kang] Youwei kept it from others and never taught his students the theory of the Great Unity. [Because he] held the view that today [we are situated] in the Age of Disorder, [we can] only advocate the Lesser Prosperity, not the Great Unity. If not, it will have catastrophic impacts on the world. Among his disciples, only Chen Qianqiu and Liang Qichao were permitted to read

⁵⁴² The original edition of Kang's chronological autobiography was written in 1899 during his exile in Japan. The sequel, covering the rest of Kang's life from 1899 to 1927, was printed on a small scale and revised when Kang was alive. However, its official publication time was as late as 1976. Kang Youwei, 1992, intro. p. 1.

⁵⁴³ On the question of the writing process, I have consulted Liang Qichao, 2010, p. 124; Hsiao K. C., 2014, pp. 255-257; Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 753-754.

this book in the early period. Extremely delighted after reading this book, we were enthusiastic about advocating a part of it. Youwei did not approve of our activity but could not prevent it. Afterward, many of the students of Wanmu Caotang Academy participated in advocating the ideas of the Great Unity.

有為雖著此書，然秘不以示人，亦從不以此義教學者，謂今方為“據亂”之世，只能言小康，不能言大同，言則陷天下於洪水猛獸。其弟子最初得讀此書者，惟陳千秋、梁啟超，讀則大樂，銳意欲宣傳其一部分。有為弗善也，而亦不能禁其所為，後此萬木草堂學徒多言大同矣。⁵⁴⁴

Considering Zhang's experience working with Liang and other Kang's followers in the *Shiwu Journal* press in 1897, he had sufficient access to the ideas originated from Kang's theory of the Great Unity, his disagreement to which constituted the background context of the publication of "On Equality," roughly seven months after joining *Shiwu Journal* press. The short-lived Wuxu Reform (and its preparation period) was the only period when the theory of the Great Unity was limitedly released and circulated thus having practical relevance. During his exile, Kang began to show himself as a consistent royalist faithful to the Guangxu Emperor. Despite the accomplishment of the *Book on the Great Unity*, any release of its content would damage his new public image and take away his political potential of returning to the imperial arena.⁵⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Liang Qichao turned away from the Confucian religion and shortly embraced Buddhism and republicanism, before shifting again to be an advocate of gradual constitutionalism. The loss of practical relevance of the theory of the Great Unity, along with the inaccessibility of the complete book, explains why in "On the Five Negations" Zhang targets anarchism but does not mention or allude to Kang's theory. Excluding Kang Youwei from the list of interlocutors, however, does not deny his influence on the development of Zhang's dystopian thought.

The late Qing and the beginning of the Republic is a turbulent period crucial for the transformation of Chinese society. It is by no means accidental that we witness strong trends of utopianism during this period. The Taiping Rebellion was an outstanding case, the utopian feature of which was exposed by its self-given title, the "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace" (*Taiping tianguo* 太平天國). Limiting the scope to the intellectual elites,

⁵⁴⁴ Liang Qichao, p. 2010, p. 123.

⁵⁴⁵ Hsiao K. C., 2014, pp. 144-146.

the earliest and most remarkable case was Kang Youwei's theory of the Great Unity. Tan Sitong's *An Exposition of Benevolence*, though highlighted by the subversive will to break through the traps, can be seen as a special expression of utopianism. The utopian trend also intrigued intellectuals attached to the Old-Text school, Zhang Taiyan and Liu Shipei. The former, despite his firm rejection of the advent of a perfect society, was deeply involved in this trend. Many revolutionary comrades of the two, though less educated and less literary, explored the utopian horizon with the same passion. Many belonging to a younger generation, these revolutionaries tended to seek and embrace more Westernized and secularized versions of utopia, represented by anarchism and the Three Principles of the People.⁵⁴⁶ The two cases, picked out to compare with Zhang's dystopia, shared some essential common ground despite their apparent distinctions.

Now that we have basic knowledge about the general background and the relationship between the three utopian cases, the comparative examination begins. Let's begin by examining their intellectual resources. The Chinese anarchists (leaving out the exception of Liu Shipei) relied heavily on Western scholarship and ideologies, primarily Western anarchist works, then the Western model of techno-scientific development and social reforms. Zhang's doctrine of non-creation, representing the opposite pole, was underpinned by native resources (the Buddhist and Daoist teachings). Anarchism, despite its critical stimulus to this doctrine, remained peripheral to its theoretical framework. Kang's theory of the Great Unity, different from the above two, had strong syncretic characteristics. It incorporated and integrated a wide range of intellectual resources both native and Western, religious and techno-scientific, political and ethical.⁵⁴⁷ Through a closer examination, we can find that Kang's intellectual inclusiveness and syncretism (sometimes imprudent) did not deny his strong commitment to Confucius' teachings. Zhang's attachment to the Old-Text school, in contrast, failed to make a voice in his dystopian vision. Generally, Zhang had a cynical attitude towards most of the intellectual resources he had attached to or been inspired by. Buddhism, as one of the rare exceptions, constituted the mainstay of his theory. In comparison, Buddhism also greatly inspired

⁵⁴⁶ Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, pp. 38-39; Hsiao K. C., 2011, p. 930; Wang Fansen, 2001, p. 199.

⁵⁴⁷ For a comprehensive knowledge of Kang's intellectual resources, see Hsiao K. C., 2014, pp. 255-260; Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 761-765. To get a glimpse of how Kang was inspired by these intellectual resources and based his theory on them, see Kang Youwei, 1992, pp. 12-13.

Kang's utopian tendency but was adopted and reinterpreted in a very different direction, as we will see later.

Next, let's proceed to examine the political and social aspects of their utopianism. Anarchism appealed to inferior classes to unite and break the current governmental machine and property system. Though extremely radical for practical struggles, but in terms of utopian vision, anarchism stopped halfway, as Zhang put it.⁵⁴⁸ Both Zhang and Kang explored more distant utopian realms from the place where the anarchists stopped. For Kang, what he put forward was breaking down nine boundaries to deliver human beings from profound sufferings: (1) the national boundary; (2) the boundary of classes; (3) the boundary of races; (4) the gender boundary; (5) the boundary of family; (6) the professional boundary; (7) the boundary of disorder; (8) the boundary of species; and finally (9) the boundary of sufferings.⁵⁴⁹ In contrast to such a far-reaching vision was Kang's political conservatism, regarding constitutional monarchy as a necessary stage preparing for the Age of Increasing Peace and finally the Age of Great Peace. A similar schema of stages existed in Zhang's case who claimed that, in comparison to anarchism, anti-Manchuism was a more practical objective and the doctrine of non-creation was a superior destination.⁵⁵⁰ Anarchism, on the other side, looked forward to the victory of a universal revolution once for all. Despite the above similarities to Zhang, for the issue of the government, Kang distinguished himself from the latter (and also from anarchism). In Kang's conception, a world government is crucial to promote the Great Unity. Democratically elected, this government will be in charge of welfare services such as infant and old-age care, education, and productive enterprises.⁵⁵¹ Hence, Kang was oriented towards a socialist utopia rather than an anarchist one.

The brief examination above shows the complex relative positioning between the utopianism of Zhang Taiyan, Kang Youwei, and Chinese anarchists. Neither two of them reach a consensus against the third one. However, Kang and anarchists did share common ground for one crucial issue, i.e. their attitude towards evolutionism. Kang was one of the

⁵⁴⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 460.

⁵⁴⁹ Hsiao K. C., 2011, p. 679.

⁵⁵⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 269.

⁵⁵¹ Liang Qichao, 2010, pp. 121-122. According to Liang, Kang's such ideas were mainly based on the Confucian utopia depicted in "Liyun" 禮運, a chapter of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記).

first advocates of evolutionism in China. Furthermore, he established a Confucian version of the evolutionary theory of history, best manifested in his *Annotation of the Analects* (*Lunyu zhu* 論語註), a book completely written between 1915 and 1917:⁵⁵²

The evolution of human history follows a regular schema. From the family system to the tribe, next to the state, and finally from multiple states to a grand unity. ... Developing from the Age of Disorder to the Age of Increasing Peace, and then from the Age of Increasing Peace to the Age of Great Peace, [the human society] evolves gradually and transforms for a reason. It is a universal principle applicable to ten thousand nations. ... Confucius, in authoring *Spring and Autumn Annals*, extensively elucidated the Theory of the Three Ages. ... [This elucidation] was undertaken by deducing from the evolutionary principle.

人道進化，皆有定位。自族制而為部落，而成國家，由國家而成大統……蓋自據亂進為升平，升平進為太平，進化有漸，因革有由，驗之萬國，莫不同風……孔子之為《春秋》，張為三世……蓋推進化之理而為之。⁵⁵³

This passage shows that Kang reinterprets Confucius' teachings based on the evolutionary theory of human history. Confucius's teachings, consequently, are not only relevant to ancient times but are also to the present; not only applicable to China but also to the whole world. Despite the divergent attitude towards Confucianism, both Kang and the anarchists treated evolutionism as a universal principle that effectively explained the past and, more importantly, implied a promising future. In addition to evolution, Kang was also one of the first advocates of the universal principle and materialism,⁵⁵⁴ three of the four “confusions” Zhang targeted.

While embracing evolutionism, both sides critically reflected on the negative impacts of increasing competition. For Chinese anarchists, many were upset with the competition

⁵⁵² Similar to the *Book on the Great Unity*, the writing process of the *Annotation of the Analects* is uncertain. According to the author's preface, the annotation work began before the Wuxu Reform and was completed during his exile in India in 1902. However, inferring from its original edition of 1917, there were additions as late as 1915. Despite this fact, it is probably true that the outline of the Theory of the Three Ages had been established before the Wuxu Reform. Kang Youwei, 2015, p. 344, the editor's commentary.

⁵⁵³ Kang Youwei, 2007a, p. 393.

⁵⁵⁴ For original texts on Kang's thought of the universal principle and materialism, see respectively “Complete Book on the True Principle and Common Law” (*Shili gongfa quanshu* 實理公法全書); “On Saving the Nation by Materials” (*Wuzhi jiuguo lun* 物質救國論); in Kang Youwei, 2015, pp. 23-40, 375-426. For scientific conclusions, see respectively Wong Young-tsu, 2006, pp. 58-59; Hsiao K. C., 2014, p. 260.

legitimized by Darwinism,⁵⁵⁵ to which Western anarchism offered an alternative narrative. Kropotkin's theory, for example, regarded mutual aid as an essential dimension for the survival and evolution of all species including the human being. For Kang, competition was one of the four prohibited things in a society of the Great Unity. Due to Darwin's half-knowledge of human evolution, Kang harshly criticized, wise men shamelessly advocated competition, resulting in bullying, moral degeneration, and bloody conflicts.⁵⁵⁶ So the utopianism of Kang and anarchists had nothing in common with social Darwinism, but rather reactions to the abuses of social Darwinism. In Chapter 2, I have quoted a long passage from "On the Non-Self of Human Beings" in which Zhang expresses his concern with the increasing evil wisdom represented by the theory of competition and utility. While Zhang reached a consensus with the other two sides about the abuse of excessive competition, they had opposite views in terms of utilitarianism. This divergence guides us to the fundamental issue of this theme, the moral theory of human nature and its relations with evolutionism, which also lies at the core of "On the Five Negations."

To have a basic understanding of Kang's moral theory of human nature, let's see a passage from "Inner and Outer Chapters of Master Kang" (*Kangzi neiwaipian* 康子內外篇), purportedly written in 1886 and partly published in *Qingyi Journal* in 1899:

All the beings of blood and flesh have desires and all indulge their desires. Only death can eliminate desires. The most desireless is the Buddha who still indulges the desire of preserving his soul. The most desireless is the sage who still acts following his desire for benevolence and righteousness.

凡有血氣之倫必有慾，有慾則莫不縱之，若無慾則唯死耳。最無慾者佛，縱其保守靈魂之慾；最無慾者聖人，從其仁義之慾。⁵⁵⁷

We can see that Kang rejects the orthodox dichotomy between heavenly principle and human desire. Moral principles like benevolence and righteousness, and even the other-worldly tendency, are treated as special expressions of desires. Hence, the true Confucian teachings should guide people to live a life in accordance with human nature which includes proper expressions of desires). Furthermore, for Kang, the basic dynamic of

⁵⁵⁵ Wang Fansen, 2001, p. 205.

⁵⁵⁶ Kang Youwei, 2007b, p. 183.

⁵⁵⁷ Kang Youwei, 2015, p. 10.

human desire is evading suffering and pursuing happiness.⁵⁵⁸ On the one hand, the ethics underpinning Kang's utopianism was aimed at maximizing the common people's happiness (both sensorial and aesthetic), hence similar to Bentham's utilitarianism.⁵⁵⁹ On the other hand, the blissful society of the Great Unity was not only the economic and technological zenith but also the moral pinnacle, the accomplishment of the Confucian notion of benevolence.⁵⁶⁰

In contrast to Kang's joyful utopianism, Zhang's doctrine of non-creation leads us into a gloomy dystopia. Both conceived of removing institutional and family boundaries, but for Zhang, the objective was ceasing the people's envy of others rather than increasing their happiness. The underlying reason is revealed in the part on evolution of "On the Four Confusions":

In terms of goodness and evil, pursuing more happiness is just another name for greed and rashness. Why? To improve something, one has to be located at a point, and the original point [of the human being] is purely animality. Starting from this original point and improve ceaselessly is nothing more than expanding the original animality.

以善惡言，求增進幸福者，特貪冒之異名。所以者何？有所進者，不得不先有所處，而最初所處之點，惟是獸性。循其所處之點，日進不已，亦惟是擴張獸性。

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Clearly, Zhang rejects the idea that we are capable of accomplishing coordinated improvement of morality and happiness. And this rejection is underpinned by his cynical moral theory of human nature, which delegitimizes human desires. However, confronting the moral and sensorial/emotional dimensions is only the first step. The next step consists in establishing a co-evolutionary theory of goodness and evil, happiness and suffering, which is the subject of "On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution." Zhang not only reveals the contradiction between the moral and sensorial/emotional dimensions of human evolution but also refutes a linear and progressivist picture of morality and happiness. As a result, evading suffering and pursuing happiness, the basic dynamic of

⁵⁵⁸ Kang Youwei, 2007b, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁹ Hsiao K. C., 2014, pp. 97-98. To know how Kang depicted his imagined utopia, see Kang Youwei, 2007b, pp. 184-188.

⁵⁶⁰ Chang Hao, 1988, p. 80.

⁵⁶¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 475-476.

human desire in Kang's eyes, is but an illusory hope.

Earlier I have said that the crucial divergence between Zhang and Kang as well as anarchism is their attitude towards evolutionism. Through the analysis above on utilitarianism and the moral theory of human nature, we now understand more thoroughly how this divergence is originated. Based on the theory of the original goodness of human nature, both Kang and the anarchists, as Zhang put it at the outset of "On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution," persisted in "the ultimate goal that the human evolution will not stop going forward until reaching the aesthetically and morally perfect realm." 如彼所執，終局目的，必達於盡美醇善之區，而進化論始成。⁵⁶² Based on the theory of the original evil of human nature, Zhang wished that human beings could return to an uncultured lifestyle rather than follow the course of civilization, as a primary stage of ceasing conflicts and sufferings.⁵⁶³ For the ultimate solutions, he resorted to the Buddhist ideal of *nirvāṇa* to gradually empty the six realms of transmigration.

At the end of this theme, I propose a comparison between the Buddhist influence on Zhang and Kang's utopianism. For Kang's *Book on the Great Unity*, the book begins by "entering the world and observing the human beings' sufferings" (*rushijie guanzhongku* 入世界觀眾苦). Its main body deals with nine boundaries, regarded as the origins of the suffering. To cease the suffering, the solution Kang proposes is breaking down all these boundaries, which leads to the ideal society of the Great Unity.⁵⁶⁴ We can see that the structure of *Book on the Great Unity* was considerably reshaped by the "four noble truths" (*sishengdi* 四聖諦) of Buddhism, "suffering" (*ku 苦*, *dukkha*), "origin" (*ji 集*, *samudaya*), "cessation" (*mie 滅*, *nirodha*), and "path" (*dao 道*, *magga*). Moreover, what underpins the breakdown of nine boundaries is the principle of indiscriminate egalitarianism, largely influenced by Buddhism, as demonstrated by Zhang's "On Equality." Next, Kang's vivid description of the imagined utopia under the subheading "Blissfulness of the People in the Age of the Great Unity" (*Datong zhishi renmin jile* 大同之世人民極樂), especially the part on physical cleanliness and aesthetic pleasure,⁵⁶⁵ may probably be under influence of the Buddhist mythology about *devaloka* (*tianjie* 天界), the superior of the six realms of

⁵⁶² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 405.

⁵⁶³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 458.

⁵⁶⁴ Hsiao K. C., 2011, pp. 678-679.

⁵⁶⁵ Kang Youwei, 2007b, pp. 186-187.

Buddhist transmigration where heavenly gods inhabit. Kang's high appraisal of Buddhism is particularly exposed at the end of the book when he speculates the destiny of current world religions in the Age of the Great Unity. Islam will disappear first, followed by Christianity. Confucianism will also disappear because Confucius' teachings will all be fulfilled (except the doctrine of the *Yi Jing*). The disease is cured so the medicine has no longer any utility. "So in the Age of the Great Unity, only the teachings of immortals and Buddhism will prevail." 故大同之世，惟神仙與佛學二者大行。⁵⁶⁶ Between the two, Buddhist learning comes later and is suitable for those with upper wisdom since it contains more profound esoteric and subtle doctrines than the teaching of immortals.

Now let's examine how Buddhism contributed to the development of Zhang's dystopian ideas. As early as during his reformist period, Zhang had expressed some Buddhist ideas in "On Bacteria," the implications of which can only be grasped in the context here. In this appendix of "On the True Meanings of Confucianism," Zhang asserts that all beings (including the human) "are created due to illusory mental formations" 由妄想而成. Furthermore, he examines and concludes that "the addictive desires of the human being cling to the sound, sight, smell, taste, touch, and idea."⁵⁶⁷ And the benevolence and righteousness emerge based on the addictive desires." 人之嗜欲，著於聲、色、香、味、觸、法，而仁義即由嗜欲而起。⁵⁶⁸ We can see that despite the materialist tendency at this stage, Zhang had already adopted, in some important aspects, Buddhist idealism, which foreshadowed his later appreciation of the Yogācāra doctrine of "consciousness-only." We can also see where did his cynicism and skepticism towards morality and religion come from. Also starting from "On bacteria" is Zhang's reinterpretation of Buddhist transmigration in line with evolutionism, as revealed in Chapter 1. Zhang's attitude towards evolutionism turned negative in the period in question here, nonetheless, he developed an evolutionary framework of Buddhist transmigration and *karma* rather than abandoning it. In "On the Five Negations," he argues, quote once again, "if any beings continue to exist, the human being cannot definitively disappear. The newly emerged species will gradually

⁵⁶⁶ Kang Youwei, 2007b, p. 188.

⁵⁶⁷ These are six qualities produced by the objects and organs of sense, commonly referred to as the "six dust" (*liuchen* 六塵, *six gunas*).

⁵⁶⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, pp. 131-132, 134-135. See also, Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, p. 35.

evolve into primitive humans. Through long-term infiltration [in the cultural evolution], the society and state today will emerge again.” Not only the biological evolution from microorganisms to human beings is viewed as the flow and transformation of *karma* but also is the cultural and institutional evolution in human history.

In comparison, Buddhism exerted more profound influences on Zhang than on Kang. Kang’s project to break down nine boundaries is underpinned by Buddhist egalitarianism. But at the practical level, it principally resorted to Westernized institutional reforms and techno-scientific development. Zhang, in contrast, declined any attempt to accomplish his dystopian destination by external developments, nor did he approve of any kind of compulsion. Instead, he counted on the voluntary contract between comrades⁵⁶⁹ aiming at liberating themselves as well as others from *karma*.⁵⁷⁰ The two authors distinguished from each other not only in means but also the destination. In a 1904 essay entitled “On Lutheran Protestantism” (*Lun lude xinjiao* 論路德新教), Kang divides religions into two categories, the one is the “ascetic religion/teaching” (*kuxing zhijiao* 苦行之教), the other is the “religion/teaching adaptable to humans as sentient beings” (*shiqing zhijiao* 適情之教).⁵⁷¹ Kang’s utopia of the Great Unity pursues the maximization of happiness and the minimization of suffering. Even the teachings of immortals and Buddhism are depicted more as mental enjoyment than as religious pursuit. So his utopianism should definitively be included in the second category. As to Zhang, he showed no envy towards a secular or transcendental pure land. The ultimate goal of his doctrine of non-creation is the absolute *nirvāṇa* of all beings and the disappearance of the illusory material world, hence it can be regarded as an “ascetic religion/teaching.”

* Conclusion *

At the end of this chapter, I would like to conclude by firstly summarizing the contributions of the thematic studies above to a better understanding of Zhang Buddhist thought and broader subjects from mid-1907 to mid-1908, then discussing the relevance of

⁵⁶⁹ Not the comrades for the revolutionary enterprise but the comrades for the Buddhist salvation of all beings.

⁵⁷⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 466-467.

⁵⁷¹ Kang Youwei, 2015, pp. 367-368.

this chapter to other chapters, before assessing Zhang's dystopian thought and its echoes.

Because of the brevity of the period in question compared with Chapter 2, we have the chance to see how a particular external circumstance (the faction conflicts within the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance) and a particular intellectual trend (anarchism), to a great extent, drove the transformation of Zhang's Buddhist thought and its political implications. This chapter stresses the crucial influence of the anarchist groups, larger than many researchers have supposed and Zhang would be willing to admit. This viewpoint is strongly supported by an in-depth analysis of Zhang's 1911 letter to Cai Yuanpei. The three threads offered by this letter, on the one hand, reveals the transitional role of "On the Five Negations" between the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* and the *Qiwu* philosophy, on the other, are helpful to understand Zhang's will to transcend nationalism and republicanism, leading to the phases of Five Negations.

The critical issue underlying the conflict between Zhang and the Chinese anarchists is their divergent attitude towards evolutionism. In the course of the seven years that Chapter 2 deals with, Zhang became more and more concerned with the social and moral implications of evolutionism. Nonetheless, it is based on an evolutionary perspective of human history that he realized the urgent need to reconstruct the "consciousness of kind" of the Chinese nation, leading to his advocacy of Religion and National Essence. During the one year covered in Chapter 3, Zhang definitively shifted to the opposite side of the ideology of evolutionism. Correspondingly, his ideas of religion and nationalism were subject to adjustment. Evolutionism continued to be one of Zhang's major concerns. It was not until the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy that Zhang felt capable of coping with the intellectual challenge raised by evolutionism.

In Theme 3, I introduce Kang's theory of the Great Harmony to compare with Zhang's doctrine of non-creation and anarchism. Despite the apparent distinction, Kang's theory and anarchism (as well as most of the other secular ideologies in modern China) shared the presupposition that the evolutionary process would finally allow the realization of an ideal society. In comparison to anarchism, Kang's utopianism is better compared with Zhang's Buddhist dystopia, revealing the uniqueness and far-reaching implications of the latter in the intellectual history of modern China. Furthermore, this theme continues the

comparative studies between Zhang and Kang in Chapters 1 and 2, demonstrating again Kang's significant influence on the development of Zhang's religious thought. This comparative perspective is meaningful and deserves more research in the future.

Another issue relative to Chapter 2 is the relationship between Buddhism and National Essence, studied in Theme 2. In his 1906 speech, Zhang attributed the task of "improving the citizens' morality" to Religion whereas that of "improving the patriotic eagerness" to National Essence. This implies, according to my studies in Chapter 2, that Religion (reformed Buddhism) occupies a position superior to National Essence since morality, not patriotism, is the central concern throughout Zhang's intellectual and religious life. In "On the Five Negations," we see the subsequent development of this hierarchical positioning (between Religion and National Essence). On the one hand, a cynical theory of the original evil of human nature is established, mainly based on Buddhist doctrines, facilitating moralized critiques of the overall cultural heritage including the Chinese National Essence. On the other, patriotism serves to promote the people's morale thus overcoming their desire for profit. Once the ethnic revolution is accomplished and the phases of Five Negations arrive, patriotism is something to be transcended since it is time to disintegrate the "consciousness of kind" towards the state and the nation. In other words, morality is maintained as the ultimate value whereas the value of patriotism is relativized.

The aforementioned development of hierarchical positioning leads me to suggest a more precise image of Zhang's practical Buddhism. Previous researches, as indicated in Chapter 2, tended to treat Zhang's Buddhist writings and thinking from 1906 to 1908 (or 1909) as homogenous. The transformation happens only after the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy around 1910. According to my studies, however, practical Buddhism was replaced by the doctrine of non-creation in the second half of 1907. Even during the first year of Zhang's exile stay in Japan from mid-1906, it is improper to regard Zhang's practical Buddhism from a purely instrumentalist perspective. There always exists a transcendental dimension in Zhang's Buddhist thought. As to the *Qiwu* philosophy, what its foundation means is rather bridging the gap between Buddhism and National Essence following the syncretism of Buddhism and Daoism, as we will see in Chapter 5.

Assessing Zhang's pessimist and dystopian thought is particularly complicated and

debated. A representative opinion comes from Hsiao K. C. who regarded Zhang's doctrine of non-creation as disappointed and suicidal nihilism in contrast to Kang's hedonistic utopianism.⁵⁷² Hsiao is right in pointing out Zhang's depressive and suicidal mentality in this period. However, the crisis of meaning is not equal to nihilism (void of meaning). Instead, Zhang's other-worldly aspiration is accompanied by a strong will to act, fight, and change.⁵⁷³ To demonstrate this, I would like to quote a passage in "On the Five Negations" against the teleological vision based on Hegel:

Someone stole [or reinterpreted] Hegel's theory of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, proposing that the goal of the universe is the "creation/ creation/becoming" and [we] should only affirm the things in line with this goal. However, the goal of the universe may just be the remorse of its becoming. On what grounds should we affirm the becoming? [The one who wishes to be a] Tiaoyu Zhangfu (great tamer of one's self)⁵⁷⁴ should be a confessor of the universe, not someone drifting along [the evolutionary current of creation].

或竊海格爾說有、無、成義，⁵⁷⁵ 以為宇宙之目的在成，故惟合其目的者為是。然則宇宙目的，或正在自悔其成，何成之可樂？調御丈夫，當為宇宙之懺悔者，不當為宇宙所漂流者。⁵⁷⁶

Clearly, Zhang sees himself as a fighter, if not yet a Tiaoyu Zhangfu, against the morally degenerative current of the universe. No matter what value judgment we make, (value) nihilism is not the right term regarding Zhang's doctrine of non-creation. As the final point, this doctrine revealed and increased Zhang's tension with his comrades, the current ideological trends, and the world. This tension fueled his aspiration of becoming a monk in India, to be studied in Chapter 4.

Zhang's dystopian thought influenced and was echoed by later intellectuals and monks, especially in the early 1920s when anarchism regained its momentum among Chinese intelligentsia. An outstanding example was Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之 (1899-1972)

⁵⁷² Hsiao K. C., 2011, p. 869

⁵⁷³ Wang Yuanyi (1999, p. 234) also held this opinion.

⁵⁷⁴ Tiaoyu Zhangfu 調禦丈夫 is one of ten names of Buddha, literally "tamer." This name honors Buddha's power of controlling and ceasing desires and afflictions.

⁵⁷⁵ I modify the punctuation and translation of this phrase based on Meng Zhuo's (2019, intro. p. 22) study.

⁵⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 464.

whose theory of “cosmic revolution” (*yuzhou geming* 宇宙革命) had been hugely influenced by Zhang’s doctrine of non-creation.⁵⁷⁷ To be noted, Zhu had briefly become a monk in the Doushuai Temple 兜率寺 in Hangzhou in 1921. Taixu’s case is probably more well-known. Inspired by Zhang’s combination of Buddhism and anarchism, he proposed his utopianism of three Negations which overlapped with Zhang’s Five Negations but was less critical towards anarchism and had a much more optimist tone.⁵⁷⁸ Besides, we see Yang Du’s ideas of the “Non-self school” (*wuwo zong* 無我宗). During the first high tide of Chinese anarchism in the later 1900s, Yang was a believer of statism, famous for advocating the “doctrine of Gold and Iron” (*jintie zhuyi* 金鐵主義). As one of the main promoters to revive the hereditary monarchy for Yuan Shikai in 1915, Yang retreated from politics in disgrace following Yuan’s failure. He reappeared in 1921 as an enlightened lay Buddhist, proposing his utopian version which mainly syncretized Chan Buddhism and anarchism, before turning to communism towards the end of his life.⁵⁷⁹ A peer and an important interlocutor of Liang Qichao and Zhang Taiyan, this episode in Yang’s intellectual life can be considered as a belated echo of practical Buddhism and Buddhist utopianism, which I have sufficiently discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

⁵⁷⁷ Peter Zarrow, 1990, pp. 230-231.

⁵⁷⁸ Peter Zarrow, 1990, p. 217.

⁵⁷⁹ Jiang Hainu, 2012, pp. 257-258, 265-270.

Chapter 4. The Undiscovered Side of Zhang Taiyan's Buddhist Engagement: Experience, Practice, and Related Ideas

* Introduction *

As mentioned in Chapter 3, from the end of 1907 to the beginning of 1908, Zhang Taiyan planned an unrealized travel to India to become a monk there. The plan, certainly due to his disappointment with his comrades following the power struggle within the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, was also fueled by the tension Zhang felt with the human world once he had established the doctrine of non-creation. Early Chinese researchers generally criticized this attempt as revolutionary defeatism and explained it by the negative influences of Buddhism and anarchism.⁵⁸⁰ Most researches actually just skipped over it, treating it as an accidental event without much significance. My study, in contrast, argues that the aspiration to become a monk in India was only a relatively visible episode of Zhang's lifelong religious calling, practice, and inner life, a tip of the iceberg. For the investigations of this chapter, this episode is important not because it is dramatic and controversial, but because it led me to realize that Buddhism for Zhang was not only one of the main sources of his intellectual career but also a way of life. Based on hitherto neglected primary sources, this study endeavors to reconstruct a comprehensive picture of Zhang's experience, practice, and related ideas, with respect to Buddhism and other religious traditions.

When we explore further into this undiscovered side of Zhang's Buddhist engagement and then turning back searching previous research for references, we find out that it is a subject hardly touched on. Unlike the subjects of my other chapters, specialists of Zhang so far have not yet dedicated a comprehensive work to Zhang's Buddhist practice and experience. We do have several inspiring articles in this regard (e.g. Huang Ko-wu's study of Zhang's early years and Rao Zongyi's study of Zhang's appreciation of India),⁵⁸¹ but they do not change the whole picture. The general neglect of this subject, on the one

⁵⁸⁰ See, e.g. Tang Wenquan & Luo Fuhui, 1986, pp. 260-264.

⁵⁸¹ Huang Ko-wu, 1978. Rao Zongyi, 1998.

hand, means that I have few solid academic results to rely on. On the other, however, it frees me from explaining the originality of my study since it is largely a virgin territory. Despite the lack of scientific literature, the original sources have been so well collected and edited that I am able to efficiently browse them and extract the useful materials.

The ideal situation of the primary sources means that the lack of scientific work is not caused by the inaccessibility of sources but instead due to the prevalent misconception of Zhang's relations with Buddhism. Thanks to the efforts of both mainland Chinese and overseas scientific communities for several decades, we now witness a diversity of research topics oriented toward different aspects of Zhang's Buddhist thought, including those emphasizing its political relevance, those more interested in exploring its cultural and ideological implications, and those focusing on its doctrinal novelty as well as continuity with respect to previous Buddhist scholars. However, if we cease to equate Zhang's "Buddhist engagement" with his "Buddhist thought" and hence only rely on his Buddhist theoretical writings, we see immediately that the diversity of current scholarship is limited to the more visible side of the whole picture. The focus on this side, though revealing the common interest of previous researchers and how they assess the importance of different aspects of Buddhist engagement, is after all unilateral.

To be precise, what distorts our understanding of Zhang's relations with Buddhism is the misconception that Zhang was a Buddhist scholar similar to the secular academics of Buddhist studies from the next generations like Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (1893-1964) and Zhou Shujia 周叔迦 (1899-1970). In other words, previous researchers considered Zhang's interest in Buddhism as purely intellectual and hence distinguished Zhang from his contemporary Buddhist laymen represented by Yang Wenhui who had a firm religious commitment to Buddhism. The current categorization of "Buddhist scholars" and "Buddhist laymen" is problematic for the reason that it tends to suggest a dichotomy between the two, which is largely responsible for the aforementioned misconception that has resulted in the neglect of Zhang's religious experience and practice. The critical reflection at the methodological level has been carried out in the Introduction of the dissertation. Moreover, similar reflections, as well as some content of this chapter, are

present in one of my earlier publications for the *Oxford Journal of Buddhist Studies*.⁵⁸²

To show the prevalence of this misconception, let us see two examples. The first comes from the famous historian, Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990), who concluded his general assessment about Zhang's Buddhist engagement in an essay of his later years. "Zhang Taiyan," in his eyes, "is neither a Buddhist monk nor a layman. Like Westerners, he merely undertakes Buddhist studies from a philosophical approach, aiming at the re-evaluation of the overall Chinese scholarship." 太炎既非一佛徒，又非一居士。其佛學，僅如西方人抱一哲學觀點，乃依之以進退上下中國之全部學術史。⁵⁸³ The standpoint that Qian offered has been accepted by many and remains unquestioned today. As a recent example, Jiang Hainu affirms that in terminology "Buddhist studies" is more proper than "Buddhism" (or "Buddhist religion") to characterize Zhang's relations with Buddhism.⁵⁸⁴ Qian and Jiang's ideas are also shared by their colleagues of the overseas academic communities, as in the case of Gabriele Goldfuss.⁵⁸⁵

Having stated the lack of scientific literature and the misconception responsible for it, the next task is to examine the undiscovered side and classify the issues serving as the object of this study. I establish four categories according to my classification. (1) First of all, we encounter various kinds of religious experiences in Zhang's life, such as his wish to be a monk (which was never realized, that is why I regard it as experience rather than activity), the religious dimension of his self-identity, and his dreams of the netherworld. Other closely relevant experiences, especially his actions and ideas related to martyrdom, suicide, and death (we have no sources directly revealing his death experience), and his imagination about India and aspiration of going there, should also be taken into account, though remaining at the periphery of my focus. (2) Then, we will examine Zhang's meditative practice which, despite the shift of methods, was much more constant than most of us may have assumed. Apart from meditation, there exist other fragmentary materials suggesting that Zhang was involved in popular religious practices. (3) Next, I decide to briefly touch on issues not included in the narrowly-defined category of religious activity, like learning Sanskrit and studying Chinese medicine because of their relevance to the

⁵⁸² Lu Yuchen, forthcoming.

⁵⁸³ Qian Mu, 2010, p. 539.

⁵⁸⁴ Jiang Hainu, 2012, p. 213.

⁵⁸⁵ Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001, p. 224.

question. Besides, Zhang's theoretical Buddhist writings contain valuable passages complementary to the materials directly describing his religious practice and experience. Some of them reveal Zhang's ideas about the relationship between theoretical knowledge and meditative practice in regards to Buddhist enlightenment. Some other texts, written in the last two decades of Zhang's life in which he reinterprets the neo-Confucian scholars' meditative practice through Buddhist theory and terminology, can be used to probe the shift of Zhang's own meditative method. (4) Finally, I include in this chapter background information about Zhang Taiyan from his family and early life to his temperament and ambition. Compared with his theoretical thinking, Zhang's religious experience and practice were more directly shaped by these personal characteristics and early memories.

It is also necessary to briefly present the condition of primary sources. Almost all the sources written by Zhang are included in the new edition of the *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (The Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan). For the sources produced by others about Zhang, we have a few collections to rely on, especially the *Zhuiyi Zhang Taiyan* 追憶章太炎 [Recollections of Zhang Taiyan] (Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, Du Lingling 杜玲玲 eds.) and the *Zhang Taiyan zhuanji ziliao* 章太炎傳記資料 [Biographical Materials on Zhang Taiyan] (Zhu Chuanyu 朱傳譽 and Wang Moli 王茉莉 eds.). Zhang's own writings can be divided into two categories, the first is his publications and other public writings (especially drafts and records of his speeches and seminars), the second is the more private writings which provide crucial support for this study. In his complete works, only the collection of his letters can be seen as private writings (of course not all of these letters are truly private). This collection provides many valuable texts without which this study would be impossible. The *Taiyan wenlu bubian* 太炎文錄補編 is also important since the editors included, in this supplementary book, all of Zhang's writings that had been omitted in the initial volumes in order that this edition becomes as complete as it can be. Some of the texts in it, which should rather be seen as raw materials and sometimes contain emotional or spontaneous words, are useful for my study. In addition, we should not forget the aids offered by Zhang's public writings, which include certain contents of Zhang's theoretical Buddhist writings, as has been discussed above. Aids also come from his speeches, autobiography, and other sources in which Zhang sometimes recalls his past

experiences.

Compared with Zhang's own writings, the sources produced by others about Zhang are more scattered and take more time to collect. Similar to the two categories of Zhang's writings, some of the sources in question were written by Zhang's contemporary elites who treated Zhang as their interlocutor for scholarly or political topics. Another type of sources, produced by Zhang's relatives and close friends (several of whom were interested in Buddhism), conveys information much more interesting to this study.

On the whole, the available sources include a few texts of extremely high value and many other materials which are fragmentary, less reliable, sometimes undated, and hence less important. Among the valuable ones, we have Zhang's letters to four persons: Wu Baochu, Huang Zongyang, Wu Chengshi 吳承仕 (1884-1939), and Li Genyuan 李根源 (1879-1965). Some of these letters are perfectly relevant to the topic of this chapter by providing rich details and inspiring discussions. Those to Huang Zongyang and Wu Chengshi are of particular importance partly because they covered a long time span. I will offer the contextual information for all sources, whether major or minor, when they are referred to for the first time during the course of my discussion.

The last thing for this introduction is about the structure of this chapter which is organized in a chronological order. A structure based on the classification of the four categories may also be feasible but appears less coherent and natural. Nonetheless, this classification serves to organize the discussion within each of the periods. The major question I need to answer here is why this research on Zhang's religious experience and practice is regrouped in a single chapter rather than being diffused in corresponding chapters? The first reason is that, in comparison to his Buddhist thought, the experience and practice of Zhang's Buddhist (and other religious) engagement were more stable and transformed at a slower pace, generally less susceptible to the environment (especially the context of cultural and ideological debates). Consequently, it is probably more effective to develop a long-term perspective to grasp this stability and slow transformation. Secondly, due to the fact that Zhang's religious experience and practice did not transform in the same pace as that of his Buddhist thought, the period division of this chapter is slightly different from the period division I have made for the other chapters. Furthermore, in regards to

feasibility, if we arrange the limited sources in separate chapters, they would be insufficient and could not support certain arguments without frequently referring to materials arranged in other chapters. Last but not least, now that the subject of this research remains largely untouched, regrouping all the sources in a single chapter suits better the objective of offering a preliminary integral picture of Zhang's religious experience and practice.

In addition to the question above, I want to explain why this chapter is arranged at the fourth chapter. This choice is made according to the time of the event mentioned at the outset of this chapter, namely, Zhang's unrealized plan to travel to India and become a monk there from the end of 1907 to the beginning of 1908. This is the only event that is visible to the academic communities and which has led me to dig into this undiscovered side of Zhang's Buddhist engagement. So there exists other reasonable choices, for example, arranging this chapter as the last chapter. Since this chapter actually covers the time span of Zhang's whole life, it is not directly connected to the chapters before and after it. On the contrary, Chapters 3 and 5 are more closely connected with each other.

This chapter is organized chronologically into five periods. The first is Zhang's early years (1869-1896), the longest period from Zhang's birth to the years when he was devoted to academic research in the Gujing Jingshe Academy. Then follows a period that prepared for Zhang's Buddhist commitment (1897-1903), which witnessed his transition from a reformist to a revolutionary. The third is the period of religious upsurge (1903-1909) during which Zhang was motivated by the will to become a monk and the passion for India. Zhang's Buddhist commitment continued in the next period (1910-1916), but we see more expressions out of inner unrest and traces of transformation in relation to his religious experience and practice. The fifth and last period was also the second longest period (1917-1936), characterized by an intensifying syncretism in meditative practice, especially from the mid-1920s.

* The early years of Zhang Taiyan (1869-1896) *

The longest of the five periods, this period is also the least studied. The reason is simple: the sources are very limited. I have not yet found any materials pertaining directly

to Zhang's religious experience or practice. Nonetheless, from the limited primary sources and scientific work, most of which concern Zhang's family background, it is possible to draw suggestive conclusions that are important to grasp some key characteristics of Zhang's religious life.

I would like to, in the first place, introduce several records included in the *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian* 章太炎年譜長編 [Extended Notes on the Chronicles of Zhang Taiyan] (Tang Zhijun 湯志鈞 ed.). To start, Zhang Taiyan was born in a rich gentry family. His grandfather (Zhang Jian 章鑑), father (Zhang Jun 章濬), and his elder brother (Zhang Jian 章鑑) were all adept at Chinese medicine and ready to offer charitable treatment for the poor local people.⁵⁸⁶ This family tradition, presumably, had exerted an influence on Zhang who developed a keen interest in Chinese medicine from his middle age. Apart from medical practice, Zhang Jun was also “interested in Chan Buddhism in his middle age” 中年頗好禪學, as recorded in his “family instructions” (*jiaxun* 家訓),⁵⁸⁷ but it is uncertain whether this interest was mainly intellectual or had led him toward meditative practice. After Zhang Jun’s death in 1890, Zhang Taiyan began pursuing academic training under the direction of Yu Yue in the Gujing Jingshe Academy following his father’s last will. In his “family instruction,” Zhang Jun recalls his personal relationship with Yu Yue, which explains the reason of his last will. “Quyuan [Yu Yue] offered seminars and tutorials in the Gujing Jingshe Academy. I used to serve as the conductor [of the Academy] and get along with him for several years. I recently heard that he had been keeping the vegetarian precept and practicing the repetition of the name of Buddha. It is common for the persons of virtue to lead such a moral life in their later years.” 曲園設教詁經精舍，吾時充監院，相處數歲，今聞其茹蔬念佛，賢士晚節，往往至此。⁵⁸⁸

So we now know that Zhang Taiyan’s father and supervisor, two of the most influential persons in his early life, had some kinds of Buddhist engagement, which naturally shaped Zhang’s initial perception of Buddhism despite the lack of evidence. On the contrary to Buddhism, Zhang did recall his early reading of the texts of Daoist masters, as recorded in the 1883 entry of his *Chronological Autobiography*: “My late father asked

⁵⁸⁶ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 2 ; Zhang Nianchi, 2011, p. 102.

⁵⁸⁷ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 2.

me to participate in the child exam [of the imperial examination] in the county town. I failed to finish the exam due to an outburst of epilepsy. My late father hence asked me to abandon the training for the Eight-legged essay, which allowed me to read extensively on historical books and biographies as well as the *and the *.” 先君命赴縣應童子試，以患眩厥不竟，先君亦命輟制義，頗涉獵史傳，瀏覽《老》《莊》矣。**

⁵⁸⁹ It is clear that Zhang read the texts of Daoist masters out of his own interest.

The aforementioned primary sources allow a brief glimpse at the influence from Zhang's father and supervisor on his religious interest. An inspiring scientific work further leads us to probe the father-son and master-disciple relationship, which is Huang Ko-wu's 黃克武 “Zhang Taiyan de zaonian shengya: Yige xinli de fenxi” 章太炎的早年生涯——一個心理的分析 [The Early Life of Zhang Taiyan: A Psychological Analysis]. Based on limited historical materials, Huang undertook one of the rare investigations about the personality development of Zhang Taiyan. For Huang, what happened when Zhang was 13 years old was crucial. In that year, Zhang's father took charge of his education replacing Zhang's maternal grandfather. Before, Zhang had enjoyed the freedom to explore the rich collections of the family library and thus developed anti-Manchu motifs owing to reading some officially banned books. Under the instruction of his father, Zhang had to prepare for the imperial examination against his own will. Unable to resist the paternal authority in that social environment at that age, Zhang bore huge psychological pressure which resulted in the sudden outburst of epilepsy during the exam. Zhang Jun conceded facing the illness of his son. Regaining the right of free reading, the symptom of epilepsy eased for the rest of Zhang's younger years. By asking his son to study with Yu Yue, Zhang Jun actually entrusted Yu to be his life mentor. So, to some extent, the power relationship between the father and the son reproduced itself in the master-disciple relationship. In 1901, Zhang (already an anti-Manchu revolutionary) paid a visit to his master and a conflict occurred between them. Yu reproached Zhang for “violating the loyalty to the monarchy and the filial piety.” This aroused Zhang's traumatic childhood experience. However, Zhang's mentality had considerably strengthened at this stage. He chose to confront with Yu (as the agent of his father's authority) by writing “Declining My Own Master” (*Xie benshi* 謝本

⁵⁸⁹ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 4.

師).⁵⁹⁰

The approach of Huang's article is unconventional in historical studies and may easily become a target of methodological criticisms. It is careful to treat its conclusions as suggestive viewpoints instead of assured scientific results. I nonetheless offer several remarks below which cast light on Zhang's personal character. My propositions are to be demonstrated in the later sections of this chapter. Firstly, the tension and conflict in Zhang's relationship with his father and master suggest the development of an anti-authoritarian personality, which in turn helps to explain Zhang's political stance against the Manchu regime as well as the orthodoxy it endorsed (i.e. Confucianism) from 1900, which was much more radical than the stance of his contemporary literati elites. Next, based on the symptom of Zhang's epilepsy and its link with the pressure imposed by his father's authority, we realize that the spirit of "madness" Zhang later advocated was not just an exaggerated expression but had a physiological foundation. Furthermore, the latent illness means that Zhang was susceptible to external pressure and tended to react in more extreme ways than normal people. We will see later in this chapter Zhang's recurrent impulsion facing political crisis or physical threats, which often resulted in suicidal behaviors or the attempt to "leave this world." Lastly, despite the tension, in memoires and biographies, Zhang showed much respect to his father and master. Just as the open rupture with Yu Yue did not discourage him to be a firm defender of the Old-Text school, the traumatic childhood memory did not lead him to reject the spiritual heritage of his father.

In addition, we have an article by Vincent Goossaert investigating the relations of Confucian elites with religious culture based on the case study of Yu Yue, titled "Yu Yue (1821-1906) explore l'au-delà. La culture religieuse des élites chinoises à la veille des révolutions" [Yu Yue (1821-1906) explores the other world. Religious culture among Chinese elites before the modern revolutions]. This research, apart from proposing some valuable conceptual frameworks, also allows us to use Zhang's master as a reference object in studying Zhang's religiosity. Its central notion, religious culture, means the knowledge and understanding of historical actors about religion. Compared with notions like religiosity and modalities of "doing religion," religious culture extends the scope of study

⁵⁹⁰ Huang Ko-wu, 1978, pp. 54-55.

since it also includes how such actors understand the ways in which the people around them do religion. Based on Yu's accounts of the experience and practice of his relatives and friends in relation to popular religion, collected in his *Anecdotes from the Taoist Hermitage of the Right Platform* (*Youtai xianguan biji* 右台仙館筆記), the author reveals the role that religion played in the private life of high Confucian elites at the end of imperial China, which was much more significant than most of Yu's academic works would suggest. Unlike many other literati elites with whom he was acquainted, Yu remained an observer rather than an active religious practitioner. But as an observer, the curiosity, approval, and affection that his writings exposed distinguished him from the next generations of intellectuals; the latter, receiving high education and living in metropolises, bore a radical estrangement with the popular culture of rural regions and consequently lost the natural understanding of and affection towards religious traditions.⁵⁹¹

The above case study of Yu Yue offers us a reference object to evaluate the common ground and difference between the attitude of Zhang and an older generation towards religion. The difference is more evident. Zhang belonged to a generation more deeply involved in (and a group of people actively promoting) the accelerating transformation into modern China, resulting in radicalizing negations of the Chinese religious tradition. Zhang's hostility towards popular religion, intensively expressed in his 1906 speech (as presented in Chapter 2), also affected his appraisal of his master, as demonstrated in “Biography of Master Yu Yue” (*Yu xiansheng zhuan* 俞先生傳), published in the *National Essence Journal* on August 16, 1908, one year and a half after Yu's death. In the latter part of this biography, some criticisms appear among the praise: “Late in life, [Master Yu] kept a good state of mind. However, he still could not be detached from reputation and high-status. Having extensively read books and records including folktales and folksongs, he expressed empathy and compassion in his anecdotes, the style of which has both merits and demerits. These anecdotes frequently refer to vulgar content, which is a weakness of Master Yu's scholarship.” 老而神志不衰，然不能忘名位。既博覽典籍，下至稗官歌謠，以筆札汎愛人，其文辭瑕適並見，雜流亦時時至門下，此其所短也。⁵⁹² The attachment to reputation and status was Zhang's major criticism against Confucians at the

⁵⁹¹ Vincent Goossaert, 2011, pp. 623-626, 635.

⁵⁹² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 218.

time, targeting Confucius and Kang Youwei as well. The second criticism against Yu's records of folklore and “vulgar content” 雜流 clearly included the *Anecdotes from the Taoist Hermitage of the Right Platform* as his target.

The difference between the two was closely related to that of their living environment. Yu's religious culture was fundamentally determined by his insertion in a large family in which the women played a predominant role in the diffusion of religious stories and maintenance of religious rituals.⁵⁹³ The intellectual and spiritual life of Zhang, on the contrary, was principally influenced by the social networks that he joined in following his departure from the Gujing Jingshe Academy at the beginning of 1897. The reformers and revolutionaries in charge of such social networks were mainly westernizers; women were rarely present within. Zhang nonetheless shared some common ground with Yu in terms of religious culture, especially if we take the next generations of academic Buddhist scholars into comparison. Despite the lack of intimacy with the rural religious traditions, the religious culture that he was acquainted with in his youth was never erased and would be activated at the unconscious level in times of crisis, which we will see when analyzing Zhang's dreams of the underworld.

The illness of epilepsy indefinitely suspended Zhang's participation in the imperial examination, impeding him to achieve upward social mobility. Meanwhile, his father's death was another heavy blow to the family. Failing to arrange a suitable marriage, Zhang Taiyan's mother gave a servant girl, sought out from a poor rural family, to her son (at the age of 25) as his wife.⁵⁹⁴ The married life between the two was not harmonious and happy.⁵⁹⁵ Coming through all these experiences, it is no surprise that we find in Zhang's personality a mixed feeling of high self-esteem and self-abasement, as revealed in “Clarification of Being Alone” (*Ming du* 明獨), the 24th Chapter of the *Book of Urgency (first edition)*, published in 1900. “Clarification of Being Alone” was a revised version of the 1894 essay “On Living Alone.”⁵⁹⁶ The text I refer to below is the revised one since

⁵⁹³ Vincent Goossaert, 2011, pp. 651-652.

⁵⁹⁴ Zhang's first wife is generally referred to as Ms. Wang 王氏 or Ms. Zhang-Wang 章王氏. In his *Chronological Autobiography*, Zhang describes this marriage as concubinage 納妾 because this marriage did not go through a formal wedding. Zhang Zhuo, 2009, p. 99. Wong Young-tsu, 2008, p. 16.

⁵⁹⁵ Tang Guoli, 2009, p. 71.

⁵⁹⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, pp. 1-3.

some of the most relevant passages were added into it. Nonetheless, the essential ideas were already present in the original version, written at the end of this first period of his life.

At the center of this short essay is the dichotomy between *du* 獨 and *qun* 羣. In most occasions of this text, the two terms do not mean individual and community but rather being along and being in a community. Based on the different attitude towards the community, Zhang distinguishes two ways of being alone. The first is to exclude oneself from communal life and be satisfied with a self-centered way of recluse life. This is not the *du* that Zhang approves of. In his eyes, “the superior way of being alone always means integrating into the community; if not, [the people living alone] are not worthy of the name of *du*.” 大獨必羣，不羣非獨也。⁵⁹⁷ So the second type of *du* is *dadu* 大獨. To explain this notion, Zhang resorts to both metaphors and examples in real life. For the metaphors, we see the sun (relative to the lives on Earth as *qun*) and the ocean (relative to the multiple rivers) as examples for *dadu*. For real examples, we see the description of the sage, the emperor, the military leader, the Confucian and Mohist masters, the scholar-officials, and finally the father and the teacher. Such imaginations and assertions clearly show that the author was still affiliated to the structure of order and meaning underpinned by Confucianism and imperial monarchy.

What interest us more are the ambivalent feelings and tendencies exposed in the last two paragraphs of the essay. Zhang sighs, at the beginning of this part, that “it has been a long time during which I seek a community in vain.” 吾求羣而不可得也久矣。 Witnessing the intensifying political crisis, he had the presentiment that “[at the time when] the grand community is about to disintegrate, even if there exist some *dadu* who endeavor to unite it, the effect of their efforts is no more than that of the louse.” 大羣之將渙，雖有合者，財比于蟻蟲。 Sweating because of fear, Zhang talks to himself: “This is the time when heaven and earth are closed and the sages retreat from the world.” 于斯時也，是天地閉，賢人隱之世也。 However, the author cannot bear to be indifferent to the sufferings of others and hence force himself to engage in dealing with the crisis.⁵⁹⁸ The following (and the last) paragraph begins by a plaint that fully exposes Zhang’s mixed feeling of self-abasement and high self-esteem: “I am a person of lowly status in the Yue region, born to

⁵⁹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 53.

⁵⁹⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 54-55.

be physically weak, with neither the power of swift horse nor the aspiration of the southern divine bird [Jiaoming].” 余，越之賤氓也，生又羸弱，無驥鷺之氣，焦明之志。 The plaint continues and ends in a mood of pessimism and fatalism: “[I] have realized that only by acting alone can I assemble a [new] grand community. However, I seek in vain to be alone. This is the time when heaven and earth are closed and the sages retreat from the world. I am unable to chant like Jie Yu the madman [of Chu]. … It is inevitable that the loss of my moral integrity will be given away to future generations!” 知不獨行不足以樹大旅。雖然，吾又求獨而不可得也。于斯時也，是天地閉，賢人隱之世也。吾不能為狂接輿之行吟……吾流汙于後世，必矣！⁵⁹⁹ Jie Yu was a personage appearing in the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) who, coming across Confucius on the road, sang a song to advice and alarm the latter: “O Feng! O Feng! How is your virtue degenerated! As to the past, reproof is useless; but the future may still be provided against. Give up your vain pursuit. Give up your vain pursuit. Peril awaits those who now engage in affairs of government.”

鳳兮！鳳兮！何德之衰？往者不可諫，來者猶可追。已而，已而！今之從政者殆而！

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The passages cited above demonstrate Zhang’s ambivalence between engaging in a collective cause and retreating from the chaotic world. On the one hand, he relates the superior way of being alone to the involvement in communal life. On the other, he affirms that the proper way of living when facing the collapsing social order is to retreat. On the one hand, he is unwilling to abandon his compatriots and leave them in a catastrophic situation. On the other, he is unconfident in his capability to undertake an arduous mission and is concerned with his moral reputation after his death. It is not improper to relate such ambivalence to the alternate expressions of high self-esteem and self-abasement.

Particular attention should be paid to a phrase appearing twice, an implicit citation of the *Yi Jing*, which refers to the closing of heaven and earth and the retreat of the sages. We should not regard it as simple rhetoric of sentimental expression. While it is better to refrain from suggesting an eschatological explanation, it does convey a moral protest and negation of the world. Once we grasp the strong moral sense in this phrase, it becomes

⁵⁹⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 55.

⁶⁰⁰ For the English translation of this passage, I adopt that of James Legge (consulted on November 24, 2020: <https://ctext.org/analects/wei-zi>).

understandable why, instead of worrying about his failure, what Zhang is concerned with is the loss of his moral integrity if he engages in the collective cause. As a result, I treat “Clarification of Being Alone” as the first existing text in which Zhang expressed a kind of feeling which, if it is not strictly speaking religious, contains a strong religious potential.

Furthermore, the analysis above casts new light on the characteristics of Zhang’s Buddhist engagement. Starting from a more evident point, the fact that Zhang devaluated the self-centered way of recluse life and stressed his responsibility for the collective cause perfectly corresponded to his approval of universal compassion and salvation, founded on the traditional interpretation of mainstream Sinitic Buddhism about the superiority of Mahāyāna over Hīnayāna (to be discussed in Chapter 5). A subtler point, in contrast, is to reveal Zhang’s ambivalence towards recluse life. Apparently, Zhang approved of the authoritative roles of the patriarchal social system and criticized the hermits. When the discussion is contextualized in a chaotic world, however, the author’s attitude towards the two ways of being alone became ambiguous. The reference to Jie Yu the madman clearly showed Zhang’s appreciation of virtuous hermits. We can find many references of the same type in Zhang’s writings in different periods. When the psychological drive of high self-esteem is predominant, Zhang tended to act in the way of a *dadu*, e.g. the first months following his third arrival in Japan during which he resorted to Buddhism (as the new religion) to unite the grand community 合大羣. When that of self-abasement takes its turn, Zhang was often caught by the desire to be a monk, as seen between the end of 1907 and the beginning of 1908 as well as several other cases. Moreover, the moral protest and negation of the world in this essay found a profound resonance in “On the Five Negations.” Zhang’s concern with his moral integrity in the former text can be easily articulated with his will to be “a confessor of the (karmic) universe” in the latter. So, it is safe to say that the fundamental tendencies and drives of Zhang’s religious engagement had been formed long before his commitment to Buddhism. The implications of this early essay will be further revealed in the course of the study.

* Preparation for a religious commitment (1897-1903) *

In the middle of this second period, Zhang drastically changed his political stance from a reformist to an anti-Manchu revolutionary. A switch of attitude towards religion in general occurred correspondingly. Both transformations, revealed by the revisions of the second edition of the *Book of Urgency* compared with the first edition, have been discussed in Chapter 2. While some of Zhang's religious feelings and needs were largely continuous throughout this period, he did consciously intensify religious and other bodily practices following the radical shift during the summer of 1900. At the end of the investigation of this section, we will be aware that Zhang's approval of religion was not only founded on intellectual reasons but also practical experiences.

For this investigation, we have both fragmentary and more substantial sources. Among the sources of the first category, two texts reveal limited information about Zhang's aspiration to become a monk. In the second are several letters of Zhang to his close friend Wu Baochu 吳保初 (1869-1913, courtesy name Wu Junsui 吳君遂). Let's start from the two texts of the first category. Both texts were produced during the third period (1903-1909) and the useful information was expressed as recollection. The first is a short essay written in 1908 in relation to a photo, entitled "Inscription on My Photograph as a Gift for the Master Su Manshu" (*Ziti zaoxiang zeng Manshu shi* 自題造象贈曼殊師). Su Manshu 蘇曼殊 (1884-1918) was an unconventional monk, well-known as a poet, artist, and translator. Both living in Japan at the time, they maintained a close relationship. Su in fact became a confidant who witnessed and was involved in Zhang's religious passion. At the beginning of this essay, Zhang shared that "I have had the thought of retreating from the profane world since I was thirty years old. Unfortunately, the negative *karma* accumulated in previous lives has prevented me from achieving a liberated state. I was lucky not to die an unnatural death in the Subao Case; instead, I was again drawn into mundane affairs afterwards." 余自三十歲後，便懷出世之念。宿障所纏，未得自在。既遭王賊之難，幸免橫夭，復為人事牽引。⁶⁰¹ Adopting the traditional calculation method, it was 1897 when Zhang was at the age of thirty. So the thought of retreating emerged just following Zhang's engagement in the reformist movement. This fact corresponded to the information disclosed through analyzing "Clarification of Being Alone," i.e. Zhang's ambivalence

⁶⁰¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 356.

whether he should retreat from the chaotic world or adhere to the collective cause. Zhang's reformist period (1897-1900) was a period about which we have less to say about his Buddhist engagement. Nonetheless, the research of Chapter 1 has demonstrated that Zhang's approval of Buddhism was higher than many researchers have assumed. The short essay cited above again suggested that this approval was related to his underlying religious feelings and needs.

The second source is Zhang's 1906 speech. The relevant passage is situated at the beginning of the text before he put forward the proposal of combining National Essence and Religion. Zhang recounts his second meeting with Sun Yat-sen in the spring of 1902, when he was depressed that Sun had not yet attracted more followers. "Saying to myself that my crazy hope [of expelling the Manchus and restoring the Han nation] was after all unrealistic, I then wanted to dress in *kasaya* (monk robes) and become a monk, no longer staying in touch with the scholars and politicians" 暗想我這瘋癲的希望，畢竟是難遂的了，就想披起袈裟做個和尚，不與那學界政界的人再通問詢。⁶⁰² Appearing in a frequently read and studied text, this recollection has been mentioned in several scientific publications. Nonetheless, such fragment has been easily neglected or considered as an isolated case while a comprehensive picture of Zhang's religious experience and practice is absent. In comparison to the short essay for Su Manshu, Zhang's aspiration to become a monk is more explicitly exposed in this source since it was addressed to a crowd of people instead of an intimate friend. Moreover, there exists nuanced difference in the expressions of the two sources. "Having had the thought of retreating from the profane world" 便懷出世之念 does not necessarily mean a retreat in the Buddhist way. "Wanting to dress in *kasaya* (monk robes) and become a monk" 就想披起袈裟做個和尚, in contrast, expresses a clear Buddhist identity. The reference to the *kasaya* also merits attention. Several materials hint that during several years following the Subao Case, Zhang's Buddhist commitment showed itself by symbolic manifestations and expressions, to be discussed later. The aspiration recalled in the 1906 speech is another example of Zhang's ambivalence between engaging in anti-Manchu revolution and retreating from the chaotic world (radically for both directions). This recollection, if not mentioned in the speech,

⁶⁰² Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 1.

would have been missing forever. Based on the study of the two sources above, I tend to believe that, during the period in question, Zhang was intermittently caught by such impulsion and feeling, which finally resulted in his attempt to travel to India and become a monk there several years later. Besides, among the external factors causing Zhang's impulsion of retreating, the major one was the political crisis and setback, linked with the restoration of Han nationalism.

Now let's turn to Zhang's letters to Wu Baochu. Wu was a reputed scholar-official and an active backer of the reformist movement. His father Wu Changqing 吳長慶 (1829-1884) used to be the provincial military commander of Zhejiang. His daughter later married with Zhang Shizhao 章士釗 (1881-1973), one of the sworn brothers of Zhang Taiyan. When Zhang became an outlaw for his anti-governmental activities from the middle of 1900, Wu offered shelter to this intimate friend of his. Among the three letters to be cited, two are of particular importance. The reason that these letters are more valuable than the sources above consists in the fact that, instead of recalling the situation in the past, what they reveal concerns Zhang's religious feelings, practices, and related ideas during the time when the letters were written. Moreover, the stories are told in the context of ordinary life, so they tell us about the normal state of Zhang's life and thought rather than certain dramatic events. In the first letter, written on May 16, 1902, Zhang reacted to the epidemic situation in Shanghai:

My weak body does not feel well despite the fresh weather. So I often read books of Chinese medicine for more than six hours a day in my spare time after the work of translation and redaction, in order to, hopefully, aid my weak body and increase my health knowledge. I just heard that the diphtheria is still prevalent in Shanghai. Xingchai [real name unknown] and Rangqing [Wang Kangnian 汪康年] fortunately stay safe and sound. In contrast, there have been more than ten thousand people in Shanghai who unfortunately lost their lives due to the epidemic disease. How can it be possible that no effective medicine exists to deal with this sanitary crisis? The sufferings of the people are often intensified towards the end of a dynasty. A citizen loyal to the Ming dynasty, Qingzhu [Fu Shan 傅山 (1607-1684)] often shielded the ordinary people by his medical skill. As for me, I have recently given up any hope of making achievements

similar to those of Tinglin [Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682)] and Xiaofeng [Sun Qifeng 孫奇逢 (1584-1675)] and wish to follow the path of Qingzhu. I read the words of a philosopher saying that the literati living in an age of turbulence and separation are often guided by misanthropic ideas towards the Daoist breathing and body exercises. Is not this also real [for today]?

氣候雖清，孱軀頗有不適，故於譯潤之暇常讀醫書三數時，聊以輔衰知衛。頃聞滬上喉證猶多，性柴、穰卿幸而無恙，其餘罹疾死者，先後至萬餘人，豈竟無藥處此耶？生民之厄，每在末造。傅青主以故國遺民，常借斯道護持品庶，如僕無似亭林、夏峰之業，近已絕望，亦欲從青主後矣。哲學家謂亂離之士，率多厭世觀念，遂流為吐納導引一派，豈不信哉！⁶⁰³

First of all, the main theme of this passage is disease and medicine. Our section on Zhang's early years has shown us the familial roots of Zhang's interest in Chinese medicine. The cited passage further reveals three factors that fueled this interest: the anxiety of his own health, the preoccupation of the social health crisis, and, more implicitly, the setback in his pursuit of a collective cause. "If the circumstance does not permit the path to be a good prime minister, be a good doctor instead." 不為良相，則為良醫. This is a motto shared by Zhang's family as well as larger literati communities, of which Zhang approved.⁶⁰⁴ I will revisit this topic in a later section when Zhang's enthusiasm for Chinese medicine was intensified by his acute illness and his frustration about the politics of Republican China.

Next, the reference of three late Ming and early Qing scholars in the letter provides a starting point of analysis. On the one side is Fu Shan, famous as calligrapher, artist, and doctor of traditional Chinese medicine. On the other are Gu Yanwu and Sun Qifeng, still more appreciated by Zhang for both their pioneering contributions to the Han learning of the Qing dynasty and their resolved resistance against the Manchu regime. Zhang regarded Gu Yanwu, in particular, as his personal model, from the name of whom he adopted the character "yan" 炎 to create his courtesy name "taiyan" 太炎. We do not know from which philosopher Zhang's indirect quotation comes. He did relate two German philosophers, Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann with the doctrine of misanthropy in his 1906 essay "On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution." And he did

⁶⁰³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 116-117.

⁶⁰⁴ Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, p. 93.

receive the influence of the trend of misanthropic ideas from the Japanese intelligentsia during his second trip there in 1902.⁶⁰⁵ However, the misanthropy in a chaotic age which Zhang talks about here is definitely contextualized in Chinese history since he then mentions the Daoist breathing and body exercises (*tuna daoyin* 吐納導引). To be noted, Fu Shan converted into Daoism on the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1644, the year when the Manchu army took the control of the Ming capital Beijing, naming himself “the Daoist in red robes” (*zhuyi daoren* 朱衣道人).⁶⁰⁶ So by expressing his wish to follow Fu’s path, Zhang showed some degree of interest in Daoist bodily practices.

Nonetheless, based on an attentive reading of the cited passage, we can perceive Zhang’s higher esteem of the achievement of Gu and Sun and his reluctance to retreat like Fu Shan. Moreover, there seems to be no evidence that his interest in Daoist practice ever turned into real practice. In contrast, we see a much stronger expression of his desire for Buddhist meditative practice in a second letter written shortly after. On July 29, 1902, Zhang shared with Wu Baohu his inspiration that “only by practicing *śamatha* (the tranquility of the mind) and *vipaśyanā* (insight) can I ultimately deliver myself from the slavery of the material body.” 不習止觀，終為形役。⁶⁰⁷ *Śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* are two fundamental methods for Buddhist meditation usually combined in practice. This brief citation, exposing a sense of urgency, is far from an isolated proof. Zhang did keep carrying out such methods of Buddhist meditation for decades (to be demonstrated below), possibly starting from 1902 or so. In sum, during the first years of the 20th century, on the one hand, Zhang was intrigued by religion in general, including the religious history of the world and the indigenous religious groups, on the other, his preference for Buddhism (at the practical level) had already appeared before his jail experience. Lastly, the emotional desperation expressed in the first letter, along with the urgent need of Buddhist meditation in the second, confirm the truthfulness of the memoires Zhang recalled in his 1906 speech about his impulsion to be a monk in 1902.

The third of Zhang’s letters to Wu Baohu is the most important one. It was written on May 18, 1903, nearly a year after the first one, when Zhang served as a teacher at the

⁶⁰⁵ This trend of misanthropic ideas was a confluence of Japanese Buddhism and the philosophy of Schopenhauer, as revealed by Takeshi Kobayashi (2018, pp. 75-85).

⁶⁰⁶ Huang Xinhua, 2014, p. 54.

⁶⁰⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 118.

Patriotic Student Society of Shanghai. Zhang begins the letter by expressing his regret for Wu's relocation from Shanghai to Nanjing. He then talks about his own situation and shares his radical ideas about education and morality:

Living alone recently, I damaged my chamber. Discharged from the burden of my wife, I still have three young daughters, of whom I hardly take care. Serving as a teacher at the Patriotic Student Society for a long time, I find nothing meaningful to share with you (my confidant). Contemplating alone, I have come to realize that reading is a recreational activity that wears down aspirations. The words of the Cheng brothers [Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107)] on this subject are truly extraordinary. To acquire self-discipline following their teachings, I have been practicing quiet sitting to purify my mind, which roughly corresponds to the "principle of passivism" (*xiaoji zhuyi*). To my fellow colleague [of the Patriotic Student Society], I have proposed the destruction of, or abandonment of reading, all the books in the Student Society and the exclusive practice of bodily exercises instead. Persevering like this for three years, we will definitely achieve extraordinary results. Otherwise, the words of the ancient saints engraved on bronze trays and vessels would no longer be applicable today; the new Western scholarship would also merely serve to "steal a hook (for his girdle)" (*qiegou*) and "break open a mound over a grave" (*fazhong*). The more one is enlightened by knowledge, the less he or she is aspiring and courageous. I have witnessed many students studying in Japan. Keen and fierce in spirit at the beginning, they have become preoccupied with their official career upon graduating.

頃以斃居，遂毀我室，無妃匹之累，而猶有弱女三數，然亦近於棄捐也。在學社久，無可為知己道，私自尋理，乃知讀書為玩物喪志，程氏之言，誠卓絕已。以此律己，則默坐激心，差足為消極主義；以此對人，亦謂全學社中宜毀棄一切書籍，而一以體操為務。如是三年，其成效必有大過人者。不然，湯盤孔鼎，既不足為今世用；西方新學，亦徒資竊鉤發冢，知識愈開，則志行愈薄，怯蕙愈甚。觀夫留東學子，當其始往，豈無穎銳陵厲者？而學成以後，則念念近於仕途。⁶⁰⁸

Zhang's first wife, Ms. Wang, died in 1903. The three daughters she gave birth to were left in Zhang's home town. The exact reason why Zhang damaged his chamber is unknown. It

⁶⁰⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 120-121.

could be a symbolic action to part from the isolation of “living alone” and the burden of his family, endeavoring to establish a new “grand community” founded on the social network of teachers and students (many of whom were revolutionary activists) provided by the Patriotic Student Society. However, Zhang was dissatisfied with his fellow members of the society. Although it was the place where he became acquainted with Liu Shipei and Cai Yuanpei, he felt that no one shared his opinions about education. Zhang’s educational reflections here radically confront book learning and bodily cultivation, accusing the former as “a recreational activity that wears down aspirations.” This stance is so singular that no resonance has ever been found in his later writings and activities concerning education.

Next, let’s discuss Zhang’s own bodily cultivation before turning to his advice to the other people in the Society. His practice of quiet sitting and mind purification is related to the ideas of Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, two of the main founders of the neo-Confucianism of the Song dynasty. So, Zhang refers to the practice of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism respectively in his three letters to Wu. This fact corresponds to one conclusion drawn in Chapter 2 that during 1900-1903, Zhang was enthusiastic about religion in general whereas his appreciation of Buddhism did not significantly increase. The so-called “principle of passivism” (*xiaoji zhuyi* 消極主義) encourages a variety of actions including not only silent meditation and abandoning book reading but also non-cooperation and resistance against the Late Qing New Policies (*Qingmo xinzheng* 清末新政) from 1901. To be clear, the principle of passivism is the opposite of a new version of retreat and isolation, being a political strategy as well as self-cultivation aiming to accumulate mental and moral forces. As to his advice to others, firstly of all, the term “ticao” 體操 here means rather bodily exercise (without providing any specific method), not gymnastics. Combining with Zhang’s criticism of the Chinese students abroad, we can infer that Zhang’s radical rejection of book reading, with some sense of anti-intellectualism, is not directed at its function of achieving genuine knowledge but rather its validity in accomplishing a moral character. The bodily practice, in contrast, has more natural and stronger connections with morality, from his point of view.

The most obscure terms in the cite passage are “steal a hook (for his girdle)” and

“break open a mound over a grave,” both implicitly quote the texts of the *Zhuangzi*. The first term, appearing in one of the Outer Chapters, “Cutting Open Satchels” (*Quqie 脥篋*), refers to the following sentence: “Here is one who steals a hook (for his girdle); he is put to death for it. Here is another who steals a state; he becomes its prince. But it is at the gates of the princes that we find benevolence and righteousness (most strongly) professed. Is not this stealing benevolence and righteousness, sageness and wisdom?” 彼竊鉤者誅，竊國者為諸侯，諸侯之門，而仁義存焉，則是非竊仁義聖知邪？⁶⁰⁹ In the later part of the letter I just cited, Zhang quotes another famous phrase from “Cutting Open Satchels,” “while the sagely men have not died, great robbers will not cease to appear.” 聖人不死，大盜不止。 In both cases, the real target of the author of the original text were those (especially Confucians) who “stole” the names of benevolence and righteousness and bestow them to the great robbers (who became the princes of the states) rather than the great robbers. The second term comes from a Miscellaneous Chapter, “What Comes from Without” (*Waiwu 外物*), depicting a caricature how “some Confucians, students of the *Odes* and *Ceremonies*, were breaking open a mound over a grave.” 儒以《詩》、《禮》發冢。⁶¹⁰ While committing this shameless crime, the two grave robbers utilize the phrases of the Classics to communicate the progress of the operation and justify their action. So in its original context, “steal a hook (for his girdle)” and “break open a mound over a grave” aimed at the hypocrisy of the (Confucian) scholars who took advantage of the discourse of benevolence and righteousness in the service of power and for their own benefit.

In the context of Zhang’s letter, however, these two terms are directed against the promoters of the New learning from the West, among whom a more specific target are the advocates of the constitutional monarchy. To see how Zhang transfers the words of the *Zhuangzi* to a modern context, we can rely on one of the supplemental chapters in the *Book of Urgency (Revised edition)*, “On Passivism” (*Xiaoji 消極*), which discusses the political implications of the principle of passivism. Several assertions in its last part, including a citation of the *Zhuangzi*, find resonances in Zhang’s third letter to Wu. According to Zhang, the fact that the discredited Manchu regime still managed to sustain its legitimacy is largely

⁶⁰⁹ I adopt the English translation of James Legge (consulted on December 4, 2020: <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi/cutting-open-satchels>) and make some minor modifications.

⁶¹⁰ I adopt the English translation of James Legge (consulted on December 4, 2020: <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi/what-comes-from-without>) and make some minor modifications.

due to the progressivist posture made by the New Policies.⁶¹¹ In the context of “On Passivism,” it is easier to perceive the parallel between the ancient (Confucian) scholars who endorsed the illegitimate new rulers of the vassal states and the constitutionalists (some of whom used to be Zhang’s comrades during the Wuxu Movement) who attempted to realize a balance of power within the imperial regime, and the parallel between the immoral abuse of benevolence and righteousness and that of Western learning.

For Zhang, observing the principle of passivism requires a strong moral conscience vis-à-vis the possibility to achieve officialdom and salary.⁶¹² This point, along with the aforementioned parallels, remind us of a major theme of Chapter 2, Zhang’s criticisms of Confucianism and Confucius, which reached its peak in the 1906 essay “Brief Discussion on the Teachings of the Pre-Qin Masters.” The reason is the same in the two occasions directing at the lack of moral conscience facing the temptation of officialdom and salary. Confucianism is not directly targeted in the 1903 letter, it nonetheless serves as the ancient counterpart of the modern advocates of Western learning. Here, we see a continuity between the years before and after the three-year imprisonment, which I have already demonstrated in Chapter 2. A comparison between a phrase of the letter and a sentence of “On the Non-Self of Human Beings,” confirms this continuity and further casts new light on the relationship between National Essence and Religion, the central theme of Chapter 2. To quote again the two relevant texts below:

The words of the ancient saints engraved on bronze trays and vessels would no longer be applicable today ...

湯盤孔鼎，既不足為今世用……

In our time, people’s morality has more severely degenerated than ever before.

The words of King Wen [of the Zhou Dynasty] and Confucius no longer have the power to restore it. Nor is neo-Confucianism capable of preserving morality.

民德衰頹，於今為甚，姬、孔遺言，無復挽回之力，即理學亦不足以持世。⁶¹³

A minor difference exists concerning the attitude towards neo-Confucianism. In the first text, Zhang highly praised the words and deeds of the Cheng brothers. In the second,

⁶¹¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2000, pp. 782-783.

⁶¹² Zhang Taiyan, 2000, p. 783.

⁶¹³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 452.

however, neo-Confucianism as a whole is no longer trusted. Despite this difference, the continuity is much more important with respect to the devaluation of the founding fathers and texts of Confucianism. The proposal of National Essence and Religion should be considered as alternatives Zhang put forward facing the crisis following such devaluation. Although it is only in 1906 that National Essence and Religion were combined for the first time, Zhang had developed awareness and interest in both of them before his jail experience.

In Chapter 2, I have carefully studied the advantage of Religion (reformed Buddhism) compared to National Essence in both the normative and epistemological dimensions. Now Zhang's 1903 letter to Wu Baochu offers us a third dimension to explain the advantage of Religion, i.e. the dimension of self-cultivation. By promoting National Essence to replace the conventional categories of Confucian education, Zhang and his friends aimed to shift the loyalty of the Chinese people from monarchy to the Han ethnic communities. Nonetheless, National Essence remains a knowledge system based on writings and does not have direct connections with bodily practices like Religion does. The bodily practice, in turn, had more natural and stronger connections with morality. Hence, it is no wonder that, in the 1906 speech, Zhang assigns to Religion the task of restoring morality and to National Essence the task of arousing the people's patriotism. Despite the fact that Zhang rarely confirmed, in his later writings, the radical anti-intellectualism of the 1903 letter, he did maintain religious and other bodily practices throughout his life as an indispensable way to fulfil his moral mission.

As a review of this section, during this first period of his political engagement, all the major aspects of Zhang's religious experience and practice were developed. The two opposite drives, revealed in "Clarification of Being Alone," showed themselves respectively in 1902 and 1903. In 1902, Zhang was caught by depression which resulted in the impulsion of retreating from the chaotic world. A year later, in contrast, the positive side gained the upper hand, as he was motivated to take charge of the nationalist and moral missions that he assigned to himself. The principle of passivism in fact meant an affirmation of the bodily practice which, through the negation of book reading and political participation for the moment, nourished moral integrity and the courage to take bold actions. Zhang's suicidal speech and behaviour during the Subao Case reflected not only his physio-

psychological tendencies, rooted in the symptom of epilepsy as well as his early family life, but also the accumulation of mental and moral forces. The jail experience greatly stimulated Zhang's commitment to Buddhism, nonetheless, his interest in religion (both intellectual and practical) had been established prior to that.

* Religious upsurge and commitment to Buddhism (1903-1909) *

During the period from 1897 to 1903, Zhang's will to become a monk and his interest in bodily practices reached a degree higher than most of the academics have supposed. Nonetheless, we should never underestimate the importance of Zhang's jail experience which marks the establishment of his Buddhist commitment. We also witness a short period of upsurge concerning Zhang's religious enthusiasm after he was released from the prison. In Chapter 2, I have presented the general situation of Zhang's jail life. Suffering a lot physically and mentally, he nonetheless enjoyed the freedom to read (*Yogācāra* scriptures in particular), exchange letters with friends, and publish his writings. This allows us to have some basic knowledge about what he did and thought during imprisonment. The only remaining letter to Huang Zongyang that Zhang wrote in jail on October 26, 1905, is of particular importance. The citation below comes from the outset of this long letter:

I just received the Sanskrit version of the *Shorter Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* and therefore wrote a letter to you. It is also to update my recent Buddhist achievement and seek your instruction. For the six methods of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, I have not yet proficiently mastered. What I practice for now is to follow the proper meditative rules whether in motion or motionless in order to dispel afflictions. I have not achieved the three stages of Buddhist virtues, not to mention the four attainments of Buddhist enlightenment. Besides, I spend some of my spare time reading Western philosophical works and compare them with Buddhist texts. I find out that the two reach a total agreement [on some important subjects]. It is only due to the difference of linguistic and writing systems, along with [the distortions caused by] multiple translations, that the concepts were conveyed in different forms, impeding us to illuminate the universal truth underlying the theories of the two traditions.

得梵文《阿彌陀經》後，即覆一函，竝[並]略舉所得求誨。下走於止觀六法，禪習未深，但隨分動止，以驅煩惱。尚非三賢地位，況四果耶？而間取哲學諸書，以與內典對校，則有彼此鎔合，無少分相異者。特以文字不同，又更數譯，立名既異，莫能明其一致。⁶¹⁴

As introduced in Chapter 2, Huang was an unconventional Buddhist monk with whom Zhang maintained a lifelong friendship. Zhang's deep appreciation and respect for his friend was based not only on Huang's moral integrity and active role within the revolutionary social networks but also the latter's knowledge and wisdom about Buddhism and other topics, which is shown in Zhang's letters to Huang including the one in question. The fact that Zhang wrote the letter immediately after he received the Buddhist scripture hints that this book was sent into prison by Huang. Whether this was the case or not, Huang did help his friend to get access to several other Buddhist scriptures. Moreover, what Zhang received was the Sanskrit version of the *Shorter Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, suggesting that his interest in Sanskrit had emerged as early as 1905.

Zhang then talked about his practice of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, which is probably the earliest record of Zhang's Buddhist meditative practice. It is plausible that such practice had begun around the middle of 1902, the time when Zhang expressed his urgent need to undertake this practice in his letter to Wu Baochu, and was intensified in jail in response to the sufferings. But we lack proofs. The six methods of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, developed by Tiantai school 天台宗 of Sinitic Buddhism, include six progressive stages of meditative practice: breath counting (*shu* 數), following the proper meditative rules (*sui* 隨), mind calmness (*zhi* 止), insightful observation (*guan* 觀), return to the origins (*huan* 還), and finally purification (*jing* 淨).⁶¹⁵ The three stages of Buddhist virtues, defined by some Mahāyāna scriptures, refer to some limited degrees of achievement, superior to that of the common people but inferior to that of advanced practitioners. The four attainments of Buddhist enlightenment, in contrast, occupy a more important position in the terminology of Theravāda Buddhism than that of Mahāyāna Buddhism. They indicate four progressive stages from the “stream-enterer” (*xutuohuan* 須陀洹, *sotāpanna*) to the “once-returner” (*situohan* 斯陀含, *sakadāgāmin*), then to the “non-returner” (*anahan* 阿

⁶¹⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 146.

⁶¹⁵ Zhiyi, consulted on December 11, 2020: http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T46n1917_001.

那含, *anāgāmi*), and culminating in full enlightenment as the *arahant* (*aluohan* 阿羅漢).

The following cited sentences, and the largest part of the letter, concern Zhang's preliminary thoughts seeking for the common ground between Buddhist doctrines and Western philosophy. Based on this letter and Zhang's 1913 retrospective in "Personal Statement on My Scholarly Career," Zhang Zhiqiang argues, in one of his recent papers, that Zhang Taiyan's Buddhist readings were oriented towards purely philosophical discussions rather than the goal of self-deliverance.⁶¹⁶ It is true that Zhang had the tendency to channel canonical reading into advanced theoretical thinking and that he was much more confident of his aptitude in this direction compared with his practical achievement. Moreover, one of Zhang's major concerns, emerging during the imprisonment and reaching its peak from mid-1906 to mid-1907, consisted in laying the theoretical foundation for a new universal religion, partly through the comparative studies between Buddhism and Western philosophy (discussed in Chapter 2). Nonetheless, this point should be completed by an adequate awareness of the long-neglected side of meditative practice, as manifested in Zhang's 1905 letter to Huang. Furthermore, the theoretical discussions in this letter, in comparison to his Buddhist essays published in *The People's Journal*, focus on the concepts depicting the functioning of the mind, e.g. the dichotomy between the "diversified consciousness discriminating phenomena" (*jianshi* 見識) and the "diversified consciousness producing phenomena" (*xianshi* 現識), that between the "controlling mind" (*xinwang* 心王) and the "attributes of the mind" (*xinsuo* 心所).⁶¹⁷ The speculation of such concepts, for Yogācāra Buddhism or other Indian Buddhist traditions, was closely related to the experience achieved in meditative practice. For Zhang in jail, it was motivated by the state of physical and mental sufferings to the same extent (if not more) as his intellectual ambition.

To demonstrate this point of view, I would like to introduce another text and more details of Zhang's jail situation. The text, entitled "Notes on Reading Buddhist Texts" and published in the *National Essence Journal* on April 24, 1905, has already been introduced in Chapter 2. Different from what the title suggests, this essay refers to Western philosophical and political ideas instead of Buddhist ones. This fact seems to confirm the

⁶¹⁶ Zhang Zhiqiang, 2012, p. 110.

⁶¹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 146.

opinion of researchers like Zhang Zhiqiang (as presented above). However, if we take a more careful examination of the three topics discussed in Zhang's essay (i.e. happiness vs. suffering, freedom vs. enforcement, and selfishness vs. sociality), it is hard to believe that choosing these topics was mainly based on intellectual reasons. Zhang's recollection in 1908 helps us to contextualize such discussions: "The prison managed by the Westerners, despite the cleanness of environment, did not provide enough food to eat, nor was the food seasoned by salt or fermented soya beans. Moreover, the clothes provided were so little that we could not sleep well. We were forced to get up when the belt rang. Facing each other, the prisoners were not allowed to speak, otherwise, we were beaten with sticks. It was near to the hell. ... Among the 500 prisoners there, more than 160 died after a year." 今西人所設獄，外觀甚潔清，而食不足以充腹，且無鹽豉，衣又至單寒，臥不得安眠，聞鈴即起，囚人相對，不得發一言，言即被棒，此直地獄耳……五百囚人，一歲而死者一百六十有奇。⁶¹⁸ Suffering from such unhuman living conditions, notably the physical abuse of the prison guards, Zhang protested by a hunger strike of seven days and even fought against them. This bold action reminds me of Zhang's reflection on the relative and absolute freedom in "Notes on Reading Buddhist Texts:"

Even the imprisoned slave does not necessarily lose his freedom. Why? Because, though the slave is imprisoned by force, nothing in the world is absolutely coercive. For the man being forced, if he is willing to resist it by death, the enforcement then turns out to be useless. Now that the person prefers to accept the enforcement and does not want to die, he does have the freedom to choose between death and being forced. Choosing the one and reject the other, how should we not regard it as freedom?

雖至住囚奴隸，其自繇[由]亦無所失。所以者何？住囚奴隸，人所強迫也，而天下實無強迫之事。苟遇強迫，拒之以死，彼強迫亦無所用。今不願死，而願從其強迫，此於死及強迫二事，固任其取捨矣。任取其一而任捨其一，得不謂之自繇乎？

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Evidently, the theoretical discussions above were stimulated by and responded to Zhang's own experience as a prisoner. What the dialectic views on freedom meant to Zhang at that time was the courage to fight against the tyranny of the prison guards (and accept the

⁶¹⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 112.

⁶¹⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 252.

possible consequence of death) rather than any kind of intellectual pleasure. Through the reference of “Notes on Reading Buddhist Texts” as a comparable case, I consolidate my argument that at the origin of Zhang’s commitment to (Yogācāra) Buddhism, we can find not only a passion for theoretical pursuit but also the experiences of suffering, resistance, and the vitalization of mental forces. Furthermore, such experiences were at the root of Zhang’s advocacy of “the all-powerfulness of spirit” (the theoretical foundation of which were the Yogācāra doctrines) and the ethical principle he relied on to evaluate multiple Buddhist schools, i.e. “relying on oneself instead of relying on others.” Besides, we see, in “Notes on Reading Buddhist Texts,” that Zhang treats voluntary death as the final expression of freedom and free will. It is no accident that suicide became a frequent topic in Zhang’s Buddhist essays published in *The People’s Journal*. In fact, he even conditionally approved of and encouraged suicide during that period.⁶²⁰

Apart from Zhang’s letter to Huang Zongyang in prison, we have three other pieces of materials concerning Zhang’s meditative practice during his third stay in Japan. Containing less information than the letter to Huang, these materials are nonetheless meaningful in their own ways. Let us start with the recollection of Zhu Jingzhou 朱鏡宙 (1889-1985), the husband of Zhang Zhan 章姵, the third daughter of Zhang Taiyan and Ms. Wang. Zhu later became an eminent journalist affiliated to the GMT and a Buddhist layman in his later life. In his *Literary Notes from the Yong’ē Hall* (*Yong’etang suibi* 詠莪堂隨筆), Zhu collects dozens of anecdotes about his father-in-law, of which two concern Buddhism. The one is a transcription of Zhang’s 1916 letter to Huang Zongyang, to be studied in the next section. The other is a very brief record of Zhang’s meditative practice: “Master Zhang had practiced the *satipaṭṭhāna* (*sinianchu*) for more than twenty years. The *satipaṭṭhāna* includes the mindful observation of the impurity of the body, the affliction of the sensations, the impermanence of the mind, and the non-self of the *dhammās*. Han Dazhai, coming from Hubei 湖北 Province, took refuge in Sichuan Province. During our meeting in the region of the Daba Mountains, he told me about the aforementioned meditative practice of Master Zhang.” 先生嘗修四念處二十餘年。四念處者，觀身不

⁶²⁰ For this subject, see Zhang’s 1907 essay “Commentary to ‘On the Courage to Die’” (*Gansilun anyu* 《敢死論》按語) (2017b, p. 267) and the study of Takeshi Kobayashi (2018, pp. 106-107).

淨，觀受為苦，觀心無常，觀法無我。鄂人韓達齋因避難入蜀，相見巴山，舉以告余。⁶²¹ Han Dazhai is the courtesy name of Han Yuchen 韓玉辰 (dates unknown), who had served as a member of the Republican parliament and later became a Buddhist layman enthusiastic about Yogācāra Buddhism. The *Collected Letters of Zhang Taiyan* includes two letters to Han, written in 1923, communicating political affairs.⁶²²

Returning to the record of Zhu Jingzhou, while the intimate personal tie of Zhu assures the authenticity of his recollection, his commitment to Buddhism explains why he included the anecdotes of Zhang's religious experience and Buddhist practice in his writing. The link between Zhu's Buddhist commitment and his records of such anecdotes should not be taken for granted, especially if we take into consideration the following fact: among the massively produced memoires by the disciples of Zhang Taiyan, many of whom worked in leading Chinese universities and to some extent monopolized the biographical rewriting of their master, Zhang's Buddhist engagement was rarely recalled. This is understandable since the main subjects they learned from Zhang were Chinese linguistics and classical textual studies, not Buddhist studies, and that some of them served as major advocates of radical anti-traditional ideas during the New Culture Movement (*xinwenhua yundong* 新文化運動) from the mid-1910s to the mid-1920s. Zhu Jingzhou and Han Yuchen, along with Gong Baoquan 龔寶銓 (1886-1922), another son-in-law of Zhang Taiyan (to be introduced below), in contrast, belonged to the social networks more characterized by cultural conservatism and enthusiasm for Buddhism. Despite the important role they had played on the political scene of the Republic of China and their close relationship with Zhang, their voices on this topic were neglected over the next several decades.

One thing that we have to be aware of is that this material is undated. It is highly likely that Han Yuchen took refuge in Sichuan Province during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945); in this scenario Zhang began practicing the *satipaṭṭhāna* during the 1910s. Taking full account of this, I still propose to trace this practice back to the 1900s, not long after he carried out the regular practice of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* since the *satipaṭṭhāna* (mindful observation of four subjects) is one of the fundamental methods of

⁶²¹ Zhu Jingshou, 2009, p. 142.

⁶²² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 1021-1023.

vipaśyanā (insightful observation). Furthermore, during the period in question, as is repeatedly presented, Zhang's aspiration to become a monk in India was dramatically intensified. In comparison to the method that Zhang attempted to switch to in the 1910s, i.e. the "compassionate contemplation/observation" (*ciguan* 慈觀) (to be discussed in the next section), the *vipaśyanā* was developed decisively within the Indian religious tradition and had a much stronger other-worldly orientation. That is why I tend to date the information offered by Han (via Zhu) from the 1900s.





The second piece of material is a photo, the only remaining one, that records Zhang's practicing sitting meditation. This photo was used for the biographical introduction to Zhang in the exposition "The Stories of Zhang Taiyan and Lu Xun" 章太炎與魯迅的故事 (September 23 – October 25, 2020), arranged by the Beijing Lu Xun Museum 北京魯迅博物. The first photo above was taken on the spot whereas the second was accessed on the Internet. The display board in the first photo seems to suggest that this photo was taken in 1910, still during Zhang's exile in Japan but is included in the next period (1910-1916) according to the chronological division of this chapter. But this short time gap is nothing significant for the study here.

From this photo, it seems probable that Zhang was meditating in the "full lotus pose" (*shuangpan* 雙盤, *padmasana*), whose legs were crossed with both feet resting on top of his opposite thighs. Readily accomplishing this relatively difficult posture reflected Zhang's persistent exercise of Buddhist meditation. Though it is impossible to make further suggestions about the level he had achieved, this photo did provide us a precious visual image of Zhang as a Buddhist practitioner. In addition, at the time when this photo was

taken, photography was far from popularized. It rather served as a new technology to record ceremonial and other important moments. So the fact itself that Zhang had this photo taken for him showed the aspect of his self-identity as a Buddhist practitioner.

The third piece of material comes from a totally different category, Zhang's theoretical Buddhist writings, certain passages of which indirectly improve our understanding of Zhang's Buddhist practice. The citation below is extracted from the first part of Zhang's 1907 essay "On the Non-Self of Human Beings." In Chapter 2, I have offered a short introduction to the main ideas of this essay. This citation is important because it reveals Zhang's general ideas about the relationship between theoretical knowledge and meditative practice with respect to Buddhist enlightenment:

There are two types of "self." The one is what the common people consider as the self. A new born infant already has the emotion of happiness and sorrow based on whether you satisfy his needs or not. The "self-clinging" of a human being exists from moment to moment throughout his whole life. Even those capable of well explaining the doctrine of "non-self" also follow the common sense [about the existence of self], using the word "self" in their speech according to the tact of convenience. This is the "self-clinging arisen from the creation" which belongs to the "nature of existence arising from causes and conditions." Only by mastering *śamatha* and *vipāśyanā* and eliminating [all the *karma* of previous and current existences] can we overcome this self-clinging; it is no use applying words [in the form of speech or writing] to deal with this type of self-clinging. The other type is the concept of self out of deviated views, which differs from the connotation of the self in the common sense. ... The "self" in this context is, in essence, another name of "nature." It is the self-clinging of differentiation and discrimination, which belongs to the "nature of existence produced from attachment to imaginatively constructed discrimination." We should apply various "methods of inference" (*biliang* 比量, *anumāna*) and refute these deviated views through repetitive argumentation.

我有二種：一者，常人所指為我。自嬰兒墮地，已有順違哀樂之情，乃至一期命盡，無一剎那而不執有我見。雖善解無我者，亦隨順世俗以為言說之方便。此為俱生我執，屬於依他起自性者。非熟習止觀以至滅盡，則此見必不能去，固非言詞所能遮撥。二者，邪見所指為我，即與常人有異……質而言之，則我者即自性之別

名。此為分別我執，屬於遍計所執自性者。乃當以種種比量，往覆徵詰而破之。⁶²³

Here Zhang distinguishes and discusses two types of “self-clinging” (*wozhi* 我執, *ātma-grāha*) of the human being, which, though resorting to the Yogācāra terminology, correspond to a more well-known Buddhist dichotomy, i.e. the obscuration of afflicting emotions (*fannao zhang* 煩惱障, *kleśāvaraṇa*) vs. the obscuration concerning the knowable (*suozhi zhang* 所知障, *jñeyāvaraṇa*). Zhang referred to this dichotomy in other occasions himself. Instead of contextualizing this text in Zhang’s efforts to lay out the epistemological foundation of a new religion, I make use of it here from the angle of Zhang’s practical engagement in Buddhism, leading to different insight and outcome.

The content to be highlighted, from this angle, consists in the assertion that the “self-clinging (*ātma-grāha*) arisen from the creation” (*jusheng wozhi* 俱生我執) can only be overcome “by mastering *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* and eliminating [all the *karma* of previous and current existences].” It is clear that Zhang confirms the irreplaceable role that Buddhist meditation plays in getting rid of the self-clinging arisen from the creation. In comparison to the self-clinging of differentiation and discrimination, largely limited to the literate groups like philosophers and religious specialists, the former type of self-clinging is universal for all human beings and more difficult to overcome since it functions from moment to moment throughout one’s life. Indeed, we see in multiple occasions that Zhang approved of the more fundamental position of meditative practice, compared with theoretical speculation, in achieving *nirvāṇa* enlightenment.

For instance, in the last part of the 1906 essay “On Atheism,” written two months earlier than “On the Non-Self of Human Beings,” Zhang negates the similarity between the “suchness” and the God (within the monotheistic traditions) because “we can verify the suchness by ourselves [through meditative practice] but not the existence of the god. Both the suchness and the god are names borrowed for temporal indication, but the things they indicate are different, [one being real and the other unreal.] Hence, it is improper to refer to the case of the god [to refute the real existence of the suchness]” 真如可以親證，而神則不能親證，其名之假相同，其事則不相同，故不可引以為例。⁶²⁴ As a result, it is the validity of meditative practice as a means of epistemological verification that

⁶²³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 441.

⁶²⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 422.

distinguishes Zhang's new religion from the theist religions in the past. In other words, although Zhang dedicates most pages of his Buddhist writings during this period to theoretical argumentations on the suchness and other Buddhist concepts, in his eyes, it is the meditative attainments of ancient Buddhist sages that ultimately guarantee the authenticity of the suchness as the source of the transcendental and universal truth rather than a depersonalized reprint of the God.

Zhang's higher valuation of meditative practice relative to theoretical thinking seems to contradict with the fact that the former topic only occupied a marginal position in his Buddhist writings during this period. But in fact, this is largely due to Zhang's full awareness of the limit of thought based on language. As he admits in the cited passage, speeches and writings are of little use to deal with the self-clinging arisen from the creation. What his conceptual discussions aim at is the obscuration concerning the knowable 所知障, not the obscuration of afflicting emotions 煩惱障. "To dispel afflictions" 以驅煩惱, Zhang resorts to *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, as revealed in his 1905 letter to Huang. This physico-mental practice, though undertaken on a regular basis for several decades, was barely visible in the writing records. In brief, we should grant more significance to Zhang's meditative practice than researchers have so far suggested based on the rarity of this topic in his Buddhist writings.

Corresponding to the intensified meditative practice, it seems that Zhang conducted a way of life more and more similar to that of a monk in the same period, based on several fragmentary materials. In the last section, I have touched on the subtle difference between "the thought of retreating from the profane world" in 1897 and the wish to "dress in *kasaya* (monk robes) and become a monk" in 1902. Wearing the *kasaya* is a visible manifestation of the affiliation to Buddhism, though not necessarily implying the will to conform to Buddhist monasticism. On the one hand, his impulsion to become a monk did not turn into reality at that time; on the other, the aspiration to transcend the profane world persisted and the sense of identity as a "lay monk" (if I may use this expression) increased. The 1903 Subao Case, as a sensational public event, left us with rich records of Zhang's speeches and behaviors during the lawsuit. A news of the *Shen Bao Newspaper* 申報, reported on July 16, 1903, provides us with precious descriptions of Zhang Taiyan's appearance during

the first trial: “According to a witness, the long and thin hair of Zhang hanged down upon his shoulders. His style of dressing was neither Chinese nor Western, but rather similar to the *kasaya*. Zou Rong had his braid cut and wore Western clothes [instead of Chinese ones]. The other accused persons still wore Chinese clothes.” 有見者，謂章長髮毵毵然被兩肩，其衣不東不西，頗似僧人袈裟之狀。鄒剪辮，易西服。餘人則仍用華裝。⁶²⁵

The appearance of Zhang Taiyan and Zou Rong, as the two main accused persons, differed from that of the other accused and also contrasted with each other. Zhang had cut his braid three years earlier than Zou and he certainly approved of many of the Westernized ideas of his sworn brother, but still, the Buddhist traits turned out to prevail over other traits in his appearance, whether Zhang deliberately chose to appear in this manner or not. More carefully reflecting on the details of this description, we can find that, on the one hand, Zhang had been carrying out his earlier wish to dress in *kasaya* before he formally began to serve his prison term. This fact suggests that the suffering in jail was a strong catalyst, rather than the dominant reason, for the establishment of Zhang’s Buddhist commitment. On the other hand, what Zhang wore was probably not the formal style of *kasaya* though it gave the witness an impression of being similar to it. Moreover, Zhang kept his long hair instead of shaving it like a monk. Hence, the visible symbols of Zhang’s affiliation to Buddhism were selectively manifested according to his own will without implying any obligation or devotion in relation to Buddhist monasticism. This observation is supported by the fact that though Zhang kept a frugal dietary habit throughout his life, he did not observe vegetarianism, at least not during his stay in Japan.⁶²⁶ Furthermore, we have Zhang’s own words revealing his ambiguous self-identity concerning the status of monk, as appearing in his recorded conversation with Takeda Hanshi and Gondo Seikyo in January 1907. At the outset of the second section of their conversation, Zhang, following his compliment to Hanshi as “a person having retreated from his heroic career in the profane world” 以英雄而為出世人, describes himself thus: “I am not a (Buddhist) monk but I resemble a (Buddhist) monk.” 僕亦非和尚也，而又似乎和尚。⁶²⁷ This sentence perfectly explains what I intend to express by the term “lay monk,” a lay Buddhist scholar

⁶²⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 101.

⁶²⁶ Ma Xulun, 2009, p. 20; Zhu Jingzhou, 2009, p. 136.

⁶²⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, pp. 268-269.

and practitioner with an urge to become a monk but without evident will to follow a monastic way of life. This, in turn, helps us to infer what kind of monk Zhang would have become if he had realized his plan to become a monk in India, the question that follows.

To proceed to Zhang's unrealized plan to become a monk in India from the end of 1907 to the beginning of 1908, we should first know that this was not an event that can be fully grasped from the sole angle of religious motivation alone. It was connected to Zhang's involvement in the power struggle within the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (studied in Chapter 3), which explains why Zhang planned this trip at this particular moment. It was also affected by his covert fundraising for the trip from certain high officials of the Manchu government via Liu Shipei and He Zhen, the failure of which resulted in Zhang giving up his plan. Moreover, Zhang's high appreciation of India was closely related to his constant promotion of the cultural and geopolitical unity between Asian countries against the imperial West. These are all relevant topics that I will not discuss below.⁶²⁸ Instead, I intend to relate Zhang's attempt to become a monk in India to his learning Sanskrit in Japan. The latter, happening about a year after his attempt, can be seen as an alternative when the trip proved to be unfeasible. Since Zhang managed to learn Sanskrit for quite a while, we now possess considerable original sources concerning this affair, much more than those about his unrealized plan. A study of this topic allows us to better understand Zhang's appreciation of Indian (religious) culture and also get a glimpse of his social network in Japan in relation to Buddhism and India. Besides, we see within this social network the discreet interaction between Zhang Taiyan and Yang Wenhui. The two eventually diverged, a fact from which we can draw important conclusions.

Let's start with Zhang's changing attitude towards India and Japan. The thought of building a united Asia originated from the beginning of Zhang's engagement in the reformist movement. What Zhang emphasized at the outset was an alliance between China and Japan.⁶²⁹ His views on India, in contrast, were relatively negative, which was still the case in his 1903 polemic essay "Refuting Kang Youwei Concerning the Revolution."⁶³⁰ Following his third exile (also the longest stay) in Japan, Zhang dramatically reversed his

⁶²⁸ For Zhang's unsuccessful fundraising and its aftermath, see Yang Tianshi, 2011, pp. 324-356. For Zhang's promotion of a united Asia, see Lin Shaoyang, 2018, pp. 186-224.

⁶²⁹ Lin Shaoyang, 2018, pp. 178-181.

⁶³⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 205.

earlier preference for Japan over India. He perceived and was provoked by the hidden ambition of imperial expansionism among Japanese political and intellectual elites. His esteem for the Japanese sinologists and Buddhist communities went down at the same time. His hostility against the Japanese government and elites, in effect, largely increased the tension between him and the pro-Japanese core members of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance (among whom was Sun Yat-sen). Meanwhile, Zhang took advantage of his chief editorship of *The People's Journal* to publish eight essays on India, including introductions to Indian history and culture, his interaction with Indian scholars and anti-colonial nationalists, the importance and means of building an alliance between India and China, and even the scientific achievements of ancient Indians. Zhang's enthusiastic publications began from March 1907 and lasted until October 1908, just before *The People's Journal* was banned by the Japanese government.⁶³¹ In this series of essays, Zhang depicted India as a model (more or less idealized) that China should follow, which implicitly criticized Japan and the Chinese advocates of the Japanese path.⁶³²

In the aforementioned context, Zhang began planning his trip to India and learning Sanskrit. For both affairs, we see the crucial role of Su Manshu, whose communication with Zhang provides us with precious original sources. The first material to be introduced, however, is Su's letter to his friend Liu San 劉三 (dates unknown), written at the end of 1907. "I recently received the letter of [Zhang] Taiyan," said Su, "asking me to be his companion. But for the moment, we cannot fix the time schedule due to the lack of money for this trip." 前太炎有信來，命曼隨行，南入印度，現路費未足，未能預定行期。⁶³³ This letter shows that Zhang's plan was ready before the end of 1907, the only remaining obstacle being the shortage of funds. It was in this context that Zhang entrusted Liu Shipei and his wife to raise money for him, a decision he must have regretted later. In January 2, 1908, a short announcement was published in No. 18 of *The People's Journal* about Zhang resigning from the chief editorship due to "the sudden outbreak of mental illness" 腦病忽作. Zhang Ji and Tao Chengzhang took Zhang's position successively for the next four issues.⁶³⁴ According to the research of Yang Tianshi, Zhang asked Liu Shipei to show this

⁶³¹ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 149, 164, 172-173.

⁶³² Lin Shaoyang, 2018, pp. 206-214.

⁶³³ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 171-172.

⁶³⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 146.

announcement to the Qing officials in contact to demonstrate his decisive departure from the revolutionary league.⁶³⁵ So the mental illness might be an excuse for his resignation. Nonetheless, this excuse may have a factual basis. In other words, it is possible that Zhang was truly affected by a sudden outburst of epilepsy at that time, bearing huge pressure in front of a critical crossroad in his life. Just as the case of his youth during the exam, this outburst of epilepsy, in a forceful way, facilitated his decision-making of leaving the collective cause behind and pursuing a more transcendental goal.

Another original source resonating with this situation as well as the religious experience of Zhang's early years is the essay "Inscription on My Photograph as a Gift for the Master Su Manshu," probably written at the beginning of 1908. Its first part, recalling the origin of the author's urge to leave the profane world, has been discussed in the previous section. I cite here the passage that follows: "In this impure and chaotic world, the people are filled with hatred and resentment. 'When the *yin* and *yang* act awry, heaven and earth are greatly perturbed; [and on this comes the crash of thunder] and from the rain comes fire, which consumes great locust trees.'⁶³⁶ What Zhuangsheng has depicted happens today. If not leaving this world rapidly, I will spit out blood [out of hatred and resentment] and die. As planned for the early summer of 1908, I will shave my hair and become a monk in the mountains." 濁世昌披，人懷慄悞。莊生云：“陰陽錯行，天地大絃。水中有火，乃焚大槐。”今之謂也。非速引去，有歐血死耳。當於戊申孟夏，披鬚入山。

⁶³⁷ In this citation, Zhang gives an explicit schedule for his plan to become a monk. But the more impressive point is his description of an eschatological age through the mouth of Zhuangzi, much more intense in emotion than what "Clarification of Being Alone" had expressed by "the closing of heaven and earth and the retreat of the sages from the world." Also, what drove him to take the departure was the hatred and resentment (which belong to *devesha*, one of the three unwholesome roots that Buddhism aims to eliminate) instead of the fear of losing his moral integrity. Such negative emotions would strike Zhang again during his house confinement in the 1910s. Despite this difference, what remained

⁶³⁵ Yang Tianshi, 2011, p. 341.

⁶³⁶ I adopt the English translation of James Legge (consulted on December 22, 2020: <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi/what-comes-from-without>) and make some minor modifications. The phrase within the square brackets is left out of Zhang's quotation.

⁶³⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 356.

consistent was his tendency of transforming the political experience and reflection into moral protest and religious pursuit.

Due to Liu Shipei's betrayal of the revolution, Zhang's plan of going to India halted. Zhang's secret operation of fundraising later became a proof of "treason" handed over to his opponents within the divided revolutionary league. It is no surprise that Zhang left few records nor wrote any recollection about this event. The religious and cultural urge at the origin of this plan has ever since been shadowed by the political scandal. "[I] have realized that only by acting alone can I assemble a [new] grand community. However, I seek in vain to be alone." This passage of "Clarification of Being Alone" has been cited above. It seems that it foretells the dilemma its author would face in the future.

Now let's turn to Zhang's learning Sanskrit in Japan around 1909. In contrast to the failed attempt of becoming a monk in India, here we have Zhang's letters to Su Manshu, the Zhou brothers, and Yang Wenhui (along with Yang's response), and in addition the recollection of Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967). Moreover, these original sources are mutually related and confirm each other.

But before examining them, I would like to return to an earlier source, Zhang's 1905 letter to Huang Zongyang. The first part of this letter, cited at the beginning of this section, is highly relevant to the topic in question. It shows, first of all, that Zhang's interest in Sanskrit had emerged then though he was probably unable to read the original text of the *Shorter Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*. Furthermore, it offers a hint on why Zhang wished to learn Sanskrit. The first and most visible reason lies in the Sino-Indian cultural communication, explicitly expressed in "The Means of Uniting China and India" (*Zhina Yindu lianhe zhi fa* 支那印度聯合之法), published in No. 20 of *The People's Journal* on April 25, 1908.⁶³⁸ The second reason is the intent to reach the universal truth underlying the theoretical texts in different languages. As revealed by the letter to Huang, Zhang held the opinion that Western philosophy and Indian Buddhism shared a lot on some core subjects. The main obstacle preventing him to reach a final conclusion is "the difference of linguistic and writing systems, along with [the distortions caused by] multiple translations." The third reason consists in the scholarly methodology that Zhang was familiar with. As discussed

⁶³⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 385-386.

in Chapter 2, Zhang found Yogācāra scriptures accessible to him because it “begins by analyzing concepts and ends by dispelling them,” hence is similar to the methodology of “the Plain learning [i.e. the Han learning] in which I had been specialized.”⁶³⁹ The studies of the Han learning are founded on traditional Chinese linguistics (*xiaoxue* 小學). So it is natural that Zhang wanted to develop his theoretical study of Yogācāra Buddhism on the basis of learning Sanskrit.

Although Zhang formally started learning Sanskrit in May 1909, his plan can be traced back to the same period as that of going to India. In the only remaining letter from him to Su Manshu, written around the end of 1907 and the beginning of 1908, Zhang informed Su of the arrival of an Indian (Hindu) monk in Tokyo, encouraging Su to take advantage of this opportunity to learn Sanskrit and Hindu classics with him. Called in Chinese “Suoluo” 婆羅, this monk had stayed at the Baoji Temple 寶積寺 of Mount Luofu 羅浮山, a sacred mountain situated in Guangdong 廣東 Province and was sympathetic to the Chinese revolutionary movement. Zhang praised “Suoluo” for his expertise in meditative practice and suggested that Su published his *Dictionary of Sanskrit* (*Fanwen dian* 梵文典) with the help of “Suoluo.” Furthermore, Zhang humbly asked Su to teach him the original texts of the *Upanishads* (*Aoyishu* 奧義書) which Zhang had asked an Indian friend to buy and deliver for him.⁶⁴⁰ The recollections of Zhou Zuoren seems to contradict this letter. One of Zhang’s main disciples in Tokyo and later an influential essayist and translator, Zhou recalls in his later years his experience in Japan translating the *Upanishads*, encouraged by his master, as well as his being witness to Zhang learning Sanskrit. According to Zhou, there were quite a few Japanese Buddhists who mastered Sanskrit, but Zhang did not like them. Besides, Su Manshu had learned Sanskrit and Zhang wrote a preface for his *Dictionary of Sanskrit*, probably at the end of 1907. Zhou wonders why Zhang did not ask Su to teach him Sanskrit.⁶⁴¹

The answer to this question is that Su did not continue working in this direction. According to a short essay by Rao Zongyi, entitled “Zhang Taiyan dui Yindu de xiangwang he renshi” 章太炎對印度的嚮往和認識 [The Yearning for and Knowledge about India

⁶³⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 71.

⁶⁴⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 271. Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 171.

⁶⁴¹ Zhou Zuoren, 2013, p. 286.

of Zhang Taiyan], Su failed to complete the promised *Dictionary of Sanskrit* though both Zhang Taiyan and Liu Shipei had each dedicated a preface to it.⁶⁴² Moreover, we see Zhang complaining about Su's attention being distracted from serious studies to sighting trips and musical instruments in his letter to Yu Tongbo 余同伯 (dates unknown) on April 17, 1909.⁶⁴³ Yu was a disciple of Yang Wenhui, with whom Zhang used to be acquainted. By writing to Yu, Zhang attempted to get the support of the latter's master to pay for the expense of language tutorial. The correspondences between Zhang and Yang via Yu are the main historical materials about the divergence between these two important figures in the Buddhist history of modern China. The original texts were included in the volume 8 of the *Deng budeng guan zalu* 等不等觀雜錄, a collection of Yang's selected works, including one letter from Zhang and two letters in reply of Yu reporting the words of his master.⁶⁴⁴ Following the recent discovery of Zhang's original letters, we now know that the letter from Zhang included in Yang's collection was a mixture of excerpts of three original letters, one directly addressing to Yang and the other two to Yu.⁶⁴⁵ These original letters, included in the new edition of *The Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan*, allow us to access more details, e.g. Zhang's complaint about Su.

The three original letters were written in April and May 1909. Shortly before, Zhang had found an Indian scholar named "Mishiluo" 密尸羅 (or 密尸囉, 密史羅 in different texts), the only one who mastered Sanskrit among the dozens of Indian students and scholars in Tokyo. After finding a qualified teacher, the next and bigger difficulty was to seek some other people to learn together and share the tutorial expense. To the disappointment of Zhang, apart from the absence of Su Manshu, Gui Bohua, who used to be enthusiastic about learning Sanskrit, could not participate either because his younger brother went mad.⁶⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Zhang also wrote a letter to Zhou Zuoren and his older brother Lu Xun, inviting them to attend the language class with him, informing that he had paid the expense of the first half month for them. Zhou attended the first session and found himself to be the only participant apart from his master.⁶⁴⁷ Apparently, most of Zhang's

⁶⁴² Rao Zongyi, 1998, p. 158.

⁶⁴³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 352.

⁶⁴⁴ Yang Wenhui, 2000, pp. 516-517.

⁶⁴⁵ For the discovery of and a general introduction to the three original letters, see Chen Siyi, 2014.

⁶⁴⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 352.

⁶⁴⁷ Zhou Zuoren, 2013, p. 287.

disciples did not share his passion for Indian culture and religion.

According to the recollection of Zhou Zuoren, the first session occurred on the 16th day of a month at the end of spring and the beginning of summer. In the aforementioned letter to Yu written on April 17, Zhang talked about his solitude, having only one person to learn together. Combining these two sources, it is safe to infer that Zhang formally started learning Sanskrit from April 16, 1909.⁶⁴⁸ Also in this context, we can see that Yang Wenhui was then the last chance to afford the tutorial expense. The result was once more disappointing. Yang politely refused to offer any help. Gabriele Goldfuss has summarized four reasons based on the correspondences available during her research.⁶⁴⁹ The first and main reason lies in the divergences of their religious stance. The views Zhang held were founded on his tendency of syncretizing various religious traditions of China and India (to be studied in Chapter 5). To quote from his letter to Yang, written on May 8, 1909: “As the orthodox religion [of India], Brahmanism used to serve as a precursor of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Despite the confrontation and conflict in the history, Buddhism and Brahmanism have recently been converging into a single religion [in India] despite the difference of their forms. … Having the support of Brahmanism, there will be a boom in the development of Buddhism (the ‘sacred religion’) [in China]. Furthermore, the communication of the two religions will reintroduce Mahāyāna scriptures into India, truly a blessed event for the ten thousand generations in the future.” 婆羅門正宗之教，本為大乘先聲，中間或相攻伐，近則佛教與婆羅門教漸已合為一家，所異者獨在形式耳……得此扶掖，聖教當為一振。又令大乘經論得返梵方，誠萬世之幸也。⁶⁵⁰

In his reply letter, Yang expresses his strong disagreement on this issue, reaffirming the conventional frontier between the two religions: “[I] am convinced that by turning away from Brahmanism and establishing Buddhism, Buddha Śākyamuni did not tolerate any penetration of the former’s doctrines. Now we are living in the *Degenerate Age* (*mofa*), it is [a dangerous act] to integrate Brahmanism and Buddhism as one religion, which will result in the confusion and extinction of the genuine Buddhist teachings. This is an idea

⁶⁴⁸ In *The Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan*, Zhang’s letter to the Zhou brothers was considered to be written in May rather than April, which is probably a mistake.

⁶⁴⁹ Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001, pp. 204-209. Goldfuss has offered the French translation of the correspondences between the two persons.

⁶⁵⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 355.

that I can never agree with.” 深知如來在世，轉婆羅門而入佛教，不容絲毫假借。今當末法之時，而以婆羅門與佛教合為一家，是混亂正法，而漸入於滅亡，吾不忍聞也。⁶⁵¹ Besides the different religious view, Yang also talks about his financial difficulty and the limited level of his students, which, though were not as important as the first reason, should not be regarded as mere excuses. A fourth reason is also easy to find, as already pointed out by Zhou Zuoren⁶⁵² before contemporary researchers. Zhang deeply appreciated Yogācāra Buddhism but was very critical against Pure Land Buddhism and Tantric Buddhism. Yang, in contrast, held an inclusive attitude towards all Sinitic Buddhist schools, though he was also among the early advocates of Yogācāra Buddhism in the late Qing.

The last and hitherto neglected reason, which would be difficult to find out without the discovery of Zhang’s original letters, is related to politics. At the end of Zhang’s second letter to Yu Tongbo, written shortly after the first one asking again for help, he refers to a history in the late Eastern Jin dynasty 東晉 (317-420) between Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416), Lu Xun 盧循 (?-411), and Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422).⁶⁵³ Maybe the most reputable Buddhist monk at his time, Huiyuan did not decline Lu’s visit though the latter was a rebellious leader (affiliated to the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice) against the Jin rulers. But Liu Yu, who would later be Emperor Wu of (Liu) Song (劉宋武帝), showed his generosity by treating Huiyuan’s contact with Lu as irrelevant with politics. In a literary manner, Zhang expresses his hope that Yang Wenhui would not be afraid of collaborating with him for the religious cause due to his engagement in rebellious groups against the Manchu government. Despite his humble insistence, Zhang failed to get Yang’s support. Though it remains uncertain whether the divergence of political stance was a major concern of Yang, we should nevertheless take this factor into account.

Also in this second letter, Zhang provided his Sanskrit translation of a passage from the *to show his achievement after studying for less than a month. To be noted, it was traditionally believed that the monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) of the Tang dynasty, a great translator of Buddhist canonical works (Yogācāra scriptures in particular), had*

⁶⁵¹ Yang Wenhui, 2000, p. 517.

⁶⁵² Zhou Zuoren, 2013, p. 288.

⁶⁵³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 354.

translated the *into Sanskrit. Zhang's tentative translation suggests that he may have treated Xuanzang as a model. Zhang's 1916 letter to Xu Shouchang 許壽裳 (1883-1948), to be discussed in the next section, will confirm this conjecture. In contrast to Zhang's excitement, the feedback of his only classmate was rather negative. In his recollection, Zhou Zuoren complaints about the complexity of Sanskrit as well as the difficulty in communicating with the Indian teacher. He quitted after the first two sessions.⁶⁵⁴ Zhang, though much more motivated than his disciple, must have been troubled by the same problems, in addition to the unsolved financial difficulty. Learning Sanskrit would considerably contribute to his studies of traditional Chinese linguistics in the following years.⁶⁵⁵ But this experience in general was full of frustration and loneliness. In contrast to his anti-Manchu propaganda, Zhang's praise of Indian religious culture and promotion of the Sino-Indian alliance barely received any response among the revolutionary groups or overseas Chinese students. So he lamented that "having the idea [of promoting the Sino-Indian cultural communication] for years, I found myself to be the only advocate with no one in response. The sorrow comes ceaselessly from within my heart." 懷此數年，孤唱寡和，悲從中來，不可天闕。⁶⁵⁶*

During the year of 1909, Zhang wrote two letters to Liang Qichao. Apart from reconciling with each other, they also communicated their scholarly achievements in the past few years. In the first of the two letters, Zhang talks about his unsuccessful experience of learning Sanskrit due to his decreasing vitality in his forties, which resulted in the abandonment of his earlier plan to learn three languages of ancient Asian civilizations, i.e. Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic. He then claims that "[I] therefore realized that it was better to master the native dialects than exhaustively study foreign languages; and it was better to investigate the local conditions of the nine regions [of China] than traveling around the Earth. This is true for scholarship as well as politics." 是知偏稽殊語，未若綜域內之方言，環游地球，不如省九州之風土。此非專為學術，蓋於政事亦然。⁶⁵⁷ We can infer that by the time when this letter was written (the exact date is unknown), Zhang had admitted that it was too hard for him to reach a satisfactory level of Sanskrit and had been

⁶⁵⁴ Zhou Zuoren, 2013, p. 287.

⁶⁵⁵ Rao Zongyi, 1998, p. 158.

⁶⁵⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 386.

⁶⁵⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 64.

preparing to turn to the studies of Chinese dialects. Moreover, the sentence that “it was better to investigate the local conditions of the nine regions [of China] than traveling around the Earth” can be seen as a hint of Zhang’s indefinite suspension of his plan of travelling to India. Zhang would feel again the urge of leaving the profane world in the future, but he then tended to choose a destination in his homeland rather than in India.

I would like to end this section by discussing a question raised by Rao Zongyi: if Zhang had managed to become a monk in India, would he have been a Buddhist monk or come into contact with Brahmanism?⁶⁵⁸ Indeed, Zhang must have known that he could hardly find any Buddhist temples or communities in India. From his correspondences with Yang Wenhui, we know that Zhang had the intention to integrate Brahmanism (especially the philosophy of Vedānta) with Buddhism, comparing his work with that of the prominent monks of the Eastern Jin and (Liu) Song dynasties who integrated the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi with Buddhism.⁶⁵⁹ So, surely, he would have undertaken syncretic work with respect to different religious and scholarly traditions of India in this scenario. What he did in reality after abandoning learning Sanskrit (i.e. reinterpreting the *Zhuangzi* on the Buddhist basis) would probably have been postponed. Furthermore, becoming a monk may not have meant a decisive rupture with the past. Judging from the relationship between Zhang and contemporary Buddhist monks, it is clear that he got along much better with Huang Zongyang and Su Manshu than those living a conventional way of monastic life. Both Huang and Su engaged in anti-Manchu movements and various cultural activities and both won Zhang’s appreciation for their moral integrity. Moreover, the companion who would have gone to India with Zhang was Su. These facts altogether lead me to presume that if Zhang had become a monk in India, instead of thoroughly retreating from the profane world, he would have kept in contact with the Indian scholars and political militants he had known in Japan and continued making contributions to the Sino-Indian communication.

* Spiritual unrest and the transforming Buddhist practice (1910-1916) *

This is a period of both continuation and transformation. On the one hand, Zhang

⁶⁵⁸ Rao Zongyi, 1998, pp. 157-158.

⁶⁵⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 355.

kept undertaking meditative practice and, troubled by the political turbulence and personal sufferings, felt the urge of leaving the world (by becoming a monk or even committing suicide). On the other hand, he sought more indigenous methods of self-cultivation, resonating with his efforts at syncretizing Buddhism with Daoist and Confucian teachings. This section focuses on studying Zhang's dreams (or nightmares) of the netherworld starting from early December 1915 during his house confinement, recorded in detail in his long letter to Huang Zongyang. This is the most important material for this chapter, which presents the content of the dreams as well as various methods Zhang applied to get rid of them. Along with the presentation of its background, the analysis of this letter allows us to perceive how Zhang received the Buddhist imaginary of the afterworld and utilized popular religious methods in real life, in addition to his new tentative of meditative practice and his attitude towards death.

I skip over the biographical introduction of this period, reserving it for the next chapter which studies the intellectual aspect of the same period. Let's enter into the direct background of the dreams, i.e. Zhang's house confinement in Beijing from August 1913 to June 1916 as punishment for his uncompromising political stand against Yuan Shikai. The house confinement happened roughly a decade after the Subao Case, and its duration was similar to that of the imprisonment in the Shanghai concessions. Nonetheless, at the time he considered himself as a man of great merit to the new-born Republic instead of a rebellious intellectual determined to endure martyrdom.⁶⁶⁰ As a result, the house confinement turned out to be a period of spiritual unrest and torment although decent living conditions were guaranteed and receiving guests was conditionally permitted. In contrast to the jail experience, this time he suffered much less physically, but when he resorted to Buddhism to cope with the spiritual turmoil, the result was not as satisfying as ten years earlier.

Despite the changed mood, to a large extent Zhang reacted to the political repression in the same ways. For example, in both cases he undertook hunger strikes. In the second occasion, the hunger strike began from May 1914 and lasted two weeks during which he ate only four meals. The hunger strike ended thanks to the clever persuasion of a friend.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁶⁰ Sun Wanguo, 1986, p. 337.

⁶⁶¹ Ma Xulun, 2009, pp. 20-21.

As a concession to Zhang's suicidal protest, the Yuan government transferred him from the Longquan temple 龍泉寺 to a house in Qianliang hutong 錢糧胡同.⁶⁶² Carried out as a struggle tactic, the suicidal protest was nonetheless conducted out of sincerity, as exposed by Zhang's letters to Tang Guoli 湯國梨 (1883-1980), his second wife, during his house confinement. Their wedding was held in Shanghai on June 15, 1913 (shortly before Zhang's departure for Beijing), and Cai Yuanpei served as the best man. In a letter written on May 23, 1914, Zhang hoped that his newly-married wife could "diligently eliminate her personal *karma* and read Buddhist scriptures for spiritual comfort" 勸修自業，觀覽佛經以自慰藉。⁶⁶³ The tone of this letter and several others written during the hunger strike, seemed to express his last wishes. As another example, in a 1915 letter to a Japanese friend, Zhang explained that he "did not commit suicide due to the lack of others capable of undertaking the cause of cultural transmission in his place." 不肯引決自裁者，以他人不與爭文化之業也。⁶⁶⁴ The explanation offered here had been expressed in the 1903 text "Autobiographical Account from Prison in the Year of *Guimao*" in a more emotional manner but grounded on the same reason.

Though he never again directly attempted to end his life, Zhang continued to manifest his fearlessness and will to die, as shown in particular by his calligraphy work of two Chinese characters, "susi" 速死 (wishing to die soon). This calligraphy was written in August 1915, accompanied by a postscript: "All sentient beings, [functioning fundamentally according to] the storing *ālaya*-consciousness, come to rest when the move/functioning ends. As long as a person orients every thought toward death, death will come as he wishes." 含識之類，動止則息，苟念念趣死，死則自至。⁶⁶⁵ While the former part of the postscript refers to Yogācāra terminology, the later part is more relevant to the Buddhist meditative method for mental concentration, especially the method of "holding to/relying on the names of Buddha or Bodhisattva" (*chiming* 持名). Zhang did not just write the calligraphy but also suspended it in a hall of the house. Shortly after, on September 8, Zhang's firstborn daughter Zhang Li 章焱 (1893-1915), who took care of her father's daily life, committed suicide in the house. According to an anecdotal record,

⁶⁶² Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 111, 273-274.

⁶⁶³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 694.

⁶⁶⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2017, p. 764.

⁶⁶⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 523.

Zhang Li hung herself beside the calligraphy.⁶⁶⁶ This may not be true,⁶⁶⁷ but it is still plausible that Zhang Taiyan's will to die, manifested by the calligraphy and in various other ways, was responsible for the suicide of his daughter.

It was in this context that Zhang was caught by the upsetting dreams. Zhang referred to this event in his letters to two friends, Gong Baoquan and Huang Zongyang. The husband of Zhang Li, Gong was the son-in-law with whom Zhang Taiyan was closest. Based on the eighteen remaining letters from Zhang to Gong, all written during Zhang's house confinement, we can see the important role Gong played in the publication of Zhang's writings as well as other tasks of ordinary life. The dreams are briefly mentioned in two of these letters, the first on December 19, 1915 and the second on February 1, 1916.⁶⁶⁸ One thing to be noted is that in the first letter, Zhang said he was happy to have such dreams, in contrast to which, we see in Zhang's letter to Huang, written more than three months later, that he had become "very fed up with" them. There was a change of attitude here. As background information about Gong Baoquan, he became a devoted Buddhist in his later years and had contacts with prominent scholars like Fan Gunong 范古農 (1881-1951), Shen Zengzhi 沈曾植 (1850-1922), and Ma Yifu 馬一浮 (1883-1967), all reputed for their Buddhist studies and all originating from northern Zhejiang Province.⁶⁶⁹ As to the long letter to Huang Zongyang, it was written on March 30, 1916. The extended citation below is the first half of the letter. To facilitate reading and reference, I divide the English translation into several numbered paragraphs and provide corresponding Chinese characters for key names and concepts:

The attendant of (Buddhist) master Yang:⁶⁷⁰

[1] I am glad to receive your reply letter which cheers up my spirit. In response to your enquiry, I try to describe my illusory dreams below, waiting for your commentary.

[2] In early December last year, I had a dream at night in which someone sent to

⁶⁶⁶ Xu Yishi, 1983, p. 93.

⁶⁶⁷ According to the grandson of Zhang's third daughter (Zou Liren, 2009, p. 97), Zhang Li hung herself from a tree in the courtyard.

⁶⁶⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 755-756.

⁶⁶⁹ See the biography of Gong Baoquan by Zhang Taiyan (2014c, p. 217).

⁶⁷⁰ Zhang addresses the letter to the (fictional) attendant of Huang Zongyang instead of Huang himself, which is an elegant style to show respect.

me an invitation card for lunch. Reading the invitation card, I found that it was Wang Ao 王鳌 (1450-1524) who invited me. {*Zhang's own note: Originated from Zhenze 震澤 county, Wang was a reputable minister during the reign of Zhengde Emperor 明武宗 (1491-1521) of the Ming dynasty.*} I went out of the door and found a carriage waiting for me. Upon arriving at his house, the host received me with hearty dinner. Among other guests accompanying me, I found Indians, Europeans, and Han Chinese, who showed their own visiting cards to me. The Han Chinese guests were Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209-254) and Mei Yaochen 梅堯臣 (1002-1060). I asked Mr. Wang: "I have had knowledge of your reputation and virtue by reading historiography. However, I never have the honor to drink with you/meet you personally. So I feel confused to be invited today." Mr. Wang said: "You are invited to deal with official documents together with us. Mr. Mei is the chief procurator. The rest of the attendees all serve as judges. There are nine of us respectively taking charge with the judicial affairs of the five continents. You and me are responsible for those of East Asia." I asked Mr. Wang: "Life and death are limited by lifespan and transmigration is directed by karma. Even the Maheśvara 大自在天 cannot be the ruler of their functioning, let alone us?" Mr. Mei replied: "There is no ruler for life and death nor for transmigration. This place only takes charge with complaints as well as citations and arrest. The cited ones are not all dead whereas those arrested are. Once the sentence is executed, the condemned cannot be released until the term of penalty ends. After being released, the condemned are reincarnated into the six paths, which is out of our bounds." I found this explanation quite in line with Buddhist teachings, different from the popular belief that it is Yama 焱[焰]摩 who rules transmigration as well as life and death. So I asked again: "The iron bed and copper pillar are extremely cruel torture. Who made this method of punishment?" The attendees all replied: "No one in this place makes any laws/methods of punishment. We are recommended/elected by the people of Jambudvīpa 閻浮提 instead of nominated by the superior. The laws here have been compiled based on those of Han, Tang, Ming, and Qing dynasties, as well as Western and Japanese laws. The iron bed and copper pillar are never applied. Those condemned ones for a grave crime will be confined for a *kalpa*, and those of minor crime for a hundred years. Both rod penalty and death penalty are abandoned. We have been suspicious

whether the prison guards have committed illegal punishments against the prisoners by the iron bed and copper pillar. The inspectors secretly sent to the prison all negated the existence of [illegally applying the iron bed and copper pillar]. The condemned ones who have then been released, however, say that they have truly suffered such torture." I said: "The illegal punishment of prison guards cannot be inspected. Now that I am invited to this place, I am willing to solve this problem with all of you. How do you see it?" Mr. Wang replied: "It is indeed my own will." Thus, I took the leave.

[3] The next day I again dreamt of going to the bureau to handle official business. Since then I had such dreams every night. There were no important cases among those on which I had passed sentences. The most frequent cases were fights with weapons, murders, and swindle for money. I was very fed up with these illusory dreams appearing ceaselessly except Sundays. Last year after having had such dreams for more than twenty days, I wrote one day a note requesting for leave and burned it. I did not have dreams that night. However, they appeared again the next night and it have been four months since then. Suspicious of the illegal punishment of the prison guards, I changed all the prison guards one night. Under my enquiry, the prisoners said they still suffered from the iron bed and copper pillar. I asked where were the instruments of torture? The prisoners all pointed out by fingers or eyes, but I could see the instruments nowhere. I did not realize the reason until I went back. In Buddhist canonical works, this is named as illusory appearance. No one ever forced the prisoners. It is due to their *karma* that the instruments of torture appear. Correspondingly, having such dreams myself is caused by my *karma*.

[4] This spring, I bought and took ginseng for its effect of calming the "five *yin* organs" (*wuzang* 五臟). Moreover, I practiced sitting meditation observing my mind (*yanzuo guanxin* 宴坐觀心) for an hour or so after supper wishing to get rid of the illusory dreams but did not succeed. In the recent reply letter, you advised me to keep a detached attitude [towards pleasant experience in meditation], which I know well. However, although I understand by "methods of inference" (*biliang* 比量, *anumāna*) that it is illusory, I could not eliminate this mental shadow at the level of "direct experience" (*xianxiang* 現量, *pratyakṣa*). Reflecting on this, I assume that it was caused

by my “hate/aversion” (*chen* 嘴, *devesha*). We live in a very unfair world. In the past three years, I have endured trials and tribulations. Except seven or eight disciples, the other acquaintances of mine in Beijing are all snobbish and do not pay me visits. The change of the state system last year⁶⁷¹ further intensified my feelings of hate. No wonder that in dreams I transform into Yama out of such *karma*. To calm the hate, the only effective method is the “compassionate contemplation/observation” (*ciguan* 慈觀). I am afraid that the “constant *samādhi* in all states” (*yixing sanmei* 一行三昧) is not applicable to this problem. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (大般涅槃經), I find doctrinal discussions on the “compassionate contemplation” without technical instructions. So, I do not know how to carry it out. I wait for your remarks and instructions. {Zhang's own note: *What is the essence and property of the object of hate?*? *What is the trait and representation of the mental state of hate?*? *I have been observing/reflecting on such issues when the hate emerges but I fail to overcome it.*}

.....

Vandana (salute) from Zhang Binglin

March 30 (1916)

仰上人侍者：

快接手書，神氣為開。所問幻夢事狀，今試筆述，願上人評之。

去歲十二月初，夜夢有人持刺請與午餐，閱其主名，則王鑒也。王，震澤人，明武宗時賢相。走及門外，已有馬車。乘車至其宅中，主人以大餐相餉，旁有陪客，印度人、歐洲人、漢人皆具，各出名刺，漢人有夏侯玄、梅堯臣。余問王公：“讀史知先生名德，而素無杯酒之歡，今茲召飲，情有所惑。”王曰：“與君共理簿書事耳。梅君則總檢察，吾輩皆裁判官，以九人分主五洲刑事，而我與君則主亞東事件者也。”余問王公：“生死為壽量所限，輪回則業力所牽，大自在天尚不能為其主宰，而況吾儕？”梅氏答曰：“生死輪轉，本無主者。此地唯受控訴，得有傳訊、逮捕事耳。傳訊者不皆死，逮捕則死矣。既判決處分後，至彼期滿釋放。釋放後又趣生諸道，則亦非此所主也。”余思此論頗合佛法，與世俗傳言燄[焰]摩主輪回生死者不同，因復問言：“鐵牀[床]銅柱，慘酷至極，誰制此法者？”皆答曰：“此

⁶⁷¹ It refers to the revival of hereditary monarchy from the newborn Republic, promoted by Yuan Shikai in late 1915.

處本無制法之人，吾輩受任，亦是閻浮提人公舉，無有任命之者。法律則參用漢、唐、明、清及遠西、日本諸法，本無鐵牀銅柱事也。受罪重者，禁錮一劫，短則百年，而笞杖之與死刑皆所不用。吾輩尚疑獄卒私刑，以鐵牀銅柱困苦獄囚，曾遣人微往視之，皆云無有。而據受罪期滿者言，則云確受此痛。”余曰：“獄卒私刑，非覩察所能得，吾此來當與諸公力除此敝，何如？”王荅曰：“固吾心也。”遂退。

明日復夢到署視事，自此夕夕夢之，所判亦無重大案件，唯械鬥謀殺、詐欺取財為多。如此幻夢不已，而日曜之夜，則無此夢。余甚厭之。去歲夢此二十餘日，一日自書請假信條，焚之，夜亦無夢。明夕復如故，相續至今，已四月矣。余因疑獄卒私刑，一夕盡換獄卒，往詢囚徒，云仍有鐵牀銅柱諸苦。因問此具何在。囚徒皆指目所在，余則不見。帰而大悟。佛典本說此為化現，初無有人逼迫之者，實罪人業力所現耳。余之夢此，是亦業感也。

今舊[春]，以人參能安五藏，買得服之，并于晚飯後宴坐觀心一小時傾，思欲去此幻夢，終不可得。來示謂不作聖解，此義鄙人本自了然。但比量上知其幻妄，而現量上不能除此翳垢，自思此由嗔心所現故耳。吾輩處世，本多見不平事狀，三歲以來身遭患苦，而京師故人除學生七八人外，其餘皆俛仰炎涼，無有足音過我者。更[更]值去歲國體變更問題，心之嗔恚，益復熾然。以此業感而得燄摩地位，固其所宜。息嗔唯有慈觀，恐一行三昧亦用不著（著）。慈觀見《涅槃經》，雖說其義而無其法，亦竟無從下手耳。想上人必有以教我也。所嗔之事有何體性，能嗔之心作何形相，未嘗不隨念觀察，而終不能破壞。

.....

章炳麟和南

三月三十日（一九一六年）⁶⁷²

This letter describes in detail the dreams of the netherworld exposing much private information, which once more demonstrates the intimacy between Zhang and Huang Zongyang. Paragraph 2 recounts Zhang's first visit to the netherworld, presenting the bureaucratic system there through his conversation with the host Wang Ao and Mei Yaochen. The next one concerns the dreams in the following days, the main event of which is Zhang's investigation of illegal punishment and its result. Mainly in the fourth paragraph,

⁶⁷² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 153-154.

Zhang presents how he reacts to the dreams and reflects on their cause. The discussion below sets out to answer three questions: Why did Zhang have the netherworld dreams? What experiences in Zhang's real life might the details of the dreams reflect? What conclusions can we draw from Zhang's reactions to the dreams?

The first question is relatively simple. Through the background introduction above, we know that the suicidal hunger strike he had launched, the dramatic expression of his will to die, and the tragic death of his daughter, must all influence Zhang's mental state. The extreme mentality was strengthened by physical sufferings during the hunger strike as well as the psychological consequences of extended isolation, constant surveillance, and spreading rumors (e.g. severe sleep loss and persecution mania).⁶⁷³ In Paragraph 4 we see another reason highlighted by Zhang himself, the insurmountable negative emotion of hate and aversion, resulting from Yuan Shikai's revival of hereditary monarchy after crushing the military resistance of southern revolutionary groups. In addition to Yuan's treason of the newborn Republic, Zhang also felt frustrated witnessing the snobbish and even unprincipled conduct of many acquaintances during the drastic political change.

Besides, dreaming of holding an official post in the netherworld may be relevant to the widely-spread belief that Confucian literati, as the elites among the living, will be elites in the netherworld as well. According to Goossaert's study, Yu Yue recorded a story about a virtuous literati classmate of him who had recited a Buddhist scripture every day and became a judge of the hell after his death.⁶⁷⁴ Indeed, from the cited text we can find a tendency of reorganizing the memory of his dreams into a stylized narrative conforming to such belief. This perception is supported by his original letters. In a letter written on March 19, 1916, Zhang informs Huang of the dreams he has been having for the first time, mentioning the three Chinese historical figures meeting him in the netherworld. Zhang says that he has heard about similar experience lived by Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052), one of the most prominent political and literary figures of the Song dynasty (960-1279).⁶⁷⁵ However, at one point Zhang does not share the same idea as his master Yu, as revealed by a supplementary letter sent to Huang along with the cited long letter after the latter was

⁶⁷³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 693. Ma Xulun, 2009, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁷⁴ Vincent Goossaert, 2011, pp. 635, 643.

⁶⁷⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 152.

sealed. Zhang holds the view that Fan Zhongyan became Yama (the deity of death in Indian myths) after his death as a negative karmic consequence for his approval and teaching of the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*Doctrine of the Mean*), the only Confucian classic that Zhang harshly criticizes as incompatible with Buddhist doctrines.⁶⁷⁶ We now realize that by “similar experience” in the previous letter, Zhang does not mean that Fan had similar dreams as his but rather the mythical story that Fan became a judge of the hell after death. In both Fan’s case and his own, serving as a judge of the hell was considered by Zhang as a punishment rather than a reward.

It is more challenging to undertake an analysis of the content of the dreams, deciphering relevant experiences in Zhang’s real life. Acknowledging its stylized form, it is safe to treat the substance of the record as credible in general. First of all, let’s discuss why Zhang dreamt of Wang Ao as the host of the meeting. As introduced in Zhang’s own note, Wang was a reputable scholar-official who had held the position of Grand Secretary. He was remembered by later generations mostly for his courageous but failed struggle against Liu Jin 劉瑾 (1451-1510), the leader of a powerful group of eunuchs controlling the imperial court and persecuting literati opponents. It is plausible that Liu appeared in the dream because he had reminded Zhang of his own political experience during the first years of the Republic of China, especially his fight against Yuan Shikai and the consequential house confinement. As a comparative case, preparing for his death in 1915, Zhang entrusted a friend to negotiate with the descendants of Liu Ji 劉基 (1311-1375) his wish to be buried alongside the latter’s tomb.⁶⁷⁷ Liu was a military strategist and a key advisor to Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398). Zhang highly appreciated Liu for his contribution in overthrowing the Mongol regime and restoring the Han Chinese nation. Choosing the site of his tomb beside that of Liu Ji was a deliberate act whereas dreaming of Wang Ao was the result of unconscious mental functioning. Nonetheless, in both cases we see Zhang seeking models from historical figures to guide his political career and ascribe meaning to what he had done.

In the first dream, Zhang found guests from India and Europe besides China, all serving as judges (or procurators), elected by the worldwide people and acting according

⁶⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 156.

⁶⁷⁷ Zhang Nianchi, 2011, p. 59.

to the laws established after consulting those of different Chinese dynasties as well as other countries. The presence of foreign colleagues and references to foreign judiciary practices were founded on the experience of Zhang's stay in cosmopolitan cities like Shanghai and Tokyo for more than a decade. Such representations in dream were also nourished by Zhang's extensive reading of foreign scholarship. Furthermore, we should not forget Zhang's political engagement in the first years of the Republic, from the mistakes of which he had much learned. A good example is "Personal Statement on My Scholarly Career" (*Zishu xueshu cidi* 自述學術次第), a dense text written in 1913 shortly after he was confined, in which Zhang devotes much space to his reflections on political institutions and laws in Chinese history.⁶⁷⁸ More in-depth reflections can be found in the revised and added content of the *Book after Examination*, on the basis of the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*, especially the seven chapters of Volume 9.⁶⁷⁹

In Zhang's recounting, the main event happening through many of his netherworld dreams is his great effort to solve the illegal punishments by the iron bed and copper pillar. In real life, Zhang had himself suffered excessive torture in the jail of Shanghai concessions which caused the death of many of his cellmates.⁶⁸⁰ It is plausible that the traumatic memories vividly aroused when he suffered similar physical and mental pains a decade later, motivating him to deal with the abuses in the scenario of the dreams. Compared with the inspection of illegal punishments, what interests us more is the conclusion that Zhang draws (still in dream) from such inspection. Based on Buddhist doctrines, he explains the instruments of torture as illusory rather than substantial, only appearing to the prisoners due to their *karma*. Similarly, in Paragraph 2 Zhang questions the theoretical foundation of the functioning of the netherworld bureaucracy and feels satisfied with the answer given by Mei Yaochen since it is "quite in line with Buddhist teachings, different from the popular belief that it is Yama who rules transmigration as well as life and death." These conclusions are related to Zhang's attitude towards the belief in the six realms of transmigration, by examining which we can have a glimpse of how Zhang received the Buddhist imaginary of the afterworld in general. Zhang's discussions about the authenticity

⁶⁷⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, pp.198-202.

⁶⁷⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 618-645.

⁶⁸⁰ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 111-112.

of karmic transmigration can be found in multiple key texts through different periods.

In the 1899 essay “On Bacteria,” after affirming the doctrine of transmigration as ultimately reasonable, Zhang reinterprets it in line with evolutionism, claiming that what undergoes transformation between successive individuals is the biological body rather than the popular Buddhist concept of soul.⁶⁸¹ In the 1907 essay “On the Non-Self of Human Beings,” Zhang explicitly rejects the viewpoint of Anesaki Masaharu that the doctrines of non-self and the six realms of transmigration contradict with each other, arguing that the two doctrines are genuinely compatible.⁶⁸² In the 1911 Buddhist lecture, however, Zhang considerably withdraws his support for this doctrine since “there are plenty of religious elements mixing in it. The belief in heavenly palace and hell was actually originated from the *Laws of Manu*.” 頗有宗教分子羼入在裏頭。究竟天宮地獄等語，原是《摩拿法典》流傳下來。⁶⁸³ Although these three texts approach the doctrine of transmigration from different angles, we can still see that Zhang’s attitude was ambivalent and slightly drifting. On the one hand, he doubted that this doctrine was founded on superstitious beliefs, on the other, he found strong support for it from various Buddhist theories and was once tempted to reconcile it with natural science. The serious speculation on the institutions and instruments of the netherworld bureaucracy mirrored Zhang’s undetermined views on the Buddhist imaginary of the afterworld and his wish to figure out their authenticity.

Finally, the third question concerns the actions Zhang took to get rid of the dreams. The first method was burning the note requesting for leave (relevant with this action was the fact that Zhang did not have the dreams in Sunday, the rest day of this world). Surprisingly to some extent, it worked much better compared with the other two methods. Zhang does not provide more details about this action or reflection on its effectiveness. This fact may be partly due to Zhang’s lack of curiosity in further exploring popular religious practices. However, from another perspective, we see that Zhang did not hesitate to apply such ritual method when necessary. Once the problem was solved, he just accepted the positive result, not feeling astonished nor the need to explain the effectiveness of the ritual. What Zhang tacitly accepted was not just the legitimacy of the method but also the

⁶⁸¹ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 135.

⁶⁸² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 450-451.

⁶⁸³ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 102.

existence of the supernatural world as well as its rules of communication and hierarchical order. This case, though only briefly mentioned in the letter, reveals the common ground between Zhang and his master Yu Yue in terms of religious culture. Such knowledge and practice, deeply rooted in the memories of his youth, persisted despite the highly developed atheist conceptions in Zhang's later life and was easily activated at the time of personal crisis.

In fact, it is not true to say that Zhang totally lacked curiosity about popular religious practices. In the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, one of Zhang's main theoretical writings during the house confinement (to be studied in Chapter 5), he recalls the divination practice of a friend: "Gui Bohua studied Buddhist canonical works with strong conviction and diligence. Because of his strong conviction, he relied on the *Zhan cha jing* to divine the result of events, many of which turned out to be correct. At the outset of the Wuchang Uprising (in the year of Xinhai), Bohua divined its result with the *Zhan cha jing* and hence judged that it would be successful." 桂伯華治內典，篤信而好學。以其信之篤，每以《占察經》卜事，多有驗者。辛亥武昌起義之初，伯華卜之《占察經》而決其有成。

⁶⁸⁴ Zhang's praise of Gui's divination practice reminds us of his positive attitude towards augury (discussed in Chapter 2), the importance of conviction being emphasized in both cases. The difference is that in Gui's case, the validity of religious practice implies the religious sincerity of the practitioner whereas in reaffirming augury, the practical effect matters more.

The second method was taking ginseng to calm the five *yin* organs, the bigger topic behind which was Zhang's revived interest in Chinese medicine, stimulated by the troubling dreams as well as the acute illness of jaundice in the spring of 1917 (for which he wrote a prescription himself). In the 1920s, he produced more than sixty medical essays and engaged in debates on the practice of Chinese medicine.⁶⁸⁵ This is an important topic that I cannot explore here.⁶⁸⁶

Let's quickly turn to the third method, sitting meditation and mental observation, which Zhang regularly practiced for one hour or so after supper. During the imprisonment

⁶⁸⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 15.

⁶⁸⁵ Zhang Nianchi & Pan Wenkui, 2014, introduction: pp. 8-14.

⁶⁸⁶ To know more about this topic, see Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, pp. 91-106.

in Shanghai, Zhang sustained physical health and mental tranquility thanks to his Buddhist reading and practice. This time, however, Buddhism failed to deliver him from spiritual unrest. In a letter to Tang Guoli written on April 9, 1914, Zhang complains, after talking about his severe sleep loss, that “although [I] have been undertaking Buddhist studies and sitting meditation, at the moments of excessive contemplation and mental restlessness, these practices turn out to be useless.” 平素雖嘗學佛坐禪，思慮掉舉之時，卻又無用。

⁶⁸⁷ So the problem was already there before the netherworld dreams appeared. Being troubled by the dreams was just another circumstance reminding Zhang of the insufficient attainment of his self-cultivation. To quote Zhang’s words in the long letter: “Although I understand by methods of inference that it is illusory, I could not eliminate this mental shadow at the level of direct experience.” The last section has introduced Zhang’s discussion about two types of self-clinging, the one arisen from the creation and the other out of deviated views. The method of inference is able to remove the self-clinging out of deviated views. The self-clinging arisen from the creation, however, can only be overcome by the attainment of direct experience. In another letter to Huang Zongyang, written about two months after the long letter, Zhang admits that he “has adequate theoretical knowledge but lacks concentrated and diligent practice” 知見有餘，而精勤不足,⁶⁸⁸ showing that he has realized the crucial reason for his problem.

The central issue to be analyzed next is Zhang’s seeking concrete methods of the compassionate contemplation, which Zhang considers as more appropriate to calm the hate than the constant *samādhi* in all states. To be noted, the constant *samādhi* in all states is another name of the six methods of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, the meditative approach that Zhang applied in jail. The former indicates the general principle whereas the latter manifests six concrete methods, according to a pedagogic text of Tiantai Buddhism.⁶⁸⁹ Combining several aforementioned primary sources, it is plausible that Zhang kept practicing sitting meditation following the same approach though it remains unsure whether he had adjusted the concrete methods. Despite the disappointment that his long-term practice of the constant *samādhi* in all states had little effect in times of personal crisis,

⁶⁸⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 693.

⁶⁸⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 157.

⁶⁸⁹ Zhiyi, consulted on February 3, 2021: http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T46n1917_001.

Zhang still approved of it as a superior meditative approach, as seen in two texts written during confinement. The first is Section 20 of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*. Zhang defends the validity of Buddhist meditation against the criticism of some Ming Confucian scholars that the state attained in meditation is merely the effect of imagination. But here, he distinguishes two meditative approaches, the first being the mental observation of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) and one's own skeleton (as if it is the skeleton of a dead). Though affirming the practical utility of this approach, Zhang considers it as indeed related to the functioning of imagination. The second approach, i.e. the constant *samādhi* in all states, is a direct verification of one's true mind 直證自心 and hence has nothing to do with imagination.⁶⁹⁰ The second material is an aforementioned letter from Zhang to Gong Baoquan, written shortly before the long letter to Huang, in which Zhang explains the ceaseless dreams by the fact that he, “having not achieved *samādhi*, is unable to eliminate his ‘behavioral tendency caused by karmic imprint’ (*vāsanā*).” 三昧未成，習氣難斷。⁶⁹¹ The two materials demonstrate that despite the ineffectiveness in practice, Zhang continued approving of the constant *samādhi* in all states, just considering it as unsuitable for his particular problem.

The compassionate contemplation is a more obscure question. In the original text of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, translated by Dharmakṣema (Tanwuchen 疊無讖) of the Northern Liang dynasty 北涼 (397-439), “compassion and pity” (*cibei* 慈悲) is one of the central concepts. Its Volume 13 enumerates doctrinal concepts by increasing numbers. The great compassion, the great pity, and “the *samādhi* through trusting to and calling on the Buddha” (*sanmei nianfo* 三昧念佛) are introduced along with the “ten supernatural powers (of the Buddha)” (*shili* 十力) under the number of thirteen.⁶⁹² Its Volume 15 affirms that “cultivating oneself according to compassion can eliminate the greed (*raga*) whereas cultivating oneself according to pity can eliminate the hate (*dvesha*).” 修慈者能斷貪欲，修悲心者能斷瞋恚。⁶⁹³ The content in Volume 13 seems to suggest the existence of meditative methods to combine compassion and *samādhi*. That in Volume 15 supports Zhang's proposal of calming the hate through the compassionate contemplation.

⁶⁹⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, pp. 15-16.

⁶⁹¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 756.

⁶⁹² Dharmakṣema transl., consulted on February 5, 2021: https://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T12n0374_013 [0442a04].

⁶⁹³ Dharmakṣema transl., consulted on February 5, 2021: https://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T12n0374_015 [0453a28].

Nonetheless, as Zhang has pointed out, what can be found in both cases are doctrinal discussions rather than technical instructions.

Despite the lack of textual support for in-depth analysis, it is safe to say that the constant *samādhi* in all states finds its roots in the traditional Indian meditative methods of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* which pursue the attainments leading to *nirvāna*. The approach of the compassionate contemplation, in contrast, develops sympathetic and selfless feelings for other living beings and is essentially affiliated to Mahāyāna Buddhism and its ethical pursuit of saving all sentient beings. The profound meaning of Zhang's intent to change his meditative approach will be revealed by studying the foundation of Zhang's *Qiwu* philosophy in Chapter 5. And we will see that emphasizing on compassion in meditative practice corresponds to reinterpreting Zhuangzi as a Mahāyāna bodhisattva in Zhang's theoretical construction. Back to the issue in question, unfortunately, Zhang failed to learn about concrete methods of the compassionate contemplation from Huang Zongyang, as shown indirectly in the letter admitting his lack of concentrated and diligent practice.⁶⁹⁴ In the course of the 1920s, he shifted to neo-Confucianism seeking inspiration and instruction for sitting meditation.

Apart from the dreams, another significant issue is Zhang's revived will to be a monk during the house confinement, manifested by multiple primary sources including his letters to Tang Guoli, Huang Zongyang, Xu Shouchang (a disciple of him), and the ministers of the Yuan government.⁶⁹⁵ Based on Zhang's letters and activities in the first year after he was released in mid-1916, we can see his ambivalence between leaving the profane world and engaging in politics. Despite the external conditions much more favorable than the previous time in early 1908, Zhang in the end abandoned the possibility of travelling to India or retreating in mountain temples of the Jiangnan area. The psychological unrest and struggle seemed to gradually recede but his Buddhist practice continued with some new characteristics.

* Continuous self-cultivation and intensifying syncretism (1917-1936) *

⁶⁹⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 157.

⁶⁹⁵ For the latter two sources, see Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 760-762, 778-779.

This is the final and the second longest period, during which Zhang turned more and more to Confucianism. The Zhang-scholars have devoted very limited time to studying this period and failed to notice that Zhang's Buddhist and other bodily practices continued. Nonetheless, this period is also characterized by his increasing tendency of syncretizing the Buddhist and Confucian meditative approaches. The primary sources are limited but sufficient to depict the general development of syncretic self-cultivation and reveal some other interesting points. Among the available materials, the most important ones include Zhang's letters to Wu Chengshi and Li Genyuan 李根源 and an essay of Wang Xiaoxu 王小徐 (1870-1948), which I will introduce when the texts are referred to for the first time. This section will discuss Zhang's developing ideas about the "self-verification" (*qinzheng* 親證) and how he established meditative syncretism. Referring to Zhang's own words to define the term, the "self-verification" signifies "the cessation of mental functioning through silent meditation in order to verify ... the characteristics of the essence of mind and the existence (or non-existence) of the self and the material world." 寂絕心行，默證而後可得……心之本體何如，我與物質之有無何如。⁶⁹⁶ However, a chronological introduction to several pieces of materials comes first presenting the continuity of Zhang's Buddhist practice as well as the intensifying syncretism.

In the first years following the end of house confinement, Zhang deeply engaged in the Constitutional Protection Movement (*hufa yundong* 護法運動) in support of Sun Yat-sen, his ancient revolutionary ally, and Li Yuanhong 黎元洪 (1864-1928), the politician he appreciated most, elected twice as the President of the Republic of China (1916-1917 and 1922-1923), against Duan Qirui 段祺瑞 (1865-1936) and other warlords once affiliated to the Beiyang Army 北洋軍. Such political involvement superseded his wish to retreat from the profane world in Buddhist monasteries.⁶⁹⁷ Meanwhile, Zhang's meditative practice nonetheless continued. The historical materials to be introduced first are his letters to Wu Chengshi. Wu was a disciple whom Zhang highly appreciated and kept frequent contact with in his later life.⁶⁹⁸ The 87 letters from his master that Wu preserved, lasting from 1911 to 1936, constitute a rich resource to access Zhang's overall scholarship during

⁶⁹⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 413.

⁶⁹⁷ Expressed most explicitly in his letters to Huang Zongyang, see Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 156-158, 160-161.

⁶⁹⁸ To have more detailed knowledge about their friendship, see Zhang Nianchi, 2011, pp. 222-236.

the Republican era. The letters discussing the relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism are reserved for Chapter 6. Besides, Wu served as interlocutor and recorder for Zhang's *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, to be introduced in Chapter 5.

The first relevant letter was written in 1920, in which Zhang talks about his recent situation: "Entangled in illness in recent years, I have been much studying Chinese medical cures. I also frequently practice *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* in leisure time. As to other books, I have shelved them for a long time." 年來嬰於疾疢，頗究醫方，暇亦時作止觀，於他書屏置已久。⁶⁹⁹ We see that Zhang kept on practicing Buddhist meditation and Chinese medicine in the same style as during house confinement. The reason that he did not abandon the methods of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* was largely due to his failure to learn about concrete methods of the compassionate contemplation from Huang Zongyang or others.

Next, among Zhang's letters to Wu in 1926, there are two letters revealing the emerging turn from a pure Buddhist style of sitting meditation to one combining Buddhist and neo-Confucian traditions. The first was written on May 25. After congratulating the anniversary of Wu's father, a scholar specializing in the scholarship of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), he comments that "Confucians have their proper way of preserving health and spirit, there being no need to resort to [Daoist] immortal or Buddhist ways." 儒者自有衛養之術，不煩求之仙釋也。⁷⁰⁰ These words can be seen as a compliment to Wu's father, but to some extent, they also reflect Zhang's own thought. In the second letter, written on November 2, Zhang recalls his general situation during the year, which more explicitly manifests the turn of his meditative practice: "This year, I have done nothing but enjoyed the idleness of staying at home. I practiced *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* during summer and autumn and obtained much pleasure from the meditative experience. However, due to excessively long sitting meditation, I suffered from the exuberant functioning of heart and was forced to stop practicing. Besides, I frequently entertain myself by reading neo-Confucian writings of the Song and Ming dynasties, finding myself capable of recognizing the advantages and disadvantages of their teachings." 僕今歲唯閒居自適，夏秋間從事止觀，頗得禪悅，而宴坐過久，心脈過旺，遂止不

⁶⁹⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 419.

⁷⁰⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 462.

為。時以宋明儒書為樂，其中利病，頗能尋究。⁷⁰¹ In comparison to the situation in 1920 or during confinement, Zhang achieved better results in Buddhist meditation during this time. But the bad news follows. The pleasant experience may have led Zhang to overly carry out meditative practice, thus causing a negative reaction from his body.

As to reading neo-Confucian writings, it was more than mere intellectual entertainment. Above all, it resulted in one of Zhang's main writings in the 1920s, the *Exoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* (*Zhuohan changyan* 薦漢昌言), a collection edited in 1925 or the following years. As the companion publication of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, this work made more elaborate efforts to syncretize Buddhism and Confucianism (especially neo-Confucianism) and was more accessible to readers. The setback in Buddhist meditation and the stronger emphasis on syncretism happened at the same period, which may not be a coincidence. On the contrary, the study below demonstrates that Zhang's partial turn towards neo-Confucianism was both intellectual and practical.

Firstly, let's examine two letters from Zhang to Li Genyuan which reveal both continuity and subtle transformation. Li was a military leader of the revolutionaries and a lifelong close friend of Zhang. According to the autobiography of Xuyun 虛雲 (circa 1864-1959),⁷⁰² the eminent monk of Chan Buddhism, he had persuaded Li to cease the destruction of Buddhist temples in Yunnan 雲南 Province and converted him to Buddhism in the 1910s.⁷⁰³ Whether the story is genuine or not, as a Buddhist devotee, Li did serve as a patron of Buddhism during the Republican era.⁷⁰⁴ In the first letter, written on November 16, 1927, Zhang shares that “[from early summer, I] practiced sitting meditation during the daytime and studied neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties in order to cease anger. Thus practicing for four months, I achieved limited result as expected, gradually dissolving the resentment in a way. But due to excessive practice, I suffered from the exuberant functioning of heart and stopped sitting meditation after the Double Ninth Festival.” 終日宴坐，兼治宋明儒學，藉以懲忿。如是四月，果有小效，

⁷⁰¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 462.

⁷⁰² The final version of Xuyun's autobiography fixes the Chan master's time of birth in 1840. Daniela Campo (2014, pp. 271-289) revised the birth time to around 1864 and revealed the intentions underlying the construction of Xuyun's “long-life” legend.

⁷⁰³ Cen Xuelyu ed., 1995, 44a.

⁷⁰⁴ Holmes Welch, 1968, p. 330.

胸中磊砢之氣漸能稍釋。惟把捉太過，心火過盛。重陽後，因即停止宴坐。⁷⁰⁵ Provided that the letter was correctly dated, what this citation tells us is that Zhang was troubled by the same problem in meditative practice in the middle of 1927 as in the middle of 1926. The second letter was written on December 6, 1928, roughly one year later. The everyday self-cultivation followed the same routine: “To deal with the resentment, this year [I] have been seeking and studying the mind-controlling methods of Neo-Confucian scholars as well as practicing *chan* meditation. The anger in my heart, promptly dissolved since April, still emerge in situations of concern and cannot be eliminated.” 今年本以胸有不平，研尋理學家治心之術，兼亦習禪。四月以來，忿心頓釋，而遇事發露，仍不能絕。⁷⁰⁶

Combining Zhang’s two letters to Li and an earlier letter to Wu,⁷⁰⁷ we notice that Zhang’s self-cultivation was particularly aimed at hate and resentment, the same mental state troubling him during the house confinement. Through a careful examination of the slightly changed expressions of the three letters, it becomes clear that Zhang had achieved constant progress in meditative practice in the 1920s. In 1916, Zhang failed to get rid of the netherworld dreams and once doubted the effectiveness of *śamatha* and *vipāśyanā* in regards to hatred. A decade later, he succeeded in regaining pleasure from carrying out Buddhist meditation (in 1926) and then witnessed its effectiveness in reducing the resentment accumulated for decades (in 1927). The constant and intensifying meditative practice finally brought about the prompt dissolution of anger in 1928. Also in this year, Zhang was no longer hit by the side-effect of excessive meditation, showing that he had accomplished a better understanding about the conditions of his body. Besides the advancing attainment, another change was the combination between Buddhist meditation (respectively referred to as “*śamatha* and *vipāśyanā*” 止觀, “sitting meditation” 宴坐, and “practicing *chan* meditation” 習禪 in the three letters) and neo-Confucianism. Subtle differences exist between the expressions of the three letters. In the 1926 and 1927 letters, Zhang talks about his Buddhist meditation first before turning to neo-Confucianism. In the 1928 letter, however, the order is inverted, implying an increasing importance of neo-

⁷⁰⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 921.

⁷⁰⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 930.

⁷⁰⁷ Apart from these three letters, Zhang Taiyan (2017a, pp. 1134-1135) talks about the same topic at greater length in a letter to Xu Zhongsun 徐仲蓀 (1876-1943) in 1927 or 1928. Xu Zhongsun was the younger brother of Xu Xilin, the great revolutionary martyr, and a member of the Restoration Society.

Confucianism. Furthermore, in the former two texts, Zhang refers to his study of neo-Confucianism in a general manner whereas in the latter one, he says to “have been seeking and studying the mind-controlling methods” of this Confucian tradition. Based on this single piece of material, we cannot judge whether Zhang only initiated this approach this year or had undertaken it years ago. But still, it is safe to say that Zhang’s increasing interest in neo-Confucianism in the 1920s was partly motivated by the concern of improving his self-cultivation.

Now let’s turn to Zhang’s increasing emphasis on the importance of the self-verification (through Buddhist meditation) in the later 1910s, which foreshadowed the intensification of his meditative syncretism. Similar emphasis appears in multiple texts of the previous periods (1906-1916), e.g. a passage of the 1907 essay “On the Non-Self of Human Beings” cited in an earlier section. However, at that time Zhang emphasized more and devoted more energy to theoretical construction compared with practical attainment. Following the end of house confinement, Zhang’s theoretical innovation largely came to an end, including Buddhist theory and academic research on other domains. In contrast, the importance of the self-verification in his thought became more significant.

Three primary sources are discussed below gradually leading us to the core of the issue. The first is Zhang’s letter to Wu Chengshi, written on November 13, 1918. “[For a student of Buddhist teaching,] it is not difficult to achieve doctrinal knowledge,” argues Zhang, “what at stake is the self-verification [of the doctrinal knowledge].” 佛法義解非難，要有親證。⁷⁰⁸ He then encourages Wu to verify the Buddhist knowledge he had learned. The second source comes from Zhang’s series of lectures on National studies, given in Shanghai from April to June 1922 and recorded by Cao Juren 曹聚仁 (1900-1972). It was later published entitled *A General Introduction to National Studies* (*Guoxue gailun* 國學概論). In one of the two sessions on philosophy, he compares four traditions: neo-Confucianism from the Song dynasty, the teachings of ancient Chinese masters, Indian Buddhism, and Western philosophy, particularly contrasting the first and the fourth. The Western philosophers, according to Zhang at the time, were merely specialized in conceptual thinking without experimental verification. Relying exclusively on the method

⁷⁰⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 415.

of inference, they lacked the attainment of direct experience. Neo-Confucian scholars, on the one hand, did not compare with the ancient masters (or Buddhism) in both theoretical and practical achievements; on the other, were still superior to their Western counterparts since what they were able to verify in practice corresponded to the speeches they had given.⁷⁰⁹ We see that Zhang applies his emphasis on the self-verification to not only Buddhism but also other philosophical traditions. A less perceptible point is that Zhang employs the term “experimental verification” (*shixian* 實驗) to indicate two categories (considered as distinctive in contemporary Chinese language), the one being scientific experiment and the other self-verification. This analogy serves to legitimate meditative practice in an age of science.

The third source is the most inspiring, allowing us to connect Zhang’s emphasis on the self-verification and his meditative syncretism. It is situated at the outset of Zhang’s letter to Wu, written on May 23, 1917: “[I] have recently received a postcard presenting the achievement of the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) in self-verifying the *ālaya*-consciousness. Within the tradition of Confucianism, the scholars of Yangmingism such as Luo Dafu (1504-1564) [also known as Luo Hongxian 羅洪先], Wang Tangnan (1522-1605) [also known as Wang Shihuai 王時槐], and Wan Simo (1531-1610) [also known as Wan Tingyan 萬廷言] were all able to verify the *ālaya*-consciousness. In India, Sāṃkhya masters were able to verify it. It is far from easy to achieve such attainment. … What Bergson has obtained is a rare achievement, more advanced than the empty words of [the previous Western] philosophers.” 近得明片，道法人柏格森親證阿賴耶識事，此在儒家則王門羅達夫、王塘南、萬思默皆能證之，在梵土則數論師能證之，其功力亦非容易……柏格森所證果爾，亦為難得，校哲學空言則進矣。⁷¹⁰ Along with Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and John Dewey (1859-1952), Henri Bergson was one of the most influential Western philosophers toward the Chinese intelligentsia in the 1920s.⁷¹¹ Zhang has referred to Bergson in several occasions in his Republican-period writings.

Assimilating Bergson’s philosophy into the Yogācāra theoretical framework must

⁷⁰⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 1997a, p. 47.

⁷¹⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 411.

⁷¹¹ To have a general understanding of this topic, see Joseph Ciaudo, 2013.

seem weird to academics today, but what matters here is not the reason of Zhang's misinterpretation. Instead, what matters is the way Zhang praises Bergson, considering the latter to have verified the *ālaya*-consciousness through self-verification rather than through conceptual speculation. In contrast, previous Western philosophers like Kant, though having established theories similar to those of Yogācāra Buddhism (in Zhang's eyes), are now devaluated as relying merely on empty words. It is worth noting that the term “*ālaya*-consciousness” here is not used as a key concept of a particular Buddhist school but rather as a synonym of universal truth. It demonstrates that, despite a considerable turn towards neo-Confucianism, Zhang continued affirming Buddhist teaching as the revelation of transcendental truth at this stage of his life. Moreover, to access such revelation, the essential and ultimate means is the self-verification through meditation, not theoretical thinking. A further observation lies in Zhang's praise of Neo-Confucian scholars (affiliated to Yangmingism) and Indian Sāṃkhya masters besides Bergson for their similar practical attainment, from which we see the broad vision of Zhang's meditative syncretism. In chapter 5, we will see how Zhang established theoretical syncretism in the same vision.

Via the case of Bergson we shift from Zhang's increasing emphasis on the self-verification to his meditative syncretism between Buddhism and neo-Confucianism. In his abundant writings on this topic during the late 1910s and 1920s, one of their principal subjects is the mind-controlling methods. Apart from his interest in the methods that the neo-Confucian scholars applied, Zhang was also curious about the level of their meditative attainment. Through the case study of Zhang's discussion about Luo Dafu, this part intends to show not only Zhang's meditative syncretism but also the limit of his practical knowledge of Buddhism. Zhang's discussion about Luo appears in three primary sources. The first is Zhang's letter to Wu Chengshi, written on April 3, 1917.⁷¹² The regular conversations between the two during Zhang's house confinement constituted the primary materials for the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*. As to the letter, the passage about Luo Dafu was included in the *Exoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* following slight modification. This second source, in turn, was cited and commented on in “Review of the *Exoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*” (*Du Zhuohan changyan 讀蔚漢昌言*),

⁷¹² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 408.

an essay of Wang Xiaoxu written at the request of Zhu Jihai 朱季海 (1916-2011, also known as Zhu Xuehao 朱學浩), the youngest disciple of Zhang, shortly after Zhang's death. A prominent science engineer who had studied in Britain, Wang became a Buddhist layman under the influence of Yang Wenhui and was well known for his comparative study on Buddhism and natural science. Zhang had recorded his conversation with Wang on Buddhism and materialism in "Casual Notes of the Zhuohan Chamber" (*Zhuohan xianhua* 莊漢閒話).⁷¹³

Below, I offer the passage of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* cited in Wang's essay as well as the latter's criticism:

In a state of ultimate tranquility, Luo Dafu experienced the emptiness of his heart traveling to infinity like the clouds flowing boundlessly in the vast sky and like the fish and dragons evolving ceaselessly in the ocean. It was impossible to distinguish internal from external, moving from motionless. What Luo achieved in meditation was exactly the *ālaya*-consciousness.

羅達夫極靜時，覺此心中虛無物，旁通無窮，如長空雲氣，流行無所止極，如大海魚龍，變化無有間隔，無內外可指，無動靜可分。此所見者，正為阿賴邪識矣。

⁷¹⁴

The commentary [of Wang Xiaoxu]: [Zhang Taiyan's interpretation of Luo Dafu's meditative experience] may not be appropriate. Within the hierarchical order of the worldly "meditative absorption" (*dhyāna-samādhi*), only the "meditative attainment of non-discernment" (*asamjñi-samāpatti*)⁷¹⁵ can halt the functioning of the "six consciousness."⁷¹⁶ Apart from that, even in the state of "neither perception nor non-perception" (*naiva-samjñin-nāsamjñin*),⁷¹⁷ there remains minimal functioning of the mental consciousness, hence it is impossible to verify the existence of the *ālaya*-consciousness. Based on Luo's account of his meditative experience (ref. "like ... and

⁷¹³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014c, p. 103.

⁷¹⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 93.

⁷¹⁵ It is a state of meditative absorption in which the six consciousnesses are temporarily brought to a halt, ultimately resulting in rebirth as a perceptionless god.

⁷¹⁶ The six consciousnesses include the five senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body) consciousnesses and the mental consciousness.

⁷¹⁷ It is the highest meditative attainment in the "world of formlessness" (*wusejie* 無色界, *arūpaloka*), the superior world of the "three worlds" (*sanjie* 三界, *trailokya*). This is a cosmology shared by Hinduism and (early) Indian Buddhism.

like ...”), it seems that he had not surpassed “applied thought” (*vitarka*) and “sustained thinking” (*vicāra*), remaining at the first stage of meditation (*dhyāna*).⁷¹⁸

按：未必然。世間禪定，惟無想滅六識。此外雖非非想尚有極微細意識，安能見賴耶？據羅氏境界，既曰如某如某，似尚未離尋伺，不過初禪也。⁷¹⁹

The first passage sheds more light on the way Zhang establishes meditative syncretism, in comparison to which the case of Bergson is too brief for us to grasp the reason of Zhang’s praise. These two cases demonstrate that Buddhism continued serving as Zhang’s benchmark in estimating other philosophical or religious teachings. What had changed in the course of the 1910s rather consisted in a shift of emphasis. Now practice mattered more than theory despite the fact that Zhang’s writing style on practical issues remained highly theoretical.

The critical comments in the second passage is even more precious. It comes from a contemporary of Zhang who apparently had a better mastery of the practical knowledge of Indian Buddhism (largely shared with Hinduism and other Indian religious schools) than Zhang. To be clear, Wang’s better practical knowledge did not necessarily mean a corresponding level in his meditative practice. And I do not suggest that the practical knowledge of this Indian tradition is superior to the practical knowledge that Zhang was more acquainted with. The point here is rather that, thanks to Wang’s criticism, we realize that Zhang may not be adequately aware of the risk in combining the highly abstract Yogācāra concepts with the concrete meditative experiences of other religious traditions.⁷²⁰ Though more fascinated by Indian religious culture than most of his contemporary literati elites, Zhang did not gain systematic knowledge about the original context of Indian Buddhist self-cultivation. Instead, his meditative practice was always embedded in Chinese religious culture, especially Sinitic Buddhist schools (e.g. Tiantai and Chan Buddhism) and neo-Confucianism, which was more familiar and available to him.

⁷¹⁸ The three Sanskrit terms in this sentence concern the “form world” (*sejie* 色界, *rūpa-dhātu*), the second one of the three worlds, inferior to the world of formlessness. The attainments of meditation are divided into four stages. The applied thought and sustained thinking are qualities of the first stage and should be surpassed in order to achieve the second one.

⁷¹⁹ Wang Xiaoxu, 1978, p. 512b.

⁷²⁰ Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885-1968) also strongly criticized Zhang’s identifying Luo Dafu’s ideas about “cosmic movement” (*liuxing* 流行) with the *ālaya*-consciousness, considering it the fundamental error in Zhang’s Buddhist philosophy. Xiong’s criticism was undertaken through philosophical argumentation underpinned by his affirmation of the “perpetual creation” (*shengsheng* 生生). See Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, p. 161.

Apart from the precise criticism, the essay of Wang Xiaoxu offers us a previous record of the Buddhist ritual on Zhang's deathbed, a historical material suited to end the present chapter. Wang was informed of this event by Zhu Jihai who recalls his participation in the ritual besides being witness to Zhang's meditative practice:

Master Zhang regularly practiced silent sitting meditation with his mouth slightly moving. I [Zhu Jihai] wondered whether he was repeating the name of the Buddha or sacred utterances (*mantra*). I [Wang Xiaoxu] heard also [from Zhu Jihai] that when master Zhang was dying, Mr. Li Yinquan [the courtesy name of Li Genyuan] asked Zhang's disciples to repeat the name of the Buddha in a unified voice. Quite a while after the master's death, the top of his head and his chest remained warm. Also, his face was fixed in an amiable appearance. These all hinted at the fact that the master had calmly passed away. Hence, we can see that the master had accumulated profound good *karma* in his previous lives.

先生常靜坐。坐時口微動，不知是念佛，抑持呪[咒]。又聞，先生彌留時，李印泉先生命諸弟子同聲念佛。逝後多時頂與胸猶暖，遺像亦和藹可親，想見捨報安詳之概。然則先生夙根之深厚亦可知已。⁷²¹

Zhu Jihai became Zhang's disciple in 1932, so his testimony proves that Zhang persisted in meditative practice until his last years. As to the ritual on Zhang's deathbed, it was without any doubt a ritual of Pure Land Buddhism. As an intimate friend sharing the same passion for Buddhism, it was natural that Li Genyuan served as the host of the ritual. The description of the state of the body contains symbolic meaning. In the beliefs of Pure Land Buddhism, the top of the head corresponds to the "realm of heaven" (*tianjie* 天界, *devaloka*) whereas the chest (in particular, the heart) corresponds to the "realm of man" (*renjie* 人界, *manushya*), the only two realms of virtue among the six realms of transmigration.⁷²² After the death of Zhang Taiyan, his numerous disciples initiated a variety of activities commemorating and often glorifying their master. The record in question, produced in this context, was nonetheless a rare one that depicted Zhang as an accomplished Buddhist layman rather than a master of Confucian scholarship.

This record guides us to rethink Zhang's attitude towards Pure Land Buddhism.

⁷²¹ Wang Xiaoxu, 1978, p. 513a.

⁷²² Shi Yingguang, 2000, p. 138.

Zhu's recollections are ambiguous and do not assure us of Zhang's application of the meditative methods of Pure Land Buddhism. We are not certain either whether he fully approved of the performance of such a ritual. He may not be the one who proposed the ritual in the first place. But it is also improbable that Li Genyuan ordered it against his friend's will. It is more plausible that Zhang tacitly accepted this last ritual. Ambiguity here is due to the limit of primary sources. But ambiguity is also the word characterizing Zhang's attitude towards Pure Land Buddhism, indeed towards popular religion in general. Once we no longer study Zhang's Buddhist engagement from a purely intellectual perspective and become more aware of the rapidly changing religious landscape in which Zhang was situated, we will not be surprised if the activities in his religious life did not always conform to his intellectual arguments.

* Conclusion *

The exploration of the undiscovered experience and practice in Zhang's religious life ends here. The historical materials, limited if distributed to different chapters, are actually abundant when assembled in a single chapter, many of which I have not presented in detail. Researching on these materials in a chronological order, it now becomes clear that the practical aspect of Zhang's Buddhist engagement was continuous and consistent, in contrast to the relatively unstable aspect of his theoretical thinking, more susceptible to the changes of political environment and scholarly influences. From the nearly lifelong engagement with Buddhism and other religions, we can summarize three main themes: the ambivalence between leaving the profane world and the commitment to political and scholarly enterprises; the insurmountable gap between his theoretical knowledge and meditative achievement; and his ambiguity towards the Buddhist imaginary of the afterworld and popular religious practices.

Among the results acquired in this chapter, one deserving particular attention concerns the close connections between the practical and intellectual aspects of Zhang's Buddhist engagement. A systematic investigation of the undiscovered practical aspect is very helpful for better understanding Zhang's Buddhist thought. I would like to show the

relevance by relating this chapter to other chapters. To start with, the early origins of Zhang's religious urge was correlative with the underlying appreciation of Buddhism in his reformist period (Chapter 1). The wide-ranging bodily practices and related ideas during the period 1900-1903, apart from making Zhang's commitment to Buddhism in jail more intelligible, sheds new light on the advantage of Religion over National Essence (Chapter 2). Next, Zhang's aspiration of becoming a monk in India resonated with the arresting pessimism in his major essay "On Five Negations" written shortly earlier (Chapter 3). The intensifying meditative syncretism in Zhang's later life, as mentioned several times in this chapter, corresponds to his syncretizing the three teachings in theory (Chapter 5). Finally, Zhang's emphasis on the necessity of meditation helps explaining his reserved attitude towards the radical anti-clericalism of Ouyang Jingwu (Chapter 6).

In addition, this chapter allows us to draw some methodological reflections. The primary sources used in this chapter differ dramatically from those of other chapters in terms of writing forms, interlocutors, aims, and the situation of publication. To summarize, the former category of primary sources was less likely to be recorded and preserved. Many of the remaining ones, collected and published much later than the more elaborate writings, have been made available to researchers only several decades after Zhang's death. The difference between private and public writings is not the only reason. The restriction of the publication and diffusion of the primary sources useful to this study also came from the predominant process of secularization throughout the twentieth century history of China which was positively received and promoted by many of Zhang's most influential disciples.⁷²³ Many of his disciples pursued their academic career within the scope of National learning and were ignorant about either the Buddhist thought or practice of their master. This explains why the ritual on Zhang's deathbed, attended by many disciples, was solely recorded (as far as I know) by a lay Buddhist scholar according to what he had heard.

The final point, putting the study of this chapter in a broader perspective, is that it is merely a representative case in a long tradition of literati elites who kept curiosity and familiarity with, and even developed commitment to, various religions beyond Confucianism, the degree of which varies due to different personality and life experience.

⁷²³ Lin Shaoyang (2018, pp. 359-380) has made extended investigations into the construction of Zhang's image by his disciples emphasizing the historical significance of Lu Xun.

Goossaert's study of Yu Yue has revealed the fact that many of Yu's acquainted literati friends actively carried out religious practices, a principal form of which was sitting meditation.⁷²⁴ The accelerating importation of Western scholarship and ways of life into the late Qing intelligentsia involved an increasing skepticism towards Confucian orthodoxy, but not a corresponding rejection of other religious beliefs and practices. Among the most prominent figures of political reformism, we witness on the contrary bolder expression of religious needs and exploration. This is the case for both those from older generations, from Gong Zizhen and Wei Yuan to Zheng Guanyin 鄭觀應 (1842-1922),⁷²⁵ and those among Zhang's contemporaries. As Zhang's main opponent, the early Kang Youwei had undertaken sitting meditation exploring firstly the spiritual state of neo-Confucian predecessors and then that of Buddhist and Daoist masters,⁷²⁶ which considerably contributed to his founding the Confucian religion. Kang's religious passion was shared by his partisans as well as their friends belonging to larger reformist social networks. A fitting historical material to show this collective enthusiasm is a photo appearing at the page ahead of the content of Jiang Hainu's monograph on politics and Buddhism in the Late Qing China:



In this photo taken in Shanghai on September 25, 1896, more than half of the people are

⁷²⁴ Vincent Goossaert, 2011, p. 635.

⁷²⁵ See, e.g. the study of Lai Chi Tim (2018) on Zheng's Daoist thought and practice.

⁷²⁶ Mao Hajian, 2009, pp. 14-15.

familiar to us, including Liang Qichao (the first on the left of the front row), Tan Sitong (the first on the right of the front row), Wang Kangnian (the first on the left of the back row), Song Shu (the first on the right of the back row), and Sun Baoxuan (position unclear).⁷²⁷ Tan's gesture was a strong expression of his intense belief in Buddhism (without excluding other religions) and the other three people in the front row all posed in accordance to sitting meditation. The rupture with the traditional religious life, as I have proposed in the introduction of this chapter, happened rather between Zhang's generation and that of his disciples following the Wuxu Reform and the abolition of the imperial examination system.

⁷²⁷ Jiang Hainu, 2012, the page ahead of the content.

Chapter 5. Toward the Foundation of the *Qiwu* Philosophy: Buddhist Syncretism and the Return to Indigenous Teachings

* Introduction *

Continuing from Zhang's Buddhist-inspired dystopian ideas, studied in Chapter 3, this chapter investigates the development of his scholarly and religious thought from 1908 to 1916. Except for an interval of fewer than two years following his return to China (1911-1913), when he deeply engaged in the establishment of the newborn Republic of China, Zhang was more focused on academic teaching and studies than on revolutionary or political activities. As a scholar, it was a harvest season when he wrote and revised several works most highly valued by himself. As a philosopher, he achieved the mature result of his theoretical thinking through a systematic reinterpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal," an Inner Chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. According to Zhang's interpretation, "qiwu" 齊物 means not only an equalitarian view on all beings but also the transcending of perceptual or conceptual appearances.⁷²⁸ The first connotation of "qiwu" reveals Zhang's understanding of the original text that the notion "wu" 物 designates not only things but in effect all sentient beings and (man-made) concepts. Despite this terminological elucidation, I finally decide to apply a conventional translation of the title by Burton Watson, i.e. "Discussion on Making All Things Equal." Watson's translations of the *Zhuangzi*, along with those of James Legge, serve as two main references for my study. As to the second connotation, it can be seen as Zhang's reinterpretation based on Buddhism.

Apart from Zhuangzi, Zhang reinterpreted other pre-Qin masters' works on a Buddhist basis. While the Buddhist superiority was reaffirmed at the theoretical level, Zhang gradually turned to indigenous teachings for the solution to practical and ethical problems.

Through a comprehensive study of the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy, this

⁷²⁸ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 1-2.

chapter intends to depict Zhang's return to indigenous teachings while revealing its correlation with his Buddhist syncretism. In contrast to Chapters 2 and 3, this chapter primarily deals with the doctrinal aspect rather than the political implications of Zhang's Buddhist thought. *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"* is undoubtedly the central text, nonetheless, this study also relies on a variety of Zhang's other writings to trace intertextual threads and confirm my points of view.

Zhang's *Qiwu* philosophy has been discussed by a large number of specialists of Zhang Taiyan. Their researches have two general orientations. The one serves as introductory studies or focuses on textual annotation and explanation. The other contextualizes this philosophy in its broader historical backgrounds and attempts to draw more general conclusions from it. In many cases, the two directions were combined in an integral study. For the first type of researches, Su Meiwen undertook one of the most comprehensive introductory studies in Chinese.⁷²⁹ In Japanese, we see Takeda Atsushi's 高田淳 work *Shingai kakumei to Shō Heirin no seibutsu ronshaku* 辛亥革命と章炳麟の斉物哲学 (The 1911 Revolution and Zhang Binglin's Philosophy of Equalization).⁷³⁰ Their counterpart in Western scholarship is John Makeham who, in an extended article, discussed the general idea of Zhang's *Qiwu* philosophy and its correlation with Yogācāra Buddhism. Besides, his study emphasized Zhang's contribution to the foundation of philosophy as an academic discipline in modern China.⁷³¹ As to textual annotation and explanation, it is Meng Zhuo who made a major contribution in 2019. Specialized in traditional Chinese linguistics and the pre-Qin textual studies, Meng accomplished solid and extensive annotations of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal,"* to which I owe a great debt.⁷³²

For the second type of researches, one of the most original works was accomplished by Wang Hui who interpreted the political implications of Zhang's *Qiwu* philosophy in the context of the predominant discourse of the "universal principle."⁷³³ In Chapter 5 of his book, Viren Murthy followed Wang's approach and transposed the *Qiwu* philosophy in a

⁷²⁹ Su Meiwen, 2007.

⁷³⁰ Published by the Kenbun shuppan in Tokyo, 1984, this book has not yet been translated into English or Chinese. So, unfortunately, I am unable to read it.

⁷³¹ Johan Makeham, 2012.

⁷³² Meng Zhuo, 2019.

⁷³³ Wang Hui, 2008, pp. 1078-1103.

global (or comparative) perspective of modernities, which opened up a new vista for Zhang-studies.⁷³⁴ On the other hand, we have Wong Young-tsui who disagreed with Wang and Murthy on a variety of topics around Zhang's attitude towards modernity, e.g. whether the *Qiwu* philosophy can be seen as a refined expression of cultural pluralism or not.⁷³⁵ Besides, we have an article of Zhang Zhiqiang which offers insights into the structure and subtleness of the *Qiwu* philosophy,⁷³⁶ and the monograph of Ishii Tsuyoshi 石井剛 which related Zhang Taiyan and Liu Shipei's studies of the pre-Qin Daoist texts to the particularity of the Chinese linguistic practice as well as the intercultural networks of East Asia.⁷³⁷

In contrast to the wealth of research on Zhang's *Qiwu* philosophy, there are much fewer studies of the doctrinal aspect of Zhang's Buddhist studies. The most valuable one among them is the book co-written by Guo Peng and his colleagues.⁷³⁸ The critical attitude the authors took, though leading to contentious viewpoints on several occasions, helps to reveal the deviation of Zhang's doctrinal reinterpretation from the convention of Buddhist communities.

While acknowledging the fruitful scientific results of previous studies and the debt I owe to them, this chapter intends to make original contributions to the current scholarship in two directions, respectively carried out in the third and fourth sections. The first original contribution concerns the revelation of one of the major factors that conditioned and facilitated the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy, i.e. the growing syncretic tendency in Zhang's Buddhist thought. Most of the previous researches introduced and studied how Zhang reinterpreted the *Zhuangzi* on a Buddhist basis and combined the two teachings, but few raised the question of the reason and condition for this reinterpretation. Some took notice of Zhang's changing attitude towards indigenous teachings and some stressed Zhang's increasing criticism of Western learning. However, few realized the influence of Zhang's Buddhist syncretism on his intellectual transformation towards the *Qiwu* philosophy. Some did connect Zhang's transforming ideas about Buddhism with his

⁷³⁴ Viren Murthy, 2011, pp. 169-222. See also (especially for Chinese readers) Viren Murthy, 2014.

⁷³⁵ The divergences between the two parties have been introduced in the Introduction. See Wong's review of Murthy's book (2012) and the latter's response (2012).

⁷³⁶ Zhang Zhiqiang, 2012.

⁷³⁷ Ishii Tsuyoshi, 2016.

⁷³⁸ Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying, 1989, pp. 354-391.

increasing appreciation of the Daoist masters, proposing a negative turn of attitude towards Buddhism,⁷³⁹ which is far from reality. The aforementioned disadvantages can largely be explained by the prevalent idea among academics that Yogācāra Buddhism always occupied a predominant position in Zhang’s Buddhist thought.⁷⁴⁰ This idea fails to recognize Zhang’s attempts, whether consciously or not, to syncretize the Yogācāra doctrines with those of other Buddhist schools and trends that had a larger influence and affinity with the Sinitic traditions of Buddhism. Recent researchers like Cai Zhidong and Meng Zhuo showed awareness of the syncretic characteristic in Zhang’s Buddhist thought⁷⁴¹ but did not dig into its correlation with the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy. The third section of the chapter aims to undertake a comprehensive investigation of this neglected issue.

The second original contribution consists in examining the relationship between the *Qiwu* philosophy and Zhang’s earlier Buddhist theories, especially the doctrine of non-creation. On the subject of the practical implications of the *Qiwu* philosophy, previous researches have well demonstrated how this philosophy responded to the discourse founded on the dichotomy between civilized and barbarian, as well as other prevalent ideologies like evolutionism, and how it further revealed the cultural imperialism of the West covered by such ideologies. My study, on the contrary, deals with this subject indirectly through an examination of Zhang’s critical reflection on the forms of political Buddhism that he used to put forward. The tension between the *Qiwu* philosophy and the doctrine of non-creation was overlooked, firstly because of some scholars overlooking the subtle ways of expression Zhang applied for self-criticism, then due to the neglect of the syncretic tendency and its consequences in Zhang’s Buddhist thought, and also because of the lack of in-depth studies of the 1907-1908 period (as I have pointed out in Chapter 3). As a result, previous researches tended to focus on the external and explicit targets of Zhang’s words in reinterpreting the texts of the *Zhuangzi* and skip over the implicit intertextual reference and revision between his own writings. Based on an in-depth analysis of a crucial passage at the end of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* long neglected

⁷³⁹ Luo Fuhui & Tang Wenquan, 1986, p. 282.

⁷⁴⁰ See, e.g. Li Xiangping, 1993, pp. 117-121; John Makeham, 2012, p. 104.

⁷⁴¹ Cai Zhidong, 2013, pp. 46-49. Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 93.

by previous researches, the fourth section of the chapter attempts to reveal how Zhang revised and transformed his previous political application of Buddhism in founding the *Qiwu* philosophy.

The chapter is composed of four sections. The first section provides basic information on Zhang's activities and writings from 1908 to 1916 in chronological order. The second section offers a general introduction to *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal,"* focusing on how Zhang reinterprets this text in accordance with Buddhist doctrines. The theme of the third and fourth sections have been discussed above, the first on Zhang's Buddhist syncretism and the second on the practical implications of the *Qiwu* philosophy.

* Zhang Taiyan's activities and writings (1908-1916) *

Following his disappointment with the Chinese revolutionary groups abroad, Zhang shifted his focus to education and academic research. Shortly after his third arrival in Japan in mid-1906, he appealed to his comrades and Chinese young students to support the Academic Society of National learning. This plan probably did not work out well judging by the fact that he did not fulfill his promise about a monthly publication on National learning (or National Essence).⁷⁴² According to the existing documents, Zhang's seminars on National Essence began in April 1908, the time when Zhang broke up with Liu Shipei and also the anarchist group in Tokyo. In October of the same year, following *The People's Journal* ban by the Japanese government, Zhang devoted a major part of his time to hosting his seminars oriented primarily towards the Chinese students in Japan which lasted until the end of his stay there in 1911.⁷⁴³ Among the participants of the seminars, we see Huang Kan 黃侃 (1886-1935), Qian Xuantong, Zhu Xizu, Zhou Zuoren, and Lu Xun, who later became leading scholars and writers and maintained lifelong master-disciple relationships with Zhang.

Meanwhile, Zhang's focus switched from foreign scholarship to the native one. In his essay "The Indian People's View on National Essence" (*Yinduren zhi lun guocui* 印度

⁷⁴² Zhang Taiyan, 2001, Chen Pingyuan intro. p. 20.

⁷⁴³ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 679-683; Zhang Taiyan, 2001, Chen Pingyuan intro. pp. 20-21.

人之論國粹), published in No. 20 of *The People's Journal* on April 25, 1908, Zhang argued that compared to learning European languages and history, collecting and studying the native dialects and historiographies was more important.⁷⁴⁴ Next, we have his 1909 letter to Liang Qichao reflecting on his unsuccessful experience of learning Sanskrit (discussed in Chapter 4). So there was a tendency in 1908 and 1909 during which Zhang shifted his scholarly interest first from the West to the Asian classics, then from the Asian classics (especially the Indian ones) to the scholarship of his homeland.

His seminar teaching and the shifting focus of attention considerably contributed to Zhang's academic writings.⁷⁴⁵ From 1909 to 1910, Zhang wrote several of his most elaborate works, about which he expressed much pride. For example, in a letter to his son-in-law Gong Baoquan 龔寶銓 (1886-1922), written on May 23, 1914, Zhang said that "in my publications, only *An Interpretation of 'Discussion on Making All Things Equal'* (*Qiwulun shi*) and *On the Origin of Writing* (*Wensi*) have no match in the recent sixteen hundred years. As to the *Disquisitions on National Heritage* (*Guogu Lunheng*), *A New Study of Dialects* (*Xin fangyan*), and *Questions and Answers about Chinese Linguistics* (*Xiaoxue dawen*), if the eminent scholars of past generations were reborn in my time, they may also realize the same achievements." 所著數種，獨《齊物論釋》、《文始》，千六百年未有等匹。《國故論衡》、《新方言》、《小學答問》三種，先正復生，非不能為也。⁷⁴⁶ All written during 1909-1910, these five books primarily focused on two domains, the first is Chinese linguistics, as seen in *On the Origin of Writing*, *A New Study of Dialects*, *Questions and Answers about Chinese Linguistics*, and the first of the three sections of the *Disquisitions on National Heritage*. The other is the studies of the pre-Qin masters, as seen in Section 3 of the *Disquisitions on National Heritage* and *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal."* This corresponds to the two foci of Zhang's seminars, revealed in a letter of his to the editors of the *National Essence Journal*, published in No. 10 of this journal on November 2, 1909. Zhang explains that "what I recently discussed with the students finds its foundation in Chinese phonetics and exegetical studies and treats the masters' scholarship of the Zhou and Qin dynasties as

⁷⁴⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 384.

⁷⁴⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 683.

⁷⁴⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 746.

superior. Besides, [I] also give lessons on Buddhist canonical works.” 弟近日與學子討論者，以音韻、訓詁為基，以周、秦諸子為極，外亦兼講釋典。⁷⁴⁷ In contrast, Zhang decided not to introduce his disciples to the studies of Confucian classics for the moment since it was too complicated and profound.

In his linguistic writings, Zhang emphasized the study of dialects. Apart from *A New Study of Dialects*, Zhang published seven essays in 1910 in the newly established *Vernacular Magazine of Education* (*Jiaoyu jinyu zazhi* 教育今語雜誌). This magazine was aimed at restoring National Essence and promoting universal education among the common people.⁷⁴⁸ This goal can be easily recognized by the titles of these essays and their writing style. Presumably, Zhang had realized the limitations of his previous intellectual elitism and made efforts to compensate for it. Zhang’s studies of dialects and practices of vernacular writing were influenced by his debates with the writers of the *New Age Journal* and related to the *Qiwu* philosophy. In “Refuting the Proposal that China should adopt Esperanto,” Zhang generalizes his views on the language by eight Chinese words, “blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself”⁷⁴⁹ 吹萬不同，使其自己, which are originated from the chapter “Discussion on Making All Things Equal” of the *Zhuangzi*. To demonstrate this, he refers to not only the distinctiveness of the Chinese language vis-à-vis the foreign ones but also the common origins of diversified Chinese dialects.⁷⁵⁰ Zhang’s studies of Chinese dialects, on the one hand, facilitated the foundation of *Qiwu* philosophy, on the other, were inspired by his Buddhist knowledge, especially the concept of “dependent arising in turn” (*zhanzhuan yuansheng* 輾轉緣生).⁷⁵¹

Now let’s turn to Zhang’s studies of the pre-Qin masters, centered on the *Zhuangzi*. In Chapter 3, I have introduced Zhang’s transforming attitude towards the Daoist masters, especially Laozi and Zhuangzi. So we know that Zhang considered these masters’ teachings more and more as a native counterpart superior to anarchism during 1907-1908. A similar shift occurred concerning Zhang’s views on the Daoist masters’ teachings and

⁷⁴⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 328.

⁷⁴⁸ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 186.

⁷⁴⁹ Burton Watson, 1968, p. 37.

⁷⁵⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 353-356.

⁷⁵¹ Peng Chunling, 2008, pp. 78-79. See the conclusion of Peng’s article for more information about the relevance of Zhang’s linguistic studies to the debates around Chinese language and dialects in the Republic era.

Western philosophy. In the 1906 speech, Zhang claims that in the intellectual history of China, “the most learned persons were the masters in the Zhou and Qin dynasties. No final conclusion has yet been reached on comparing them with the European and Indian [philosophers].” 最有學問的人，就是周秦諸子，比那歐洲、印度，或者難有定論。

⁷⁵² Between 1907 and 1908, however, it became evident that he began to regard the native masters, at least Zhuangzi and Laozi, as superior to the Western philosophers.⁷⁵³ A roughly parallel issue is Zhang’s references to the concept of *qiwu*. This concept was touched on as early as 1902 in the chapter “On the Origin of the Teaching/Religion (Part 1)” of the *Book of Urgency (Revised edition)*, quoting again, “equalize things and ideas and remove the distinction between high and low.” 齊物論而貴賤泯。Nonetheless, it is not until mid-1907 that it began to appear frequently in texts like “Preface to *Anarchism*” and “Impartial Discussion of the Anti-Manchu Movement,” among others.

According to several documents and memories,⁷⁵⁴ Zhang taught the *Zhuangzi* in his seminars from August 5, 1908, after finishing the lessons on Chinese linguistics around the *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 (Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters). Unlike the case of the *Shuowen Jiezi*, there remain no class notes. Through Zhang’s two publications about the *Zhuangzi* in this period, however, we can infer that his seminars were oriented towards two directions. The first is the textual exegesis, the results of which are presented in the *Textual Exegesis of the Zhuangzi* (*Zhuangzi jiegu* 莊子解詁), published in installments in No. 2-12 of the *National Essence Journal* from March to December 1909. The second is the doctrinal reinterpretation, leading to the central text of this chapter, *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal” (original edition)*, written mainly in 1910 and published in 1912.⁷⁵⁵ As indicated by Zhou Zuoren, the reinterpretation of this book “is based on his [Zhang Taiyan’s] comprehensive and profound Buddhist knowledge, which belongs to the section of *yuantong* (perfect and resilient understanding of the truth; literally, universal and thorough).” 乃是運用他廣博的佛學知識來加以說明的，屬於佛教的圓通部門。⁷⁵⁶ This is also the case for Section 3 of the *Disquisitions on National*

⁷⁵² Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 8.

⁷⁵³ Tang Wenquan, 1981a, p. 47.

⁷⁵⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 169-170, 182-183, 682-683. Zhou Zuoren, 2013, p. 278.

⁷⁵⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 182-183, 200-201. Meng Zhuo, 2019, intro. p. 3.

⁷⁵⁶ Zhou Zuoren, 2013, p. 278.

Heritage, especially the last three chapters, “On the Origin of the Name” (*Yuan ming* 原名), “Philosophical Clarification” (*Ming jian* 明見), and “Distinguishing the Nature” (*Bian xing* 辨性). Dense in theory and elegantly written, these chapters estimate various pre-Qin masters’ particularity based on Buddhism, “Sunqing [Xunzi] investigated the mind (or heart, *xin*) to the most profound degree; Zhuang Zhou [Zhuangzi] investigated the cause (or origin, *yin*) to the farthest-reaching degree; and Hui Shi investigated the things (*wu*) to the subtlest degree.” 言心莫眇於孫卿，言因莫遠於莊周，言物莫微於惠施。⁷⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Zhang appreciated the *Zhuangzi* in particular, especially the chapter “Discussion on Making All Things Equal.” In his eyes, “to understand Yogācāra doctrines above and be widely beneficial to sentient beings below, no text of ancient China is better than ‘Discussion on Making All Things Equal.’” 夫能上悟唯識，廣利有情，域中故籍，莫善於《齊物論》。⁷⁵⁸

In sum, during 1909-1910, Zhang switched his focus from politics and ideological debates to academic research and consciously returned to the native scholarly traditions. Correspondingly, he devoted most of his energy to teaching and writing on Chinese linguistics and the studies of the pre-Qin masters. His Buddhist knowledge was incorporated and presented in both directions, nonetheless, the politically oriented Buddhist writings diminished. In order to grasp the new tendencies of Zhang’s Buddhist thought from 1909, three earlier essays need to be included in this investigation, all published in No. 19 of *The People’s Journal* on February 25, 1908. The major one is “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism” (*Dacheng fojiao yuanqi shuo* 大乘佛教緣起說), the other two essays, “On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*” (*Bian Dacheng qixin lun zhi zhenwei* 辭《大乘起信論》之真偽)⁷⁵⁹ and “A Philological Investigation of the Birth and Death Dates of Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna” (*Longshu pusa shengmie nianyue kao* 龍樹菩薩生滅年月考), were published as its appendices. The first text is an extended thesis in response to the dispute on whether Mahāyāna (Buddhism) should be treated as authentic Buddhism. In the second text, Zhang defended the authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* against the accusation that this

⁷⁵⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2011c, p. 752.

⁷⁵⁸ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁵⁹ It is renamed as “*Dacheng qixin lun bian* 《大乘起信論》辯” in *The Collected Works of Taiyan* (Vol. 1).

influential canonical work was in fact authored anonymously in Chinese rather than being written by the purported Indian Buddhist master Aśvaghoṣa (Maming 馬鳴, c.80-c.150CE). Historically formed, both disputes had dramatic resonances in the intelligentsia of modern Japan, to be presented later. The third text, much shorter and less important, was not included in the *Taiyan wenlu chubian* 太炎文錄初編 (*Selected Works of Taiyan, book I*), one of the publications launched by Zhang himself in 1915.

These Buddhist essays were published in a time when Zhang's editorship of *The People's Journal* suffered from increasing criticisms. During the debate between Zhang and Meng'an in mid-1908, the latter targeted "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism" questioning its value in overthrowing the wicked Qing government and building the Republic. In contrast to the tough attitude he adopted in general in his "Letter in Reply to Meng'an," Zhang conceded on this issue, explaining that "'On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism' is no more than a text of philological studies irrelevant to the grand goal. At the time, [I] was occupied with the discussion about Chinese dialects. Hastily, I failed to spare time [to write a more suitable essay]. That is why I included this essay [for that issue of *The People's Journal*]” 《大乘緣起說》者，無過考證之文，不關宏旨。是時方討論震旦方言，不皇輟業，倉猝應乏，遂以是篇入錄。⁷⁶⁰ The modest tone of this explanation may let us think that Zhang himself took little count of this essay. However, in a later passage of this letter, Zhang returns to "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism" and estimates it by four Chinese words, "outlining the key points and probing the profound implications" 提要鉤玄.⁷⁶¹ A later section of this chapter will reveal the importance of this text as well as "A Philological Study of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*."

In contrast to the three philological texts above, Zhang's Buddhist lecture in 1911 has drawn much attention from the researchers. The lecture is commonly referred to by the title "On the Relationship of Buddhism with Religion, Philosophy, and Reality" (*Lun fofa yu zongjiao zhexue yiji xiashi zhi guanxi* 論佛法與宗教、哲學以及現實之關係), given for its first publication in No. 6 of the *Zhongguo zhixue* 中國哲學 (Journal of Chinese Philosophy) in 1981.⁷⁶² In "Personal Statement on My Scholarly Career," a text written

⁷⁶⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 320-321.

⁷⁶¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 321.

⁷⁶² Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, the editor's note, p. 102.

two years later during his house confinement, Zhang recalls the background of this lecture:

Then [I] have written *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"* (*original edition*), which made intelligible each of the five thousand words [of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"] by Zhuangsheng [Zhuangzi]. Many Japanese monks appreciated this work of mine. Just at that time, [I heard about] the Wuchang Uprising and packed my luggage preparing to return [to China]. More than thirty Japanese monks from different Buddhist schools asked me to give a Buddhist lecture. [I] presented the essential Buddhist doctrines in a single night, slightly different from the conventional ideas. ... [I] clarified all the problematic issues and made all of them satisfactory.

既為《齊物論釋》，使莊生五千言，字字可解，日本諸沙門亦多慕之。適會武昌倡議，束裝欲歸，東方沙門諸宗三十餘人屬講佛學，一夕演其大義，與世論少有不同……悉為疏通滯義，無不厭心。⁷⁶³

We can see that Zhang depicts himself as an accomplished Buddhist scholar who masterly elucidates difficult problems for those seeking instruction. In comparison to his Buddhist writings in 1906-1907, the 1911 lecture is characterized by a strong syncretic tendency instead of the previous affiliation to Yogācāra Buddhism. This tendency reveals itself throughout the main topics of this lecture including Buddhist theory vs. Buddhist practice, “absolute truth” (*zhendi* 真諦) vs. “relative truth” (*sudi* 俗諦), Mādhyamaka Buddhism vs. Yogācāra Buddhism, and “other-worldly *dharma*” (*chushijian fa* 出世間法) vs. “this-worldly *dharma*” (*shijian fa* 世間法). This syncretism corresponds to the traits of *yuantong*, a term used by Zhou Zuoren to characterize the Buddhist thought his master relied on to reinterpret the *Zhuangzi*. In the last topic, Zhang mainly discusses the coordination between Buddhism (as the *chushijian fa*) and Daoist masters’ teachings (as the *shijian fa* that perfectly matches with Buddhism):

If [we] solely use the Buddhist teaching/law (*fofa*) to cope with the practical affairs, it is hardly possible to avoid the weakness in planning. If [we] borrow the words of anarchist parties, their theories have materialist tendencies and their approaches do not fulfill [their goals]. Only the combination between Buddhism and the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi is, in the eyes of the ‘masters adaptable to the changing occasions’

⁷⁶³ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 192.

(*shanquan dashi* 善權大士), the best solution to cope with the current crisis.

若專用佛法應世務，規畫總有不周。若借用無政府黨的話，理論既是偏於唯物，方法實在沒有完成。唯有把佛與老莊和合，這才是“善權大士”救時應務的第一良法。⁷⁶⁴

In this passage at the end of the lecture, Zhang reaffirms the viewpoint that the Daoist masters' teachings are the ideal substitute for anarchism, as they are better coordinated with Buddhism. This idea had taken shape during the period studied in Chapter 3. This passage offers a perfect glimpse into the motifs underlying the sophisticated theoretical works of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal.”* The last issue worthy of notice is revealed by Zhang's claim at the beginning of this lecture that “the Buddhist teaching only belongs to the same category as the philosophies rather than the religions.” 佛法只與哲學家為同聚，不與宗教家為同聚。⁷⁶⁵ It reminds us of the differences between Zhang's Buddhist proposition at the beginning of his third stay in Japan, i.e. Buddhism (as the Religion) in combination with National Essence, and that at the end of the stay, i.e. Buddhism (closer to philosophies) in combination with the Daoist masters' teachings.

Following the success of the Wuchang Uprising in October 1911, Zhang returned to China and deeply engaged in political activities concerning the transition from the imperial monarchy to the first Republic of Asia, newly born on January 1, 1912. During the failed Second Revolution (*Erci geming* 二次革命), launched by the former revolutionary groups in several southern provinces against the Beiyang government 北洋政府 (1912-1928) led by Yuan Shikai from July to September 1913, Zhang was put in house confinement in Beijing from August 1913 to June 1916, shortly after Yuan's death. Compared with the three years in jail roughly ten years before, Zhang had a much better living condition and limited permission to receive guests and exchange letters. Nonetheless, his mental suffering was greater. Feeling the approach of death, Zhang spent a considerable amount of time in concluding his scholarly career. First of all, he wrote retrospective self-accounts, represented by “Personal Statement on My Scholarly Career” and the last section of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*. Furthermore, he revised some of his major works

⁷⁶⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 111.

⁷⁶⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 102.

such as the second (and also the final) edition of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* the *Book after Examination* (based on the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*), and the *Disquisitions on National Heritage*. Then, he launched the compilation of the *Collection of the Works of Zhang Taiyan*, published by the *Youwen Press* 右文社 in Shanghai in 1915, which included some of his revised works.

For the aforementioned writings, *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal” (final edition)* (*Qiwulun shi dingben* 齊物論釋定本) was revised from early 1915 to early 1916. Hence, it was not included in the *Collection of the Works of Zhang Taiyan* but published separately in 1919. There exist significant differences between the original and the final editions,⁷⁶⁶ some of which will be touched on below. The *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*⁷⁶⁷ was the result of Zhang’s in-depth dialogues with Wu Chengshi. As one of the few disciples who paid frequent visits during Zhang’s confinement, Wu may be the only disciple capable of discussing with Zhang on theoretical issues based on Buddhism and other teachings. Once the dialogue was finished in the spring of 1916, Wu gathered his notes from his discussions with the master, arranging them into 167 sections, presumably through Zhang’s review and modifications. This work was firstly published in Beijing (in 1916 or 1917) and included, along with *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal” (final edition)*, in the second edition of the *Collection of the Works of Zhang Taiyan* of 1919.⁷⁶⁸ Though adopting the form of lecture notes, this is far from an accessible text. In a 1917 letter to Wu Chengshi, Zhang talks about the fact that the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* did not sell well, complaining that “[I] cannot find not only any author [able to say the same words as mine] but also any interpreter.” 非但能言人不可得，正索解人亦不可得。⁷⁶⁹ As a major theoretical work during Zhang’s house confinement, the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* showed a strong tendency to extend his syncretism between Buddhism and the Daoist Masters further to Confucianism. It furthermore helps us to grasp the development of the final

⁷⁶⁶ To have general knowledge of these differences, see Su Meiwen, 2007, pp. 129-132. For more specific and in-depth understandings, see the new publication of Meng Zhu (2019) whose annotations clearly exhibit the passages revised in the final edition.

⁷⁶⁷ Zhang used “Master of the Zhuohan Chamber” (*Zhuohan gezhu* 薈漢閣主) as one of his surnames. 薈 (zhuo/dao) is a character with various pronunciations. I choose *zhuo* because it corresponds to Zhang and his family members’ pronunciation of this character. Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, preface pp. 1, 4-5.

⁷⁶⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, preface p. 1. Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 346. Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 407.

⁷⁶⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 407. Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, preface p. 3.

edition of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal”* compared with the original edition.

As mentioned above, Zhang briefly summarizes his scholarly career in the last section of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*. At the end of this section, Zhang concludes by the following sentence: “Looking back on my scholarly career, at first [my thought] transformed from *su* (secular/mundane) to *zhen* (transcendental/real), finally [it] returned from *zhen* to *su*.” 自揣平生學術，始則轉俗成真，終乃回真向俗。⁷⁷⁰ Researchers have for several decades paid much attention to this sentence and offered various explanations. The early researches in mainland China (1970s-1980s) tended to explain this sentence in a general way, e.g. explaining *su* as concrete challenges from the social reality and *zhen* as philosophical reflections.⁷⁷¹ Hou Wailu, in contrast, explained *su* as “according with sentient beings” 隨順眾生 and *zhen* as “eliminating the delusion” 破除迷妄, thus revealing the Buddhist origin of these two notions.⁷⁷² The younger generations of mainland Chinese researchers and their overseas colleagues have reached a consensus in identifying Zhang’s Buddhist thought as *zhen* (or at least as its main source) and, in most cases, treating the other aspects of his scholarship (largely related to Confucianism) as *su*.⁷⁷³ Moreover, a few scholars explained the relationship between *zhen* and *su* in terms of analogical dichotomies, e.g. “other-worldly *dharma*” and “this-worldly *dharma*,” “inner moral perfection” (*neisheng* 內聖) and “outer political kingliness” (*waiwang* 外王), “essence” (*ti* 體) and “application” (*yong* 用), or “the pursuit of the truth” and “the application for practical purposes.”⁷⁷⁴ These dichotomies offered valuable ideas from different angles. However, the real origins of Zhang’s terms of *zhen* and *su* are probably the Buddhist concepts of “absolute truth” (*zhendi*) and “relative truth” (*sudi*).

The next question is: what kind of Buddhist thought represents Zhang’s understanding of *zhen*? Inadequately aware of the nuanced transformation of Zhang’s

⁷⁷⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 72.

⁷⁷¹ This is the proposition of Jiang Yihua (2011, p. 556) and Zhu Weizheng (Tang Wenquan & Luo Fuhui, 1986, p. 277).

⁷⁷² Tang Wenquan & Luo Fuhui, 1986, p. 277.

⁷⁷³ As divergent views, Jiang Hainu (2012, p. 208) argued that the transformation between *su* and *zhen* should be understood within the scope of Zhang’s Buddhist conviction. Sakamoto Hiroko (2019, p. 69) also proposed to avoid the simplified idea which identifies *zhen* as Buddhism and *su* as Confucianism or Daoism. However, they did not offer a clear alternative explanation.

⁷⁷⁴ Su Meiwen, 2007, pp. 142-143. Li Qingxin, 1999, p. 151. Xie Yingning, 1987, pp. 189-190, 194.

Buddhist thought from 1906 to 1908, previous researches either associate *zhen* to Zhang's Buddhist thought as a whole⁷⁷⁵ or focus on Zhang's establishment of Yogācāra Buddhism as the mainstay of the new Religion.⁷⁷⁶ Besides, there exists the opinion that the *Qiwu* philosophy is the ultimate expression of Zhang's understanding of *zhen* whereas all his previous Buddhist writings are situated in the course of the transformation from *su* to *zhen*.⁷⁷⁷ For this dispute, I agree with Wang Fansen's viewpoint. According to him, Yogācāra Buddhism serves as the theoretical basis for the transformation from *su* to *zhen*, however, the ultimate expression of *zhen* is found in the doctrine of "non-creation." As to *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal,"* what it means is rather Zhang's return from *zhen* to *su*.⁷⁷⁸ Above is a general introduction to the ideas of previous researchers as well as mine regarding the key sentence concluding Zhang's scholarly career. The remaining problem concerns the transformation from the doctrine of "non-creation" to the *Qiwu* philosophy, to be discussed in a later section.

The last text of this period to be introduced is the *Book after Examination*. The reasons for Zhang's revision of the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)* have undergone careful examination in Chapter 3. As a result of such reasons, the influences of Western and Japanese scholarships are considerably reduced in the *Book after Examination* in comparison to the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*. Besides, this third and final edition systematically rearranges the structure of its chapters and conveys in some newly added chapters the reflections based on his recent political engagement. However, what I give particular attention to here is a text entitled "On the Origin of the Yellow Turban Daoists" (*Huangjin daoshi yuanqishuo* 黃巾道士緣起說), added as an appendix of "The Transformations of Scholarship" (*Xuebian* 學變), the last chapter of the third volume of the *Book after Examination*. This neglected text helps us to achieve a more complete understanding of Zhang's developing ideas about Daoism.

"The Transformations of Scholarship" first appeared in the *Book of Urgency (revised edition)*. It studies five major transformations of scholarship from the Western Han dynasty 西漢 (202BC-9AD) to the Jin dynasty 晉朝 (266-420). For the fifth transformation,

⁷⁷⁵ Cai Zhidong, 2013, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁷⁶ Li Xiangping, 1993, pp. 112-113.

⁷⁷⁷ Zhang Zhiqiang, 2012, pp. 112.

⁷⁷⁸ Wang Fansen, 2012, pp. 20-21.

Zhang discusses how Ji Kang 嵇康 (223-262) and Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210-263), the leading figures of the Qingtan 清談 school of Daoism, implicitly expressed their resentfulness against the officially promoted ritual and law (*lifa* 禮法) through the form of *xuanyan* 玄言 (abstruse words). In the annotation (printed in a smaller size) following this passage, Zhang touches on the confrontation between two Daoist schools during the Wei 魏 (220-266) and Jin dynasties, namely the Qingtan school whose members highly appreciated Laozi and Zhuangzi and those pursuing immortality represented by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343) and Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536). In the edition of the *Book after Examination*, Zhang expanded this annotation by adding a third Daoist school, the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice (*wudouumi dao* 五斗米道), proposing that it originated from Mohism.⁷⁷⁹ In this context, the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice was a synonym of the Yellow Turban Daoism. At the outset of the appendix, Zhang put forwards his viewpoint about the origin of the Yellow Turban Daoism as thus:

The Doctrines of immortality may have claimed a fictive filiation with Laozi at the end of the Han dynasty. These doctrines are contrary to the original thought [of Laozi]. The Yellow Turban Daoists today date from Zhang Ling (traditionally 34–156), Zhang Lu (?-216), and others. [They set up the religious post of] Jiji, also entitled as Jianling, which was specialized in Laozi's five thousand words. However, [the Yellow Turban Daoists] were not essentially affiliated with the superior Way of nothingness [of Laozi], nor were they preoccupied with becoming immortals. What they dealt with were rather sacrifice, exorcism, convocation, and punishment [related to gods, spirits, and demons]. [The primitive origin of the Yellow Turban Daoists] was the ancient shamans. Their religious techniques had a recent origin in Modi (c.476-c.390BC), not Laozi and Zhuangzi, nor the techniques relative to immortality.

神仙之說，漢末或託老子，與其初旨背馳。今之黃巾道士，起于張陵、張魯之倫。其姦令祭酒，雖主習老子五千言，本非虛無貴勝之道，而亦不事神仙，但為禁解効治而已。斯乃古之巫師，其術近出墨翟，既非老莊，並非神仙之術也。⁷⁸⁰

Here, Zhang reaffirms the viewpoint that he newly put forwards in “The Transformations of Scholarship” of the *Book after Examination*. In the following paragraphs, Zhang offers

⁷⁷⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 143-144, 454.

⁷⁸⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 455.

proofs and detailed discussions to verify this viewpoint. Once the filiation with Mohism is established, Zhang feels that it is understandable that the Way of the Celestial Masters (*tianshi dao* 天師道), synonymous for him with the Yellow Turban Daoism, appealed even to many members of the educated elites.

To conclude, “On the Origin of the Yellow Turban Daoists” gives limited legitimacy to the Way of the Celestial Masters, a religious tradition rarely noticed and recognized among the Confucian literati. On the other hand, however, it firmly distinguishes the teachings of pre-Qin Daoist masters from the Daoist religious schools. Despite the originality of this textual study in tracing different origins of the Daoist schools, it serves to reinforce a conventional distinction which Zhang had approved of in an earlier period. In the 1906 essay “Brief Discussion on the Teachings of the Pre-Qin Masters,” for example, he asserts that “the Daoist masters such as Laozi and Zhuangzi never showed any belief or veneration towards the ghosts and gods. Liezi (or Lie Yukou 列禦寇), though closer to [the doctrines of] immortality, did not practice in a similar way as the *fangshi* [literally “method masters”] of the Han dynasty. … The Daoists resorted to the teaching [of Laozi] and venerated him as the patriarch of their religion. In reality, however, [their religion] has nothing to do with Laozi.” 道家如老、莊輩，皆無崇信鬼神之事，列子稍近神仙，亦非如漢世方士所為也……道士依傍其說，推為教祖，實於老子無與。⁷⁸¹ As a result, Zhang’s studies of the origins and developments of the Daoist religion have no direct relevance with his syncretic endeavors regarding the Daoist masters and Buddhism. The pre-Qin Daoist masters’ teachings were treated, similar to the Buddhist teaching, as belonging to the category of philosophy rather than religion. Furthermore, the studies of the Daoist religion did not share similar motifs with Zhang’s Daoist practices and his interest in popular religions, the former were driven by academic interests⁷⁸² whereas the latter were respectively motivated by the personal spiritual need and the intent of mass mobilizations for the revolutionary cause.

⁷⁸¹ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 291.

⁷⁸² Zhang’s interest in academic studies of the Daoist religion in the *Book after Examination* may have been influenced by Liu Shipei. Liu claimed to have read through the *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon), the first in the history of modern China, in the White Cloud Temple 白雲觀 in 1910. His “Reading Notes of the Daoist Canon” (*Du Daozang ji* 讀道藏記) was published in installments in the *National Essence Journal* from February to June 1911 (Chen Qi, 2007, p. 295). As another main author of this journal, Zhang probably had read Liu’s texts before undertaking his studies.

* Introduction to *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal”* *

This section offers a general introduction to *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* focusing on how Zhang reinterprets this text on a Buddhist basis. Before proceeding to the main text of Zhang’s interpretation, I would like to discuss the preface he wrote for the original edition of this book, in which the author puts forward his understanding of the concept *qiwu* and discusses why his book is superior to the previous works syncretizing Buddhism and Daoist masters’ teachings. Discussing this preface helps us to establish a basic understanding of the main idea and the methodology of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal.”*

For the concept *qiwu*, Zhang explains as follows:

[Zhuangzi’s] main ideas are conveyed in two chapters [of the *Zhuangzi*], i.e. “Free and Easy Wandering” (*Xiaoyao you* 逍遙遊) and “Discussion on Making All Things Equal.” [Zhuang’s ideas of freedom and equality] are different from the mundane ideas of freedom and equality. The essence (*ti*) [that these two texts convey] transcends forms and objects (*xingqi*), hence is unrestrained and beyond binary opposition. The principle (*li*) transcends concepts and words (*mingyan*), hence is equal and adaptable to all [things, beings, and occasions].

維綱所寄，其唯《消搖》《齊物》二篇，則非世俗所云自在平等也。體非形器，故自在而無對；理絕名言，故平等而咸適。⁷⁸³

The mundane ideas of freedom and equality refer to the political philosophies of the modern West. Regarding the superiority of Zhuangzi’s ideas over its Western counterparts, Zhang offers an accessible explanation in a popular publication entitled *General Introduction to the National Learning* (*Guoxue gailun* 國學概論), which was based on his lecture series given in 1922, recorded and edited by Cao Juren 曹聚仁 (1900-1972). In Zhang’s eyes, the recently introduced Western ideas define freedom in terms of interpersonal relationships. They do not deal with the loss of freedom when one struggles to survive cold and hunger. Zhuangzi, in contrast, takes this into consideration by defining

⁷⁸³ Meng Zhuo, 2019, preface pp. 7-8.

freedom as “non-dependence” (*wudai* 無待). As to the Western conception of equality, it is limited to the scope of human-to-human interactions. Zhuangzi, in contrast, equalizes human beings with not only animals and plants (as Buddhist texts preach) but also all the other things. Furthermore, Zhuangzi sets out to reveal the origin of inequality, i.e. the conception of right and wrong (*shifei zhi xin* 是非之心). If we do not get rid of this binary conception, “the attempt, with what is not even, to produce what is even will only produce an uneven result.” 以不平平，其平也不平。⁷⁸⁴

In comparison to Western philosophy, Buddhism, in Zhang’s reinterpretation, serves as a more important interlocutor for Zhuangzi’s ideas of freedom and equality. Taking the quoted passage as an example, the “essence” (*ti* 體) is defined in line with the Buddhist concepts “embryo of the *tathāgata*” and the “*ālaya*-consciousness” whereas the “concepts and words” (*mingyan* 名言) is elucidated based on both Yogācāra Buddhism and Mādhyamaka Buddhism.⁷⁸⁵ This leads me to introduce the second issue about Zhang’s critical review of the syncretic reinterpretations of the *and *Zhuangzi* in ancient times, especially those undertaken by prominent Buddhist monks:*

The doctrines [of different schools and traditions] do confirm each other, which has nothing to do with farfetched interpretations. In ancient times, Sengzhao (384-414) and Daosheng (355-434) resorted to Buddhist doctrines to elucidate the *Zhuangzi* whereas Fazang (643-712) and Chengguan (738-839) secretly borrowed [Laozi and Zhuangzi’s doctrines to reinterpret Buddhist canonical works] but pretended to reject them. {Zhang’s auto-commentary: Some Confucian scholars of the Song dynasty criticized the Buddhist canonical works for having frequently stolen Laozi and Zhuangzi’s doctrines. This misunderstanding was caused by the neglect of the distinction between Chinese and Sanskrit. As to Fazang and Chengguan, they stole Zhuangzi’s doctrines to reinterpret the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. From Chengguan to Zongmi (780-841), they again plagiarized Laozi and Zhuangzi’s doctrines, making frequent references to the ideas of the Way of the Celestial Masters. [Chengguan and Zongmi’s reinterpretations] distorted and sullied the ancient masters and they were no match for Daosheng and Sengzhao in thought.} The doctrinaire provoke conflicts based on their sectarian bias whereas the wise men of broad-minded views probe the abstruse common origin [of different schools and traditions]. Moreover, the

⁷⁸⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 1997a, p. 34; via Meng Zhuo, 2019, preface pp. 7-8.

⁷⁸⁵ Meng Zhuo, 2019, preface p. 8.

*Zhoubi Suanjing*⁷⁸⁶ and the *Mozi* (*Chapters “Canon”*) were authored in this land [i.e. China] but the interpreters still referred to Western mathematics [to reinterpret them].

義有相徵，非附會而然也。往者僧肇、道生，摭內以明外；法藏、澄觀，陰盜而陽憎。宋世諸儒或云佛典多竊老、莊，此固未明華梵殊言之理。至於法藏、澄觀，竊取莊義，以說《華嚴》，自澄觀至於宗密，復剽剝老、莊，其所引據，多是天師道士之言，而以誣汙前哲，其見下於生、肇遠矣。然則拘教者以異門致釁，達觀者以同出覽玄。且《周髀》《墨經》，本乎此域，解者猶引大秦之算。⁷⁸⁷

This long passage reveals several important points. First of all, Zhang approves more of reinterpreting the *and *Zhuangzi* based on Buddhist doctrines rather than the opposite. This demonstrates that, despite his increasing appreciation of the Daoist masters, Buddhism still occupies the highest position in theory. Next, the criticism of reference to the Way of the Celestial Masters is just another example of Zhang's distinction between the pre-Qin Daoist masters and the Daoist religious schools, as shown by the above discussion of "On the Origin of the Yellow Turban Daoists." What is at stake in this passage, however, consists in Zhang's belief that different schools and traditions confirm each other in terms of the ultimate truth. "Syncretism" is the term I use to designate this belief and the corresponding theoretical endeavors. In Chapter 2, I referred to a sentence in "Personal Statement on My Academic Career" which distinguishes universal scholarship and particular scholarship. To quote again, "the scholarships on mental and physical issues are underpinned by universal principles beyond the difference between countries, whereas language, writing system, and history are characterized by their national particularity." It is evident that the Buddhist and Daoist masters' teachings, (mainly) treating mental issues, both belong to the type of universal scholarship and share many ideas about the universal truth.⁷⁸⁸ The Chinese National Essence, in contrast, is a kind of particular scholarship. This partly explains the difference between the Buddhist combination with National Essence and its integration with the Daoist masters' teachings.*

⁷⁸⁶ The *Zhoubi Suanjing* 周髀算經 is one of the oldest Chinese mathematical texts dedicated to astronomical observation and calculation. "Zhou" refers to the ancient Zhou dynasty. "Bi" means thigh and according to the book, it refers to the gnomon of the sundial. "Suanjing" means the classic of arithmetics, which honors its achievement in mathematics.

⁷⁸⁷ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 12-16.

⁷⁸⁸ John Makeham (2012, p. 123) has reached the same conclusion from a different sequence of discussions.

The part below introduces Zhang's Buddhist reinterpretation in the main text of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal."* Far from being systematic, it is limited to offering a basic introduction through some representative cases. By default, the original text is quoted from the final edition. The difference between the two editions is discussed only when necessary. Zhang's book adopts the traditional exegetical form of *shuzheng* 疏證 (annotation and elucidation). It is organized into seven chapters corresponding to the structure of the original text of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal." The first chapter, more than half of the total pages, is further divided into six sections. In his Buddhist reinterpretation of this chapter, the conceptual syncretism between the *Zhuangzi* and Buddhism is fundamentally accomplished.

Section 1 of the first chapter. The original text starts with a conversation between Nanguo Ziqi 南郭子綦 the master and Yan Cheng Ziyou 顏成子游 the disciple. The conversation first talks about the master's trance-like meditation experience and then shifts to three types of sounds, the human sounds (*renlai* 人籟), the terrestrial sounds (*dilai* 地籟), and the heavenly sounds (*tianlai* 天籟). Zhang refers to the mastery of contemplation (*chanding* 禪定, *dhyāna-samādhi*) in Buddhist meditation to explain the experience that "I [had just now] lost myself" (*wu sang wo* 吾喪我).⁷⁸⁹ He then reinterprets "blowing the myriad differences" (*chuiwan butong* 吹萬不同) of the heavenly sounds as a metaphor of the *ālaya*-consciousness. In addition, he refers to the "numinous tower" (*lingtai* 靈臺), or the "numinous storage" (*lingfu* 靈府), appearing in the miscellaneous chapter "Geng-sang Chu" 庚桑楚, to prove that the author of the *Zhuangzi* grasps well the doctrine of "consciousness-only."⁷⁹⁰ Through such argumentation, Zhang makes full use of his knowledge of Chinese linguistics as well as the Buddhist canonical works.

In Section 2, the author of the original text questions the relationship between different components of the human body, including its hundred parts (*baihai* 百骸), its nine openings (*jiuqiao* 九竅), and its six viscera (*liuzang* 六藏). "It might seem as if there would be a 'true governor' concerned in it, but we do not find any trace (of his presence and acting)." 若有真宰，而特不得其朕。⁷⁹¹ In search of the true governor (*zhenzai* 真

⁷⁸⁹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 30-31, 36-37.

⁷⁹⁰ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 39-41.

⁷⁹¹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 77.

宰), the original edition resorts to the Buddhist concept of “*ādāna*-consciousness” (*atuona shi* 阿陀那識, *ādāna-vijñāna*), the consciousness that maintains (*renchi* 任持) the faculty of the body (*shengen* 身根). According to him, the *ādāna*-consciousness is another name of the *ālaya*-consciousness.⁷⁹² The final edition, however, extends the connection with the Buddhist doctrines by referring to a phrase in the Inner Chapter “The Sign of Virtue Complete” (*Dechongfu* 德充符), “he uses his knowledge to get at his mind (*xin*), and uses his mind to get at the constant mind (*changxin*).”⁷⁹³ 以其知得其心，以其心得其常心。 For Zhang, “the mind is identical to the *ādāna*-consciousness whereas the permanent mind is identical to the *amala*-consciousness.” 心即阿陀那識，常心即菴摩羅識。⁷⁹⁴ On the one hand, the “*amala*-consciousness” (*anmoluo shi* 菴摩羅識, *amala-vijñāna*) is considered as another name of the embryo of the *tathāgata*. On the other, the true governor and the “true sovereign” (*zhenjun* 真君) are just two other names of the permanent mind. As a result, this true governor should also be reinterpreted first and foremost as the embryo of the *tathāgata*.⁷⁹⁵ While the mind (regarded as the numinous storage) is paralleled with the *ālaya*-consciousness since they both have the function of storing up elementary things,⁷⁹⁶ the permanent mind is paralleled with the embryo of the *tathāgata* because of their unchangeable property. In comparison to the original edition, the final edition develops a more in-depth analysis, in the textual context of the *Zhuangzi*, of the characteristics of the embryo of the *tathāgata* and its relationship with the *ālaya*-consciousness. Moreover, it explicitly asserts that “despite the difference in their karmic appearances, the mind and the permanent mind share the same essence.” 心與常心，業相有別，自體無異。⁷⁹⁷ Zhang attaches particular importance to his reinterpretation of these two sections by which he believes that *Zhuangzi* fully understood the fundamental ideas about the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*.

The following sections of Chapter 1 follow the same pattern. In section 3, Zhang resorts to the Yogācāra concept of “mental karmic seeds” (*zhongzi* 種子, *bīja*) to

⁷⁹² Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 39, 82.

⁷⁹³ Burton Watson, 1968, p. 69.

⁷⁹⁴ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 92.

⁷⁹⁵ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 91-93.

⁷⁹⁶ To be precise, *ālaya*-consciousness functions as a storage of the mental karmic seeds. Zhang reinterprets the notions of mind and the numinous storage accordingly.

⁷⁹⁷ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 93.

reinterprets the “predetermined mind” (*chengxin* 成心), appearing in the sentence “if a man follows the mind given him and makes it his teacher, then who can be without a teacher?” 夫隨其成心而師之，誰獨且無師乎？⁷⁹⁸ Also, he refers again to Kant’s theory of the twelve categories and Masaharu Anesaki’s *archetypes of ideas* to explain the meaning of the mental karmic seeds, as he had done around 1906.⁷⁹⁹ In section 5, at its outset, the original text presents a sequence of declines in the human recognition of ancient times. A first class held that “things have never existed” 未始有物; a second class held that “things exist but recognized no boundaries among them” 有物，而未始有封; a third class held that “there were boundaries but recognized no right and wrong” 有封，而未始有是非也; finally, the most inferior class “develops definite opinions of right and wrong [about these differentiated things]” 是非之彰.⁸⁰⁰ Zhang considers that the idea of the first class corresponds to the doctrine of “consciousness-only.” He then resorts to the Yogācāra theory of the “three natures” asserting that the degenerations are “all caused by the ‘nature of existence produced from attachment to imaginatively constructed discrimination,’ [due to which we] misconceive the ‘nature of existence arising from causes and conditions’ [and cling to things as if they were real] thus producing a variety of foolishness and illusion.” 此皆遍計所執自性迷依他起自性，生此種種愚妄。 “Nonetheless, the ‘nature of existence being perfectly accomplished’ indeed does not increase or diminish” 雖爾，圓成實性實無增減, just as the story of Zhao Wen’s playing the lute 昭文之鼓琴 reveals (based on Zhang’s reinterpretation).⁸⁰¹

Through the reinterpretation work from sections 1 to 5, Zhang systematically introduces the Yogācāra terminology and assimilates it into the theoretical framework of a native classical text. In the sixth section, however, he turns to the canonical works of other Buddhist schools to discover the abstruse ideas of *Zhuangzi* in terms of the causal relationship (*yinyuan* 因緣, *nidāna*). In *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* it is the section to which Zhang devotes the longest development. But it is also a section that Zhang hardly revised in the final edition, showing his satisfaction and confidence in his original work. To establish connections between the Buddhist view of

⁷⁹⁸ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 98, 106-107. Burton Watson, 1968, p. 38.

⁷⁹⁹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 106.

⁸⁰⁰ Burton Watson, 1968, p. 41; James Legge (2020 November 24, <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi/seal-of-virtue-complete>).

⁸⁰¹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 181-184.

the causal relationship and that of Zhuangzi, Zhang refers to a famous sentence in “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,” “Heaven and Earth were born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things are one with me.” 天地與我並生，而萬物與我為一。

⁸⁰² He resorts to a sentence in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經) to explain it, “completeness is identical to oneness, vice versa.” 一切即一，一即一切。 Zhang then refers to a sentence in the miscellaneous chapter “Imputed Words” (*Yuyan* 寓言), “the ten thousand things all come from the same seeds,⁸⁰³ and with their different forms they give place to one another.”⁸⁰⁴ 萬物皆種也，以不同形相禪。 This time, he resorts to a sentence in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (*Dacheng ru lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽經), “One seed and no-seed are of the same stamp, and one seed and all seed also; and in one seed you see all seeds, which are multiple mental seeds.”⁸⁰⁵ 應觀一種子，與非種同印。一種一切種，是名心種種。⁸⁰⁶ Zhang’s next task is to introduce, analyze, and rectify Fazang’s theory of “unlimited causation” (*wujing yuanqi* 無盡緣起), also known as the “causation of the dharma realm” (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起),⁸⁰⁷ which proposes unlimited influences and dependences of everything on all things. Zhang shows great confidence in the version rectified by him, asserting that this causal theory can be applied to the aforementioned chapters of the *Zhuangzi*.⁸⁰⁸ The discovery of Zhuangzi’s ideas about the causal relationship, along with the reinterpretation work around the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata* in the first two sections, explains why Zhang thinks that “Zhuang Zhou [Zhuangzi] investigated the cause (or origin, *yin*) to the most far-reaching degree.”

Now let us jump to the seventh (and last) chapter. The original text itself, about Zhuangzi’s butterfly dream, is short. In contrast, Zhang’s interpretation is extensive, dealing with crucial issues and concluding the whole book. The main body of his

⁸⁰² Burton Watson, 1968, p. 43.

⁸⁰³ Zhang relates *zhong* 種 to the Buddhist concept of seed. However, it should be noted that “seed” in Indian Buddhism can be interpreted as either the mental karmic seeds or the “pure seeds of permanent mind” (*zhēnxīn zhǒngzǐ* 真心種子). The first is affiliated to the doctrine of *ālaya*-consciousness and the second to that of the embryo of the *tathāgata*. See Meng Zhuo’s (2019, p. 229) annotation of this concept.

⁸⁰⁴ Burton Watson, 1968, p. 304.

⁸⁰⁵ I adopt the English translation of Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (2020 November 24, http://lirs.ru/do/lanka_eng/lanka-nondiacritical.htm) and make some modifications.

⁸⁰⁶ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 190, 227-229.

⁸⁰⁷ Honored as the third hierarch of Huayan School, Fazang is its actual founder. His theory of unlimited causation interprets seed as the pure seeds of permanent mind, thus affiliated to the doctrine of the embryo of the *tathāgata*.

⁸⁰⁸ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 228-238.

interpretation begins with regarding Zhuangzi's dream as a metaphor for Buddhist transmigration. He then puts forwards the question, by a fictional interlocutor ("somebody asks" 或云), about Zhuangzi's attitude towards transmigration, "the Buddhist teaching treats the karmic transmigration as an affliction, Zhuangsheng [Zhuangzi], in contrast, diverted himself from worries through the belief in transmigration. How to explain this contrast?" 佛法以輪回為煩惱，莊生乃以輪回遣憂，何哉？⁸⁰⁹ His response, on the one hand, admits that "examining through Zhuangzi's teaching, he indeed never expresses any aspiration for *nirvāna*" 觀莊生義，實無欣羨寂滅之情, on the other, explains that "Zhuangsheng did not divert himself from worries through the belief of transmigration, but rather wished the people to get rid of the differentiated recognition and clinging. That is why some of his words are rhetorically expedient." 莊生本不以輪轉生死遣憂，但欲人無封執，故語有機權爾。 In Zhang's eyes, the butterfly dream serves as an inviting passage for ordinary readers. Zhuangzi actually understood well that life and death (and the doctrine of transmigration) belonged to the "relative truth" (therefore had the "nature of existence arising from causes and conditions") and did not cling to it (thus avoiding the delusion relative to the "nature of existence produced from attachment to imaginatively constructed discrimination").⁸¹⁰

Now that Zhang expresses double negatives about Zhuangzi's attitude towards transmigration, how to estimate Zhuangzi's way of life and position him properly in the Buddhist tradition in terms of self-cultivation and salvation? Here we see significant differences between the two editions. In both editions, the texts of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and especially the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* are quoted to demonstrate that Zhuangzi was willing to live as a Bodhisattva-Icchantika (*pusa yichanti* 菩薩一闡提) who, out of compassion, intentionally chooses not to attain *nirvāna* until he finally delivers all beings from the karmic transmigration. However, a slight difference exists concerning Zhuangzi's level in the ten-stage schema of bodhisattva attainment, conveyed in the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra* (*Shidi jing* 十地經, *Ten Stages Sūtra*).⁸¹¹ In the original edition, Zhuangzi is considered as having attained the seventh stage "the Gone Afar" (*yuanxing di*

⁸⁰⁹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 413, 417, 433.

⁸¹⁰ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 433, 439.

⁸¹¹ The *Daśabhūmika Sūtra* is an early Mahāyāna Buddhist scripture influential in China. The sūtra also appears as the 26th chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*.

遠行地, *dūramgamā*). In the final edition, Zhuangzi's attainment is revaluated as already “beyond the Gone Afar” 遠行地後.⁸¹²

The most significant difference, however, appears at the end of the interpretation of Chapter 7 where Zhang adds, in the final edition, a long passage critically reflecting on his previous assessment of Zhuangzi. He said that “I used to write the chapter ‘Philosophical Clarification,’ [in which I] still criticize Zhuangsheng for drifting along the karmic flow and not pursuing the ultimate Buddhist enlightenment (*wushang zhengjue, anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). Now I realize that this criticism is just like the quail laughing at the great *peng*.⁸¹³ 余曩日作《明見》篇，猶以任運流轉，不求無上正覺為莊生所短。由今觀之，是誠斥鵠之笑大鵬矣。⁸¹⁴ Despite the intensified appreciation of the pre-Qin masters, “Philosophical Clarification,” as well as several other chapters of the *Disquisitions on National Heritage*, still affirm their disadvantages. Similar to the case of Xunzi (discussed in Chapter 3), Zhuangzi is criticized for “not being concerned with transcending [the mundane world]” 不務超越, hence remains a “philosopher-sage within the [mundane] world” 方內之聖哲.⁸¹⁵ The *Disquisitions on National Heritage* was written in the same period as the original edition of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* so the critical reflection on the former book can be appropriated to grasp the major transformation of Zhang’s religious and intellectual ideas during the years before the final edition of the latter book was written. Following the self-criticism at the outset of the added part, Zhang next asserts that Zhuangzi was a Bodhisattva-Icchantika who had attained the stage of the “absolute body” (*fashen* 法身, *dharmakāya*). In Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures like the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, the “reality body” is assimilated into the concept of the embryo of the *tathāgata*. The fact that Zhang promotes Zhuangzi to the complete stage of the bodhisattva hierarchy is manifested by a sentence coming just after:

As to how to thoroughly deliver all beings and migrate to the perfect land, the chapter “Free and Easy Wandering” has revealed the solution, namely, transcending the distinction between many years and a few years and that between great knowledge and

⁸¹² Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 429-431, 437.

⁸¹³ The allegory of the quail and the great *peng* appears in the chapter “Free and Easy Wandering.” By this reference, Zhang reflects on his previous underestimation of Zhuangzi out of ignorance.

⁸¹⁴ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 451.

⁸¹⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2011c, p. 774.

small knowledge, waiting for (or depending on) nothing and thus realizing the essence of the free and easy life. This is what the Buddhist doctrine of “permanence, pleasure, personality, and purity” (*chang le wo jing*) means.

若乃所以遍度群倫，偕詣極地者，《消搖游》已陳其說。離於大年小年，無有大知小知，一切無待，體自消搖，斯即常樂我淨之謂。⁸¹⁶

The four qualities of *nirvāna*, “permanence, pleasure, personality, and purity” are proposed by the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* (*Dabo niepanjing* 大般涅槃經) and several other *Mahāyāna* Buddhist scriptures, usually closely related to the doctrine of the embryo of the *tathāgata*. The connection of “Free and Easy Wandering” with this Buddhist doctrine explains why Zhang regards it, along with “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,” as two key chapters for the *Zhuangzi*.

To conclude, Chapter 7 shifts the focus from the texts of the *Zhuangzi* to its purported author, estimating Zhuangzi’s biography, character, and his way and goal of life. Nonetheless, just as for the previous chapters, Buddhism always serves as the benchmark for Zhang’s systematic reinterpretation. As a result, Zhuangzi is portrayed as a figure of complete attainment and universal compassion, which can be seen as an act of “canonization” in the context of the Buddhist superiority in not only theoretical doctrines but also genealogy and hagiography. The transformation of the image of Zhuangzi is crucial to understanding Zhang’s return to the religious and scholarly tradition of his homeland. It also implies Zhang’s shifting ideas about his role in the world, to be later discussed.

* Zhang Taiyan’s Buddhist syncretism *

This section sets out to elucidate Zhang’s syncretic ideas about Buddhist theories, history, and ethics. Concerning Zhang’s return to the Chinese religious and scholarly traditions, previous researches, as presented in the introduction to this chapter, mainly emphasized Zhang’s motifs to reevaluate the indigenous teachings and discussed how Zhang carried out syncretic work between the Buddhist and Daoist teachings. Fully

⁸¹⁶ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 455.

acknowledging the importance of this approach, my study, in contrast, focuses on a relatively neglected aspect of Zhang’s Buddhist syncretism and its implications for his return. Already present at the outset of Zhang’s Buddhist commitment, I would like to argue, this syncretic tendency contributed to his Buddhist reinterpretation of the *Zhuangzi* and hence the foundation of his *Qiwu* philosophy. Besides, it reinforced itself in the meantime.

By Buddhist syncretism, I mean the attempt to merge different Buddhist doctrines, schools, and trends of thought, thus asserting an underlying unity. Conventionally, Zhang is considered to be an adherent of Yogācāra Buddhism, as is demonstrated by his own words. In the 1906 speech, he praises the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness-only as superior in theory. In interpreting the title of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,” he claims that this is the indigenous text that best matches the Yogācāra doctrines. Nonetheless, far from being a Yogācāra fundamentalist, Zhang held a rather inclusive attitude towards the diversity not just within Buddhism but also among the Indian religious schools. Furthermore, he had been particularly influenced by the doctrine of the embryo of the *tathāgata* and more and more readjusted his Buddhist theory favoring this doctrine.

As a brief introduction to terminology and history, the embryo of the *tathāgata* (*tathāgata-garbha*) means in the first place “the inherent capacity of humans (and sometimes other sentient beings) to achieve Buddhahood.” Over time, its meaning expanded and came to signify “the original pristine pure ontological Buddha-ness intrinsic in all things, a nature that is obscured or covered over by defilements.”⁸¹⁷ In contrast to Yogācāra Buddhism, Tathāgata-garbha Buddhism, if I may use this term for convenience, should not be regarded as a coherent school but rather a diffused and penetrating trend of religious thought. Incorporated in a variety of Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures such as the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*,⁸¹⁸ this doctrinal trend occupied a significant position in Sinitic traditions of Buddhism following the translation of these canonical works into

⁸¹⁷ John Makeham, 2012, p. 122; based on Dan Lusthaus’s article “Buddhist Philosophy, Chinese” (retrieved 20 April 2008).

⁸¹⁸ Besides these scriptures, the doctrine of the embryo of the *tathāgata* also penetrated the teachings of Yogācāra school. Shi Yinshun, 2011, pp. 165-209.

Chinese.⁸¹⁹ Yogācāra Buddhism, in contrast, had very limited influence in ancient China despite the major contribution of Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) as a translator of Yogācāra scriptures and the founder of a Buddhist school dedicated to transmitting its teachings. It was not until the late Qing, following the Buddhist revival among lay Buddhist elites and political reformists, that Yogācāra Buddhism was promoted due to its theoretical profoundness. In the Republican period, Yogācāra Buddhism served as a central object of Buddhist studies in the newly formed discipline of philosophy.⁸²⁰ Moreover, the influential lay Buddhist scholar Ouyang Jingwu triggered debates within the Chinese Buddhist community for his controversial claim that Yogācāra Buddhism alone conveyed the ultimate teachings of the Buddha as well as his severe critiques of Sinitic Buddhist schools. The main figure confronting to Ouyang's Yogācāra fundamentalism was the reformist monk Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947), who maintained the inclusivity of the Buddhist teachings in China.

The above contextual background helps us to better position Zhang's syncretism between Yogācāra Buddhism and Tathāgata-garba Buddhism (and other Buddhist traditions). My detailed investigation now follows, divided into four parts respectively on history, scripture, doctrine, and ethics.

First, Zhang's syncretic view on Indian Buddhist history, which is extensively expressed in his essay "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism." The tenet of this essay lies in defending Mahāyāna Buddhism against the criticism that denies it to have authentically transmitted Buddha Śākyamuni's teachings (*dacheng feifo shuo* 大乘非佛說). Having existed for a long time in ancient India between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhists, this controversy has resonances in contemporary times. According to Zhang's presentation at the outset of the essay, the Hīnayāna Buddhist scriptures, mainly produced and spread in the south of India and later inherited by Theravāda Buddhism, were all written in Pāli. The Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures, produced and spread in the north (of India), in contrast, were written in Sanskrit. Some contemporaries, therefore, concluded that Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged later than Hīnayāna Buddhism and should not be treated as the

⁸¹⁹ To have comprehensive knowledge of the relationship between Yogācāra Buddhism and Tathāgata-garba Buddhism as well as the influence of the latter on the Sinitic traditions of Buddhism, see Zhou Guihua, 2006.

⁸²⁰ Besides John Makeham's study of Zhang Taiyan and Yogācāra Buddhism, see, in the same book, Thierry Meynard's (2012, pp. 187-216) article.

legitimate inheritor of Śākyamuni's teachings.⁸²¹

Zhang's essay mainly aims at the critical historical studies of Western Indology and Buddhology on the origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism, as demonstrated by "The Principle of Education Should be founded upon Patriotism and Individual Awareness," one of his essays published in the *Vernacular Magazine of Education* in 1910. Approving of European scholars who founded their Buddhist studies on linguistics (Sanskrit) and history (Buddhist hagiography), this essay points out their limited access to primary sources, neglecting especially Mahāyāna texts. Zhang then criticizes those who blindly follow the European scholarly ideas that downgrade the Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures.⁸²² Presumably, his criticism alludes to the Meiji Japanese Buddhist scholars represented by Murakami Senshō 村上專精 (1851-1929) and Anesaki Masaharu who massively introduced the scientific approach and results of their Western colleagues. Although none of the names is mentioned, the Japanese intelligentsia indeed is the main target of the essay, particularly its scholarship of Buddhism and the Chinese National Essence. As another piece of evidence, Zhang, in "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism," refers to Tokiwa Daijō's 常盤大定 (1870-1945) treatise on Aśvaghoṣa, a great Sanskrit poet and dramatist, also conventionally considered as one of the early founders of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Actively engaged in debates of Buddhist studies, Tokiwa Daijō held a more conventional stance towards the relationship between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism. He reveals in the treatise, according to Zhang's quotation, four similar aspects between the two Buddhist traditions and proposes a five-stage hypothetical theory about the production of the Indian Buddhist scriptures.⁸²³

Compared to Zhang's defense of the legitimacy of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its superiority over Hīnayāna Buddhism, more inspiring and more related to the current investigation is the unconventional narrative Zhang elaborates about the relationship between Buddha Śākyamuni, his disciples, Mahāyāna Buddhist masters, and the *waidao* 外道 (heretics), i.e. the Buddhist stigmatizing term for the Āstika and Nāstika schools (*yindu liupai zhengtongpai zhexue* 印度六派正統派哲學). Referring extensively to both

⁸²¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 494.

⁸²² Zhang Taiyan, 2001, pp. 92-93.

⁸²³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 498-501.

Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna texts, Zhang asserts that during the time of Buddha Śākyamuni there existed superior *waidao* masters sharing a common religious context with the Buddhist founder. For the doctrinal issue on which the two reached a consensus, the *waidao* masters, Zhang argues, should not be dismissed but rather regarded as sage bodhisattvas. The disciples who served Buddha Śākyamuni in person are depicted as sectarians who, caused by their allegiance to Śākyamuni, refused to acknowledge the superior aspects of *waidao* teachings. The Mahāyāna masters, in contrast, were ready to communicate with and learn from the *waidao* masters, following Śākyamuni's example. To explain the broad-mindedness of these masters, Zhang, based on Buddhist hagiography and mythology, points out that Mahāyāna masters like Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna (Longshu 龍樹, c.150-c.250CE) had been affiliated to a *waidao* tradition before converting to Buddhism, and even the mythical figures like Maitreya (Mile 彌勒) and Mañjuśrī (Wenshu 文殊) had been incarnated as *waidao* masters. Finally, Zhang asserts that a large proportion of Buddha Śākyamuni's teachings were preserved by both monks and lay Buddhists through oral or written transmission, most of which were not included in the discourse collection (*Sūtra Piṭaka*) based on Ānanda's (Anan 阿難, 5th-4th century BCE) recitations. It is reasonable, in his eyes, that the gradual reappearance of such unauthorized records in later generations resulted in the doctrinal divergence between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Buddhism.⁸²⁴

Probably motivated to reinforce this aforementioned unconventional narrative, Zhang next turns to the pre-Qin history of China, one of his core subjects, proposing a parallel historical picture:

Referring to parallel historical facts in ancient China, Confucius' primary ideas were recorded in the *Analects* (*Lunyu*). Nonetheless, many supplementary records [of Confucius' ideas] existed in texts like the *Biography of the Book of Odes* (*Shizhuan*) and the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*). Confucius' ideas were also recorded by Zhuangzhou and Han Feizi, some of which are totally distinguished from those recorded by Confucians [or Confucius' disciples]. Buddha Śākyamuni's doctrines were recorded in the *waidao* scriptures in the same way as Zhuangzhou and Han Feizi's records of Confucius' ideas. The pure (or dogmatic) Confucians definitely would not approve of the authenticity and righteousness

⁸²⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 502-506.

of Zhuangzhou and Han Feizi's records. Correspondingly, the Hīnayāna masters would not approve of the records in the *waidao* scriptures. The broad-minded scholars, in contrast, know that Confucius and Laozi derived from the same origin, just like Buddha Śākyamuni having paid visits to recluse sages like Ārāḍa Kālāpa and Uddaka Rāmaputta shortly after he became a monk. Buddha Śākyamuni and the *waidao* masters associated with each other, similarly is the relationship between Confucius and Zhuangzhou and Han Feizi. Therefore, [contrary to the conventional understanding,] the ideas recorded in the outsiders' texts can be treated as superior ones. The viewpoints of the resilient (or thorough) Confucians and the Mahāyāna masters thus correspond with each other.

以此土成事例之，孔父緒言，著在《論語》，而《詩傳》、《禮記》，旁出者多。乃至莊周、韓非，錄其故言，或與儒家絕異。夫外道經中之錄佛語，亦猶莊周、韓非之記孔說也。若在純儒，必不信此為諦實，此為正道，亦猶小乘諸師之見也。然達者則知孔、老一原，與佛初出家時，嘗訪阿羅邏、鬱陀羅諸仙同例。佛與外道，互有通途，孔與莊、韓，亦非隔絕。故錄在彼書者，轉可信為勝義。通儒大乘所見，亦相符矣。⁸²⁵⁸²⁶

In this dense and inspiring passage, Zhang maintains the authenticity of the scriptures as well as hagiography and mythology of Mahāyāna Buddhism, thus reaffirming the superiority of Mahāyāna over Hīnayāna. In this respect, he is in line with the Sinitic traditions of Buddhism. His unreserved syncretism of Mahāyāna Buddhism and the *waidao*, however, is definitely provocative in the eyes of conventional Buddhists like Yang Wenhui, as we have seen in Chapter 4. Besides, this passage establishes an analogy between the Buddhist and Confucian genealogies in their early stage, which reminds us of Liang Qichao's 1899 proposal which compares the relationship between Xunzi and Mencius and that between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, discussed in Chapter 1. It offers another good example of how Zhang eventually concedes to a methodology that he used to reject. Despite his unconventional ideas and the concession, Zhang defends the authenticity of the Old-Text classics, targeted by the New-Text scholars, in this new context. As early as in "Impartial Discourse (part 3)," a chapter of *Book of Urgency (first edition)*, Zhang had

⁸²⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 506.

⁸²⁶ In the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* (Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 33), we can find a section summarizing the quoted passage as well as the content before it in "On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism."

already criticized the contemporary studies (both Western and native) that questioned the conventional dating of Mahāyāna scriptures as well as the authenticity of Old-Text classics only based on the difference in writing systems (see Chapter 1). Though not explicit, this conservative scholarly stance is reaffirmed in “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism.”⁸²⁷

Corresponding to the assimilation of the *waidao* into Mahāyāna Buddhism we see that of Zhuangzi, into the genealogy of Confucius’ teachings. This is made possible by degrading the importance of Confucius’ disciples, followed by depreciating the *Analects*, a text these disciples compiled, as merely conveying the master’s elementary ideas. On the one hand, Zhang regards Zhuangzi as a Confucian to the same extent as a Daoist. On the other, he considers Confucius, along with his beloved disciple Yan Hui 顏回 (c.521-481BC), as having grasped the superior doctrine of “non-self” just as Zhuangzi and the Buddhist master did.⁸²⁸ Thus, Zhang extends his Buddhist reinterpretation from the pre-Qin Daoist texts and figures to the pre-Qin Confucian ones. Put forward first in the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, this tendency was significantly developed in the 1920s. While acknowledging Zhang’s gradual drift of focus from Indian Buddhism to indigenous teachings, we should also see that this tendency is permitted and promoted by the developed syncretism both within and beyond his Buddhist thought, which blurs the boundaries of different teachings leaving more space for innovative interpretation.

Second, Zhang’s syncretic view of the Indian Buddhist scriptures, as revealed in “On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.” As one of the two appendices of “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism,” this essay defends the authenticity of a canonical treatise important in the Sinitic traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism through both philological and doctrinal argumentation;⁸²⁹ it thus contributes to maintaining the legitimacy of Mahāyāna Buddhism in general. Similar to the rejection of Mahāyāna Buddhism as authentically transmitted Buddha Śākyamuni’s teachings, the controversy in question has its roots in the Sui 隋朝 (581-605) and Tang dynasties, the crucial times of the Chinese translation of Indian Buddhist scriptures, and receives constant resonance in

⁸²⁷ Despite the continuity, there exists a contextual difference between the two essays. In “Impartial Discourse (part 3),” Zhang’s interlocutors were probably the missionaries who adopted the Western academic results of Indian Buddhism. At the time, he had not yet been informed of the scholarly disputes within Japanese intelligentsia. Chen Jidong, 2019a, p. 212.

⁸²⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 1997a, p. 35.

⁸²⁹ To grasp the importance of this scripture to Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism, see e.g. Shi Yinshun, 2010, pp. 7-15.

the age of Zhang's life. In Meiji Japan, the debates around the authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* constituted the most dramatic scene in critically investigating the origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Without explicitly referring to his opponents, Zhang's essay directed at the Japanese scholars who judged the text as a Buddhist Apocrypha made up by an anonymous Chinese author instead of created by Aśvaghoṣa.⁸³⁰

The *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* occupies an important position not only in the Westernized Buddhist studies of Meiji Japan but also in Zhang's Buddhist thought. Chapter 1 provided a quotation of the 1897 entry of his *Chronological Autobiography*, the first time that Buddhism is mentioned in this book. In contrast to his indifference towards other Buddhist canonical works, Zhang felt enlightened at the first reading of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and frequently cited it. However, during his three-year imprisonment, what Zhang enthusiastically read were the Yogācāra scriptures which provided him with the doctrinal and terminological repertoire to establish a new religion. The once highly appreciated *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, in contrast, was rarely referred to during 1906-1907. No evidence suggests that it had ever played a role in turning him into a Buddhist believer. "On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*," though published modestly and having received little immediate echo, marks a turning point in the importance of this scripture to Zhang's Buddhist thought. In *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" (original edition)*, the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* has already become one of the most frequently cited Buddhist scriptures.⁸³¹ In the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, its importance is more explicitly manifested by the fact that the first section of the book discusses the metaphor of wave and water which the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* uses to grasp the relationship between the "ignorance" (*wuming* 無明, *avidyā*) and suchness. In this section, Zhang proposes a more refined reinterpretation regarding the original appropriation of the metaphor, which sets the keynote for the whole book.⁸³² Indeed, the increasing influence of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* from 1908 reflects on the

⁸³⁰ For a general introduction to Zhang's essay and its Japanese context, see Chen Jidong, 2019b, pp. 427-433.

⁸³¹ For some instances, see Meng Zhuo, pp. 77-78, 85, 243, 430.

⁸³² Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 3.

rising importance of *Tathāgata-garba* Buddhism relative to *Yogācāra* Buddhism in Zhang's Buddhist thought. The importance of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* in Zhang's Buddhist theory has been touched on in recent research,⁸³³ nonetheless, the role it played in facilitating his return to indigenous teachings has rarely been discussed.⁸³⁴

Now that I have presented the context of "On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*" and the position of the scripture in Zhang's Buddhist thought, let's turn to the essay itself. The first half of the text defends the scripture through philological argumentation. Against his skeptical opponents, he explains why the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* was never ascribed as one of Aśvaghoṣa's treatises in Buddhist historiography and hagiography. He then adopts the tactic of active defense, pointing out the inconsistency of the attackers who approved of the authenticity of another purported work of Aśvaghoṣa without applying the same critical standard to it. Titled "Sūtra on Nirgrantha-putra Consulting about the Doctrine of Non-self" (*Niqianzi wen wuwo yi jing* 尼乾子問無我義經), this scripture was translated into Chinese as late as the Song dynasty and was resting on a weaker basis to prove its authenticity.⁸³⁵

The doctrinal argumentation in the second half of the text is directly related to my study of Zhang's Buddhist syncretism. The attackers held the view that the doctrine of the embryo of the *tathāgata* and that of non-self are incompatible. The former doctrine is conveyed in the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* whereas the latter is conveyed in the *Sūtra on Nirgrantha-putra Consulting about the Doctrine of Non-Self*. Zhang disapproves of this viewpoint and proposes to the contrary that Aśvaghoṣa never truly accepted the doctrine of non-self but instead develops that of the embryo of the *tathāgata* to surpass it. "The doctrine that Aśvaghoṣa first embraced was similar to *puruṣa* (*shenwo*, the abstract essence of the self). It is unlikely that, after converting to Buddhism, he thoroughly abandoned his previous ideas. He established the doctrine of the causation of the embryo of the *tathāgata* through the comparison between the doctrine of the self and non-self." 馬鳴初執，本與神我相類，其後學佛必非盡捨故見，正以有我、無我相較，

⁸³³ See e.g. Cai Zhidong, 2013, p. 31.

⁸³⁴ John Makeham (2018) revealed a key conceptual structure that is common in the Song neo-Confucians' writings and the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. Regretfully, he did not relate this discovery to Zhang's return to indigenous teachings.

⁸³⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 512.

而立如來藏緣起之說。⁸³⁶ To be noted, *puruṣa* is a concept shared by multiple Indian religious traditions including Sāṃkhya (*shulun* 數論), one of the six āstika schools of Hindu philosophy, to which Aśvaghoṣa was affiliated in his early career. Sāṃkhya is also the *waidao* school that Zhang appreciates the most. In “Review of Tsumaki Chokuryō’s *On Psyche*” (*Du linghun lun* 讀《靈魂論》), an essay published in No. 566 of *Japan and Japanese* on September 15, 1911, Zhang asserts that “apart from Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Buddhism, Sāṃkhya is the superior teaching in the world.” 世無大小乘教，《數論》即第一矣。⁸³⁷

Similar but more revealing ideas are expressed in “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism” revealing stronger syncretic tendencies:

According to the historical materials available today, Buddha Śākyamuni interacted most frequently with the Sāṃkhya masters in his lifetime. Now that the common people all assumed the existence of the self, if Śākyamuni established only the doctrine of non-self thus negating the existence of the self, his teaching would run against the conventional knowledge. Moreover, without establishing the *ālaya*-consciousness, how could he convince the Sāṃkhya masters during the debates? Therefore, I hold the view that the doctrines of the embryo of the *tathāgata* and the *ālaya*-consciousness were both approved of by Buddha Śākyamuni.

今尋佛在世時，與數論師出入最數。若專立無我者，現見世人皆證有我，而說為無，即有世間相違之過。非建立藏識，其能服數論之心耶？故知如來藏、阿賴耶識諸宗，原惟佛說也。⁸³⁸

The arresting syncretism of this passage can be analyzed in four aspects. Firstly, “On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*” explains the origin of the doctrine of the embryo of the *tathāgata* by the comparison between the doctrine of the self and non-self and the debates between the once Sāṃkhya master Aśvaghoṣa and his Hīnayāna master Puṇyayaśas (Funashe 富那奢). Here, the unconventional viewpoint concerning the origin of the doctrine of the embryo of the *tathāgata* is extended to explain the origin of the doctrine of the *ālaya*-consciousness. Secondly, here, the origins of the two

⁸³⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 513.

⁸³⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014c, p. 368.

⁸³⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 509.

doctrines were traced back to Śākyamuni thus guaranteeing the consistency between the Buddhist founder and Mahāyāna masters like Aśvaghoṣa. Thirdly, this passage holds an ambiguous attitude towards the dispute between the doctrines of non-self and self. On the one hand, it acknowledges that non-self is one of the principal doctrines that Śākyamuni preached. On the other, what it implicitly favors are the doctrines of the embryo of the *tathāgata* and the *ālaya*-consciousness even though the two concepts were put forward to convince the opponents as well as the common people. Fourthly, in Zhang's narrative, the *waidao* schools, especially Sāṃkhya, played a crucial role in the religious career of both Śākyamuni and Aśvaghoṣa. As a result of such strong syncretic orientation, the boundaries and hierarchy of the conventional Buddhist knowledge system are dissolved in favor of more creative (or arbitrary according to one's perspective) theoretical work largely based on Tathāgata-garbha Buddhism.

Third, Zhang's doctrinal syncretism as represented by the combination of the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*. In introducing and discussing *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism,” and “On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*,” I have frequently referred to Tathāgata-garbha Buddhism, its concept, scriptures, and history as well as its importance to Zhang's Buddhist thought. This part undertakes a more systematic analysis of how Zhang syncretizes Yogācāra and Tathāgata-garbha Buddhism through the combination of the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*. Zhang's assertions on these two concepts largely lay the ontological basis of Zhang's Buddhist theory.⁸³⁹ Throughout Zhang's Buddhist writings from 1906 to 1916, we see not only the growing importance of the latter concept but also a corresponding transformation of the ontological framework. The conceptual transformation of this fundamental aspect affects other aspects of Zhang's Buddhist thought about phenomenological causality, ethics, the nature of things and beings (or the concept of the self), the relationship between Buddhism and the indigenous Chinese teachings, etc. To demonstrate this influence, this part offers a

⁸³⁹ In this dissertation, I remain cautious about borrowing terminology from Western philosophy to translate or express Zhang's Buddhist ideas. Nonetheless, I agree with John Makeham (2012, p. 108) in using “ontology” to designate Zhang's theoretical appropriation of Yogācāra concepts like the three natures and the *ālaya*-consciousness. My reservation is that he failed to realize the importance of Tathāgata-garbha doctrines at the ontological level of Zhang's Buddhist thought.

supplementary analysis about Zhang's approval of the absolute self (the notion of a single transcendental self in contrast to the multiple delusional selves) following the transformation of his ontology.

As early as 1906-1907 when Zhang set out to establish an innovative Buddhist theory, the two concepts were already combined as dual forms of a single transcendental entity, as revealed in “On the Non-Self of Human Beings.” “The *ālaya*-consciousness is also named the embryo of the *tathāgata*. They are differentiated as two concepts as the former is polluted whereas the latter is pure. Referring to a metaphor to show their genuine relationship, the one is like the gold and the other the [golden] ring. There is no [substantial] difference between them, both should not be confused with the prevalent concept of the soul.” 即此阿賴耶識，亦名如來藏。特以清淨雜染之分，異其名相。據實言之，正猶金與指環，兩無差別，而又不可與世俗言靈魂者並為一談。⁸⁴⁰ Emerging at the early stage of Zhang's theoretical work, the ontological syncretism was made possible by misinterpreting the nature of the *ālaya*-consciousness. According to “On Establishing Religion,” “all sentient beings share the same *tathātā* (or embryo of the *tathāgata*) and the same *ālaya*-consciousness. Therefore, this [entity of] consciousness is not limited to a particular living body but rather the only one of its kind and ubiquitous throughout all sentient beings.” 一切眾生，同此真如，同此阿賴耶識。是故此識非局自體，普遍眾生，唯一不二。⁸⁴¹ While the embryo of the *tathāgata* is truly a shared single entity, the *ālaya*-consciousness, based on the orthodox Yogācāra doctrine, is the base-consciousness of every particular sentient being and hence is multiple instead of single.⁸⁴² Due to this misinterpretation, the two concepts are described as the two opposite sides of one coin.

Despite the establishment of conceptual syncretism, the importance of the two concepts in Zhang's early Buddhist writings is far from equivalent. The *ālaya*-consciousness is one of Zhang's central concepts; this is not only guaranteed by its fundamental position in Yogācāra doctrines but also reinforced by its value in communicating with Western epistemology. The embryo of the *tathāgata*, in contrast, appears in limited occasions, usually referred to along with the *ālaya*-consciousness and as

⁸⁴⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 450.

⁸⁴¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 436.

⁸⁴² Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying, 1989, pp. 376-377.

the latter's opposite form. In this early stage, the *ālaya*-consciousness is interpreted as a real entity distinguished from delusional concepts such as soul, God, and *puruṣa*, constructed due to the mistake of “erroneous imputation.” He asserts in “On Establishing Religion” that “the *ālaya*-consciousness is real whereas the self (or self-consciousness) is delusional. It is the most erroneous view to cling to this delusional self as the transcendental entity.” 此識是真，此我是幻，執此幻者以為本體，是第一倒見也。⁸⁴³ In other words, the central position of the *ālaya*-consciousness is accompanied by an emphasis on the doctrine of non-self. On the other side, Zhang was not yet ready to approve of the absolute self during this period, as revealed by an auto-commentary in “Letter in Reply to Tiezheng.” “The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* establishes [the doctrine of absolute] self, which might have something in common with the embryo of the *tathāgata* and the *ādāna*-consciousness, established in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, the *Mahāyāna Ghanavyūha Sūtra*, and the *Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra*, but which is distinguished from the ‘transcendental emptiness’ of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.” 《涅槃》立我，與《楞伽》、《密嚴》、《瑜伽》立如來藏及阿陀那識者，或可相通，與《般若》真空相遠。⁸⁴⁴ Evidently, Zhang’s attitude towards the concept of an absolute self was still ambiguous at the time.

From 1908, the situation began to change towards a growing syncretic tendency favoring *Tathāgata-garbha* Buddhism. To trace this constant change, let us first review the outset of “On the Non-Self of Human Beings” where Zhang pays tribute to Asaṅga (Wuzhuo 無著, fl. 4th century C.E.), traditionally considered as the main founder of Yogācāra Buddhism, honoring him as his “ancient master” (*xianshi* 先師).⁸⁴⁵ Moreover, the argumentative style of this essay shows strong imprints that the intensive reading of Yogācāra scriptures in jail had left on his mind. In “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism” and “On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*,” however, Zhang switches his focus to the figures and scriptures related to the early stage of Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially Aśvaghoṣa and the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. The *waidao* background of Aśvaghoṣa is highlighted which implicitly promotes the position of Zhuangzi in the parallel Chinese historical context. The subtle turn of 1908 foreshadows

⁸⁴³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 426-427.

⁸⁴⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 387.

⁸⁴⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 441.

the deliberate syncretic efforts and the increasing proportion of references to Tathāgata-garbha Buddhist scriptures in *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal.”* Moreover, by comparing Section 2 of Chapter 1 of the two editions, I have shown the ever-increasing emphasis on Tathāgata-garbha concepts.

Corresponding to the shift of interest from Yogācāra Buddhism to Tathāgata-garbha Buddhism, we see the transformation of the ontological framework to grasp the relationship between the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*. In 1906-1907, what Zhang resorts to is the framework of the “three natures.” The *ālaya*-consciousness is settled within the category of the “nature of existence arising from causes and conditions” whereas the embryo of the *tathāgata* is considered as possessing the “nature of existence being perfectly accomplished.”⁸⁴⁶ In later stages, however, the ontological framework of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* gradually prevails. This scripture proposes an idealist dichotomy to grasp all states of existence, the one is the “aspect of mind in terms of the absolute (or suchness, *tathātā*)” (*xin zhenru men* 心真如門), the other is the “aspect of mind in terms of phenomena (or birth and death, *samsāra*)” (*xin shengmie men* 心生滅門), which are mutually inclusive. The embryo of the *tathāgata* is arranged in the first aspect whereas the *ālaya*-consciousness, arranged in the second, is responsible for the state of non-enlightenment (or “ignorance”).⁸⁴⁷ It is based on this framework that Zhang speculates on the metaphor of wave and water at the outset of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*. This is also the case for Section 2 of Chapter 1 of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* especially the final edition.⁸⁴⁸ This new ontological framework, though it did not completely replace that of the three natures, considerably facilitates Zhang’s syncretic reinterpretation of the *Zhuangzi*.

Meanwhile, Zhang became more and more concerned with approving the absolute self without running against the doctrine of non-self, the first efforts of which appeared in “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism” and “On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.” The most revealing text nonetheless comes from Section 7 of the

⁸⁴⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 436.

⁸⁴⁷ For the introduction of the original scripture, I refer to Shi Yinshun’s (2010, pp. 40, 46, 57, 81) annotation and adopt Yoshito S. Hakedas’s English translation (2020 November 24, http://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Translations/Awakening_of_faith.html).

⁸⁴⁸ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 95-96.

Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber:

Buddhist teachings do preach the doctrine of non-self, it nonetheless points to the phenomenal birth and death rooted in the *ālaya*-consciousness. The embryo of the *tathāgata*, of an immutable nature, is identical to the Buddha-nature and the absolute self. It is real, universal, and permanent. The sentient beings, incapable of the self-verification [through meditative practice], merely cling to the self subject to phenomenal birth and death. How can they find the true self by this means? Only after achieving the Buddha-fruition and that the Buddha-nature shows itself, would [the absolute self, along with the four qualities of *nirvāṇa*, i.e.] permanence, pleasure, personality, and purity, be accomplished. This is the first and foremost doctrine preached in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. It is through realizing the non-self that the absolute self shows itself.

佛法雖稱無我，祇就藏識生滅說耳。其如來藏自性不變即是佛性，即是真我，是實是徧是常。而眾生未能自證，徒以生滅者為我，我豈可得邪？及得佛果，佛性顯見，即為常樂我淨，此則《涅槃經》中所說第一義諦。要知無我，真我乃見。⁸⁴⁹

This passage perfectly demonstrates how the growing influence of *Tathāgata-garba* Buddhism, along with the new ontological framework based on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, result in Zhang's approval of the absolute self. This approval, furthermore, is linked with the doctrine of permanence, pleasure, personality, and purity. This doctrine, in turn, is referred to at the end of Chapter 7 of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"* (*final edition*) to reinterpret the notion of "Free and Easy Wandering." As presented above, the added content at the end constitutes one of the major developments of the final edition in comparison to the original one. Through the analysis of this quotation, we can clearly see how the development of syncretic tendencies in Zhang's Buddhist thought contributes to his syncretic work regarding Buddhism and the *Zhuangzi*.

Fourth, Zhang's ethical syncretism that unites *Mahāyāna* Buddhism and indigenous teachings. In Chapter 7 of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal,"* Zhang describes *Zhuangzi* as a Bodhisattva-Icchantika aspiring to achieve "inner moral perfection" and "outer political kingliness,"⁸⁵⁰ thus redefining his personality in Buddhist and Confucian terms. What makes this ethical syncretism possible? The first part discusses

⁸⁴⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 6.

⁸⁵⁰ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 437, 439.

the parallel historical picture of the relationship between the genealogy of Śākyamuni's teachings and the *waidao* on the one side, and that between the genealogy of Confucius' teachings and Zhuangzi on the other. This helps to understand how Zhang assimilates Zhuangzi into Confucianism. Here in the fourth part, my task consists in investigating Zhang's views on the Buddhist compassion and salvation of all sentient beings and how, based on such views, he redefines Zhuangzi, along with some other indigenous masters, as philosopher-sages with transcendental pursuit of morality.

As soon as his Buddhist commitment was established, Zhang stressed the salvation of all beings as the ultimate goal. "On Separating the Universal and Particular of Evolution," for example, distinguishes two types of misanthropic doctrine. The one considers leaving the mundane world as desirable and is only concerned with personal salvation. The other, in contrast, seeks a pure realm for all sentient beings and chooses to stay in the mundane world serving the salvation of others.⁸⁵¹ This distinction, though appearing in the context of dialoguing with Eduard von Hartmann and other Western philosophers, is a clear reaffirmation of the traditional distinction between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna in mainstream Sinitic Buddhism. This stance, established as early as in "Clarification of Being Alone" (written before 1900), was maintained throughout Zhang's life even during the period when he got caught up in pessimism and cynicism about human nature. That is what we have seen in "On the Five Negations" which await the advent of "superhuman masters" preaching the doctrine of non-creation for all the suffering beings.

Zhang's attachment to universal compassion and salvation is reinforced by two viewpoints which seem problematic according to contemporary Buddhist studies. The first is his misinterpretation of the *ālaya*-consciousness as a shared single entity rather than particular and multiple ones. The second is his problematic distinction between the material world (*qi shijian* 器世間) and the world of sentient beings (*youqing shijian* 有情世間).⁸⁵² Based on the first viewpoint, Zhang claims that everyone has the responsibility to save all other sentient beings of unlimited *kalpa* (*jie* 劫, a cosmic time scale of the growth and

⁸⁵¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 412-413.

⁸⁵² According to Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying (1989, pp. 382-383), conventionally, the world of sentient beings is the direct reward (*zhengbao* 正報) whereas the material world is the material environment on which a sentient being depends (*yibao* 依報), both resulting from former karma. It is impossible to separate the two.

decay of a universe) since they share a common *ālaya*-consciousness and embryo of the *tathāgata*. The second viewpoint, largely inferred from the first, endorses an ethics of mutual assistance, as revealed by the metaphor of the leaking boat in “On Establishing Religion.” This metaphor explains that what is to be detested and rejected is the leaking boat, not the other passengers on the boat, with whom we should collaborate to together survive the shipwreck. Here the leaking boat signifies the material world and the passengers signify the sentient beings.⁸⁵³ The deviated ideas above propose a cosmology of the great unity of all beings.⁸⁵⁴ Though founded on Zhang’s syncretism between Yogācāra and Tathāgata-garbhā Buddhism, they are compatible with many indigenous ideas, surely including “the ten thousand things are one with me” in Zhuangzi’s “Discussion on Making All Things Equal.”

Next, we need to pay enough attention to Zhang’s increasing approval of the absolute self. As discussed above, this concept is closely related to the doctrine of “permanence, pleasure, personality, and purity,” preached notably in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, which violates the fundamental doctrines of Hīnayāna Buddhism. For the latter, “all compounded things are impermanent; all emotions are painful; all phenomena are without inherent existence” 諸行無常，諸受皆苦，諸法無我, as verified by the first three of Four Dharma Seals (*sifayin* 四法印, *caturmudrā*). The former doctrine, however, put forwards upside-down views asserting that “permanence, pleasure, personality, and purity,” though not accessible now, are innate qualities of *nirvāṇa*, thus offering a form of soteriology more appealing to lay Buddhists and which encourages a this-worldly reorientation of religious ethics.

In Zhang’s case, this doctrine means a lot for his syncretic work between Buddhism and the *Zhuangzi*. On the one hand, it has an affinity with the *waidao* concept of *puruṣa*, so it contributes to an unconventional explanation of the origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism through its connections with the *waidao*. On the other hand, more importantly, it allows Zhang to accomplish a Buddhist understanding of “Free and Easy Wandering.” This connection, asserted at the end of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things*

⁸⁵³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 436-437.

⁸⁵⁴ This cosmology of Zhang has been discussed by various researchers. See e.g. Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, pp. 48-52; Chang Hao, 1988, p. 195.

Equal" (final edition) and in Section 54 of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*,⁸⁵⁵ lays the theoretical foundation for promoting Zhuangzi as a salvationist Bodhisattva-Icchantika who offers a solution to "thoroughly deliver all beings and migrate to the perfect land" 遍度群倫，偕詣極地. Despite the rhetoric of "perfect land," the path that Zhuangzi reveals emphasizes "non-dependence" on the phenomenal world (of birth and death) rather than breaking away from it,⁸⁵⁶ that is why he "does not aspire to attain *nirvāṇa* nor detest the course of transmigration" 岳希圓寂而惡流轉哉.⁸⁵⁷ Corresponding to the approval of the absolute self and its influence on reinterpreting the *Zhuangzi*, Zhang became more empathetic to the sentient beings (their sufferings and ignorance) and more tolerant towards the world where they coexist whereas his once strong misanthropic impulsion and cynicism gradually faded. This mental change reveals a major transformation from the doctrine of non-creation to the *Qiwu* philosophy, to be analyzed later.

We have seen above how, facilitated by the Tathāgata-garba concept of the absolute self, Zhang redefines Zhuangzi as a Bodhisattva-Icchantika taking on the task of universal salvation. Now let's turn to his more comprehensive endeavors that combine indigenous philosopher-sages with Indian Bodhisattva figures. At the outset of Section 99 of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, Zhang quotes Lu Jiuyuan's 陸九淵 (1139-1193) thesis that "the sages of the eastern and western seas share the same mind and approve of the same principle." 東海西海聖人，此心同，此理同。 He reaffirms this thesis since, in his eyes, all sages share the calling of achieving the transcendental truth and delivering sentient beings from sufferings.⁸⁵⁸ Naturally, the aforementioned "mind" and the "principle" are defined according to Buddhist terms, as revealed in the 1911 Buddhist lecture:

"Attaching to neither birth and death nor *nirvāṇa*." This phrase reveals the ultimate truth of Buddhist teachings. Among those [who realize this ultimate truth] there is a group named Bodhisattva-Icchantika by the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* which asserts that "the Bodhisattva-Icchantika knows that all existing things essentially do not differ from

⁸⁵⁵ The latter text (Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 25) more explicitly explains the doctrinal consistency between the state of "Free and Easy Wandering" and of "permanence, pleasure, personality, and purity."

⁸⁵⁶ See again Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 25.

⁸⁵⁷ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 176.

⁸⁵⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 43.

nirvāṇa, hence chooses never to enter into it.” Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and Vimalakīrti in India, Lao Dan [Laozi] and Zhuang Zhou [Zhuangzi] in China, are all Bodhisattva-Icchantika.

“不住生死，不住涅槃”這兩句話，是佛法中究竟的義諦。其中還有一類，《大乘入楞伽經》喚作菩薩一闡提，經中明說：“菩薩一闡提，知一切法，本來涅槃，究竟不入。”象印度的文殊、普賢、維摩詰，中國的老聃、莊周，無不是菩薩一闡提。⁸⁵⁹

Strikingly enough, Laozi and Zhuangzi are compared with mythical Bodhisattva figures rather than historical Mahāyāna masters (also honored as Bodhisattva), hence the highlighted property is their salvationist ethics rather than their intellectual profoundness. Section 89 of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* further promotes King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty and Confucius, along with Laozi and Zhuangzi, as “the four sages in the [Chinese] territory” 域中四聖.⁸⁶⁰ A decade earlier, Zhang asserted that “the words of King Wen [of the Zhou Dynasty] and Confucius no longer have the power to restore it [i.e. people’s morality].” He even launched harsh moral criticisms against Confucius. Now they are portrayed as philosopher-sages motivated by universal compassion that transcend particular cultures.⁸⁶¹

To be discussed next is Vimalakīrti (Weimojie 維摩詰), traditionally considered as a lay follower and wealthy patron of Buddha Śākyamuni. However, he was much better-known as the central figure of the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* (*Weimojie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所說經) in which he appears as a successful businessman merely to conform with the ways of the mundane world in order to bring sentient beings to the realization of the transcendental truth. In the last part of the lecture, Zhang again expresses his appreciation of Vimalakīrti (as a Bodhisattva-Icchantika), implicitly praising him as a model of the “masters adaptable to the changing occasions.” Resorting to the latter’s authority to endorse his own proposal, Zhang claims that if Vimalakīrti was alive today, he would definitely also combine Buddhism with the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi to cope with the current

⁸⁵⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, pp. 108-109.

⁸⁶⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 38.

⁸⁶¹ John Makeham (2012, p. 123) has made a similar observation about Zhang’s promotion of pre-Qin masters beyond their ethnic-cultural context. But what he emphasized is the intellectual aspect instead of the religious one.

crisis.⁸⁶² While in “On the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism,” the mythology related to Maitreya and Mañjuśrī is used to reveal the close links between early Mahāyāna Buddhism and the *waidao*, the reference to Vimalakīrti in the 1911 lecture implies Zhang’s awareness of the necessity to apply the “tact of convenience” (*fangbian* 方便) in teaching according to receptivity. As a result of such syncretic reinterpretation, on the one hand, Zhuangzi undertakes the “inner moral perfection” and “outer political kingliness” despite being an outsider to Confucianism, this description being comparable with the *waidao* appearance of the mythical Bodhisattva figures in Zhang’s narrative; on the other hand, he “appears in white clothes (i.e. appears as a layman)” 示現白衣, and hence becomes the indigenous counterpart of Vimalakīrti, who has realized that “verifying the inner enlightenment can be separated from the appearance conforming with this world.” 內證聖智，與隨世示現之相，本自不同。⁸⁶³

The appreciation of Vimalakīrti, furthermore, reveals Zhang’s religious self-identity evolving from a Buddhist monk to a Buddhist layman. This issue has been dealt with in Chapter 4 of Zhang’s 1916 letter to Xu Shouchang, through which we see that Zhang’s plan has changed from becoming a monk in India to visiting this country “in the status of Vimalakīrti the Buddhist layman” 以維摩居士之身.⁸⁶⁴ Similarly, at the end of the 1911 Buddhist lecture Zhang exposes his strong will to follow the model of Vimalakīrti in a tone of mingled aspiration and regret:

You and I haven’t achieved the attainment [of Vimalakīrti] nor the status of Bodhisattva-Icchantika. Nonetheless, it is possible to “comprehend through listening and speculating and to declare our resolution and aspiration.” The *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* has revealed “A domain where one realizes the non-creation, yet does not become destined for the ultimate; where one associates with all beings, yet keeps free of all afflictive instincts, there is the domain of the bodhisattva; a domain of solitude with no place for the exhaustion of body and mind; the domain of the triple world, yet indivisible from the ultimate realm. [Such are the domains of the bodhisattva.]”⁸⁶⁵ Are we truly

⁸⁶² Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 111.

⁸⁶³ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 441, 448.

⁸⁶⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 779.

⁸⁶⁵ I adopt the English translation of Robert A. F. Thurman (<https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/wtmp/lva/vimalakirti/Thurman.pdf>) and make some modifications.

destined to be forever desperate [for being unable to attain such domains]?

象兄弟與諸位，雖然不曾證到那種境界，也不曾趣入“菩薩一闡提”的地位，但是聞思所成，“未嘗不可領會；發心立願，未嘗不可宣言。”《維摩詰經》所說的“雖觀諸法不生而不入正位，雖攝一切眾生而不愛著，雖樂遠離而不依身心盡，雖行三界而不壞法界性”，難道我輩就終身絕望麼？⁸⁶⁶

It is now evident that underlying Zhang's ethical syncretism between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Zhuangzi is his own experience and passion both religiously and politically. The four-part investigation ends here in which I demonstrate the significant importance of Zhang's Buddhist syncretism for the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy and his return to indigenous teachings.

* The foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy and its practical implications *

The previous section demonstrates that the Buddhist reinterpretation of the *Zhuangzi* and other indigenous texts is closely related to the developing syncretic tendencies in Zhang Buddhist thought. This section, focusing on the practical aspect of the *Qiwu* philosophy, intends to complete this study by revealing the social-political implications of the return to indigenous teachings.

In contrast to its theoretical sophistication and scholarly profoundness, the practical tenet of the *Qiwu* philosophy is explicitly expressed in *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* first at the outset in interpreting the title of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,” then in Chapter 3 where Zhang asserts that “the practical significance of equalizing beings lies in sustaining inner enlightenment and extending outer benefits towards sentient beings. The circumstances in the world differ from each other; the civilized and the barbarian people have different preferences. [It is natural that] they follow at ease their respective custom and way of life without envying one another. ... However, the people with expansionist ambitions deny the accusation that they ‘nibble’ at other countries’ territory, claiming to have acted in line with moral principles.” 原夫齊物之用，將以內存寂照，外利有情。世情不齊，文野異尚，亦各安其貫利，無所慕往……

⁸⁶⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 111.

然志存兼並者，外辭蠶食之名，而方寄言高義。⁸⁶⁷ Among such moral principles, the most pervasive and persuasive one against which Zhang devotes himself to fighting during this period is the discourse founded on the dichotomy between civilized and barbarian. This objective is expressed in a vernacular way in the latter part of the 1911 Buddhist lecture:

It is relatively easy to get rid of the ideas of good and evil, right and wrong. But it is most difficult to get rid of the ideas of civilized and barbarian. ... The powerful and ill-intentioned countries, intending to annex the weak ones, do not expose their true purpose of occupying the latter's land and exploiting the latter's products. On the contrary, they declare that those weak countries are barbarian and, by eliminating [the state of] that country, they make it possible for the people there to pursue a civilized and happy life. ... Therefore, first of all, we need to transform the public opinion against the ideas of civilized and barbarian, thus removing the excuse of those ill-intentioned people.

大抵善惡是非的見，還容易消去。文明野蠻的見，最不容易消去……懷著獸心的強國，有意要併吞弱國，不說貪他的土地，利他的物產，反說那國本來野蠻，我今滅了那國，正是使那國的人民獲享文明幸福……所以第一要造成輿論，打破文明野蠻的見，使那些懷挾獸心的人，不能借口。⁸⁶⁸

So in fact Zhang treats the *Qiwu* philosophy as a theory based on which he can reveal the hypocrite nature of the ideology of civilized and barbarian, thus promoting a new public opinion against the expansionism of Western imperialism. Zhang hopes that ultimately this philosophy can convince the Western intellectual and political elites and contribute to the equalized existence of all beings on a worldwide scale.⁸⁶⁹

As presented in the introduction of this chapter, researchers have much discussed the practical significance of Zhang's *Qiwu* philosophy in terms of cultural pluralism and anti-colonization. This section, in contrast, investigates the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy following the transformation from the doctrine of "non-creation." As a much less studied topic, it remains unclear how Zhang elaborates his most mature system of thought partly through critical reflections on his dystopian radicalism. By comparing both the continuity and the difference between the *Qiwu* philosophy and the doctrine of non-creation, we can

⁸⁶⁷ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 294-295

⁸⁶⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 110.

⁸⁶⁹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 28-29.

better understand why the former means Zhang's return from *zhen* (transcendental/real) to *su* (secular/mundane). Additional attention is paid to the still earlier political appropriation of Buddhism (as Religion) and National Essence serving as another reference. We shall see how the political and religious implications intertwine with each other in Zhang's writings relative to Buddhism, political ideology, and scholarly subjects.

Let's first examine the continuity between the *Qiwu* philosophy and the doctrine of non-creation. We have seen in Chapter 3 that Zhang has already actively promoted the ideas of equalizing beings in "On the Five Negations" and some other texts. On the other hand, *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"* reaffirms some of the essential criticisms against anarchism and evolutionism. In Chapter 3, for example, Zhang asserts that, despite their self-styled egalitarianism, the anarchists "are still attached to the ideas of civilized and barbarian. Consequently, they push for the everlasting development of mechanical arts and improvement of daily life, at the cost of painstaking labors of the people. How delusional is their claim that this is the people's duty!" 猶橫著文野之見，必令械器日工，餐服愈美，勞形苦身，以就是業，而謂民職宜然，何其妄歟！。⁸⁷⁰ The radical linguistic reform (relative to Esperanto) promoted by the anarchists is also targeted in Section 3 of Chapter 1, contrasting with the author's defense of the historically formed traditions of Chinese dialects.⁸⁷¹ As to evolutionism, Zhang's criticism is seen in Section 4 of Chapter 1 where he rejects the similarity between Hegel's theory (of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis) and Zhuangzi's.⁸⁷² This criticism resonates with two texts of the previous period. The one that appears in "On the Five Negations" reveals the teleological vision underlying Hegel's theory of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, already quoted in Chapter 3. The other that appears in "On the Four Confusions" provides more inspiring insights:

As to Zhuangsheng's [Zhuangzi's] words that "there is nothing that is not so, nothing that is not acceptable." In comparison to Hegel's idea that "what is reasonable is real; that which is real is reasonable,"⁸⁷³ the two share the same literal meaning.

⁸⁷⁰ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 303-304.

⁸⁷¹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 122, 136.

⁸⁷² Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 177.

⁸⁷³ For the quotation from the "Discussion on Making All Things Equal," I adopt the English translation of Burton Watson (1968, p. 40). For Hegel's idea, I choose to offer a generalized translation instead of a precise one due to the lack of original texts.

However, the first argues that the human minds differ from one another and should not be forced to follow the same standard; whereas the second treats all existent things as transitional passages through which [the Absolute Spirit] is oriented towards an endpoint [in history]. The true meanings of the two are distinct from each other.

若夫莊生之言曰“無物不然，無物不可。”與海格爾所謂“事事皆合理，物物皆善美”者，詞義相同。然一以為人心不同，難為齊概；而一以為終局目的，藉此為經歷之途。則根柢又絕遠矣。⁸⁷⁴

This passage is inspiring because, through the contrast between Zhuangzi and Hegel, it hints to us about an advantage of the *Qiwu* philosophy over the doctrine of non-creation, that the former has fully got rid of the linear temporality, to be analyzed below.

It demands a more careful examination to reveal the difference between the *Qiwu* philosophy and the doctrine of non-creation. Let's first examine the position of anarchism and evolutionism in the two theories. In “On the Five Negations,” though the preference of Daoist masters over anarchism is explicitly expressed, Zhang still takes the anarchist idea of negating the government as the starting point of his five-phase framework. In *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* despite the continuing criticism, the topics related to anarchism are marginalized. On at least two occasions, the author does advocate the idea of negating the rulers but it is oriented towards the Daoist tradition instead of towards anarchism.⁸⁷⁵ This change means that Zhang feels confident enough to replace anarchism with Daoist masters, and relies on the latter to cope with the real challenges he and his Chinese contemporaries confronted, being aware of the disadvantage of Buddhism in this regard. This intent is demonstrated by a quoted passage at the end of the 1911 Buddhist speech.⁸⁷⁶ It is the same case with evolutionism. In “On the Five Negations,” Zhang depicts the evolutionary chain from microorganisms to human beings, arguing that only after delivering every form of living beings in this chain to the realm of *nirvāna* can we completely accomplish the Negation of human beings. In the lecture given to the anarchist group, recorded by Zhu Xizu (quoted in Chapter 3), Zhang even proposes to follow the example of apes (a more primitive living being in the

⁸⁷⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 475.

⁸⁷⁵ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 24-25, 440.

⁸⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 111.

evolutionary chain) for the sake of freedom and moral integrity. Such ideas, though radically fighting against evolutionism, in effect means the tacit approval of the linear temporality, thus falling into the evolutionary framework. In the *Qiwu* philosophy, this problem is well settled. Thereafter, evolutionism no longer constitutes one of the major challenges in Zhang's intellectual life.

Examining the changing position of anarchism and evolutionism is helpful. Nonetheless, it is far from enough to answer the question of why the Daoist masters' teachings are capable of making up for the weakness of Buddhism in coping with practical affairs. To answer this question and to reveal how is this answer founded upon critical reflections on the doctrine of non-creation, I would like to quote a passage situated at the core of Chapter 7 of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"* which can be seen as the conclusion to the whole book:

Zhuangsheng [Zhuangzi] did not divert himself from worries through the belief of transmigration but rather wished the people to get rid of the differentiated recognition and clinging. That is why some of his words are rhetorically expedient. Moreover, his original aspiration is to achieve the "inner moral perfection and outer political kingliness," stemming from his sympathy with the helpless ordinary people and his concern with the rigid and ruthless judicial and administrative power. Therefore, he [advocates making all things equal] to remove the worldly rulers and to deconstruct the ideas founded on the dichotomy between civilized and barbarian. [In Zhuangzi's philosophy,] the outer political kingliness means the independence of everyone whereas the inner moral perfection means the wisdom beyond differentiated recognition and clinging. If Zhuangzi did not adapt to the people's common ideas of the time and appear in white clothes, how could he fulfill his original aspiration! If one is solely preoccupied with the cause of delivering sentient beings to *nirvāṇa* and ignores the pain they experience on the way [to *nirvāṇa*], the salvation process would be so long that no living person can wait and foresee the final accomplishment. Despite great compassion, [the sole preoccupation with the Buddhist salvation] does not suit the mind of the people. [In contrast,] the *Qiwu* philosopher makes the mind of the people his mind. As a result, [the *Qiwu* philosopher,] while affirming [the *nirvāṇa* of all sentient beings] as its final accomplishment, is ready

to undertake worldly missions [in line with the mind of the people].

莊生本不以輪轉生死遺憂，但欲人無封執，故語有機權爾。又其所志本在內聖外王，哀生民之無拯，念刑政之苛殘，必令世無工宰，見無文野，人各自主之為王，智無留礙然後聖。自非順時利見，示見白衣，何能果此願哉！苟專以滅度眾生為念，而忘中塗恫怨之情，何翅河清之難俟，陵谷變遷之不可豫期，雖抱大悲，猶未適於民意。夫齊物者以百姓心為心，故究極在此，而樂行在彼。⁸⁷⁷

The passage is the same in the original and final editions. Despite its importance, it has rarely been focused on and explained. Though it is an extremely dense and revealing text, much of its connotation and implication has been discussed above. For example, the previous section, especially its fourth part on Zhang's ethical syncretism, analyzed Zhuangzi's attitude towards the karmic transmigration and *nirvāna*, the "tact of convenience," Zhang's appropriation of the Confucian discourse of "inner moral perfection and outer political kingliness" to define Zhuangzi, and the parallelism between Zhuangzi and Vimalakīrti in terms of the status of the layman. Other topics, like the implicit reference to anarchism and the explicit rejection of the dichotomy between civilized and barbarian, are touched on earlier in this section. All this work makes the first half of the passage accessible, allowing us to focus on its second half beginning from the phrase "if one is solely preoccupied with the cause of delivering sentient beings to *nirvāna* and ignores the pain they experience on the way [to *nirvāna*]."

A nuanced difference between the first and second half of the passage is the subject of the sentences. In the first half, the subject is Zhuangzi. In the second half, however, the subject becomes ambiguous. It no longer refers to Zhuangzi only but rather "the *Qiwu* philosopher," which, more precisely, implies Zhang himself. Through discussing the dos and don'ts of the *Qiwu* philosopher, Zhang actually critically reflects on his previous political philosophy on a Buddhist basis. Realizing the self-criticism hidden between the lines is important for understanding Zhang's mental transformation towards the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy. "If one is solely preoccupied with the cause of delivering sentient beings to *nirvāna* ..." It is relatively easy to discern that this phrase refers to the doctrine of non-creation, principally conveyed in "On the Five Negations." Then what does Zhang

⁸⁷⁷ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 433, 439-444.

mean when he talks about the ignorance of “the pain they (the people) experience on the way”? Crucial aid comes from Section 99 of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, the beginning of which relative to Lu Jiuyuan has been discussed above. After the approval of the common calling for all sages of achieving the transcendental truth and delivering sentient beings from sufferings, Zhang turns to distinguish the common final goal 終局目的 and the diverse pains on the way 中塗苦痛. Due to the diversity of the latter, the sages in different countries are driven by varied aspirations 別願. The Western (or Indian) sages, for example, are aspired to make the land more habitable or to cure diseases and save lives. “The sages of this land [i.e. China], in contrast, are all driven by the particular aspiration of governing the country and guarding the people. In order to govern the country and guard the people, they have to integrate themselves into the mundane society. The means they use to remedy the abuse may leave a trace seemingly deviated [from the final goal]. [Consequently, the Chinese sages] are different from Indian Buddhism in terms of not only the ritual and norm but also the state of the self-verification [of the transcendental truth].” 而此土聖哲，悉以經國寧民為其別願。欲國寧民者，不得不同於世俗社會，有弊以術矯之，其跡又或近偏，非徒與佛家儀則不同，乃與自內證知亦異。⁸⁷⁸

Following this text, we now know that by “the pain on the way” Zhang reflects on the pains of the Chinese people characterized by “the rigid and ruthless judicial and administrative power” plus the imperial expansionism under the cover of the discourse of civilized and barbarian. A well-directed remedy is only possible after realizing such particularity; if not, achieving the final goal would be hopeless. Furthermore, we can see that Zhang’s critical reflection is carried out in terms of the relationship between the sage and the people. Political and religious at the same time, this relationship is grasped within the dichotomy between “inner moral perfection” and “outer political kingliness,” as revealed in another section of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, Section 59. This section compares the politico-economic situation of India and China. The former was historically divided into numerous small countries with a small population, the governance of which is relatively simple. Moreover, the hot climate of India makes it easier to satisfy the livelihood of the people. China, in contrast, has a long tradition of political unification

⁸⁷⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 49.

and a high population density. Correspondingly, the Indian sages represented by Śākyamuni were concerned more with other-worldly issues (i.e. inner moral perfection) whereas the Chinese sages represented by Confucius and Laozi principally coped with worldly affairs (i.e. outer political kingliness). Among the sages of the two countries, only Zhuangzi succeeded in combining the aspects of “inner moral perfection” and “outer political kingliness,” whose major work “Discussion on Making All Things Equal” is an invaluable treasure for both China and abroad 內外之鴻寶.⁸⁷⁹ The comparison above explains, first, why Zhang switches from a religious approach to a socio-political approach for the final salvation; second, why the Chinese sages are more competent in practical affairs than their Indian counterparts; and finally, through the praise of Zhuangzi, how it is possible to connect the socio-political means to the religious cause.

Now let's proceed to the next sentence in the original text, focusing on the phrase “the *Qiwu* philosopher makes the mind of the people his mind.” Undoubtedly, its expression refers to a sentence in the *, “the sage has no invariable mind of his own; he makes the mind of the people his mind.”⁸⁸⁰ 聖人無常心，以百姓心為心。 This sentence has been quoted in Section 3 of Chapter 1 of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal.”*⁸⁸¹ Nonetheless, this expression should be apprehended in the context of strong Buddhist syncretism. At the outset of Section 112 of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, Zhang again refers to Lu Jiuyuan's thesis. He argues this time that it is not just the sages of the eastern and western seas who share the same mind and approve of the same principle, this commonality is also true between the sages, the ordinary people, and even the heretics. The reason is that “the same kind of sentient beings share the same fundamental rules of the same place. The perception of time and space, the law of causation, and all kinds of concepts and tendencies are stored in the same way in the *ālaya*-consciousness. As a result, the trajectory of thinking and speech, and the course of mental speculation and deliberation, they all take place upon such epistemological bases and can never get away from this realm.” 一類眾生，同茲依正則，時方之相，因果之律，及一切名言習氣，自為藏識中所同具，故其思惟之軌，尋伺之途，即須據是為*

⁸⁷⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 27.

⁸⁸⁰ I adopt the English translation of James Legge (2020 November 24, <https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>).

⁸⁸¹ Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 130.

推，終已莫能自外。⁸⁸²

In Chapter 4 of *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,”* the theoretical connotation of this issue is more systematically elucidated through interpreting a phrase in “Discussion on Making All Things Equal,” “all creatures agree in approving and affirming” 物之所同是. In both texts, Zhang first utilizes the Yogācāra conceptual repertoire and then resorts to the ontological framework of *the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* to reveal the ultimate truth that the states of enlightenment and non-enlightenment (or “ignorance”) are inseparable and mutually dependent, “just as water and wave are not two things; or as hemp and [hemp] rope have the same property.” 如水與波，非是二物；如麻與繩，非有二性。⁸⁸³ The unity of opposites between enlightenment and non-enlightenment parallels with that between the embryo of the *tathāgata* and the *ālaya*-consciousness. No wonder the metaphors Zhang use, gold vs. golden ring for the former and hemp vs. hemp rope for the latter, are essentially the same. To conclude, by such expressions Zhang demonstrates that the *Qiwu* philosopher can and should make the mind of the people his mind. In an aforementioned passage, I have introduced Zhang’s idea that the sages have to integrate themselves into the mundane society to remedy the real problems. Now we know that this integration is not only practically necessary but also theoretically affirmed.

Does the phrase “the *Qiwu* philosopher makes the mind of the people his mind” also conveys critical reflection on his previous political Buddhism? My answer is yes. Let’s start by examining the context where the quotation of the *appears. To sum up, it criticizes the religious and scholarly groups that restrain people and suppress other groups according to their dogmatic and sectarian appropriation of the “universal principle.” The criticism targets the sectarian confrontation between Confucianism and Mohism as well as the anti-traditional movement of Esperanto.⁸⁸⁴ Contrasted assessment of Zhuangzi and Mozi has already appeared in earlier texts like “Impartial Discussion of the Anti-Manchu Movement.” The development in this new period is rather the explicit parallelism between Mohism and the Abrahamic religions, as seen in both *An Interpretation of “Discussion on**

⁸⁸² Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 49.

⁸⁸³ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 112. Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 307-315.

⁸⁸⁴ Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 125-136.

Making All Things Equal" and the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*. In the latter text, Zhang criticizes Mozi for "promoting disarmament and pacification in the name of the 'will of Heaven,' which is not just in vain but instead causes religious wars." 為天志大義而偃兵者，非徒無效，又因以起宗教戰爭。 It is fortunate, in his eyes, that Mohism did not prevail for long, "if not, since Mohism is of the same kind as Islam and Christianity, the catastrophes of the Crusades would have occurred early in Chinese history." 自不然者，墨子之教實與天方、基督同科，而十字軍之禍，夙見於禹域矣。⁸⁸⁵

All these groups and movements, whether religious or secular, run against the principle advocated by the original author and the modern interpreter of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal." Instead of making the mind of the people their mind, they impose their mind to the mind of the people. However, by "the *Qiwu* philosopher makes the mind of the people his mind," it is not from them that Zhang learned the lesson but rather from himself. This judgment is made based on its textual context. To quote again: "If one is solely preoccupied with the cause of delivering sentient beings to *nirvāna* and ignores the pain they experience on the way [to *nirvāna*] ... despite the great compassion, [the sole preoccupation with the Buddhist salvation] does not suit the mind of the people." 苛專以滅度眾生為念，而忘中塗惄怨之情……雖抱大悲，猶未適於民意。 The words in square brackets are added according to my interpretation, nonetheless, the author's use of terms such as "delivering sentient beings to *nirvāna*" 滅度眾生 and "despite the great compassion" 雖抱大悲, evidently refers to the doctrine of non-creation hence suggests an intent of self-criticism. The fact that the *Qiwu* philosophy implies self-criticism has been discussed by the Taiwanese historian Wang Fansen. Wang proposed that inspired by the thought of equalizing all beings, Zhang realized the potential abuse caused by promoting Yogācāra theory as the exclusive source of the transcendental truth and thus devaluating the theories of other scholarships and religions.⁸⁸⁶ Wang's discussion is very insightful but at the same time problematic. First of all, a major reason for Zhang's appreciation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal" is that it greatly helps "understand Yogācāra doctrines" (quoted above). Moreover, as this chapter endeavors to demonstrate, in the years before the formal foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy, a strong syncretic tendency had been

⁸⁸⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 42; see also Meng Zhuo, 2019, pp. 8, 296.

⁸⁸⁶ Wang Fansen, 2012, p. 21.

emerging in Zhang's Buddhist writings which facilitated his combination of Buddhism and the Daoist master's teachings. So it is inappropriate to suggest, at the theoretical level, a picture of contradiction between maintaining the Buddhist authority and returning to indigenous teachings. And finally, the original text that Wang referred to, i.e. Zhang's conclusion of his scholarly career in the last section of the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, does not provide persuasive proof for his viewpoint.

So while affirming the insightfulness of Wang's discussion, my study offers an alternative to explain Zhang's self-criticism. What Zhang was reflecting on when he wrote the final chapter of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal"* is not the abuse related to any Buddhist theory but instead the way of applying the Buddhist theory to practical affairs. To be precise, following the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy, Zhang, on the one hand, remained consistent in approving of the ultimate value underpinning the doctrine of non-creation, on the other, came to realize that the five-stage agenda may share something in common with the discourses and groups resorting to the universal principle. Though compulsive means is rejected, this dystopian agenda nonetheless assumes the advent of "superhuman masters" in charge of transforming the people's mind in accordance with theirs, which separates the sage from the people and neglects the latter's particularity and free will. That is why the direct application of the doctrine of non-creation "does not suit the mind of the people" due to its ignorance of "the pain they experience on the way." By reinterpreting "the outer political kingliness" as "the independence of everyone" and depicting a kind of sage who "has no invariable mind of his own," Zhang shows his awareness and preparation to resolve the problems in his previous political Buddhism.

We know that the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy signifies the return of Zhang's thought from *zhen* to *su*, less noticed is how this transformation released his tension with the real world. In "On the Five Negations," we see intense expressions of pessimism caused by not only the desperation about human nature but also the large gap between the unsatisfying reality and the ideal realm, as revealed by a passage at the end of the text: "The knowledge to learn in life is boundless whereas the cause [based on such knowledge] is limited by space and time. At present, it is out of the question to leap forward to the

realms of the Five Negations. [So I] have to accord with the temporal and conditional reality (or literally, the aspect of existence) and treat it as the primary stage. It is what [some people would] call ‘marching like a crippled donkey’.” 人生之智無涯，而事為空間時間所限。今日欲飛躍以至五無，未可得也。還以隨順有邊為初階，所謂跛驢之行。

⁸⁸⁷ This passage is echoed by a phrase quoted above: “If one is solely preoccupied with the cause of delivering sentient beings to *nirvāṇa* … the salvation process would be so long that no living person can wait and foresee the final accomplishment.” 苛專以滅度眾生為念……何翅河清之難俟，陵谷變遷之不可豫期。 This correlation demonstrates again that Zhang’s critical reflection in *An Interpretation of “Discussion on Making All Things Equal”* is aimed at the doctrine of non-creation.

Utopianism commonly presupposes a large gap between the real and the ideal. However, what the doctrine of non-creation advocates is a dystopian destination counter to the evolutionary current instead of “drifting along” it, that is what Zhang means by the term “a confessor of the universe” (referred to in Chapter 3). Undoubtedly, this orientation intensified the tension since Zhang then fought against not only the current reality but also the tendency of civilization. Furthermore, “according with the temporal and conditional reality” 隨順有邊 is conventionally considered in Buddhist terminology as a synonym for “according with sentient beings” 隨順眾生. The reference of “marching like a crippled donkey” evidently shows that Zhang is not satisfied with the stage of according with the people but intends to lead them to a destination that he views as desirable. In contrast to the large gap between the real and the ideal and that between the reformer’s will and the people’s tendency, the solution proposed in “On the Five Negations” is powerless, i.e. the voluntary contract between comrades and the gradual popularization based on a moral appeal. As a consequence, Zhang was caught by a strong feeling of tension with his environment and causes (both political and scholarly), which explains his attempt to become a monk in India at the time. Following the theoretical foundation of the *Qiūwú* philosophy, Zhang developed a more resilient attitude towards the relationship between “absolute truth” and “relative truth,” between “other-worldly *dharma*” and “this-worldly *dharma*.” He got rid of the linear temporality of history embedded in the evolutionary

⁸⁸⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 468.

framework.⁸⁸⁸ He dissolved the confrontation between the reformer and the people. And he returned to the traditions of Chinese teachings, scholarship, and way of governance upon which he endeavored to realize “the outer political kingliness” in a modern and global context.

Apart from the doctrine of non-creation, the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy also means the critical reflection on an earlier form of political Buddhism characterized by the combination of Buddhism (as the Religion) and National Essence. The transformation is revealed by “Conversations with Song Shu and Song Jiaoren” (*Dui ersong* 對二宋), a chapter added in the *Book after Examination*. Zhang’s conversations with Song Jiaoren are about the role of revolutionary leaders both before and after the overthrow of the Manchu regime. Following the success of the Xinhai revolution, Song criticized Zhang for having underestimated the critical influences exerted by a few key members of revolutionary groups. Zhang’s reply gives us a glimpse of the political implication of the *Qiwu* philosophy. He said that “what I (the old servant) believe [and act accordingly] is to help the natural development of all things and allow the diligent and constant improvement of the world.” 老僕所知，輔萬物之自然，成天下之亹亹已。 Regarding the contribution of revolutionary leaders, he offered an alternative explanation to that of Song. According to him, the leaders successfully aroused the repressed nationalist feelings of the people and reoriented such feelings from anti-foreign to anti-Manchu. Nonetheless, they themselves were not the main cause of the success. Zhang then distinguished two types of leaders, showing again the strong imprint of the *Qiwu* philosophy. “The one who clothes all things as with a garment and makes no assumption of being their lord should be called the teacher and guardian of the country, the way of governance of whom differs from that of the hero.” 夫衣養萬物而不為主者，此之謂國之師保，其道異於英雄。⁸⁸⁹⁸⁹⁰ The chapter ends with Zhang’s recall of learning the assassination of Song Jiaoren a year after their conversation. This end implicitly expresses Zhang’s regret that Song did not share his idea about their

⁸⁸⁸ Ishii Tsuyoshi (2016, p. 25) touched on Zhang’s rejection of the linear temporality of history. However, he attributed this rejection to Zhang’s adherence to Yogācāra Buddhism.

⁸⁸⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, p. 617.

⁸⁹⁰ In the two cited passages, Zhang quotes two phrases from the *, i.e. “helping the natural development of all things” 輔萬物之自然 and “clothing all things as with a garment and making no assumption of being their lord” 衣養萬物而不為主.*

role following the success of the revolution, which, according to him, was partly responsible for the latter's tragical death (being assassinated in 1913).

This conversation between Zhang and Song reveals a significant switch of the former's views on his political role. At the beginning of his arrival in Tokyo and affiliation to the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, what Zhang stressed was the subjective initiative of pioneering individuals, as revealed by his advocacy of madness in the 1906 speech and of individualistic heroism (referring to Nietzsche's concept of superman) in "Letter in Reply to Tiezheng." At the time, Zhang in effect shared the heroic conception of revolution with Song. He was the person who had changed following the foundation of the Republic of China, from a rebellious intellectual elite to a practitioner of the *Qiwu* philosophy. We can see that the critical reflection on the doctrine of non-creation can be applied to the previous discourse of Religion and National Essence which overplays the all-powerfulness of the revolutionary spirit and downplays the tendency and potential of the people. Apart from the self-awareness represented in his writings relative to Buddhism and Daoist masters, Zhang's deep engagement in the revolutionary activities in Japan as well as the political transition around 1912 must have been beneficial for the maturity of his thought. Indeed, the development of his scholarship and theoretical thinking, his intense religious experience, and the lessons learned from engagement in practical affairs intertwined during the transformation of Zhang's thought towards the *Qiwu* philosophy.

* Conclusion *

To conclude the chapter, the first issue is to review Zhang's transformation of thought from *su* to *zhen* and back to *su*. Undoubtedly, this is a pair of concepts borrowed from Buddhism. However, they do not originate from the terminological repertoire of Yogācāra Buddhism but rather from that of Tathāgata-garba Buddhism. To be precise, they are probably transformed from the "aspect of mind in terms of the absolute (or suchness, *tathātā*)" and the "aspect of mind in terms of phenomena (or birth and death, *samsāra*)," a pair of concepts fundamental for the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. So the establishment of the framework based on *su* and *zhen* reveals the increasing importance of

Tathāgata-garba Buddhism in Zhang’s Buddhist thought. Furthermore, the dichotomy between *su* and *zhen* parallels with that between “inner moral perfection” and “outer political kingliness,” and that between “essence” 體 and “function” 用, and all these dichotomies were used to redefine the life and thought of Zhuangzi. By referring again to these facts, I intend to demonstrate that during the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy, the reinterpretation syncretizing Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism was correlated with and facilitated by the growing syncretic tendency in Zhang’s Buddhist thought.

Next, I would like to relate the main themes of this chapter to other chapters. In relation to Chapter 2, the central question consists in the difference between the relationship of Buddhism and National Essence and that of Buddhism and Daoist masters’ teachings. To summarize, Buddhism, in the first case, is promoted as the new religion in charge of the critical task of moral restoration. In contrast to National Essence, which belongs to the type of particular knowledge stemming from the Chinese historical process, the reformed Buddhism is considered capable of providing the epistemological foundation for a universal moral discourse. Meanwhile, it also has the practical function of social mobilization and solidarity. In the second case, however, Buddhism is transferred to the category of philosophy rather than that of religion. Correspondingly, it is discharged from the direct application in practical affairs. As to the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, they are considered as belonging to the type of universal knowledge and having achieved the transcendental truth. Compared to Buddhism, they have the advantage of coping with ever-changing practical affairs. As a conclusion, the combination between Buddhism and Daoist masters’ teachings is not a revised version of that between Buddhism and National Essence. In the former case, Zhang developed a more integrated discourse regarding the relationship between the two parts. The role of Buddhism is reoriented and the Daoist masters’ teachings occupy a much stronger position than National Essence.

In relation to Chapter 3, the central question is the relationship between the *Qiwu* philosophy and the doctrine of non-creation. This is the main task dealt with by the fourth section of the chapter which endeavors to demonstrate that, despite the continuity between the two in promoting the Daoist masters’ teachings and criticizing the ideological trends underpinned by evolutionism and the “universal principle,” the foundation of the *Qiwu*

philosophy is accompanied by a critical reflection on the disadvantage of the doctrine of non-creation and potential abuses of its political application. Such critical reflection, nonetheless, does not mean that the goal set by the doctrine of non-creation is abandoned after that. On the contrary, the Negations of human beings and all other beings remained, throughout Zhang's later life, the ultimate expression of pursuing the transcendental truth. The importance of the *Qiwu* philosophy should be grasped from other directions. It is the mature form of Zhang's philosophical thinking. It establishes the theoretical framework of *su* and *zhen* relied on which Zhang concluded his scholarly career. Finally, it signifies Zhang's return from *zhen* to *su*, to indigenous scholarship and political practices.

In relation to Chapter 4, we are allowed to integrate the practical and intellectual aspects of Zhang's religious life, at least for the period when Zhang was under house confinement. Chapter 4 discussed in length Zhang's 1916 letter to Huang Zongyang, in which Zhang talked about the switch of his meditative practice from the constant Samādhi in all states 一行三昧 to the compassionate observation 慈觀. As is known, the former method adopted more of the traditional Indian meditative methods of *śamatha* (*chanding* 禪定, the tranquility of the mind) and *vipaśyanā* (*neiguan* 內觀, insight). The latter, affiliated to Mahāyāna Buddhism and its ethical pursuit of saving all sentient beings, exerted a much larger influence on the Sinitic traditions of Buddhism. In other words, the former pursues the attainments leading to *nirvāṇa* whereas the latter develops sympathetic and selfless feelings for other living beings. Through the study of the second section of the chapter, we are now able to understand the reason for the aforementioned switch. During the years between the original and final editions of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal,"* Zhang no longer criticized Zhuangzi for not having the motivation to transcend the mundane world and pursue the ultimate enlightenment. On the contrary, he regarded him as a Bodhisattva-Icchantika with the compassion to save the helpless people. It is evident that the shift of Zhang's attitude towards Zhuangzi parallels with the reorientation of his meditative practice. Apart from the meditative practice, Zhang's religious self-identity also changed in the same period from an unaccomplished Buddhist monk to a Buddhist layman, as manifested by Zhang's 1916 letter to Xu Shouchang, a text that reveals Zhang's religious action plan, as well as the 1911 Buddhist

lecture, a text of theoretical depth. We see the extent to which Zhang's religious thought and practices interacted with each other and became a coordinated totality.

Lastly, let us sketch a brief review of Zhang's Buddhist syncretism from a comparative perspective. Zhang was far from the first author to reinterpret the *Zhuangzi* on a Buddhist basis. Among the precursors, the most influential person is his contemporary Yang Wenhui. Serving as one of the main interlocutors in the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*, Yang's approach of interpretation must have inspired Zhang's successive work, especially when the latter speculated about the position of Zhuangzi between the other-worldly and this-worldly realms.⁸⁹¹ Academics have been well aware of the similarity between Yang and Zhang for their Buddhist reinterpretation of the *Zhuangzi* as well as Buddhist syncretism. For the Buddhist reinterpretation of the *Zhuangzi*, it is Su Meiwen who did the most comprehensive research, demonstrating the superior aspects of Zhang's work based on concrete textual comparisons.⁸⁹² For Buddhist syncretism, Guo Peng and his colleagues' research has guided me to perceive the common ground of the two concerning the approval of the causation of the embryo of the *tathāgata* 如來藏緣起, high appreciation of Tathāgata-garbha scriptures like the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*, and the promotion of Confucian sages as Bodhisattva adaptable to the changing occasions.⁸⁹³ In addition, researchers have revealed the proximity of the two in advocating the theory of Yogācāra Buddhism and the behavior of Huayan Buddhism,⁸⁹⁴ in combining the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*, and in highlighting "relying on oneself instead of relying on external forces."⁸⁹⁵ The similarity between Zhang and Yang's syncretic tendencies becomes more significant if we contrast them with the exclusive and fundamentalist stance of Ouyang Jingwu on Yogācāra Buddhism. As the main successor of Yang Wenhui and the founder of the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning (Zhina neixueyuan 支那內學院), Ouyang criticized his master with regret for not having distinguished the authentic Yogācāra

⁸⁹¹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, pp. 11, 25, 27-28. See, in particular, Section 60 on pages 27-28.

⁸⁹² Su Meiwen, 2007, pp. 118-123. Besides, Su (2007, pp. 114-118) also compared Zhang's work with that of Hanshan Deqing 慧山德清 (1546-1623), a leading Buddhist monk and poet of the late Ming China.

⁸⁹³ See Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying, 1989, pp. 1-34 (on Yang Wenhui), 354-391 (on Zhang Taiyan).

⁸⁹⁴ Chen Jidong, 2019b, p. 434.

⁸⁹⁵ Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019, pp. 44-45.

doctrines from those heterogeneous “impurities.”⁸⁹⁶ Furthermore, he judged the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* as an apocryphal text based on his systematic studies of Yogācāra Buddhism.⁸⁹⁷ The interaction and divergence between Ouyang and Zhang Taiyan will be discussed in Chapter 6.

⁸⁹⁶ Ouyang Jingwu, 2009, p. 379.

⁸⁹⁷ Cheng Gongrang, 2000, pp. 112-135.

Chapter 6. The Relationship of Zhang Taiyan with Buddhist Communities: Thought, Networks, and Activities

* Introduction *

This chapter studies Zhang's relationship with the *sangha* (*sengqie* 僧伽, congregation of monks and nuns) and lay Buddhist communities. It begins by offering chronological discussions about Zhang's expectations for the role of Buddhism in Chinese society, Buddhist reforms, the relationship between monks and laity, and that between Buddhism and Confucianism. Then, it undertakes a general introduction to the Buddhist social networks within which Zhang was inserted and the religious activities which he engaged in, including his contacts with eminent Buddhist monks, the circle around Yang Wenhui, and the positions he took charge of in multiple Buddhist associations. Finally, it focuses on Zhang's interaction with and attitude towards Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu, two of the most influential figures in the modern history of Chinese Buddhism. This chapter intends to cover the subjects that have not been dealt with in the previous chapters and thus enrich our knowledge about Zhang's Buddhist engagement, especially that from 1917 to the end of his life.

In Chapters 1-3 and 5, I place Zhang's Buddhist thought in its broad social, political, and cultural contexts, an approach shared by most of the Zhang-scholars. In Chapter 4, I explore the hitherto neglected aspect of Zhang's Buddhist practice and experience, which, essentially existed in Zhang's private life. These chapters only occasionally touch on Zhang's relationship with Buddhist communities. Zhang's close relationship with Huang Zongyang and Su Manshu has been highlighted, but they were unconventional monks largely dissociated from Buddhist monasteries. Yang Wenhui's influence on Zhang and their contact has only been discussed in a limited way. Moreover, none of the former chapters has dealt with Zhang's public opinions and roles in relation to Buddhism after he regained freedom in mid-1916.

The specialists of Zhang have not paid much attention to the subject of this chapter either. For intellectual historians, their conventional interest was confined to Zhang's

Buddhist thought from 1906 to 1916, from Zhang's explicit commitment to Buddhism to the full establishment of his *Qiwu* philosophy.⁸⁹⁸ The new generation of the Zhang-scholars has started to reassess Zhang's scholarly ideas during the last two decades of his life (1917-1936), challenging the conventional view that his thought became ossified and fell behind the times.⁸⁹⁹ However, the main focus of their attention was Zhang's return to Confucianism, suggesting that Buddhism became less and less important in his intellectual and spiritual life.⁹⁰⁰ For the scholars of Buddhist studies, they too have not yet abandoned the presupposition that Zhang's Buddhist engagement was essentially (if not exclusively) driven by intellectual interest and hence they have also neglected the practical aspect of the question.⁹⁰¹ In the studies of the socio-historical approach to Buddhism, Zhang merely occupied a marginal position, referred to in passing when researching other Buddhist figures.⁹⁰²

This chapter intends to demonstrate several points. First of all, Buddhism continued to occupy a significantly important position in the last two decades of Zhang's life. His return to Confucianism did not necessarily mean a corresponding estrangement from Buddhism. Chapter 4 has demonstrated this point but from a different perspective. In reality, some of his early Buddhist thought persisted till his last years. Next, the sharp decrease of Buddhism in his publications and speeches was not just caused by his return to Confucianism but also due to his concern with the "abuse" in promoting Buddhism as the predominant teaching for social and moral issues. Still, to see the reasons for the change in Zhang's thought, we need to relate it to the role he played within Buddhist communities, which was more active and extensive than many have assumed. Lastly, investigating Zhang's attitude towards Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu contributes to a better understanding of the confrontation between Taixu and Ouyang as well as their confrontation with conservative monasticism, which is a major topic for the Buddhist studies of modern China. Moreover, this last investigation helps us to grasp Zhang's views on the relationship

⁸⁹⁸ For example, Jiang Hainu (2012, p. 209) divided Zhang's Buddhist thought into three stages, the third of which ends in 1916.

⁸⁹⁹ See, e.g. Wang Rui, 2014.

⁹⁰⁰ See, e.g. Jiang Mei, 2017.

⁹⁰¹ It is the case for the studies of Shi Dongchu (1976, pp. 555-558), Guo Peng and his colleagues (1989, pp. 354-391), and Yu Lingbo (1995, pp. 350-353)

⁹⁰² It is the case for the studies of He Jianming (1992), Gabriele Goldfuss (2001), and Zhang Xuesong (2014).

between the Buddhist laity and the *sangha*.

As presented at the outset, this chapter deals with three topics successively: Zhang's social thought of Buddhism, his social networking within Buddhist communities, and his relationship with Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu. My study starts from Zhang's early periods but focuses on the last two decades of his life. The aspects of thought and activities are separately discussed because on most occasions they have no direct links and do not respond to the same events or concrete questions. Nonetheless, the relevance between the two will be gradually revealed, especially during the research on the third topic. Some of the texts discussed here convey rich information about Zhang's Buddhist theoretical thought, but I will not develop an in-depth analysis in this direction since what this chapter is concerned with is the social aspect of Zhang's Buddhist engagement.

* Zhang Taiyan's social thought of Buddhism *

This section investigates Zhang's thought in four aspects: the role that Buddhism should play in Chinese society; the reason and agenda of Buddhist reforms; the relationship between the *sangha* and laity, and that between Buddhism and Confucianism. It follows a chronological order.

To start with, we have an essay written during Zhang's reformist period, entitled "On Selling Temples" (*Yumiao 鬱廟*), the 24th chapter of the *Book of Urgency (first edition)*, published in 1900. In this essay, Zhang explicitly advocates to "build schools with temple property," proposing to sell the property of both the "improper cults," even those propagating loyalty and filial piety, and the Buddhist and Daoist temples.⁹⁰³ Zhang's proposal has no substantial difference from that of Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909), and targets Buddhist temples in a more unreserved manner than Kang Youwei's.⁹⁰⁴ However, this chapter was removed from the revised edition and did not reappear in the *Book after Examination*,⁹⁰⁵ showing that Zhang had changed his mind since 1900.

Then, we have "Letter of Admonition to Disciples of the Buddha in the Ten

⁹⁰³ Zhang Taiyan, 2014a, pp. 99-100.

⁹⁰⁴ For the proposal of Zhang Zhidong, see Zhang Zhidong, 1998, pp. 75-76. To see the subtleness in Kang Youwei's attitude towards Buddhist and Daoist temples, see Peng Chunling, 2014, pp. 161-166.

⁹⁰⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 85.

Directions” (*Jinggao shifang fodizi qi* 儀告十方佛弟子啟) and “Letter to the Governors and Laymen” (*Gao zaiguan baiyi qi* 告宰官白衣啟), two open letters of 1907 manifesting Zhang’s social thought following the establishment of his commitment to Buddhism. Although Su Manshu’s name appeared as the coauthor, Zhang was probably the actual writer of these two long texts. The first one, addressed to Buddhist monastic communities, held a critical tone urging overall institutional reforms. The second, addressed to political and social elites, in contrast, justifies the legitimacy of Buddhism against the anticlerical movement under the Late Qing New Policies.

In “Letter of Admonition to Disciples of the Buddha in the Ten Directions,” Zhang proposes to restore the monastic norms in three ways. Abolishing the “repentance ritual” (*lichan* 禮懺) to cease the exchange of such ritual activities for material rewards between clergy and laity; abolishing the “*dharma transmission*” (*fufa* 付法) to cease the disputes around the transition of leadership positions; ending the submission of the *sangha* to imperial power to cease the mental submission. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of improving the monks’ education, focusing on language learning. According to him, after mastering the Buddhist scriptures in Chinese, the next language to learn should be Sanskrit rather than English,⁹⁰⁶ and it is better to learn it from Indian teachers rather than European ones. Zhang’s ideas about this issue have been discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The last part of this open letter confirms the necessity of the precept prohibiting killing (eating meat) and sex, declining to follow the Japanese example that permitted monks to be married.⁹⁰⁷ This confirmation contrasts with his tolerance of Su Manshu’s nonobservance of multiple precepts.⁹⁰⁸ At the outset of “Letter to Governors and Laymen,” Zhang reflects on the abuses of the “build schools with temple property” movement, arguing that the Buddhist temples (except those built by the government) are public property belonging to the common people and it is arbitrary to expropriate them by governmental order. The rest of the letter defends Buddhism against three criticisms: firstly, the Buddhist religion (its meditation and precepts) does no good to the morality of common

⁹⁰⁶ Apart from criticizing the westernization of Japanese Buddhist communities, this proposal may also be directed at Yang Wenhui’s educational project. As a reference, after Yang’s establishment of the Qihuan Jingshe Academy 祇洹精舍 in 1908, Su Manshu served as an English teacher there.

⁹⁰⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 244-247.

⁹⁰⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017b, p. 356.

people; secondly, most members of the *sangha* are not educated and incapable to serve as moral models; thirdly, the Buddhist doctrines are useless for practical affairs.⁹⁰⁹

Following the foundation of the *Qiwu* philosophy (1910-1916), the general tendency of Zhang's thought "returned from *zhen* (transcendental/real) to *su* (secular/mundane)" 回真向俗. In the process of depicting a new image of Zhuangzi, Zhang expresses his own ethical pursuit that "while affirming [the *nirvāṇa* of all sentient beings] as its final accomplishment," he "is ready to undertake worldly missions [in line with the mind of the people]. 故究極在此，而樂行在彼。⁹¹⁰ As a consequence, in the 1910s, we see a series of Zhang's discussions on the limit of applying Buddhism to social and moral issues.

The first text is "Preface to the Chinese Buddhist Canon Emended by Pinjia Jingshe" (*Pinjia Jingshe jiaokan dazangjing xu* 頻伽精舍校勘大藏經序), published in the initial issue of *The Repository of Buddhist Studies* (*Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報) in 1912. Apart from Zhang, Shen Zengzhi and Wang Deyuan 汪德淵 (1873-1918) also wrote respectively a preface to this new edition, of which Huang Zongyang was the leading editor.⁹¹¹ [Briefly introducing the scale and importance of this edition.] At the end of the preface, Zhang says that "I am concerned with the decline of Buddhist teaching not because it is slandered but because the religious propagation of Buddhism [is flawed]." 大懼正法之衰，不在謗佛，而在昌言宗教。 To be concrete, Zhang is opposed to the Buddhist advocates who combine Buddhism with Christianity, mix it with magic (*huanshu* 幻術) and psychic forces (*lingzhi* 靈智), or only preach the rewards in the afterlife.⁹¹² This is the first time that Zhang explicitly expressed his general concern with the "abuse" of Buddhist application in social and moral issues.

The second comes from Zhang's letter to Wu Chengshi. Chapter 4 has introduced the relationship between Zhang and his disciple. Their correspondence is even more crucial for this chapter. The letter in question was written on June 26, 1917. In the first half of the letter, Zhang confirms the theoretical superiority of Yogācāra and Tathāgata-garbha doctrines. However, his emphasis switches in the second half saying that "based on my life experiences, it is inadequate to remedy the abuses by directly applying Buddhist teaching,

⁹⁰⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 248-250.

⁹¹⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2011b, p. 72. Meng Zhuo, 2019, p. 444.

⁹¹¹ To know more about this new edition, see Huang Zongyang, 2011, pp. 49-55, 59-65.

⁹¹² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, pp. 518-519.

just like the fact that we eat cereals to nourish life, but to remedy illness we have to resort to medicines. If you are not convinced, you can check the moral character and conduct of Yang Renshan's [the courtesy name of Yang Wenhui] disciples to draw your own conclusion." 若直接佛法，未足救弊，蓋亦得於經歷證驗甚多，所謂衛生之穀麥，非攻疾之藥石也。如不見信，試觀仁山弟子志行何如，亦可知矣。⁹¹³ The metaphor Zhang uses compares Buddhism to cereals which are insufficient to cure the disease. We will know that medicines refer to Confucianism once another letter written the following year is introduced. Among Yang's disciples, the one whom Zhang detested for sure was Sun Yuyun 孫毓筠 (1869-1924), also known as Sun Shaohou 孫少侯. The brother of Sun's grandfather was Sun Jianai 孫家鼐 (1827-1909), the teacher of the Guangxu Emperor and one of the most influential politicians in the late Qing. An important member of the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance, Sun Yuyun was also a lay Buddhist. The main reason that Zhang detested him was due to the latter's active support of Yuan Shikai's revival of hereditary monarchy.⁹¹⁴ In addition, Sun was addicted to opium. The phrase "if you are not convinced" seems to imply that Wu tended to approve "directly applying Buddhist teaching" at the time.

The next letter from Zhang to Wu is extremely important for this section. It was written on December 6, 1918. Here I offer the translation of its first half:

I am extremely delighted to receive again your letter. The phenomena you have noticed in the northern capital [Beijing] is truly ridiculous. However, the ideas that Cai Jiemin [the courtesy name of Cai Yuanpei] and others advocated were superficial and drifting, unable to cease [such phenomena]. The proper way for Buddhist teaching is to cultivate by oneself. If we hold aloft the banner, the opportunists will inevitably join in [the religious movement]. What's more, northern China is a territory of many superstitious activities, including identifying Śākyamuni with demonic deities. Master Taixu recently initiated the Bodhi Society (Jueshe) in Shanghai in order to resist [these northern religious movements]. *{the Moral Studies Society has arrived in Shanghai.}* However, many of his ideas are still superficial and indistinct. I reluctantly take part in his activities but do not genuinely agree with him. To increase morality and improve customs, it is still

⁹¹³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 412.

⁹¹⁴ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 285.

best to rely on Confucianism. Even though [my] mind is affiliated to the Buddha, it is improper to change the form [from Confucianism to Buddhist or other teachings]. Mingdao [Chen Hao 程顥 (1032-1085)], Xiangshan [Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139-1193)], Cihu [Yang Jian 楊簡 (1141-1226)], Baisha [Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428-1500)], and Yangming [Wang Shouren 王守仁 (1472-1529)], despite the difference of their achievements, can be adopted [as models of moral teachings]. [Among the neo-Confucian scholars,] only Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073), Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077), Shao Yong 邵雍 (1012-1077), and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) should be discarded because [some of their ideas] resemble that of demonic deities. Besides, we can adopt the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi which, despite their theoretical superiority/subtleness, cannot be distorted for the benefit of the advocates of demonic and absurd ideas.

又得手書，欣慰無量。所稱北都現象，令人發笑，然非蔡子民輩浮浪之說所能平也。佛法本宜獨修，若高張旗幟，必有浪人插足其間。況北方迷信之地，以釋迦與天魔等視邪？近上海有太虛上人發起覺社，意在與此曹相抵，道德學社已行至上海。然仍多浮淺饒洞之談。僕勉一應之，而不能以為是也。居賢善俗，仍以儒術為佳。雖心與佛相應，而形式不可更張。明道、象山、慈湖、白沙、楊明，所得各有深淺，要皆可用。唯周、張、邵、朱，亦近天魔之見，當屏絕耳。老、莊亦可道，雖陳義甚高，而非妖妄所能假借也。⁹¹⁵

“To increase morality and improve customs, it is still best to rely on Confucianism. Even though [my] mind is affiliated to the Buddha, it is improper to change the form [from Confucianism to Buddhist or other teachings].” This is the central sentence of the cited passage. Previous Zhang-scholars have frequently cited this sentence, as well as the metaphor of cereals and medicines in the previous letter, to demonstrate Zhang’s return from Buddhism to Confucianism,⁹¹⁶ which was commonly contextualized within Zhang’s concern with the anti-traditional radicalism following the New Culture Movement. However, there is an important reason that few have noticed, concerning the “abuse” when directly applying Buddhism to social and moral issues. We can find out this reason by a careful reading of this passage.

⁹¹⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 415.

⁹¹⁶ See, e.g. Jiang Mei, 2011, p. 10;

Without the original letter of Wu Chengshi, we do not know what the ridiculous phenomena in Beijing exactly refer to. Inferring from the context, they are presumably related to the redemptive groups which rapidly expanded in the early Republican era benefitting from both the confusing political atmosphere and their nationwide modern-style associations. As one of such groups, the Moral Studies Society (Daode xueshe 道德學社) declared that it aimed at promoting Confucian teachings, practice humanism, and promoting world equality and peace. But in reality, it integrated not only the beliefs and practices of indigenous religions, including Buddhism and popular religion, but also those of foreign ones such as Christianity and even Islam. While traditional rituals of spirit-writing were maintained, preaching an apocalyptic vision, it paid more attention to propagating its religious ideas through printing media.⁹¹⁷ By the terms such as “superstitious” (*mixin* 迷信), “demonic deities” (*tianmo* 天魔) and “demonic and absurd” (*yaowang* 妖妄), Zhang fully expresses his hostility towards these religious groups. Such hostile expressions, to some extent inheriting the way the Qing government stigmatized the so-called “White Lotus” sects, are partly aroused by his deep concern with the increasing penetration of Christian churches into local communities of China. While he genuinely promoted the syncretism between Buddhism, the Āstika and Nāstika schools, and the classical text-based Daoism and Confucianism, Zhang firmly refused to further include foreign monotheistic religions or indigenous redemptive societies.

Now, let us take a closer look and discuss other details of this passage. At its outset, we see Zhang’s criticism of Cai Yuanpei who had served as the president of Peking University from January 1917. Cai’s ideas, criticized as “superficial and drifting,” may refer to his proposal to establish the Moral Promotion Society (*Jinde hui* 進德會) in January 1918. If this is the case, the phenomena in Beijing that Wu had discussed with his master was the perceived moral corruption of the faculty members of the newborn Westernized universities. Considering the main theme of his letter, however, Zhang’s target may more likely be Cai’s endorsement of the “spiritual studies” (*lingxue* 靈學), which was attempting to establish itself as a new academic field of “psychical research” on paranormal phenomena. Zhang’s criticism can be explained by the fact that several

⁹¹⁷ Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, p. 93. Fan Chunwu, 2020, Chapter 3 of *Text and Context in the Modern History of Chinese Religions*, pp. 82-125.

redemptive groups adopted the discourses of the spiritual studies and displayed spirit photographs of their divinities.⁹¹⁸

A little further in this passage, Zhang talks about the Bodhi Society, initiated by Taixu several months earlier, of which he served as one of the main sponsors. This organization was intended to serve as a springboard for publication and ultimately for the reform of the *sangha*.⁹¹⁹ Despite his appreciation of Taixu's effort to confront the expansion of the Moral Studies Society, Zhang only reluctantly supported the latter's promotion of the *sangha*'s engagement in social affairs. The reason has been offered earlier in the letter: "For Buddhist teaching, the proper way is to cultivate by oneself. If we hold aloft the banner, the opportunists will inevitably join in [the religious movement]." The proposal to cultivate by oneself corresponds to Zhang's constant but invisible meditative practice throughout his life during the Republican period (see Chapter 4). The term "hold aloft the banner" 高張旗幟 has a very similar connotation as "the religious propagation of Buddhism" 昌言宗教, a term appearing in the earlier citation of "Preface to the Chinese Buddhist Canon Emended by Pinjia Jingshe." Indeed, the two texts share the same views and concerns.

After recognizing Confucianism as the main form of moral teachings, Zhang makes comments on a wide range of neo-Confucian scholars as well as Laozi and Zhuangzi. By careful reading, we can perceive the continuity between this part and the former part of the letter. Zhang's division of the neo-Confucians into two groups is based on their ability to resist demonic and absurd ideas. It is also this criterion that leads to his reservation towards Cai Yuanpei and Taixu's proposals, the latter being an example of directly applying Buddhism to social and moral issues. This criterion has been put forward in a letter that Zhang wrote to Qian Xuantong, one of his closest disciples, on April 18, 1910. In this letter, Zhang approves of the capability of Buddhist canonical works, along with the *Zhuangzi*, to resist Christianity while expressing his unease about certain passages of ancient Confucian classics where the names of "supreme lord" (*shangdi* 上帝) and "heaven" (*tian* 天) appear.⁹²⁰ In Zhang's 1918 letter to Wu, his attitude towards Buddhism and Confucianism

⁹¹⁸ Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, p. 103. For further reading, see, e.g. Huang Ko-wu, 2007.

⁹¹⁹ Holmes Welch, 1968, p. 54.

⁹²⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 180.

is largely reversed and his target shifts from Christianity to indigenous redemptive societies. Nonetheless, the underlying consideration remains the same.

Next, in his 1922 series of lectures on National studies, although Zhang reaffirms the theoretical superiority of Buddhism and pre-Qin masters' teachings over neo-Confucian scholars, he concludes by criticizing the negative moral effect when Buddhist teaching was directly applied in history: "The persons who directly studied Buddhist teachings easily turned out to be defiant. The ancient scholars who exclusively taught Buddhism and neglected Confucianism were often morally discredited, as shown by the case of Wang Wei (691/701-761) who surrendered to An Lushan (c. 703-757) and Zhang Shangying (1043-1122) who associated with Cai Jing (1047-1126), which were shameful." 至於直接研究佛法，容易流入猖狂。古來專講佛而不講儒學的，多不足取，如王維降安祿山，張商英和蔡京輩往來，都是可恥的。⁹²¹ This viewpoint resonated with Zhang's 1917 letter to Wu Chengshi critically reflecting on the moral character and conduct of Yang Wenhui's disciples. The lesson of the former text was drawn from reading historiographies whereas that of the latter was based on Zhang's life experiences. While it remains uncertain whether, by referring to ancient examples, Zhang alludes to his contemporaries (such as Sun Yuyun), it is evident that both discussions aim at revealing the ineffectiveness and even abuse of the direct application of Buddhism to social and moral issues.

Meanwhile, Zhang set out to explicitly restore the undermined authority of Confucius. Between October 1917 and October 1918, he gave a series of lectures for the academics of Sichuan Province. During one lecture on the research approach to Chinese literature, Zhang shares that "I used to extremely appreciate Buddhism and despise the teachings of Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi. I later realized that this was a wrong idea. Buddha, Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi all taught the theory of the mind. However, the teachings of Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi are ultimately more relevant for practical affairs. Comparing Confucius' teaching and those of Laozi and Zhuangzi, we see the same situation. The teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi are superior and subtle [in theory], however, they are ultimately not as good as Confucius' teaching in resolving social and moral problems through settled rules and measures." 我從前傾倒佛法，鄙薄孔子、老莊，後

⁹²¹ Zhang Taiyan, 1997a, p. 48.

來覺得這個見解錯誤。佛、孔、老、莊所講的，雖都是心，但是孔子、老莊所講的，究竟不如佛底不切人事。孔子、老莊自己相較，也有這樣情形。老莊雖高妙，究竟不如孔子底有法度可尋，有一定底做法。⁹²² We can perceive some continuity between this lecture and the 1911 lecture later entitled “On the Relationship of Buddhism with Religion, Philosophy, and Reality.” In the latter, Zhang points out that the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi are better than Buddhism for practical affairs. In the former, he adopts the same criterion to emphasize the higher value of Confucius’ teaching.

Roughly at the same time as his 1922 series of lectures in Shanghai, in reply to a letter of Liu Yizheng, Zhang sincerely apologizes for his early criticisms of Confucius, especially in the 1906 essay “Brief Discussion on the Teachings of the Pre-Qin Masters” (see Chapter 2). Moreover, he expresses, in the last part of this letter, his regret that these improper words have since then fueled radical anti-traditionalism among the next generation of intellectuals.⁹²³

Up to now, we have traced Zhang’s rebalance between Buddhism and Confucianism from the late 1910s to the 1920s as he endeavored to restore the authority of Confucius and reevaluate the value of neo-Confucian scholars. In the last decade of his life (1927-1936), especially following the establishment of Zhang Taiyan’s Academic Society of National Studies (Zhangshi Guoxue Jiangxihui 章氏國學講習會) in Suzhou in the summer of 1932, Zhang devoted most of his energy to preserving the Chinese cultural heritage and advocating the reading of Confucian classics. Despite his disapproval of the Nationalist government which was established following the military success of the Northern Expedition (*beifa* 北伐, 1926-1928),⁹²⁴ Zhang’s advocacy echoed the Reading Classics Movement promoted by the government led by Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975). Among the Confucian classics, Zhang gave priority to four texts, the *Classics of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing* 孝經), the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學), “The Conduct of the Scholar” (*Ruxing* 儒行) which is a chapter of the *Classics of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), and “Mourning Attire” (*Sangfu* 喪服) which is a chapter of the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* (*Yili* 儀禮). In a 1933 lecture in Suzhou, Zhang explains that there is no substantial difference

⁹²² Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 189.

⁹²³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 970-972.

⁹²⁴ For Zhang’s views on the Northern Expedition and the underlying reasons based on nationalism, see Luo Zhitian, 1997.

between the National Studies he teaches then and taught in the past (in Tokyo, Beijing, and elsewhere). However, he says, times have changed and he feels the urgency to preserve the old morality and restore the ethical way of life and hence suspend the pursuit of in-depth knowledge or advanced self-cultivation (like silent sitting meditation).⁹²⁵

Following his turn towards reaffirming Confucius' authority and advocating the reading of Confucian classics, Buddhism as a topic was less and less discussed in Zhang's public writings. Nonetheless, a large part of his Buddhist thought remained unchanged (though not significantly developed either). I offer two texts of Zhang's last years to demonstrate this.

The first was a text entitled by the editor as “Discussions on Life” (*Lun shengming* 論生命). Probably based on Zhang's lecture in 1935, it was recorded by his disciple Sun Shiyang 孫世揚 (1892-1947) and published on November 1, 1936, in No. 28 of the *Zhiyan Journal* 制言, the official journal of Zhang Taiyan's Academic Society of National Studies. In this lecture, Zhang introduces the contemporary biological knowledge which divides the functions of the forebrain (related to the sensorial faculties) and the back of the brain (related to the motorial faculties). He then makes suggestive discussions according to his long-established theory based on Yogācāra Buddhism. Within this theoretical framework, the forebrain is the biological basis of the “root of the mind” (*yigen* 意根), more widely known as the *manas* consciousness (*monashi* 末那識, “deluded consciousness”) which is the seventh consciousness (in the theory of Eight Consciousnesses). The first five consciousnesses are based on the spreading neural systems which converge in the forebrain. In contrast to the other seven consciousnesses, the *ālaya*-consciousness does not have any material root, but nonetheless manifests its existence through the functioning of the heart rather than the brain. To demonstrate the relation between the *ālaya*-consciousness and the heart, Zhang resorts to the record of Luo Dafu and several other neo-Confucian scholars about their attainment of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. His argumentation, besides, also relies on his knowledge of Chinese medicine.⁹²⁶

Among the other lectures of the same period, mostly about National studies, this

⁹²⁵ Wang Rui, 2014, pp. 89-98, 107-119. For further readings, see a dozen of Zhang's lectures between 1932 and 1935 (2011a, pp. 326-424).

⁹²⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, pp. 619-620.

lecture is striking for its theme. However, it shares some common interest with several early texts, especially the 1899 essay “On Bacteria.” Chapter 1 has demonstrated how Zhang reinterpreted the Buddhist concept of transmigration to accommodate it to evolutionism. Moreover, he argues that “despite their stupidity, the air and the metal also have minimal awareness/cognition. Contemporary people only recognize plants as having awareness, which was a further mistake.” 空氣金鐵雖頑，亦有極微之知。今人徒以植物為有知者，益失之矣。⁹²⁷ In the 1911 Buddhist lecture, Zhang returns to this argument and develops the concept of “awareness/cognition” (*zhi* 知) according to Yogācāra theory.⁹²⁸ The 1935 lecture “Discussions on Life” should be seen as a remote resonance to these earlier efforts to reconcile Buddhism with biology. Furthermore, it shows that during his later years, Zhang was still concerned with the truthfulness of Buddhist teaching. For this purpose, he endeavored to rearrange the relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism on the one hand, and rescue Buddhist theories from the challenge of natural sciences on the other.

The second was Zhang Taiyan’s letter to Zhang Jiluan 張季鸞 (1888-1941), written on June 6, 1935. Zhang Jiluan was a famous journalist and the chief editor of the Ta Kung Pao 大公報 (*L’Impartial*). This was a letter replying Zhang Jiluan’s consultation on how to cope with the growing threat of Japanese invasion. Zhang replies in three points. The first, very brief, emphasizes the importance of National Essence (especially historiography) which is, in his eyes, the basis of nationalism. The second talks about nationalism in the context of “saving the nation” (*jiuwang 救亡*). The main body of this point is Zhang’s advice for the political leaders in terms of military strategies. Nonetheless, he then shifts his hope to the nationalist sentiment of Chinese people and refers to the cases of how the Han nation was restored after the collapse of the Song and Ming dynasties.⁹²⁹

The third point begins with Zhang’s general commentary on Chinese culture, saying that, except demonic and absurd mythical stories and lascivious novels, all cultural forms have their right to exist. Then, he turns to praising the spirit of “chivalrous (Confucian) scholars” (*ruxia 儒俠*), of which the most important textual basis is “The Conduct of the

⁹²⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 1977, p. 131.

⁹²⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, pp. 104-105.

⁹²⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 1235-1236.

Scholar,” considering it as especially suitable for the current situation. What makes this letter revealing are its final words: “What should be suspended for the moment is the theory purely aiming at transcending the human beings and the states. That is why nowadays I consider it improper to apply Buddhist teaching alone [to social issues].” 宜暫時擱置者，曰純粹超人超國之學說，故鄙人今日於佛法亦謂不可獨用。⁹³⁰ The term “transcending the human beings and the states” (*chaoren chaoguo* 超人超國) probably refers to the main theme of his 1907 essay “On the Five Negations.” It might also concern certain ideas put forward by the new generation of Chinese anarchists, such as Zhu Qianzhi’s theory of “cosmic revolution.” Whatever the exact meaning of this term is, this citation supports the argument that till the end of his life, Zhang never fully negated the social-political values of Buddhism. The tone of the citation seems to be negative. However, considering the political context of this letter, it is reasonable to interpret Zhang’s expressions from the opposite angle. Saying that “it [is] improper to apply Buddhist teaching alone [to social issues]” in effect implies the approval of applying Buddhism alongside Confucianism. “Suspended for the moment” shows that Zhang continued treating his Buddhist utopia as desirable and speculating on the possibility of accomplishing it in the distant future even under the pressing crisis of national survival. In sum, while Zhang’s 1906 proposal of combining Buddhism (as the new religion) with National Essence was abandoned several years later, his attachment to the doctrine of non-creation persisted, which previous researchers did not notice.

Texts discussing similar topics to the two aforementioned texts are rare in the writings of Zhang’s last two decades. But it does not necessarily mean that Zhang only paid very limited attention to these topics. According to Zhang Nianchi 章念馳 (1942-), Zhang Taiyan’s grandson who has greatly contributed to the collection and publication of Zhang Taiyan’s works, among the abundant posthumous manuscripts of his grandfather, those on Buddhism represented the largest proportion. Seen by many at the former residence of the Zhang family in Suzhou as late as the early 1980s, these manuscripts were unfortunately lost afterward.⁹³¹ Despite the lack of detailed information about these Buddhist manuscripts, it is reasonable to assume that a large part was written in his later

⁹³⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 1236.

⁹³¹ Zhang Nianchi, 2011, p. 93.

life. Hence, Zhang's intellectual interest in Buddhism after his return to Confucian classics is probably underestimated given the current philological condition. The two aforementioned texts are merely the visible tip of the iceberg.

* Zhang Taiyan's social networking within Buddhist communities *

This section introduces Zhang's social networking within Buddhist communities, both the laity and the *sangha*. Just like the above investigation of his social thought of Buddhism, this introduction follows a chronological order. Zhang's interaction with Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu will be studied in the next section but the two will be referred to in this section when necessary. Zhang's relationship with several Buddhist figures, especially Huang Zongyang, Su Manshu, and Yang Wenhui has been discussed in previous chapters, and sources discussed there will not be revisited below. Other than these cases, the primary sources about Zhang's contacts with other people are too limited to allow in-depth case studies of particular persons. By assembling the fragmentary sources, we are nonetheless able to sketch a general picture of Zhang's active and long-standing involvement in various Buddhist communities.

Let us start from Zhang's early periods. We have several pieces of materials related to Yang Wenhui. Firstly, in Zhang's letter to Wu Baochu, written on January 21, 1902, he talks about a friend named Jiang Hou 蔣侯 who wishes to go to Nanjing to attend the lecture on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.⁹³² Jiang Hou refers to Jiang Zhiyou 蔣智由 (1865-1929),⁹³³ a member of the Chinese Society of Education and the Restoration Society and a prominent poet. In the following letter, written on February 14 of the same year, Zhang asks Wu what he has learned from attending the lecture on the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* in Nanjing the previous winter.⁹³⁴ While it remains unknown whether Jiang and Wu had attended the same series of lectures and what they thought about this academic experience, we can be sure that Yang Wenhui was its host and lecturer. Besides, according to Goldfuss' study, as early as 1896, Liang Qichao had met

⁹³² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 113.

⁹³³ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 72

⁹³⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 114; Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 75.

Yang in Nanjing.⁹³⁵ Liang's close friend Xia Zengyou also studied Buddhism from Yang, as Chen Jidong suggested.⁹³⁶ Apart from his influence on the intelligentsia of the Jiangnan Area as an eminent lay Buddhist master, Yang's role as the main sponsor for the printing of the Buddhist canon was also significantly important. As presented in Chapter 1, during Zhang's imprisonment following the Subao Case, he managed to obtain the *Yogācārabhūmi Śāstra* from Jiang Weiqiao. The Buddhist scripture he owned was probably the edition produced by Yang's print house.⁹³⁷

The two letters above show that Zhang then kept following Yang's Buddhist activities. But we do not have direct proof about the two persons' contact during this period. On the other hand, in Ouyang Jingwu's biography of Yang Wenhui, the author includes Zhang as one of the prominent disciples of his master, along with Tan Sitong and several others.⁹³⁸ So there should have been some face-to-face contact between Zhang and Yang. However, the distance and tension between the two exposed in the 1909 correspondence (via Yu Tongbo), along with the language of these letters, seem to disapprove their master-disciple relationship. The reality remains uncertain. The most plausible possibility seems to be that Zhang had turned to Yang for his instruction on Buddhism but did not establish himself as a formal disciple of the latter. In this scenario, Ouyang exaggerated the intimacy between Yang and Zhang which was beneficial for the reputation of his master; and for his own reputation as well since he described himself as the legitimate inheritor of Yang's religious enterprise.⁹³⁹

As a general comment, Yang Wenhui who was widely considered as the most important precursor of the Buddhist revival in modern Chinese history, engaged in reformist movements concerning not only Buddhism but also broader social issues. By no means an advocate of anticlericalism as Ouyang was, his relationship with the *sangha* nonetheless was more distant than previous lay Buddhists like Peng Shaosheng.⁹⁴⁰ Hence, it is necessary to apprehend Zhang's early contact with Yang Wenhui in the context of

⁹³⁵ Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001, pp. 88-89.

⁹³⁶ Chen Jidong, 2019d, p. 123.

⁹³⁷ Gabriele Goldfuss (2001, pp. 51-67) has undertaken a comprehensive study of Yang's printing activity. One fact she mentioned (2001, p. 104 n. 51) serves as indirect proof of my judgment: Sun Yuyun owned more than two hundred Buddhist books in 1903, all of which were printed in Nanjing by Yang Wenhui.

⁹³⁸ Ouyang Jingwu, 2009, p. 379.

⁹³⁹ Ouyang Jingwu, 2009, p. 379.

⁹⁴⁰ Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001, pp. 223-224.

political reformism (as does Chapter 1). We will see in the following parts that Zhang's interactions with and views on Buddhist laymen and monks during his third stay in Japan and the 1910s were also linked with politics.

Zhang's early contact with Yang Wenhui contributed to his appreciation of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and later the foundation of his *Qiwu* philosophy. Yang's name and words were referred to in multiple texts by Zhang, demonstrating his long-standing influence. Some of this influence might have been mediated through Zhang's contact with several disciples of Yang. Yang disapproved and was even hostile towards Zhang's anti-governmental stance (see Chapter 4). Nonetheless, this did not prevent his disciples to keep sympathetic interactions with Zhang and his revolutionary comrades. A good example was Gui Bohua. Born into a gentry family of Jiangxi 江西 Province, Gui became Yang's disciple in his middle age and was considered by Yang as his best disciple in Buddhist studies. Furthermore, several of Yang's important disciples, including Ouyang Jingwu, were introduced to him by Gui. Gui engaged in the Wuxu Reform and had contact with Liang Qichao. In 1904, he and his younger brother pursued their studies in Japan on Chinese governmental funds.⁹⁴¹ According to the record of Song Jiaoren's diary, Zhang introduced Gui to him on December 6, 1906.⁹⁴² So Zhang must have met Gui in the first months of his third stay in Japan. In previous chapters, I have introduced Zhang's agreement with Gui's change of thought in favor of Yogācāra Buddhism (Chapter 2), and Gui's interest in learning Sanskrit and his divination practices (Chapter 4), all of which happened during the two persons' interactions in Japan. Zhang was impressed by both Gui's scholarly insight and religious sincerity. It was also in Japan where Zhang met Ouyang Jingwu who came to pursue his Buddhist studies encouraged by Yang Wenhui.⁹⁴³ It is likely that Gui Bohua had arranged the first meeting between the two. In March 1915, most of Gui's writings were burned in a fire accident, which largely caused his death just afterwards.⁹⁴⁴ This unfortunate ending shadowed his importance as an eminent Buddhist scholar as well as an active organizer of Buddhist social networks.

Another important relationship Zhang established in Japan was with the monk

⁹⁴¹ Yu Lingbo, 1995, pp. 322-324.

⁹⁴² Song Jiaoren, 2014, pp. 294-295.

⁹⁴³ Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001, p. 156.

⁹⁴⁴ Yu Lingbo, 1995, p. 324.

Yuexia 月霞 (1857-1917). Born in Hubei Province and having received ordination in Nanjing at the age of 20, Yuexia devoted his later life to the education of the *sangha* and was considered as a major contributor to the revival of Huayan Buddhism in modern China. In the early 1900s, he travelled to several Southeast Asian countries and India to investigate the Buddhist situation in these countries.⁹⁴⁵ Under the invitation of Gui Bohua, he paid a visit to Tokyo in 1906 and gave a Buddhist speech there. Zhang Taiyan, along with Liu Shipei (and He Zhen), Su Manshu, and Sun Yuyun attended this speech.⁹⁴⁶ In 1908, Yuexia served as a teacher in Yang Wenhui's newly-established Qihuan Jingshe Academy 祇洹精舍 in Nanjing. Among his colleagues, we see Su Manshu again teaching English and Dixian 諦閒 (1858-1932) as the educational inspector who later became one of the most influential monks of Republican China. Among the monk students, there were Taixu and his close ally Renshan 仁山 (1887-1951).⁹⁴⁷ Yuexia's case again demonstrates the central role Yang Wenhui played in the Buddhist revival of modern China and Gui Bohua's importance in constructing the Buddhist social network around his master and facilitating interactions. Furthermore, it manifests the close links between Buddhist communities and political activists. Despite the difference in their political stance and social position, Yang Wenhui, Gui Bohua (layman Buddhists), Zhang Taiyan (political activist), and Yuexia (Buddhist monk) all served as bridges between the religious and political domains.

No primary sources remain about Zhang's contact with Yuexia in Japan. However, Yuexia's name is referred to in the latter part of Zhang and Su's 1907 "Letter of Admonition to Disciples of the Buddha in the Ten Directions": "Arriving [at Tokyo] from Nanjing last year, the Chan master Yuexia encountered several persons persuading him to take a wife. The Chan master laughed and disregarded these proposals." 去歲有月霞禪師自金陵來，即遇多人勸其蓄內，禪師笑而置之。⁹⁴⁸ The reference to Yuexia supports the authors' argument that, while Japanese monks are superior to the Chinese ones in studying Buddhist doctrinal teachings, they are unable to be a match for the latter in precepts and meditation. The same argument appears in a letter from Zhang to Huang Zongyang (the only remaining one of 1911) just after Zhang cites Yang Wenhui's words

⁹⁴⁵ Yu Lingo, 1995, pp. 23-25.

⁹⁴⁶ He Jianming, 2002, p. 199.

⁹⁴⁷ Yu Lingo, 1995, p. 24.

⁹⁴⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 246.

with approval that “China should/will be the model/main base for (worldwide) Buddhist teachings.” 中夏當為佛法之宗。⁹⁴⁹ This letter shows that, despite the unpleasant correspondence two years earlier, Zhang was still sympathetic to Yang’s sense of religious mission. Moreover, the higher appraise of the Chinese *sangha* compared with its Japanese counterpart contrasted with the critical stance Zhang held in the 1907 public letter, showing that his views on the current situation of the Chinese *sangha* were multi-faceted rather than purely critical. More importantly, both the 1907 and 1911 letters manifest Zhang’s support for preserving the monastic precepts despite his penchant for theoretical thinking, which should be grasped along with Zhang’s lifelong meditative practice (Chapter 4). This balanced attitude towards Buddhist practices and texts was also related to Zhang’s criticism of Ouyang Jingwu, to be discussed in the next section.

At the turn of 1912, the Provisional Government of the Republic of China was established in a hurry in Nanjing. Benefiting from the revolutionary environment, an extremely controversial event, later labeled as the “invasion of the Jinshan Monastery” (Danao Jinshan 大鬧金山), happened shortly afterwards in this monastery (situated by the Yangtze River just outside the city of Zhenjiang 鎮江) which served as a model for all the monasteries in China. The main plotters of this power struggle within the *sangha* were Taixu and Renshan. Under the name of organizing an inaugural conference for their newly-established Association for the Advancement of Buddhism (Fojiao xiejhui 佛教協進會) at the Jiangtian Temple 江天寺 (the main base of the Jinshan Monastery), they launched sudden attacks against the senior monks of the monastery, aided by the friends from the Socialist party they had invited. A major aim, they claimed, was to establish modern schools for the monks, which in turn legitimated their self-claimed new leadership.⁹⁵⁰ This event resulted in severe physical conflicts and became a widely spread scandal. As a tough response to this event, Zhang Taiyan jointly signed a petition telegraph on February 29, 1912, along with several other social elites under the name of “all members of the Society of Buddhist Studies (Foxue yanjiuhui 佛學研究會).” This telegraph was sent to the Provisional President Sun Yat-sen, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, asking for governmental protection of the Jinshan Temple against Taixu and

⁹⁴⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 148.

⁹⁵⁰ Holmes Welch, 1968, pp. 29-33.

Renshan's group.⁹⁵¹ In his 1907 "Letter to Governors and Laymen," Zhang has criticized the abuses of expropriating temple property by arbitrary governmental order. His rejection of the radical change of monastic institutions through controversial procedures, on the other hand, reveals his concern with the young monks' arbitrary appropriation of the rhetoric of reform and progress serving their own agenda. Nonetheless, this episode by no means implied Zhang's withdrawal of his support for systematic reforms of the *sangha* and did not prevent him from building a relationship with Taixu the next year.

The first meeting between Zhang and Taixu took place in Shanghai on June 15, 1913, in the Aili Garden 愛儻園, built by Silas A. Hardoon for his wife Liza Roos. This meeting was arranged by Huang Zongyang who managed the print house of Pinjia Jingshe 頻伽精舍 for the Buddhist canon in the garden.⁹⁵² Having provided important financial aids to the revolutionaries a decade earlier, the couple of Hardoon and Roos (a pious lay Buddhist) now became sponsors of Huang and his friends. Before going to Beijing to fight against Yuan Shikai in August 1913, Zhang had spent much time in this garden. Apart from Huang Zongyang and Taixu, he probably also had frequent interactions with Yuexia who later (in 1914) established the Huayan University 華嚴大學 in the garden offering modern education for monks.⁹⁵³ Within this Buddhist social network, Huang Zongyang played a central and eclectic role and endeavored to reconcile the confrontation between radical young monks and conservative monasticism.⁹⁵⁴

During his house confinement in Beijing from late 1913 to mid-1916, Zhang endured constant mental and physical sufferings. Meanwhile, his friends and acquaintances (even monks) faced fast-changing political circumstances and were under the pressure of political alignment. Two of his private letters concerned Yuexia. The first was Zhang's letter to Huang Zongyang, written on March 19, 1916. This letter has been briefly discussed for its connection with Zhang's netherworld dreams. In the middle part of the letter, Zhang mentions two monks' current situation followed by his comment: "Master Dixian preaches Buddhist doctrines here [in Beijing]. His improper choice of sponsors has caused a scandal

⁹⁵¹ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 226.

⁹⁵² Huang Zongyang, 2011, p. 232.

⁹⁵³ Huang Zongyang, 2011, p. 233. According to Yu Lingbo (1995), it was Kang Youwei who advised Liza Roos to establish a Buddhist educational institution. The latter then entrusted Yuexia to be responsible for this project.

⁹⁵⁴ He Jianming, 2002, pp. 200-201.

in the public opinion. Master Yuexia, fortunately, has properly reacted to the changing circumstances and conserves the same reputation as before. ‘This-worldly *dharma*’ and ‘other-worldly *dharma*’ are after all inseparable.” 諦閒上人在此說法，託非其人，物議騷然。月霞師幸尚見幾，聲價稍未損耳。世出世法，畢竟不可分離。⁹⁵⁵ The circumstances in the discussion refer to the change of state system in 1915. Both Dixian and Yuexia arrived in Beijing this year accepting the invitation of the Yuan government. Following Yuan’s formal revival of hereditary monarchy, Yuexia returned to southern China with the excuse of illness whereas Dixian continued staying in Beijing preaching the doctrines of Tiantai Buddhism.⁹⁵⁶ The second letter was from Zhang to Yuexia, written earlier on June 26, 1915. Zhang praises Yuexia for his fearless spirit in contrast with many other Buddhists who have exposed their flattery and hypocrisy in the recent political turbulence. Briefly talking about his own mental sufferings, Zhang then sighs that even Yang Wenhui died (in 1911) in a mental state of deep concern rather than mental tranquility. He places his hope on Yuexia to revive Buddhism.⁹⁵⁷

In addition to his interactions with Yuexia, Huang Zongyang, Taixu, and others, Zhang had contact with the monk Yingguang 印光 (1862-1940), the major advocate of Pure Land Buddhism who exerted a tremendous influence on the lay elites of Republican China.⁹⁵⁸ The conversations between the two were recorded by Sun Zhicheng 孫至誠 (dates unknown, courtesy name Sun Sifang 孫思昉), a scholar of National Studies who became Zhang’s disciple in 1931. Entitled “Anecdotal Records of My Conversations with Master Zhang of Yuhang County” (*Ye Yuhang Zhangxiansheng jiyu* 謁餘杭章先生紀語), this primary source was included in a collection of anecdotal writings of the well-known essayist Xu Yishi 徐一士 (1890-1971). Sun’s record was based on his conversations with Zhang in the summer of 1931. However, the date of the conversations between the latter and Yingguang (probably through correspondence) is unknown.⁹⁵⁹ Despite the brevity of the record, the two persons’ divergence is clearly manifested on whether and how Buddhist teaching can “transform the people’s minds” 轉移人心. Yingguang lays his confidence on

⁹⁵⁵ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 152.

⁹⁵⁶ Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying, 1989, pp. 51, 55.

⁹⁵⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 780

⁹⁵⁸ To know more about Yingguang and his Pure Land Revival Movement, see Jan Kiely, 2017.

⁹⁵⁹ I have not checked the collection of Yingguang’s letters to see whether his correspondence with Zhang is preserved there. This is a defect that I may get rid of in the future.

the validity of the doctrine of karmic reward and punishment whereas Zhang expresses his suspicion whether this doctrine can still convince the educated people in an age of science.⁹⁶⁰ Both persons' arguments are no surprise to us. The point I would like to make based on this record is rather that his dislike of Pure Land doctrines did not result in Zhang's neglect or contempt towards the master of this tradition. Instead, he was aware of the gap between intellectual achievements and practical (especially moral) merits. This awareness will be more significantly manifested through a comparison with Ouyang's attitude towards the leading monks later in this study. Besides Yinguang, Zhang also had contact with Hongyi 弘一 (1880-1942, also known by his original name Li Shutong 李叔同), a famous Buddhist monk and artist.⁹⁶¹ So, in sum, Zhang had built a relationship with several of the most prominent monks of his time.

The part above discusses Zhang's social networking with the lay Buddhists around Yang Wenhui and with several leading monks of his time. Now, let us turn to the topics of Buddhist institutions, transnational activities, and intergenerational contacts. First of all, following the foundation of the Republic in China, Zhang endorsed various Buddhist organizations. The first was the Chinese General Buddhist Association (Zhonghua Fojiao Zonghui 中華佛教總會), set up in Shanghai on April 1, 1912, which may be fairly described as the first national Buddhist organization in Chinese history. Jingan 敬安 (1851-1912), more widely known as Eight Fingers (Bazhi Toutuo 八指頭陀), was elected as its president and also the main representative for the petition travel to Beijing.⁹⁶² In March 1913, at the first annual conference of this association, Zhang Taiyan, along with Sun Yuyun and Xiong Xiling 熊希齡 (1870-1937), were elected as the honorary chairmen.⁹⁶³ Xiong was a politician who served as Premier of the Republic of China from July 1913 to February 1914. He played a role in transmitting the news of Jingan's death to Yuan Shikai and facilitating the ratification of the charter Jingan had struggled for.⁹⁶⁴

The urgent task the Chinese General Buddhist Association had to deal with was to acquire legal status for Buddhism in the newborn Republic now that the protection given

⁹⁶⁰ Xu Yishi, 1983, pp. 76-77.

⁹⁶¹ Zhang Nianchi, 2011, p. 93. For the readers interested in Hongyi, keep an eye on the forthcoming articles and book of Raoul Birnbaum.

⁹⁶² Holmes Welch, 1968, pp. 35-37.

⁹⁶³ Zhang Nianchi, 2011, p. 92.

⁹⁶⁴ Holmes Welch, 1968, pp. 37-38.

by the Qing Empire had disappeared. Besides, there were two other events that made the establishment of such an organization more urgent. The first was the establishment of the Chinese Buddhist Association (Zhonghua Fojiao Hui 中華佛教會) by Ouyang Jingwu and a few friends of his on March 20, only ten days before the Chinese General Buddhist Association. The former, if successful, would empower Ouyang to realize his anticlerical agenda against the *sangha*.⁹⁶⁵ The second was the “invasion of the Jinshan Monastery.” It seemed that the Chinese General Buddhist Association achieved some success in coping with the impact of these two events. On the one hand, it had a much broader base than Ouyang’s rival association; the latter was dissolved shortly after. On the other, despite the tension caused by the “invasion of the Jinshan Monastery,” Taixu (disciple of Jingan) joined in the association serving as the chief editor of its official journal: the *Monthly Magazine of Buddhism* (*Fojiao yuebao* 佛教月報).⁹⁶⁶ This fact suggests that facing a tumultuous external environment, the *sangha* temporarily managed to ease internal conflicts. We have no record at hand concerning Zhang’s detailed participation in this association, but his choice of endorsing it instead of Ouyang’s, as well as his severe criticism against the “coup” at the Jinshan Monastery, suggests his preference that the Buddhist reforms were undertaken gradually at the condition that the regular order had been restored.

After being released in mid-1916 following the death of Yuan Shikai, Zhang again devoted himself to political activities. To gain support for Sun Yat-sen and Li Yuanhong to promote the Constitutional Protection Movement, Zhang spent much time over the next two years in traveling, first among the Chinese diaspora of Southeast Asia, then in the Southwestern region of China, during which he gave several speeches on Buddhism. In October 1918, he returned to Shanghai and engaged in Buddhist organizations and activities there for a decade, most of which were initiated and managed by Taixu. This episode is reserved for the next section. For the rest of this section, I would like to introduce two topics: Zhang’s transnational Buddhist social network and his contact with young Buddhist scholars.

During his trip to the Chinese diaspora of Southeast Asia, Zhang gave a series of

⁹⁶⁵ Holmes Welch, 1968, pp. 23, 33-34

⁹⁶⁶ Ruan Renze & Gao Zhennong eds. 1992, pp. 171-172.

speeches in Singapore, one of which, taking place at the Jile Temple 極樂寺 on November 11, 1916, was on Buddhism. The speech starts by referring to the speech of a certain Benzhong Chan master 本忠禪師 on the Buddhist doctrine of equality. Presumably, Benzhong was a native monk of Singapore who had given a speech before that of Zhang. Hence, Zhang treats him as his interlocutor and therefrom puts forward his own ideas on equality through a hierarchical schema comparing Buddhism (referring to different schools) and several other religions (Christianity, Vedānta, and Sāṃkhya).⁹⁶⁷ Another transnational endeavor was the Society of Ancient Asian Scholarship (Yazhou Guxuehui 亞洲古學會), which Zhang initiated in Shanghai on March 4, 1917. The first conference of the society was held on the same day and the second on April 8. The newspapers only recorded the names and speeches of the attendees from China and Japan, but several details seem to hint at the presence of representatives from several other Asian countries. Zhang gave speeches at both conferences.⁹⁶⁸

At the outset of the first speech, Zhang recalls his unrealized plan to establish such a society during his stay in Japan. Indeed, his motivations were consistent between this newly-inaugurated Society of the Ancient Scholarship, his diplomatic effort through the Asian Solidarity Society (see Chapter 3), and his passion for Indian religion and scholarship (see Chapter 4). At the end of this brief speech, Zhang proposes to invent a common language preparing for the communication of different Asian countries.⁹⁶⁹ It remains unknown whether Zhang had any idea about how this common language would be invented, and how he could avoid the self-contradiction between this proposal and his firm rejection of Esperanto. The subject of the second speech is more relevant to this chapter. It recommends Buddhism to serve as the bond for the unification of Asian countries. According to Zhang, it is better to assign this task to laymen instead of monks. The latter, adhering to a particular school, often hold sectarian views whereas the former are often more advanced in scholarship and hence less susceptible to sectarianism, which further means that they tend to be much more flexible regarding the sectarian differences of rules and precepts. To be noted, the unification Zhang hopes to accomplish is not just between

⁹⁶⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, pp. 167-168.

⁹⁶⁸ Apart from the two speeches, Zhang probably also wrote the manifesto for the society. Tang Zhijun, 2013, pp. 320-322.

⁹⁶⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 170.

Asian countries with a Buddhist population. He further believes that the Buddhist laymen are capable of transcending the distinction between Buddhism and the so-called *waidao* religions in order to facilitate a general unification in Asia.⁹⁷⁰ We have noticed such inclusivism in Zhang's attitude towards Indian religions (see Chapters 4 and 5). The valuable point of this speech lies in the privilege it gives to the laity over the monk, which contrasts with several other texts of Zhang that confirm the advantage of the latter in meditation and observance of precepts.

Finally, we have several primary sources witnessing Zhang's interaction with young Buddhist scholars. The first was Tang Dayuan's 唐大圓 (1885-1941) record of Zhang's words during their two-day conversations in 1935. Born in Hunan 湖南 Province, Tang converted to Buddhism under the Pure Land master Yinguang in his early years. He then devoted himself to studying Yogācāra Buddhism and was recruited in 1922 as a lecturer at the Wuchang Buddhist Institute (Wuchang Foxueyuan 武昌佛學院) which, established by Taixu, was a major modern Buddhist education institute at the time. In the preface of his recollection, Tang recalls his trip from Hubei Province to Nanjing to give a series of lectures on Buddhist literature and Oriental culture following the invitation of National Central University 國立中央大學 and University of Nanking 金陵大學 as well as the municipal government of Nanjing. He took advantage of this trip, paying a visit to Zhang in Suzhou on March 21. According to Tang's recollection, Zhang welcomed him warmly despite his illness (which usually led him to decline to receive visitors). They talked about Buddhism for about four hours. Their conversation continued the next day on Confucian classics, pre-Qin masters' teachings, and history for nearly three hours.⁹⁷¹ The notes Tang took about Zhang's Buddhist ideas do not go beyond the scope of two main Buddhist works of Zhang's Republican era, i.e. the *Esoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber* and the *Exoteric Words of the Zhuohan Chamber*. The value of these notes is rather its revelation of the well-established relationship between the two and Zhang's delightfulness in having someone communicating with him on Buddhist theoretical topics.

The second primary source was Zhang's two letters to Li Shicen 李石岑 (1892-1934) through whom he communicated indirectly with Lyu Cheng 呂澂 (1896-1989) and

⁹⁷⁰ Zhang Taiyan, 2011a, p. 173.

⁹⁷¹ Tang Dayuan, 1978, p. 423.

Li Jinxi 黎錦熙 (1890-1978). The first letter was recorded by the *Shishi Xinbao Journal* 時事新報 on January 19, 1921, whereas the second, written in July 1921, was recorded by the *Minduo Journal* 民鐸 in December 1921. Li Shicen was an influential philosopher of Republican China who at the time served as the chief editor of the *Xuedeng* 學燈, an academic supplement of the *Shishi Xinbao Journal*, and the *Minduo Journal*. Through these two bases, he introduced the scholarship of many contemporary Western philosophers including Henri Bergson, whose name appears in Zhang's first letter. Lyu Cheng was a Buddhist philologist acknowledged for his multilingual studies of the Buddhist canon (in Chinese, Sanskrit, Pali, and Tibetan). As the most appreciated disciple of Ouyang Jingwu, he took charge of the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning after his master's death in 1943. Li Jinxi was a well-known linguist, educator, and senior university administrator. Li Shicen served as the intermediary facilitating the theoretical conversation between Lyu Cheng, Li Jinxi, and Zhang Taiyan, who had not yet known each other at that time.

From the two letters, we know that the main subject of their conversation concerns Yogācāra theories (“methods of inference” vs. “direct experience”; the relationship between the six consciousnesses and the *ālaya*-consciousness; and Buddhist soteriology), but they also exchange their ideas about Chan Buddhism and neo-Confucianism. Lyu Cheng was the more important interlocutor of Zhang and hugely impressed the latter. At the beginning of the second letter, Zhang praises Lyu as an interlocutor “just whom he has been wished for” 誠求之不得者 and urges Li Shicen to introduce Lyu to him. Zhang then sighs that “preoccupied with political affairs, I fall behind in academic research and am often not available for theoretical dialogues.” 僕擾於人事，學殖荒落，往往不暇問難。 In finishing his second letter, Zhang uses “smiling into each other's eyes with complete mutual understanding” 相視而笑，莫逆於心 to conclude his conversations with Lyu Cheng, treating this young scholar whom he had never met as his bosom friend.⁹⁷² Zhang's contact with the aforementioned young scholars leads to a point that I have not emphasized enough in previous chapters: the fact that Zhang left Buddhism in a marginal position in his seminars in both Japan and China was partly due to the lack of qualified interlocutors

⁹⁷² Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 954-957.

or recipients among the students. On several occasions, including his 1916 letter to Xu Shouchang and one of his 1917 letters to Wu Chengshi, Zhang had expressed his anguish that his Buddhist thought was rarely understood.⁹⁷³ The joyfulness Zhang showed in receiving Tang Dayuan in person (towards the end of his life) and discussing with Lyu Cheng in an indirect way (at the beginning of 1920s) demonstrated how strong Zhang's passion for Buddhist theories was throughout his intellectual life.

* The relationship of Zhang Taiyan with Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu *

Let us start with the relationship between Zhang and Taixu. Three questions are to be investigated successively: Zhang's influence on young Taixu; their collaborations; and discussions about two texts of Zhang in relation to Taixu.

Born in Haining 海寧 of Zhejiang Province in 1890, Taixu belonged to a new generation compared with Zhang and had been impacted by the fast-changing and competitive trends of ideas and ideologies at an early stage of his life. In the spring of 1908, Taixu met the reformist monk Huashan 華山 (1870-1918) and was encouraged to read a variety of provocative publications of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, Yan Fu, and Zhang Taiyan, among other authors. What he read first from Zhang's writings were "Letter of Admonition to Disciples of the Buddha in the Ten Directions" and "Letter to the Governors and Laymen." Shortly after, through the introduction of the revolutionary monk Qiyun 栖雲 (dates unknown), he read *The People's Journal* and became sympathetic to the anti-Manchu revolution.⁹⁷⁴ Two years later (1910) in Guangzhou, he encountered anarchism⁹⁷⁵ and began to be associated with the Socialist party. The second wave of Zhang's influence came during Taixu's voluntary sealed confinement (*biguan* 閉關) in 1914-1916, roughly overlapping with the period of Zhang's house confinement. During this period, Taixu devoted himself to an extensive reading program of not only Buddhist canonical works but also the works of contemporary scholars, one of whom he found extremely intriguing was Zhang.⁹⁷⁶ Taixu's Buddhist thought matured after his three-year

⁹⁷³ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 407, 779.

⁹⁷⁴ Don A. Pittman, 2001, pp. 67-68.

⁹⁷⁵ Peter Zarrow, 1990, p. 25.

⁹⁷⁶ Don A. Pittman, 2001, p. 83.

concentrated studies.

The influence Zhang exerted on Taixu's thought and career were huge. Zhang's politicized interpretations of Buddhism published in *The People's Journal* had probably inspired Taixu to put forward a new form of Buddhism actively involved in public life under the new political system. Zhang's two open letters in 1907 should have encouraged the latter to struggle for systematic reform of Buddhist education and institutions. Apart from these two major aspects, in many of Taixu's concrete propositions, we can perceive the imprint of Zhang's Buddhist thought. During his polemics with Christians, for example, Taixu reiterated the criticisms articulated earlier by Zhang.⁹⁷⁷ More significant is the connection between their utopianism, already revealed in the conclusion of Chapter 3. Still, the way Taixu categorized Buddhism in terms of religion and philosophy⁹⁷⁸ was largely shaped by several of Zhang's texts (notably his 1906 speech, "On Establishing Religion," and his 1911 Buddhist lecture).

Some interactions and overlapping issues between the two persons have been discussed in the first two sections. Those reserved for this section concern their collaboration from 1918 to 1928. In 1918, Zhang became one of the main sponsors of Taixu's Bodhi Society and gave a speech there entitled "On Establishing the Concepts of Consciousness-only" (*Jianli mingyan weishi* 建立名言唯識). At the time, they lived in neighboring districts in Shanghai and had frequent contact. Zhang published articles in the *Bodhi Society Series* (*Jueshe congshu* 覺社叢書) and its influential successor the *Sound of the Sea Tide* (*Haichaoyin* 海潮音), both under the direction of Taixu.⁹⁷⁹ The face-to-face conversations continued in the 1920s when the condition allowed. After Zhang established the *Monthly Magazine of China* (*Huaguo yuekan* 華國月刊) in 1923, this magazine and the *Sound of the Sea Tide* often reprinted each other's articles. In the 1920s, Zhang endorsed Taixu's establishment of a series of societies aiming at reforming Buddhism, including the Buddhist Society of New Youth (Fohua Xinqingnian Hui 佛化新青年會) in 1923, the Asian Society of Buddhist Education (Quanya Fohua Jiaoyushe 全亞佛化教育社) in 1926, and the Dharma Garden (Fayuan 法苑) and the movement of

⁹⁷⁷ Don A. Pittman, 2001, p. 244.

⁹⁷⁸ Gong Jun, 2018, pp. 158-161.

⁹⁷⁹ For more extensive knowledge of the *Sound of the Sea Tide*, see Ge Zhaoguang, 2006, pp. 114-150.

new monks (*xinseng yundong* 新僧運動) in 1927. During the inauguration ceremony of the last occasion, Zhang gave a speech claiming that “we should fulfill the Buddhist principle of almsgiving (*dāna*) to save the people and the world” 當以佛教之大施主義以救人救世.⁹⁸⁰ The aforementioned 1918 and 1927 speeches of Zhang were not recorded. Among Zhang’s publications in collaboration with Taixu, I only get access to one article entitled “Defending the Yogācāra Doctrines: Refuting *On the Origin of the Human Being*” (*Shen weishizong yi: bo Yuanrenlun* 申唯識宗義：駁原人論), to be later discussed.

The influence of new ideological trends Taixu had received in his early years explain his radicalism triggering the “invasion of the Jinshan Monastery.” Encountering the setback of this risky operation, he readjusted his stance and strategy, creating the condition for his long-term collaboration with Zhang and other lay Buddhist elites mainly based in Shanghai such as Wang Yiting 王一亭 (1867-1938, influential businessman, philanthropist, and artist)⁹⁸¹ and Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874-1952, Buddhist scholar, the author of *A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms, Foxue dacidian* 佛學大辭典).⁹⁸² The embrace of the values of revolution and progress, combined with strategic flexibility and the talent for propaganda, allowed Taixu to develop alliances with people committed to or sympathetic with Buddhism from various social strata, thus better adapted to the rapidly changing socio-political landscape of the Republic compared with the more conservative senior monks.

However, we would overestimate Taixu’s success in this aspect if we uncritically accept the biographical materials produced by Taixu and his followers with propagandist purposes. A good example was the World Buddhist Federation (Shijie Fojiao Lianhehui 世界佛教聯合會) Taixu established in 1924 to promote (Chinese) Buddhism on a global scale. Several of its council members, including Liang Qichao, Ouyang Jingwu, Dixian, and Yingguang, did not authorize the use of their names or were even unaware of being listed. While conservative monks like Yingguang were not on good terms with Taixu, the layman Ouyang did not exclude reformist monks from the targets of his anticlericalism.⁹⁸³ Taixu’s ecumenical effort was moreover criticized by Westernized and secular intellectuals

⁹⁸⁰ Li Qingxin, 1999, pp. 159-160. Zhang Nianchi, 2011, p. 93.

⁹⁸¹ For a general understanding of Wang Yiting’s religious enterprise, see Paul Katz, 2010.

⁹⁸² As a recent study of Ding Fubao’s Buddhist writings, see Gregory A. Scott, 2019.

⁹⁸³ Holmes Welch, 1968, pp. 57, 119.

like Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) who sarcastically advised the former to do research rather than propaganda, to be a student rather than the teacher during his ecumenical trips.⁹⁸⁴ In addition, recent studies of the Republican governmental archives demonstrated that Taixu exaggerated the political support he had obtained.⁹⁸⁵

Having offered the examples above, it is uneasy to speculate Zhang's real attitude towards Taixu and his religious cause. The current primary sources, not comprehensive enough to support decisive answers, nonetheless allow us to make some preliminary comments. On the one hand, Zhang considers many of Taixu's ideas "superficial and indistinct" and is reluctant to take part in the latter's activities, as revealed in his 1918 letter to Wu Chengshi. As another instance of his reluctance, Zhang declined to give a speech to show support to Taixu's World Buddhist Federation, similar to Liang Qichao and Ouyang Jingwu.⁹⁸⁶ On the other hand, the personal meetings and collaboration between the two lasted for more than a decade, which cannot be explained as pure kindness out of courtesy. More reasonably, despite his reservation towards some of Taixu's ideas and activities, Zhang gave constant support to the latter. This support, though limited and conditional, was more generous than that of many leading figures of lay and monastic Buddhist communities. Zhang's approval of Taixu will be further revealed in the next part about his relationship with Ouyang Jingwu. Before that, it is necessary to review two texts of Zhang in relation to Taixu.

The first, entitled "Defending the Yogācāra Doctrines: Refuting *On the Origin of the Human Being*," was published in No. 2 of the *Bodhi Society Series* around the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919. As shown by its title, this article criticizes *On the Origin of the Human Being*, a major treatise of Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780-841), one of the most prominent scholars of the *sangha* in the mid-Tang dynasty, later installed as a patriarch by both Huayan Buddhism and the Southern Chan Buddhism. Zhang's criticism mainly concerns Zongmi's attacks on Yogācāra Buddhism. Such attacks, he argues, were based on the misconception of the "meaning beyond description" (*shengyi* 勝義) of the Yogācāra doctrines. As a major example, Zongmi confused the "perceived appearance [of the object]"

⁹⁸⁴ Xiao Ping, 2003, p. 230.

⁹⁸⁵ Gong Jun & Lai Yueshan, 2014, pp. 102-115.

⁹⁸⁶ Xiao Ping, 2003, p. 230.

(*xiangfen* 相分, *nimitta-bhāga*) with the “(external) object” (*jing* 境). At a still more fundamental (ontological) level, Zongmi resorts to the doctrines of Mādhyamaka Buddhism to attack Yogācāra Buddhism, and vice versa, aiming at establishing the superiority of Tathāgata-garbha Buddhism. Against such ideas, Zhang reaffirms the ontological identity between the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*, consistent with the syncretic viewpoint he had held for more than a decade. At the end of his article, Zhang turns to Zongmi’s criticisms against Confucian and Daoist masters, saying that he will write another article to rectify the latter’s erroneous ideas.⁹⁸⁷

As an additional observation, the afterword Taixu wrote for this article shows some ambiguity in his attitude. At the outset, he praises Zhang’s discussions to be “extremely lucid and thorough” 至為亮徹. Nonetheless, he explains that Zongmi “explicitly manifests his affiliation to Huayan school in the first place. From the stance of Huayan school, his theoretical ideas are immune from criticism.” 先標華嚴為宗，就華嚴宗之自法門而說，其義自無過也。 Thus, Taixu maintains a distance from Zhang’s severe criticism against the honored ancient Buddhist master. Taixu finishes his afterword by saying that “as to Zhang’s discussions about Hīnayāna and Confucian and Daoist masters, it is quite another matter.” 小乘、道、儒之說，則當別論。⁹⁸⁸ This could be a euphemistic manner to express his reservation.

The second text was Zhang’s letter to Taixu written in December 1924. This is a relatively short letter and the central ideas are expressed at its outset: “With pleasure, I attended your excellent conference yesterday. You thoroughly elucidated the fundamental doctrinal ideas of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, which I genuinely admired. Furthermore, your discussions about the relationship between the ‘human vehicle’ (*rencheng*) and Mahāyāna (or literally the ‘grand vehicle’) are especially beneficial for worldly teachings.” 昨日快聆清論，所發明《起信》大義，洞若觀火，拜服拜服。更論人乘、大乘關係，尤有益於世教。⁹⁸⁹ In the rest of the letter, Zhang shares his ideas about the relationship between the “human vehicle” (which refers to Confucianism) and Mahāyāna, in response to those of Taixu. Since Zhang does not make detailed comments

⁹⁸⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2006, pp. 45, 48, 50-51.

⁹⁸⁸ Taixu (afterword for Zhang Taiyan’s article), 2006, p. 51.

⁹⁸⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 1090.

on *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, it is necessary to introduce some contextual information to infer on which issue the two persons reach a consensus. In Chapter 5, I have discussed how Zhang, through the 1908 publication of “On the Authenticity of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*,” engaged in the debates with Japanese Buddhist scholars on whether the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* was a Buddhist Apocrypha made up by an anonymous Chinese author. In the 1920s and 1930s, a new round of polemics occurred in China, launched by Ouyang Jingwu’s 1922 lecture “Differentiating the Authentic Doctrine of the Consciousness-only from False Ones” (*Weishi juezetan* 唯識抉擇談). Different from the earlier debates within the Japanese intelligentsia, this time the controversy shifted from philological truthfulness to the fundamental doctrines of this scripture, leading to the attack and defense of the Mahāyāna traditions in China. On the offensive side were Ouyang and his disciples from the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning whereas Taixu and his followers, gathered at the Wuchang Buddhist Institute, played the role of defenders.⁹⁹⁰

The aforementioned 1924 letter clearly shows Zhang’s stance to be in line with Taixu’s. We can also perceive this stance through a revisit of his contact with young Buddhist scholars. In Tang Dayuan’s record of his 1935 conversations with Zhang, the first entry is about the latter’s reaffirmation of the ancient Indian authorship for the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.⁹⁹¹ As to the correspondence between Zhang and Lyu Cheng, despite their sophisticated style of communication and the broad range of topics, a major underlying divergence concerns the validity of resorting to the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* to interpret the theory of Consciousness-only.⁹⁹²

In summary, the two texts of Zhang in relation to Taixu, which appear to discuss very different issues, actually concern two similar topics with the same attitude. The first topic is the relationship between Buddhism and Confucianism, as shown by his discontent towards Zongmi’s attacks against Confucian (and Daoist) masters as well as his appreciation of Taixu’s discussions about the combination between the “human vehicle” and Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is subtler to recognize the second topic. In the first text, Zhang

⁹⁹⁰ Cheng Gongrang, 2000, pp. 112-114. See also Ge Zhaoguang, 2006, pp. 126-128.

⁹⁹¹ Tang Dayuan, 1978, p. 423.

⁹⁹² Yao Binbin, 2014.

defends Yogācāra Buddhism against Zongmi's attacks whereas in the second one, he praises Taixu's defense of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* against, implicitly, the Yogācāra fundamentalist Ouyang Jingwu. Despite the difference in the interlocutor and aim, what Zhang insists in both contexts is the identity between the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*. While the afterword of the first text hints at a certain disagreement between Zhang and Taixu, their common ground is much larger, especially when we introduce Ouyang Jingwu for comparison.

It is time now to discuss the relationship between Zhang and Ouyang Jingwu. We first place Ouyang in the Republican Buddhist landscape, then present his contacts with Zhang and the common ground of their Buddhist scholarship, and next discuss the divergence and tension between the two. This part concludes by examining Zhang's criticisms against Ouyang.

Ouyang Jingwu was the courtesy name of Ouyang Jian 歐陽漸. Born in Yihuang 宜黃 of Jiangxi Province in 1871, Ouyang took over the Jinling Scripture Carving House after his master Yang Wenhui's death in 1911. As has been mentioned in several places above, Ouyang was widely known for his relentless anticlericalism which resulted in his unresolved confrontation with the *sangha*. He once forbade monks to attend his seminar.⁹⁹³ On the opposite side, master Yinguang attacked Ouyang as "a great king of devils" and prevented a lay Buddhist to study under him.⁹⁹⁴ Ouyang's Buddhist studies were characterized by a strong tendency of intellectualism, explicitly privileging philological and theoretical research over practices, shown in his 1941 article "Interpreting the Motto of the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning" (*Zhina neixueyuan xun shi* 支那內學院訓釋).⁹⁹⁵ More strikingly, despite the observance of vegetarianism and conditional sexual abstinence, the students of the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning were not supposed to meditate, recite Buddha's names, or perform Buddhist services when relative died, not to mention those rituals considered as the "worship of idols."⁹⁹⁶

Compared with the contacts between Zhang and Taixu, we have fewer historical materials about that between Zhang and Ouyang. It is nonetheless possible to demonstrate

⁹⁹³ Vincent Goossaert & David Palmer, 2011, p. 80.

⁹⁹⁴ Holmes Welch, 1968, p. 119.

⁹⁹⁵ Ouyang Jingwu, 2009, p. 98.

⁹⁹⁶ Holmes Welch, 1968, p. 120.

that they maintained long-standing (though probably not intimate) contact. As mentioned above, Ouyang came to know Zhang in person at the latest during their stay in Japan in the later 1900s. Unlike Taixu, Ouyang was a contemporary of Zhang and also born in a literary gentry family. The overlapping points in their Buddhist scholarship, especially as advocates of Yogācāra Buddhism, were plausibly due to the general intellectual trends of the time, plus a certain degree of mutual influence, instead of Zhang's unidirectional influence on Ouyang.

Most of the materials discussed here are private letters. The first is Zhang's short letter to Huang Zongyang, written on May 20, 1917, in which he informs that "Ouyang Jingwu is staying in Shanghai and he comes to talk with me every day. It is the best moment for you [to return to Shanghai from Yangzhou] to meet us." 歐陽竟無正在上海，每日來談，上人此時來會最好。⁹⁹⁷ The close relationship between Zhang, Ouyang, and Huang revealed in this citation is further proved by their collaboration in seeking financial aid to establish a Buddhist middle school in the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning in 1919. We have three letters concerning this affair, successively from Huang to Ouyang (on August 28), from Zhang to Ouyang (August 30), and from Ouyang to Huang (probably written at the beginning of September).⁹⁹⁸ The collaboration of the three persons worked efficiently. From the third letter, we know that the sponsorship Huang introduced for Ouyang's project had been confirmed during their correspondence.

Shortly after, in October of that year (1919) Zhang wrote the article "Preface to the Establishment of the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning" (*Zhina neixueyuan yuanqi* 支那內學院緣起) introducing and honoring Ouyang's efforts to establish this stronghold of Buddhist studies (formally inaugurated in 1922) in modern China.⁹⁹⁹ Its most frequently cited passage concerns Zhang's appreciation of Ouyang's scholarly accomplishment in Yogācāra Buddhism: "(Ouyang) used to say that 'the theories of consciousness-only (*Vijñānavāda*) and *dharma* characteristics (*Dharmalakṣaṇavāda*) were combined into a single school in the Tang dynasty. But in fact, the theoretical range and implication of their doctrines are rather different.' I was surprised and confused at first in hearing his words.

⁹⁹⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 160.

⁹⁹⁸ Huang Zongyang, 2011, pp. 85-86.

⁹⁹⁹ In her monograph on Yang Wenhui, Gabriele Goldfuss (2001, pp. 210-212) has offered a solid French translation (despite several minor errors) of Zhang's preface.

Only after careful speculation did I feel relieved [and approved of his viewpoint], believing that this is an insight superior to those [of the ancient Buddhist scholars] throughout the past one thousand years.” 詈言：“唯識、法相，唐以來並為一宗，其實通局、大小殊焉。”余初驚怪其言，審思釋然，謂其識足以獨步千祀也。¹⁰⁰⁰ Zhang expresses his praise in all sincerity rather than polite flattery. This was a rare honor that he had ever given to any other contemporary Buddhist scholar. Discussing the academic reception of Ouyang’s viewpoint is beyond the scope of this study. What is at stake here is the confrontation between Ouyang and Taixu on whether the two theories should be treated separately or maintained in combination.¹⁰⁰¹ For this debate, Zhang turned his support to Ouyang’s ideas with admiration.

Shortly later in his preface, Zhang approves of Ouyang’s ambition in Buddhist scholarship for he “will certainly be distinguished from the stubbornly conservative monks and will not be mixed with the advocates of demonic deities and strange beliefs” 必將異於茲芻顥固之倫，又不得與天磨奇說混殼可知也。¹⁰⁰² This citation confronts Ouyang with two religious categories. While Ouyang’s conflicts with Buddhist monasticism are well known, what “demonic deities and strange beliefs” mean has not yet been elucidated in the previous studies of this text. As my study above has revealed, this expression probably refers to the redemptive groups syncretizing Buddhism with both indigenous popular religion and Christianity. Zhang’s expectation of Ouyang resonated with his 1918 letter to Wu Chengshi discussing Taixu’s establishment of the Bodhi Society to resist the Moral Studies Society. We can see that in assessing the religious enterprise of both Taixu and Ouyang, Zhang paid particular attention to their attitude towards the rising forces of redemptive groups. As proposed earlier in this chapter, Zhang’s hostility towards the redemptive groups offers us a thread to grasp a neglected aspect of Zhang’s religious thought as well as an important motif underlying his Buddhist activities in the Republican era.

It now becomes clear that Zhang shared some scholarly common ground with Ouyang in Buddhist scholarship and highly appreciated the latter’s theoretical insights.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Zhang Tayan, 2017b, p. 567.

¹⁰⁰¹ For this debate, see Zhang Zhiqiang, 2011, pp. 296-315.

¹⁰⁰² Zhang Tayan, 2017b, p. 567.

This appreciation, however, did not lead Zhang to submit to Ouyang's rising academic authority like Liang Qichao did who regularly attended Ouyang's seminar in Nanjing in the early 1920s and treated the latter as his master in Buddhist studies. The fundamental divergences between the two emerged at the ontological level, concerning the relationship between the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*, and that between the absolute (or suchness) and the phenomena (or birth and death). More precisely, the main battlefield lied in the compatibility between the doctrines of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* and those of Yogācāra scriptures (such as *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra* and the *Treatise on Establishing the Theory of Consciousness-only*).¹⁰⁰³

The two scholars must have communicated and debated on such divergences during their personal conversations, unfortunately, the remaining primary sources (including three letters from Zhang to Ouyang) do not leave us with useful materials like in the case of Zhang and Lyu Cheng. So let us turn to some indirectly related sources. In the aforementioned "Anecdotal Records of My Conversations with Master Zhang of Yuhang County," Sun Zhicheng recalls an anecdote that is added just after his records of Zhang's criticism against Ouyang (to be discussed below). According to this anecdote, Sun had made efforts to arrange a Buddhist debate between his master and Ouyang. Sun's invitation letters were rudely declined by Ouyang who even reproached Sun for being "too stupid."¹⁰⁰⁴ Though we have no idea about Zhang's attitude towards his disciple's initiation nor the reason for Ouyang's refusal and reproach, we can perceive a tension between the two Buddhist masters from this anecdote (as well as several other sources). Both Zhang and Ouyang had trouble managing interpersonal relationships, largely due to their pride (and even arrogance on many occasions) in their scholarly achievement. Such personal character probably contributed to deepening the tension between them caused by theoretical divergences.

One factor may have further fueled Zhang's sense of competition with Ouyang, i.e. Ouyang's Buddhist scholarship being more appealing to young scholars. Apart from Lyu Cheng and Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885-1968, famous neo-Confucian philosopher), two

¹⁰⁰³ For a general understanding of Ouyang's theoretical arguments on this subject, see his biography of Yang Wenhui (Ouyang Jingwu, 2009, pp. 378-379) as well as Gong Jun's article (1999).

¹⁰⁰⁴ Xu Yishi, 1983, pp. 77.

eminent disciples of Ouyang, among the visiting scholars at the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning, we see Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988, prominent philosopher and social activist), Tang Yingtong, and Meng Wentong 蒙文通 (1894-1968, eminent historian). Liang Shuming's case is particularly revealing. Despite the huge influence he had received from Zhang during his early career, Liang rapidly turned away from the latter's Buddhist thought after he followed the academic trends of the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning. Compared with Ouyang's studies of Yogācāra Buddhism, those of Zhang appeared to be, in Liang's eyes, amateurish.¹⁰⁰⁵

Following the introductory parts above, we now proceed to Zhang's criticisms against Ouyang Jingwu in four points. The first one was related to the two persons' divergences at the ontological level. While we lack directly related sources, it is revealing to review Zhang's two texts in relation to Taixu in this context. The one was his late 1910s article against Guifeng Zongmi and defending his syncretism in terms of the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata*. The other was his 1924 letter to Taixu praising the latter's interpretation of the *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. The dates of these two texts overlapped with the rapid rise of Ouyang's academic reputation as well as with the time of Zhang's several other criticisms against Ouyang (to be discussed below). Hence, if these two texts implicitly aim at a contemporary interlocutor, which is my judgment, the most probable person is Ouyang.

The second and third points both rely on Zhang's letters to Wu Chengshi, in which he shared some negative thoughts about Ouyang, contrasting with the praise of Ouyang in several other occasions. This fact again reveals Wu's importance as one of Zhang's most confidential friends. The letter concerning the second point was written on May 23, 1917, the first half of which (related to Bergson) has been referred to in Chapter 4. The citation here is situated at its end: "I frequently see Ouyang Jingwu and his followers rejecting neo-Confucianism, with which I strongly disagree. ... I believe that the valuable thing today is to introduce people into the great realms [of moral teachings]. So it is inappropriate to propose too stern viewpoints." 每見歐陽竟無輩排斥理學，吾甚不以為是……蓋今日

¹⁰⁰⁵ Jiang Hainu, 2013, p. 496. I got to know Thierry Meynard's monograph (2010) on Liang Shuming as a hidden Buddhist too late to incorporate his work into this chapter. Despite his criticisms against Zhang, Liang's thought was largely shaped by the latter on various important topics, including Yogācāra Buddhism, the relationship between Confucianism and Buddhism, and comparative studies of Chinese, Indian, and Western civilizations.

貴在引人入勝，無取過峻之論也。¹⁰⁰⁶ In the last of his three remaining letters to Ouyang (written on an August 18 probably in the 1930s), after sharing his ideas about the relationship between Buddhism and the “human vehicle,” Zhang expresses a similar criticism in a gentler tone: “What [we should] be concerned with today is not the difficulty of writing books, but rather that of promoting the practice [of what we advocate]. [We should] endeavor to promote such practices in order to facilitate people’s moral accomplishment instead of manifesting our sageness through empty words. That is why I have no intention to publicize my writings for the moment.” 今日不患不能著書，而患不能力行。但求力行以成人，不在空言于作聖。故于鄙著尚不欲宣示大眾。¹⁰⁰⁷

In this context, the writings Zhang reserved for himself refer to his studies of Confucianism in the Middle Age and the Song and Ming dynasties. The contrast between the practice and the empty words, in effect, constitutes the approval of neo-Confucian masters and a subtle criticism against Ouyang. This contrast implies another criticism of Zhang, to be discussed in Point 4. Besides, the aforementioned reason for Zhang’s reservation of his writings on Confucianism can be applied to explain why he kept his abundant Buddhist manuscripts unpublished. As an additional comment, Zhang’s discussions on the relationship between Buddhism and the “human vehicle,” appearing in the earlier part of his letter to Ouyang, convey the same message as in his 1924 letter to Taixu, which is: a collaboration with Confucianism was indispensable if Buddhism ever intended to establish itself as an effective moral teaching in modern China.

The third point is about Zhang’s critical reflections on Ouyang’s methodology, revealed in Zhang’s letter to Wu written on January 11, 1919: “What Ouyang’s scholarship deals with are generally the pre-existing writings and ideas. It can be considered as the Buddhist counterpart of the Confucian school represented by Hui Dingyu [Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697-1758)] and Sun Yuanru [Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753-1818)]. This type of scholarship is indispensable at the outset of Buddhist revival. Following the accumulation of knowledge and insights, however, the theoretical interpretation should turn to another path.” 歐陽所述，大抵故言，此即佛法中惠定宇、孫淵如一派。倡始之初，此種不

¹⁰⁰⁶ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 412.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, pp. 873-874.

可少；漸有心得，則義解當轉道矣。¹⁰⁰⁸ Both Hui Dong and Sun Xingyan were eminent scholars of the Han learning originating from Jiangsu Province, the scholarship of whom Zhang must have been acquainted with from his youth. Zhang reaffirms the comparison between the Han learning of the Qing dynasty and Yogācāra scholarship in terms of their philological methodology in his “Preface to the Establishment of the Chinese Institute of Inner Learning,”¹⁰⁰⁹ written later in the same year. In this later text, the reference to this comparison serves to praise Ouyang’s solid scholarly approach against “those producing strange, absurd, and subjective ideas” 詭誕私造者. In the letter to Wu, in contrast, the comparison implies that his methodological criticism of the Han learning¹⁰¹⁰ can be applied to Ouyang’s scholarship, thus relativizing and downplaying its value. “The accumulation of knowledge and insights” and “the turn of theoretical interpretation” implicitly refers to Zhang’s own experience in studying Buddhism though the precise meaning of the “turn” remains unclear.

In summary, despite his appreciation of Ouyang’s scholarly achievement, Zhang treated the latter as having not surpassed the philological model of the Han learning. In other words, although Ouyang’s Buddhist studies were widely recognized among the Chinese intelligentsia and better received among young scholars at the time, Zhang’s confidence in the superiority of his Buddhist approach and thought remained untouched.

The fourth point is Zhang’s criticism of Ouyang’s lack of Buddhist practice. This criticism appears in Sun Zhicheng’s anecdotal records, situated after Zhang’s conversation with Yinguang and before Sun’s failed effort to arrange the debate between Zhang and Ouyang. According to Sun’s report, Zhang once pointed out that “my contemporary Ouyang Jingwu, despite his refined and comprehensive achievement in Yogācāra scholarship, is extremely self-conceited and fails to leave the profane world/become a monk, hence is unable to eliminate his ‘behavioral tendency caused by karmic imprint’ (*vāsanā*). [So I] suspect that Ouyang’s Buddhist enterprise is not adequate to transform the people’s morality of his time.” 當時治法相宗既精且博如歐陽竟無者，猶負氣特甚，亦未能出家，習氣終難盡絕，疑此尚未足易世也。¹⁰¹¹

¹⁰⁰⁸ Zhang Taiyan, 2017a, p. 416.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Zhang Taiyan, 2917b, p. 568.

¹⁰¹⁰ See Chen Pingyuan, 1998, p. 209.

¹⁰¹¹ Xu Yishi, 1983, p. 77.

Zhang's criticism reveals several of his long-standing viewpoints and tendencies towards Buddhism. First of all, it resonates with his discussions in the last part of the 1906 essay "On Establishing Religion" about the disadvantage of lay Buddhists as moral models compared with monks. The former, as family men who still eat meat, have not yet accomplished a complete moral way of life and hence cannot convince others of the doctrine of non-creation.¹⁰¹² Criticizing Ouyang for his failure to become a monk is underpinned upon the same reason though we know that in terms of moral conduct, Ouyang (as a vegetarian with strong self-discipline) is superior to the type of laymen Zhang has described. It is largely based on this reason that Zhang kept his distance from Ouyang's radical anticlericalism. From another angle, such criticism also mirrors Zhang's own urge to leave the profane world and his self-criticism that his words are not matched by deeds (especially meditative achievement) to embody the doctrine of non-creation. The psychological tension caused by such urge and self-criticism is crucial to explain Zhang's religious practices and experiences in the 1900s and 1910s, as has been extensively discussed in Chapter 4. Indeed, the criticism in question is not just related to whether to be or not to be a monk but the practical dimension in general. In Zhang's eyes, the intellectualism Ouyang promoted is problematic because it may unbalance and even rupture the natural unity between ideas and practices. Zhang's increasing interest in neo-Confucianism, Yangmingism in particular, from the late 1910s can be partly seen as a response to Ouyang's Buddhist approach.

* Conclusion *

In this final chapter of my dissertation, I more explicitly mark its connections with the previous ones. As the second chapter based on a long-term perspective following Chapter 4, it again demonstrates the underestimated continuity and consistency of Zhang's Buddhist engagement, this time with respect to his social thought and social networking. Moreover, we see in the course of this study that Zhang's attitude and tendencies in these aspects were coherent with those conveyed in his Buddhist writings on politico-ideological

¹⁰¹² Zhang Taiyan, 2014b, p. 440.

affairs and theoretical subjects, which have been studied in the other four chapters.

Furthermore, this study allows us to observe how Zhang played multiple roles within Buddhist communities on which he exerted extensive influence: as a political patron of Buddhism; as a member of the Buddhist laity; as a scholar of Buddhist studies; as a Confucian master sympathetic towards Buddhism; and finally as an isolated Buddhist practitioner. In contrast to his once revolutionary radicalism as well as his uncompromising independent posture towards all issues, Zhang tended to follow the middle path facing disputes and conflicts between Buddhists under the turbulent early Republican environment, as seen in his strong criticism against the “invasion of the Jinshan Monastery” led by Taixu and his disapproval of Ouyang Jingwu’s radical anticlericalism, among other examples. The multiplicity of Zhang’s role in the Buddhist field and his independent stance in interacting with other important figures of this field makes him a valuable case for the introduction of sociological methodology into this domain.¹⁰¹³

Finally, while insisting on the continuing importance of Buddhism in Zhang’s later life, this study also reveals a neglected reason for Zhang’s reservation concerning the effect of Buddhism on social and moral issues, i.e. his hostility towards the rapidly rising redemptive societies. This hostility was consistent with his negative attitude towards most of the popular religious phenomena as well as the Christian expansion in China. This original point intends to supplement the current Zhang-studies which grasp Zhang’s “return” to Confucianism by highlighting his cultural conservatism and growing concern with the preservation of National Essence but offer few concrete explanations for the underlying considerations.

¹⁰¹³ For methodological guidance and inspiration, see Ji Zhe, 2009 & 2017 on the differentiation and reconfiguration of the “teaching”; Ji Zhe, 2013 on the application of prosopography and field theories in biographical Buddhist studies.

Conclusion

To conclude the dissertation, I synthesize its main results, especially its original ideas, into six points. My reflections on more general issues, methodology, and remaining flaws are classified correspondingly.

The first point concerns Zhang's evolving ideas about the notions of Buddhism and religion. This perspective of conceptual analysis, covering the subjects of all six chapters, will serve as one of the threads to push forward my future researches. While previous researches have well discussed various aspects of this issue, a coherent perspective remains lacking. The late Qing intelligentsia endeavored to cope with the intellectual impact of Western scholarship which challenged the fundamental notions and theoretical frameworks of the indigenous knowledge system. At the beginning of his political career, Zhang showed less willingness to adapt to the vogue of the New learning, compared to many within the reformist circles. Faithful to the paradigm of the Han learning, he treated Buddhist texts as raw materials to be exploited for empirical studies of geography and ethnicity (Chapter 1). Zhang's attitude turned from resistance to active reception around 1902 following his extensive reading of Western anthropology, sociology, and philosophy translated into Japanese. Similar to Liang Qichao, he replaced the indigenous notion of *jiao* (teaching) with the neologism *zongjiao* (religion). This conceptual shift allowed him to reevaluate the Chinese religious tradition on a global scale and the temporality of deep history, as demonstrated in the revised edition of the *Book of Urgency*. In his 1906 speech, Zhang explicitly promoted Buddhism as the most promising candidate for the religion of modern China. This promotion implied approval of the function of religion in general (Chapter 2), which did not last long. In his 1911 Buddhist lecture at the latest, Zhang had reclassified Buddhism as a philosophical scholarship instead of a religion. Correspondingly, he referred to Buddhism more and more frequently by the term of “Buddhist teaching/law” (*fofa* 佛法, the *dharma* preached by the Buddha) rather than “Buddhist religion” (*fojiao* 佛教) (Chapter 5). The return to traditional concepts was closely related to his reservation about the religious propagation of Buddhism throughout the Republican period (Chapter 6). To carry forward researches on Zhang's conception of Buddhism and religion, it will

be necessary to devote more energy to trace the translingual chains of new terms and paradigms. The lack of language skills prevents me from researching the Japanese context of this question. I am nonetheless capable of exploring the links with its Anglophone and Francophone origins.

The second point aims to better apprehend Zhang's Buddhist viewpoints by contextualizing them within current events and revealing his implicit interlocutors. As a general conclusion to my interpretation of Zhang's texts, many of his seemingly academic-oriented discussions were directed at the opinions of his contemporary rivals, which is also true for his Buddhist texts. The emotional drives also explain the excessive rhetoric commonly seen in his polemical writings. Based on this methodological awareness, the dissertation highlights Kang Youwei as the most important interlocutor of Zhang (although Liang Qichao and Tan Sitong were also important). The two persons' difference in academic affiliation and reformist approaches is an indispensable thread to understand Zhang's rejection of incorporating Buddhism into the New learning (Chapter 1). Zhang's hostility towards Kang's moral defects and political opportunism constituted a major reason for his radical critique of Confucius and Confucians in general (Chapter 2). Despite the longstanding confrontation, the influence of Kang and his followers on Zhang, less discussed than it should be, persisted. Zhang's proposal of a reformed Buddhism as the new religion resonated, whether intentionally or not, with Kang's Confucian religion (Chapter 2). His dystopian Five Negations can be seen as a critical response to the latter's bold imagination of the Great Unity (Chapter 3). Moreover, Zhang actually applied the analogical method and hybrid ontology in his Buddhist studies, contrasting with his earlier criticism of such methodologies by the Kang party (Chapter 1). In Zhang's debates with the Chinese and Japanese anarchists, we find a similar two-sided situation, i.e. acceptance and common ground alongside profound divergences (Chapter 3). Besides, the emphasis on contextual information helps us to grasp Zhang's nuanced position vis-à-vis the confrontation between Taixu and Ouyang Jingwu (Chapter 6). As the main flaw of my work related to this point, I do not sufficiently access the original texts of Zhang's interlocutors whether they were his opponents or close friends.

Based on careful intertextual studies, the dissertation reveals Zhang's rigorous but

often unspoken self-reflections, which is the topic of the third point. While the shifts of Zhang's Buddhist thought through the years have been repeatedly depicted, the underlying reasons and how these reasons intertwined with each other have not been fully revealed. On certain occasions, the self-reflections were explicitly presented, even if in a neglected text. The best example is Zhang's 1911 letter to Cai Yuanpei concerning the switch of his attitude towards Sino-babylonianism, Laozi and Zhuangzi, and the parliamentary system. The more profound reflections, as Chapter 3 argues, aim at the limit of nationalism and the abuse of evolutionism as an ideology, which significantly reoriented Zhang's Buddhist thought around 1907. On more occasions, however, Zhang critically reflected on his earlier ideas in an implicit way. It is the case for Zhang's inquiry, in "On the Five Negations," into the ethical foundations of nationalism, revolution, and religion, which can be seen as the expression of an urge to transcend the stage of nationalism, with which the reformed Buddhism allied according to his 1906 speech (Chapters 2-3). A more inspiring case appears in Chapter 7 of *An Interpretation of "Discussion on Making All Things Equal."* when the author interpreted Zhuangzi as the embodiment of the Bodhisattva ideal for both the goal and means of Zhuangzi's teaching. The obscure style of Zhang's words has long prevented Zhang-scholars to realize that they not only forecast general theoretical turns but also signify specific self-criticisms against the doctrine of non-creation (Chapters 3 & 5). The aforementioned intertextual studies remind us of the constant self-dialogue and tension in Zhang's Buddhist thinking. On the one hand, we need to pay enough attention to the consistent tendencies and logic of his Buddhist thought; on the other, however, we should not refer to his Buddhist texts as if their contents were homogenous.

The fourth point. In studying Zhang's philosophical reinterpretation of Buddhist doctrines and history, the dissertation emphasizes its hybrid and syncretic characteristics. As examples for hybridity, we see his adoption (despite earlier resistance) of the analogical method (Chapter 1), reinterpretation of Buddhist epistemology in line with the philosophy of Kant and Schopenhauer (Chapter 2), and reconciliation between the theory of karmic transmigration and evolutionism (mainly in Chapter 1). "Syncretic" refers to Zhang's tendency to integrate (Sinitic) Buddhism with other indigenous teachings as well as Indian religious traditions, presupposing that the sages of the two lands had achieved the same

spiritual realm and pursued the same moral goal. Situated at the core of his syncretism was the convergence between the *ālaya*-consciousness and the embryo of the *tathāgata* at the ontological level, a topic to which Chapter 4 devotes many pages and is also closely related to various questions of Chapter 6. The topic is related to several original ideas belonging to this point, concerning the discovery of Zhang's neglected studies of Indian Buddhist genealogies and scriptures, the correlation between his syncretism of the Three Teachings and his earlier syncretic Buddhist ideas, and the discussions of his fundamental theoretical divergence with Ouyang Jingwu and his disciples. However, there exist considerable flaws in that I fail to exploit recent scientific results of Buddhology nor do I investigate enough the criticisms from Ouyang, Lyu Chen, and Xiong Shili against Zhang's Buddhist studies.

The fifth point is to explore Zhang's rich and lifelong practice and experience of Buddhism and other religious traditions. Assembled in Chapter 4, most of the contents are either original or only discussed in a casual and unsystematic way in previous researches. So, instead of offering a summary of the original ideas, I choose to reflect on some methodological issues. First of all, this chapter shows how fragmentary materials, if being collected with patience and for a clear purpose, can support the construction of a relatively complete picture of a long-neglected question. Secondly, the collection and chronological arrangement of hitherto ignored sources are far from the only reason for the production of original ideas. The introduction of a new discipline (in this case, religious studies) and, as a result, the interaction and combination of different paradigms, are also crucial for new insights into even the most well-known texts. Next, as two examples, the concept of religiosity guides me to treat the intellectual and practical sides of Zhang's Buddhist engagement as a whole, whereas that of religious culture helps me to recognize the familiarity and limited curiosity Zhang had for popular religious beliefs and practices, which did not contradict with his harsh attacks on them. Zhang's attacks were noted in his writings but his internalized religious knowledge was rarely so. The contrast of visibility easily leads many to neglect the fact that Zhang resorted to various religious methods in times of personal crisis. The study of Zhang's religious life provides a new case to demonstrate the persistent and diffused religious culture among the late Qing literati, even though some of them played important roles in promoting the secularization of Chinese

society. By proposing a comparative perspective concerning Zhang, his master, and his disciples, the dissertation further touches on (though insufficiently) the generational transformation of the educated Chinese population in terms of their attitude and conception of religion. Moreover, the aforementioned contrast of visibility leads to another methodological reflection on the production and preservation of texts. In Zhang's case, a large proportion of his writings, especially those in his later years, were recorded and edited by his disciples, most of whom were specialized in textual classical studies and some were hostile towards religion in general. This fact is partly responsible for the invisibility of Buddhism during the last two decades of Zhang's intellectual life. Finally, the shared religiosity between Zhang (and many other reformist literati) and Buddhist laymen of the time prompts me to question the problematic distinction between Buddhist laymen and Buddhist scholars, to which I have devoted an article.¹⁰¹⁴

The sixth and last point is about Zhang's activities within Buddhist social networks and related ideas, the subject of Chapter 6. This is another topic neglected by Zhang-scholars and only casually referred to by historians of modern Chinese Buddhism. The section on Zhang's social thought of Buddhism allows us to confirm the coherence between his Buddhist-inspired theoretical thought, political and moral application of Buddhism, self-cultivation based on Buddhism, and attitude towards the Buddhist role in Chinese society. Based on the studies of Zhang's social networking as well as his influence on early Taixu, it becomes clear that Zhang exerted his influence on the Republican Buddhist communities not only through his Buddhist studies but also his direct and indirect promotion of Buddhist reforms. The comparison between Zhang and Ouyang in terms of anticlericalism shows that Buddhist laymen could be much more radical than Buddhist scholars (supposedly less attached to the conventions of Buddhist monasticism). The introduction of religious studies also evokes original ideas for this point. An outstanding case is the correlation of Zhang's reservation about the religious propagation of Buddhism with his hostility towards the rapidly expanding redemptive societies in early Republican China. Due to the unexpectedness of this finding, the chapter fails to dig deeper into the question, leaving it in an uncompleted state, which requires me to undertake more advanced

¹⁰¹⁴ Lyu Yuchen, forthcoming.

researches in my future career.

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Résumé de la thèse

* Le sujet de la thèse *

Cette thèse étudie l’engagement bouddhique de Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936). Issu d’une riche famille noble de Yuhang 餘杭, une ville de la province de Zhejiang 浙江, Zhang est considéré par beaucoup comme le plus important propagandiste antimandchou, et aussi l’un des pères de la République de Chine, fondée en 1912 sur les ruines de l’empire Qing. Parallèlement à ses influences politiques, Zhang est également connu comme un érudit original. La formation académique de haut niveau en école de Han que Zhang a reçue dans ses premières années lui a permis d’apporter des contributions considérables à la linguistique chinoise, aux études historiques et classiques anciennes. Vers la trentaine, Zhang menait une vie instable dans des villes cosmopolites telles que Shanghai et Tokyo, où il s’imprégnait largement des savoirs occidentaux (principalement par l’intermédiaire de l’intelligentsia japonaise) et s’engageait dans des débats sur un large éventail de questions politiques, idéologiques et académiques avec des réformistes, des royalistes, des révolutionnaires, des anarchistes et des conservateurs culturels. Le rôle de Zhang en tant qu’éducateur était également important. Parmi ses premiers disciples pendant son séjour à Tokyo, plusieurs sont devenus des figures éminentes du mouvement de la Nouvelle Culture vers la fin des années 1910, notamment Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) et Qian Xuantong 錢玄同 (1887-1939). Malgré sa réserve sur l’application du système parlementaire occidental en Chine, Zhang s’avérait être un ferme défenseur de la République contre les tentatives de restauration de la monarchie. Après la prise du pouvoir par le Parti nationaliste (Kuomintang 國民黨) en 1928, Zhang se retirait de l’arène politique et se consacre à la préservation et à la promotion des études nationales. À sa mort, l’image de Zhang s’était figée en tant que maître dépassé des classiques confucéens.

Le bouddhisme occupait une position unique dans la pensée et la vie de Zhang. Son intérêt intellectuel pour le bouddhisme s’est émergé lors de sa participation dans les cercles réformistes à la fin des années 1890 et, dans une certaine mesure, s’est transformé en un engagement religieux au cours de son emprisonnement (1903-1906) à Shanghai à cause de

ses publications antigouvernementales. Semblable aux autres aspects de ses activités sociales et universitaires, dont un motif sous-jacent majeur peut être généralisé par le terme « nationalisme », le bouddhisme était autrefois promu par Zhang en tant que force religieuse pour faciliter la révolution ethnique et restaurer la moralité du peuple. Moins connue était son utopie d'inspiration bouddhique visant à transcender le nationalisme et à résoudre les abus liés à l'idéologie de l'évolutionnisme. Encore moins ont été au courant de la pratique méditative de longue date de Zhang, de son envie de devenir moine, ainsi que d'autres expériences et engagements religieux. La dernière étape de la pensée bouddhique de Zhang était motivée par un fort syncrétisme associant le bouddhisme aux enseignements des maîtres taoïstes pré-Qin et au confucianisme. Le bouddhisme en tant que thème est devenu moins important dans les écrits et les discours publics au cours des deux dernières décennies de la vie de Zhang. Ce fait, néanmoins, ne doit pas occulter la continuité et la cohérence de l'engagement bouddhiste de Zhang dans la pensée, la pratique et les activités sociales.

Étant donné que ce que le bouddhisme signifiait pour Zhang était multidimensionnel et était inextricablement lié à d'autres domaines de sa vie, cette étude m'oblige à tenter un compte rendu complet de l'érudition globale et de la carrière politique de Zhang. Vu sous un nouvel angle, cette approche centrée sur le bouddhisme nous permettra de mieux comprendre les grands enjeux qui le concernent : ses idées sur le nationalisme et les études nationales ; ses vues sur la révolution et le système politique post-révolutionnaire ; son attitude envers la pensée étrangère et les relations diplomatiques ; sa pensée morale et ses recherches spirituelles. Outre la variété des rôles joués par Zhang ainsi que la complexité de sa pensée et de sa personnalité, la transformation drastique et générale de la société chinoise vécue par Zhang ajoute à la difficulté de cette étude. L'engagement bouddhique de Zhang a commencé au lendemain de la guerre sino-japonaise de 1894 et a atteint un état de maturité lorsque le mouvement de la Nouvelle Culture a été déclenché en 1915. Cette période d'environ vingt ans correspond à l'étape cruciale de la transformation radicale de la Chine vers sa forme unique de modernité. En tenant compte de ce fait, nous pouvons mieux faire face aux caractéristiques apparemment toujours changeantes de la pensée bouddhique de Zhang. Par ailleurs, il est de l'intention de cette étude de sonder, à travers

l'étude de cas de Zhang, plusieurs questions générales : la différenciation de l'« enseignement » (*jiao* 教 ; terme polysémique qui peut aussi se traduire par religion, éducation, instruction, ou -isme),¹⁰¹⁵ et le destin moderne des intellectuels chinois ; la révolution radicale et le conservatisme culturel ; et la religiosité des élites lettrées.

* Approches et thèmes des travaux scientifiques *

Comme preuve de son importance historique, nous voyons une histoire continue de recherche scientifique sur Zhang Taiyan depuis sa mort dans diverses parties du monde. En 2013, Chen Xueran, historien à l'Université chinoise de Hong Kong, a publié un article de 86 pages proposant une bibliographie quasi exhaustive de la littérature scientifique sur Zhang.¹⁰¹⁶ La plupart des travaux scientifiques ont été écrits en chinois par des universitaires chinois continentaux et taïwanais. Là, les travaux académiques autour de Zhang ont constitué un domaine différencié intitulé « études de Zhang » (*Zhangxue* 章學). En outre, il existe une importante tradition d'études Zhang au Japon, basée sur l'érudition philologique bien établie ainsi que sur l'intelligentsia de gauche. Dans la sinologie occidentale, les monographies et articles consacrés à Zhang restent limités. Néanmoins, le nom de Zhang est fréquemment mentionné par les historiens intellectuels (principalement dans le monde anglophone) lorsqu'ils discutent du nationalisme dans la Chine moderne. Depuis la publication de l'article de Chen en 2013, nous assistons à une reprise continue des études de Zhang en Chine continentale. Tout aussi importante a été la publication de la nouvelle édition de *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (Œuvres complètes de Zhang Taiyan) en 2014-2017.

Je choisis de mener la revue de la littérature scientifique selon des approches et des thèmes plutôt que par ordre chronologique ou régional. Les approches académiques et les thèmes à introduire sont liés non seulement à l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang, mais aussi aux autres aspects de sa vie et de sa pensée et même à des problèmes plus généraux. La raison de ce choix réside dans le fait que des chercheurs affiliés à plusieurs disciplines différentes ont contribué aux études Zhang. Ceux de la même approche ont tendance à

¹⁰¹⁵ Voir Douglas M. Gildow, 2018, p. 112.

¹⁰¹⁶ Chen Xueran, 2013.

partager des présupposés similaires, à appliquer des méthodologies similaires, à se concentrer sur des sujets et des facettes similaires et sont parfois situés dans le même réseau universitaire. De plus, Zhang Taiyan et le bouddhisme en tant que thème n'ont pas acquis le statut d'une subdivision très différenciée. Les travaux scientifiques les plus précieux pour mon étude étaient généralement publiés par les chercheurs spécialisés dans d'autres sujets au sein des études de Zhang. Il est impossible d'esquisser l'état actuel de la littérature scientifique sur l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang tout en le séparant du tableau général. De plus, l'examen sous cette forme me permet de montrer comment cette étude pourrait être bénéfique pour des collègues préoccupés par des questions différentes mais connexes.

Dans la partie suivante de la section, je voudrais passer en revue 12 thèmes, en commençant par les questions plus générales et suivis par ceux qui appartiennent plus étroitement aux études de Zhang. Le premier groupe de thèmes est divisé en deux approches fondamentales de l'histoire intellectuelle et des études religieuses. Le deuxième groupe de thèmes est organisé suivant l'ordre allant de l'approche philologique à l'approche théorique. Inévitablement, il y a un certain degré d'arbitraire dans ma catégorisation et les thèmes peuvent se chevaucher. Pour chaque thème, je présenterai ses vues générales (et sa méthodologie dans certains cas), quelques chercheurs représentatifs (en particulier ceux ayant directement contribué à ma thèse) et comment j'ai bénéficié de leurs travaux.

Commençons par l'approche de l'histoire intellectuelle. Le premier thème est la radicalisation de la culture intellectuelle dans la Chine moderne. Par « radicalisation », j'entends un doute et une critique toujours croissantes contre l'héritage intellectuel et la légitimité institutionnelle en termes de confucianisme et de monarchie impériale, qui ont sapé la continuité de la tradition culturelle chinoise à travers plusieurs générations d'intellectuels. L'une des études les plus éminentes est venue de Joseph Levenson. Dans son étude de cas de Liang Qichao, Levenson a expliqué les incohérences et incompatibilités apparentes dans les idées de Liang en les relativisant selon la situation et la référence. L'anti-culturalisme que Liang avait péniblement lutté pour atteindre est devenu un point de départ naturel pour la prochaine génération de la « nouvelle jeunesse » (*xinqingnian* 新青年). Les idées qu'ils semblaient partager étaient en fait parlées dans différentes langues

et états mentaux.¹⁰¹⁷ Le schéma de Levenson est très utile pour appréhender les attaques radicales de Zhang contre Confucius et le confucianisme dans les années 1900 (correspondant à son virage vers le bouddhisme) et son autocritique une décennie plus tard. Malgré la confrontation de leurs idées sur de nombreuses questions, Zhang et Liang étaient des contemporains et ont connu une « dérive » similaire dans le spectre en évolution rapide de la politique et la culture.

Pour expliquer la radicalisation de la sphère intellectuelle, Yu Ying-shih l'articule avec la marginalisation des élites instruites dans la sphère politique.¹⁰¹⁸ L'événement le plus crucial pour ce dernier processus, comme l'ont souligné beaucoup, a été l'abolition du système d'examens impériaux (*keju* 科舉) en 1905, dont l'impact a été pleinement démontré dans l'étude d'Henrietta Harrison sur Liu Dapeng 劉大鵬 (1857-1942).¹⁰¹⁹ Élève de Yu Ying-shih et ayant également effectué des recherches dans le journal de Liu Dapeng, Luo Zhitian a mis en relation la marginalisation des élites instruites avec la montée d'une population nouvellement instruite de l'arène périphérique à l'arène centrale,¹⁰²⁰ ce qui a offert un aperçu sociologique du radicalisme culturel croissant. Un autre étudiant de Yu, Wang Fansen a consacré un premier travail à l'introduction de la pensée générale de Zhang Taiyan à la fin de Qing, qui a conclu en examinant ses impacts de grande envergure sur le confucianisme.¹⁰²¹ La dette que je dois aux œuvres de Wang ne se manifeste pas suffisamment dans les citations. En outre, les universitaires de Chine continentale des années 1970 et 1980 ont également évoqué la carrière de Zhang en tant que penseur révolutionnaire pionnier. Malgré leurs termes et cadres théoriques problématiques selon la norme de l'érudition contemporaine, plusieurs chercheurs (par exemple, Li Zehou et Hou Wailu) ont apporté des points de vue perspicaces révélant le mélange d'éléments radicaux et conservateurs dans la pensée de Zhang.¹⁰²²

Le deuxième thème est le conservatisme en tant que tendance intellectuelle de la Chine moderne. Une collection de recherche classique est *The Limits of Change* (Les limites du changement), édité par Charlotte Furth, qui nous fournit une douzaine d'études

¹⁰¹⁷ Joseph R. Levenson, 1965, pp. vii-viii, 10-11.

¹⁰¹⁸ Yu Ying-shih, 2003, pp. 15-25 (comme cité dans Aymeric Xu, 2020, p. 159).

¹⁰¹⁹ Henrietta Harrison, 2005.

¹⁰²⁰ Luo Zhitian, 2014, pp. 109-153.

¹⁰²¹ Wang Fansen, 2012.

¹⁰²² Li Zehou, 1979, pp. 382-420. Hou Wailu, 2014, pp. 1330-1475.

de cas sur les alternatives conservatrices offertes par les élites intellectuelles et les forces politiques tout au long de la fin de l'histoire de Qing et républicaine. Bien que radical et conservateur soient utilisés pour indiquer deux orientations opposées, le principe commun est que les personnes partageant les mêmes idées à une certaine période ne parlaient pas nécessairement la même langue et n'exprimaient pas le même état mental. Alors que Levenson nous a aidés à comprendre le virage conservateur de Zhang par la radicalisation intergénérationnelle, l'essai de Furth sur le nationalisme de Zhang a bien démontré la compatibilité entre le conservatisme culturel de Zhang et le radicalisme politique.¹⁰²³ Un article récent d'Aymeric Xu a proposé une typologie à quatre dimensions pour cartographier le conservatisme en Chine républicaine, dans laquelle Zhang a été classé comme un représentant majeur des conservateurs antimodernes. De plus, Xu a fait remonter le conservatisme républicain au mouvement de nationalisme culturaliste à la fin de Qing, dans lequel Zhang a joué un rôle crucial.¹⁰²⁴ En éclairant les différentes connotations du conservatisme dans le contexte de Qing et républicain, l'étude de Xu offre un fil conducteur pour appréhender les changements et la cohérence de la pensée de Zhang à travers les décennies. Parmi les chercheurs chinois contemporains de Zhang, c'est Wang Rui qui a fait de nouveaux progrès remarquables sur le conservatisme culturel de Zhang au cours de ses dernières années, ce qui l'a contextualisé dans les débats académiques de Zhang avec les intellectuels de la « nouvelle jeunesse » et a souligné son lien avec la pensée politique mature de Zhang.¹⁰²⁵

Le troisième thème est l'application politique et morale du bouddhisme à la fin de Qing. Parmi les études de la culture intellectuelle au cours de cette période, une grande attention a été accordée à l'importance du bouddhisme pour les élites littéraires réformistes et révolutionnaires. Contrairement à la plupart des laïcs lettrés antérieurs qui limitaient leur intérêt et leur dévotion au bouddhisme à leur vie privée, ils ont promu le bouddhisme comme un moyen indispensable pour sauver la nation chinoise et sa tradition morale. Le bouddhisme, ainsi que les études des maîtres pré-Qin et la pensée et la religion occidentales, étaient considérés comme des alternatives idéologiques à la version officielle du

¹⁰²³ Charlotte Furth, 1976.

¹⁰²⁴ Aymeric Xu, 2020, pp. 137-140, 149.

¹⁰²⁵ Wang Rui, 2014; 2016.

confucianisme. Ce sujet a attiré à la fois des historiens intellectuels et des spécialistes des études bouddhiques. Dans le premier groupe, certains chercheurs (par exemple Chan Sin-wai et Jiang Hainu) ont proposé le terme « bouddhisme politique » et ont discuté de sa logique et de ses effets.¹⁰²⁶ Le deuxième groupe, représenté par Li Xiangping, s'est davantage concentré sur les valeurs bouddhistes et leur rôle dans la restauration de la moralité.¹⁰²⁷ Indépendamment de la différence dans leur orientation, il n'y a pas de divergence substantielle entre les chercheurs pour expliquer la soudaine montée d'enthousiasme pour le bouddhisme au sein des cercles lettrés des militants politiques. Ils étaient tous d'accord ou présupposaient que cet enthousiasme de courte durée était motivé par l'envie de rechercher l'ordre et le sens (comme le titre de la monographie de Chang Hao l'a révélé) dans une période de crise nationale qui s'aggravait.¹⁰²⁸ Bien que le lien entre le bouddhisme et la politique ait rapidement cessé d'exister, la génération de la « nouvelle jeunesse » a largement hérité de la même motivation que leurs prédecesseurs de la fin de Qing, qui constituaient un fil de continuité sous-jacent, comme l'a expliqué Kondo Kuniyasu.¹⁰²⁹ Dans la plupart des études (à l'exception de celle de Chan Sin-wai), Zhang Taiyan et sa pensée bouddhique ont été traités comme l'un des principaux cas, généralement aux côtés de Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865-1898) et Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927).

Passons maintenant à l'approche des études religieuses. Comparés aux historiens intellectuels, les chercheurs de la religion ont beaucoup moins contribué au sujet de l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang. Basé sur l'approche de l'histoire intellectuelle, l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang est égal à la pensée bouddhique de Zhang. Dans cette perspective plus ou moins instrumentaliste, Zhang a tiré parti du bouddhisme comme l'une des ressources intellectuelles non conventionnelles qui ont facilité son engagement dans les débats intellectuels et les activités politiques. Même ceux qui reconnaissaient la sphère de croyance dans l'engagement bouddhiste de Zhang avaient tendance à la considérer comme purement fondée sur l'intellectualisme. Tout en étant totalement d'accord sur le

¹⁰²⁶ Chan Sin-wai, 1985. Jiang Hainu, 2012.

¹⁰²⁷ Li Xiangping, 1993.

¹⁰²⁸ Chang Hao, 1988.

¹⁰²⁹ Kondo Kuniyasu, 1988. A noter, je ne parle pas japonais et ne peux accéder à la littérature scientifique japonaise qu'à travers des traductions chinoises limitées.

fait que l’engagement bouddhique de Zhang était différent des situations conventionnelles des bouddhistes laïcs lettrés, j’ai l’intention de démontrer qu’en introduisant les cadres théoriques des études religieuses et leurs résultats scientifiques récents (bien que généralement sans lien direct avec les études de Zhang), nous pouvons découvrir des aspects longtemps négligés sous l’approche intellectualiste actuellement prédominante et dresser un tableau plus complet. Une fois que nous percevons l’engagement bouddhique de Zhang comme une façon de « faire religion » et que nous avons entrepris de rechercher des sources primaires dans cette direction, nous commençons à voir comment le bouddhisme a fourni à Zhang les moyens de se cultiver, a informé son envie de poursuite transcendante, et enfin, nous révèle le rôle qu’il a joué dans le paysage en évolution rapide de la religion chinoise. Bien que la littérature scientifique des études religieuses soit moins bien intégrée dans la thèse, elle a donné lieu à de nombreux points originaux, notamment dans les chapitres 4 et 6.

Le quatrième thème, et aussi le premier pour l’approche des études religieuses, est le renouveau bouddhique dans la Chine moderne. A présenter en premier lieu est l’étude classique de Holmes Welch qui a rendu la thèse du « renouveau bouddhique » à la fois proéminente et problématique. Intégrant une variété de textes, de documents et de matériaux oraux, la monographie de Welch a établi la référence pour l’histoire sociale des études bouddhiques et est toujours inspirante aujourd’hui pour sa manière critique d’investigation.¹⁰³⁰ À la suite du travail de pionnier de Welch, de nombreux nouveaux résultats scientifiques ont été obtenus sous la forme d’études biographiques. En Occident, nous voyons l’étude de Gabriele Goldfuss sur Yang Wenhui (1837-1911), l’étude de Don Pittman sur Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947) et l’étude de Daniel Campo sur Xuyun 虛雲 (vers 1864-1959), entre autres.¹⁰³¹ La monographie de Goldfuss montrait l’influence considérable que Yang exerçait sur l’intelligentsia réformiste dans la région de Jiangnan et facilitait ainsi mon enquête sur la distinction ambiguë entre les laïcs bouddhistes et les savants bouddhistes (Zhang étant inclus dans ce dernier), qui était communément maintenue par des études biographiques antérieures en chinois comme celles de Shi

¹⁰³⁰ Holmes Welch, 1968.

¹⁰³¹ Gabriele Goldfuss, 2001. Don A. Pittman, 2001. Daniel Campo, 2013.

Dongchu et Yu Lingbo.¹⁰³² Des recherches récentes ont souligné l'utilisation d'archives et de manuscrits, permettant d'esquisser un portrait plus authentique de personnalités importantes, dont un bon exemple est l'étude de Gong Jun et Lai Yueshan sur Taixu.¹⁰³³

Le cinquième thème est la religiosité des lettrés de la fin de Qing. En tant que concept relativement nouveau, la « religiosité » nous amène à examiner l'exercice de l'initiative personnelle en choisissant parmi un répertoire religieux vaste et diversifié. Parmi le schéma développé sur cette base conceptuelle, nous avons les cinq modalités de « faire religion » d'Adam Yue Chau et la typologie à quatre quadrants de la religiosité des élites de Vincent Goossaert.¹⁰³⁴ En recourant au schéma de Chau, ma thèse tente de démontrer que la manière dont Zhang s'est engagé dans le bouddhisme était loin d'être uniquement discursive/scripturale, mais aussi personnelle-culturelle et, dans une certaine mesure, immédiate-pratique et relationnelle. Quant à Goossaert, il a proposé un autre concept lié à la religiosité, à savoir la « biculturalité », qui souligne la diversité des convictions religieuses personnelles des lettrés sous les modèles publics qu'ils étaient censés jouer en tant que fonctionnaires ou confucéens.¹⁰³⁵ En révélant la distance entre les religiosités publiques et privées, nous sommes en mesure de dépasser la dispute autour des identités religieuses confessionnelles, qui, dans le cas de Zhang, impliquait des enquêtes problématiques sur la question si Zhang peut être considéré comme un dévot bouddhique (contrairement à son identité de confucéen Maître).

Le sixième thème, la différenciation de l'« enseignement », offre un autre angle pour questionner la religiosité des élites intellectuelles de la fin de Qing, notamment son déclin et sa reconfiguration. Les historiens intellectuels représentés par Luo Zhitian et Wang Fansen ont apporté de grandes contributions à des sujets liés à ce thème, tels que la désintégration du groupe de lettrés et l'émergence d'intellectuels modernes, et la formation de l'histoire en tant que discipline moderne en Chine.¹⁰³⁶ Ce thème est également entré dans la conscience collective des spécialistes des études religieuses, comme on le voit dans un numéro spécial sur la religion, l'éducation et la politique dans la Chine moderne.¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³² Shi Dongchu 1976. Yu Lingbo, 1995.

¹⁰³³ Gong Jun & Lai Yueshan, 2014. Pour plus des travaux récents sur Taixu, voir Wang Song ed., 2018; 2020.

¹⁰³⁴ Adam Yue Chau, 2006, p. 75. Vincent Goossaert, 2017, pp. 15-17.

¹⁰³⁵ Vincent Goossaert, 2017, pp. 10-13.

¹⁰³⁶ Luo Zhitian, 2014. Wang Fansen, 2001.

¹⁰³⁷ Ji Zhe ed., 2011.

L’éditeur de ce numéro, Ji Zhe, a introduit les théories sociologiques de la différenciation sociale pour saisir la voie chinoise de la sécularisation et comment les élites bouddhiques laïques (représentées par Yang Wenhui et Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無, 1871-1943) ont choisi de reconstruire les relations entre le sacré, le savoir et le pouvoir.¹⁰³⁸ Cette perspective théorique et les résultats scientifiques susmentionnés m’ont amené à réaliser (1) la différence dans les études scripturaires entre Zhang et la prochaine génération des savants bouddhiques dans les universités de style occidental et (2) le rôle social que Zhang s’attendait à ce que le bouddhisme jouait en contraste avec les idées d’Ouyang et de Taixu.

Le septième thème est le nouveau paysage de la religion populaire dans la Chine moderne. D’un point de vue panoramique, tel que fourni par le livre de Vincent Goossaert et David Palmer,¹⁰³⁹ l’engagement bouddhique de Zhang Taiyan et d’autres personnalités éminentes n’était qu’une partie relativement visible de la vaste « écologie » du paysage religieux chinois qui a évolué tout en interagissant constamment avec les autres éléments et forces de la société. Dans ce paysage, l’habitude des chercheurs de Zhang est de prêter attention aux idées savantes de Zhang sur le bouddhisme, les maîtres taoïstes pré-Qin, le confucianisme et leur relation. La négligence de la reconfiguration à grande échelle de la religion populaire, dans laquelle les sociétés rédemptrices occupaient une place importante,¹⁰⁴⁰ a conduit à négliger sa pertinence avec la réserve de Zhang envers la propagation religieuse du bouddhisme. Ensuite, j’ai bénéficié de l’étude de Sébastien Billioud et Joël Thoraval et de celle de Li Tiangang sur le confucianisme et la religion populaire, tous les deux mêlant travail de terrain et études textuelles, une prise de conscience méthodologique que Barend ter Haar a généralisée dans sa revue critique sur l’histoire des études de la religion chinoise.¹⁰⁴¹ Ces travaux m’ont guidé pour étudier plus attentivement la conception changeante de Zhang de la « religion » qui est révélatrice pour diverses questions.

Après l’introduction des thèmes généraux ci-dessus, passons aux cinq thèmes

¹⁰³⁸ Voir, respectivement, Ji Zhe, 2017; 2009.

¹⁰³⁹ Vincent Goossaert & David A. Palmer, 2011.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Une publication récente d’articles rassemblés, éditée par Philip Clart, David Ownby et Chien-chuan Wang (2020), contient des recherches de haut niveau sur la Société d’études morale (Daode xueshe 道德學社) et les « études spirituelles » (*lingxue* 靈學). Je n’ai pas accédé à ce livre jusqu’à la dernière étape de la rédaction de la thèse.

¹⁰⁴¹ Sébastien Billioud & Joël Thoraval, 2014. Li Tiangang, 2017. Barend ter Haar, 2016.

restants appartenant aux études de Zhang. Les huitième et neuvième thèmes concernent respectivement l'édition et la publication des œuvres de Zhang, et les travaux d'annotation et des notes biographiques. Grâce à l'introduction de ces deux thèmes, nous pouvons acquérir des connaissances de base sur la situation des sources primaires.

Le huitième thème. Les éditeurs des œuvres de Zhang ont accompli un travail de haute qualité au cours du dernier demi-siècle environ. Le travail d'édition, initié à l'ère Mao, a réussi à publier une édition incomplète de *Zhang Taiyan quanji* au début des années 1980. Plusieurs facteurs favorables existaient alors, notamment la renommée de Zhang en tant que révolutionnaire antimandchou, sa relation maître-disciple avec Lu Xun et l'intérêt de Mao Zedong (1893-1976) pour les études de Zhang sur le légalisme au cours des dernières années du premier. Le plus important, cependant, était les efforts collectifs des disciples de Zhang (Wang Zhongluo 王仲犖, 1913-1986, Jiang Liangfu 姜亮夫, 1902-1995, et Zhu Zugeng 諸祖耿, 1899-1989, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns) et de leurs collègues. Depuis la première édition des *Oeuvres complètes de Zhang Taiyan*, plus de ses écrits ont été édités et publiés, sur la base duquel nous voyons enfin une nouvelle édition, publiée entre 2014-2017, incluant exclusivement tous les mots existants de Zhang. Parmi les contributeurs les plus importants sont Zhang Nianchi, petit-fils de Zhang Taiyan, initiateur indispensable du travail de collecte et de publication ; Tang Zhijun, l'auteur des *Notes étendues sur « L'autobiographie chronologique de Zhang Taiyan »* [*Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian* 章太炎年譜長編], dont la compilation était basée sur son édition de 1961 d'un recueil d'essais politiques de Zhang ;¹⁰⁴² et Zhu Weizheng, dont l'expertise philologique lui a permis de sonder le processus long et compliqué de Zhang pour écrire et réviser deux éditions du *Livre de l'urgence* (*Qiushu* 暴書) et, comme édition finale, le *Livre après examen* (*Jianlun* 檢論).¹⁰⁴³

Le neuvième thème. Le travail d'annotation est extrêmement important pour les chercheurs de Zhang contemporains compte tenu de l'obscurité notoire du style d'écriture de Zhang. Tout comme la situation pour l'édition et la publication, les principaux annotateurs étaient les disciples de Zhang et leurs disciples ainsi que les universitaires au sein de leurs réseaux sociaux. Comme résultats les plus remarquables, nous avons

¹⁰⁴² Tang Zhijun, 2013. *Zhang Taiyan*, 1977.

¹⁰⁴³ Zhu Weizheng, 1983.

l’annotation de Xu Fu du *Livre de l’urgence* (*version révisée*), Pang Jun et Guo Chengyong des *Disquisitions sur le patrimoine national* (*Guogu lunheng* 國故論衡), et Meng Zhuo d’*Une Interprétation de « Sur l’égalisation des choses »* (*Qiwulun shi* 齊物論釋).¹⁰⁴⁴ Les premiers annotateurs, principalement formés à la linguistique chinoise traditionnelle et l’étude des textes classiques, n’ont pas bien élucidé les parties liées au bouddhisme, comme exposé dans le cas de Xu Fu. Dans les travaux récents de Meng Zhuo, cet inconvénient a été surmonté. Parmi les œuvres de notes biographiques, les notes étendues susmentionnées de Tang Zhijun sont d’une grande valeur, offrant des informations philologiques et contextuelles abondantes sur les écrits de Zhang. Publié à l’origine en 1978, ce livre a une édition révisée en 2010 avec un contenu complémentaire basé sur le travail de terrain de Tang dans les bibliothèques et les archives du Japon, des États-Unis, de Singapour et d’ailleurs.¹⁰⁴⁵

Le dixième thème est la recherche textuelle, qui constitue la base de la plupart des études de Zhang. Comparées à celles de ses études linguistiques et classiques, les recherches textuelles de haut niveau sur les études bouddhiques de Zhang sont limitées. Les universitaires qui ont le plus contribué à ce thème sont les bouddhologues et les philosophes. Dans le premier groupe, nous avons l’excellent travail de Guo Peng et ses collègues dont l’expertise dans l’histoire et les écritures du bouddhisme chinois leur a permis de jeter un nouvel éclairage critique sur plusieurs questions clés des idées bouddhiques de Zhang.¹⁰⁴⁶ La monographie la plus récente de Zhou Guihua offre de solides connaissances contextuelles pour le chapitre 6 de ma thèse.¹⁰⁴⁷ Dans le deuxième groupe, l’article de John Makeham est le premier à introduire systématiquement la pensée bouddhique de Zhang dans le monde occidental, dont j’ai bénéficié pour des traductions terminologiques. En outre, Makeham était également l’éditeur d’une collection sur les études du Yogācāra dans la Chine moderne.¹⁰⁴⁸ Nous avons également un article de Zhang Zhiqiang sur la réinterprétation philosophique du Zhuangzi par Zhang, qui, bien que fortement orientée vers la théorie, était basée sur des lectures attentives des textes

¹⁰⁴⁴ Zhang Taiyan, 2000. Zhang Taiyan, 2011c. Meng Zhuo, 2019.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Tang Zhijun, 2013, p. 569.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Guo Peng, Liao Zili, and Zhang Xinying, 1989, pp. 354-391.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Zhou Guihua, 2006.

¹⁰⁴⁸ John Makeham, 2012. John Makeham ed., 2014.

originaux.¹⁰⁴⁹

Le onzième thème est le contexte transculturel de la pensée de Zhang. Avec le suivant, ces deux thèmes concernent des questions plus générales. Je les arrange ici parce que toute la littérature scientifique présentée ci-dessous appartient aux études de Zhang. Le contexte japonais est le sujet central de ce thème. Au cours des douze années entre la fin de 1899 et la fin de 1911, Zhang a voyagé trois fois au Japon, dont le troisième a duré plus de cinq ans. C'est durant cette période que l'on assiste non seulement aux moments forts de la carrière de Zhang en tant que propagandiste antimandchou persévérant mais aussi à la production d'une grande partie de ses textes bouddhiques. Pour ce sujet ainsi que certains sujets connexes, je dois une grande dette de gratitude aux travaux de Kobayashi Takeshi, Peng Chunling, Lin Shaoyang et Sakamoto Hiroko.¹⁰⁵⁰ En outre, il est nécessaire de mentionner l'étude de Ge Zhaoguang sur les échanges culturels et religieux entre la Chine à la fin de Qing et le Japon, dont le point focal était le bouddhisme.¹⁰⁵¹ Contrairement aux recherches fructueuses sur le contexte japonais, celles sur l'importance de l'Inde restent rares. Outre la monographie de Lin Shaoyang qui a abordé ce sujet sous un angle géopolitique, nous avons un précieux essai du sinologue reconnu Rao Zongyi sur l'appréciation de Zhang de la religion et la culture indiennes.¹⁰⁵²

Le douzième et dernier thème est Zhang Taiyan en tant que penseur original de la modernité. Bien qu'il ait longtemps été de bon sens parmi les chercheurs de Zhang que Zhang ait vécu et réagi activement à la transformation radicale de la société chinoise du traditionnel au moderne, c'est un sujet relativement nouveau qui traite Zhang comme un porte-parole chinois majeur rencontrant les tendances idéologiques occidentales ; ces tendances ont servi de sujets de recherche pour la philosophie politique, les théories sociales et les études culturelles. Largement reçu dans le monde académique chinois et anglais, Wong Young-tsu a souligné le pluralisme culturel comme le cœur de la réflexion critique de Zhang sur la modernité, bien qu'il ait discuté en même temps du rejet de Zhang

¹⁰⁴⁹ Zhang Zhiqiang, 2012.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Kobayashi Takeshi, 2018. Peng Chunling, 2014 (parmi ses autres travaux). Lin Shaoyang, 2018. Sakamoto Hiroko, 2019. Peng reste en contact étroit avec ses collègues japonais tandis que Lin a poursuit son doctorat et enseigne au Japon.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ge Zhaoguang, 2006.

¹⁰⁵² Rao Zongyi, 1998.

de l'occidentalisation, critiquant le darwinisme social en particulier.¹⁰⁵³ Face à la thèse de Wong, Wang Hui et Viren Murthy ont dépeint Zhang comme un penseur niant radicalement la modernité occidentale. Recourant aux idées bouddhistes et taoïstes, Zhang, comme les deux chercheurs l'ont réinterprété, déconstruit le discours du « principe universel » (*gongli* 公理) qui devenait la prémissse idéologique prédominante chez ses contemporains pro-occidentaux.¹⁰⁵⁴ Des polémiques entre Wong et Murthy,¹⁰⁵⁵ on peut percevoir que leur opposition était motivée par des divergences à la fois académiques et politiques.

* Présentation des chapitres de la thèse *

Dans la section précédente, je propose une rétrospective panoramique de la littérature scientifique. Une revue plus approfondie et critique des résultats scientifiques sera distribuée aux chapitres en fonction de leurs sujets. En dehors d'une telle revue, chaque chapitre fournira des informations biographiques et philologiques plus détaillées sur Zhang et ses écrits. Ce que cette section présente brièvement sont la période, le contexte, le contenu principal et les sources des six chapitres.

Le chapitre 1 traite des vues de Zhang sur le bouddhisme au début de sa carrière politique de 1897 à 1900. En se concentrant sur le contexte du soi-disant « nouveau savoir » (*xinxue* 新學) circulant dans les réseaux sociaux des élites lettrées réformistes, ce chapitre révèle l'attitude apparemment critique de Zhang envers le bouddhisme comme étant causée par son rejet de l'application politique problématique des idées bouddhiques, principalement promue par les adeptes et les sympathisants de Kang Youwei. Il retrace ensuite les différentes sources intellectuelles du nouveau savoir, sur la base duquel la divergence de Zhang avec le Parti de Kang sera expliquée. Dans la dernière partie, ce chapitre soutient que l'appréciation de Zhang pour les doctrines bouddhiques était plus élevée que beaucoup ne l'avaient supposé, comme le prouvent des passages moins souvent discutés de plusieurs de ses textes clés de cette période, et a jeté les bases de sa pensée

¹⁰⁵³ Wong Young-tsu, 2003.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Wang Hui, 2008. Viren Murthy, 2011.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Wang Young-tsu, 2012. Viren Murthy, 2012.

bouddhique ultérieure.

Le chapitre 2 traite de la période allant de la mi-1900 (tour de Zhang à la révolution antimandchou) jusqu'à la mi-1907 (un an après le troisième séjour de Zhang au Japon). Contrairement au récit conventionnel soulignant le tournant dramatique de Zhang vers le bouddhisme en raison de son expérience en prison (1903-1906), ce chapitre entend révéler l'importance des trois années précédant l'emprisonnement de Zhang (1900-1903), proposant que l'intérêt croissant de Zhang pour la « religion » (à la fois en tant que néologisme et système de connaissance) dans cette période antérieure l'a préparé à l'établissement de son engagement bouddhique. Sur la base de la prise de conscience de cette corrélation, nous sommes en mesure de développer une compréhension plus approfondie de la proposition de Zhang en 1906 pour la combinaison de la Religion (c'est-à-dire du bouddhisme réformé)¹⁰⁵⁶ et de « l'essence nationale » (*guocui* 國粹) pour faciliter le mouvement révolutionnaire. La partie la plus originale du chapitre interroge la position différenciée de la Religion et de l'essence nationale dans la pensée de Zhang, ainsi que la réception ambivalente de Zhang de l'évolutionnisme, et la pertinence de son hostilité envers Kang Youwei par rapport à sa critique contre Confucius et le confucianisme.

Concentré sur une courte période allant de la mi-1907 à la mi-1908, le chapitre 3 enquête sur l'utopisme inspiré du bouddhisme de Zhang. Les chercheurs précédents ont souvent traité l'année avant et après la mi-1907 dans son ensemble, au cours de laquelle Zhang a été le rédacteur en chef du *Journal du Peuple* (*Minbao* 民報), et le nationalisme et le bouddhisme étaient deux thèmes principaux de ses publications là-bas. Ce chapitre, cependant, met l'accent sur le changement radical de la pensée de Zhang au milieu de l'année 1907 en raison de sa déception face à ses camarades révolutionnaires et de son engagement dans des groupes anarchistes. Le texte central de ce chapitre est « Sur les cinq négations » (*Wuwu lun* 五無論), dans lequel Zhang a élaboré un cadre théorique utopique en cinq étapes pour transcender, au lieu de s'allier avec, le nationalisme. Partant du fil offert par une lettre négligée de Zhang à Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), j'entends révéler les anarchistes chinois comme les interlocuteurs implicites de la première partie du texte de Zhang. Le fort pessimisme moral exprimé dans la dernière partie est contextualisé

¹⁰⁵⁶ Dans la thèse, la première lettre de « religion » prend une majuscule lorsqu'elle fait référence à la nouvelle version du bouddhisme que Zhang a conçue.

dans la critique de Zhang de l'évolutionnisme basée sur sa philosophie bouddhique.

Partant de la tentative controversée de Zhang de devenir moine en Inde au tournant de 1908, le chapitre 4 se propose d'explorer le côté non découvert de l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang, y compris son envie récurrente de quitter le monde profane, sa pratique méditative de longue date, ses rêves des enfers, et le rituel bouddhique de la Terre Pure sur son lit de mort. Les lettres privées de Zhang sont les sources primaires cruciales pour ce chapitre, complétées par les souvenirs de ses connaissances, les documents, ainsi que les écrits publics. Bien que la plupart des matériaux historiques soient fragmentaires, rassemblés chronologiquement en un seul chapitre, ils sont suffisamment riches et solides pour soutenir l'argument selon lequel l'aspect pratique de l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang était continu et cohérent, contrairement à l'aspect relativement instable de sa pensée théorique, plus sensible aux changements de l'environnement politique et aux influences savantes. L'objectif principal de ce chapitre est de rectifier le point de vue conventionnel qui caractérisait la passion bouddhique de Zhang comme purement intellectualiste. La curiosité et la familiarité avec la culture religieuse environnante et la pratique religieuse dans la vie privée en fait prévalaient parmi les élites lettrées de la fin de Qing. Elles ont néanmoins considérablement diminué parmi l'intelligentsia plus sécularisée de la génération suivante.

Le chapitre 5 étudie le développement de la pensée savante et religieuse de Zhang de 1908 à 1916. Contrairement à l'état instable de sa vie sociale, sa pensée était progressivement orientée vers la syncrétisation du bouddhisme avec les enseignements des maîtres taoïstes et confucéens, dont les expressions les plus sophistiquées se trouvent dans *Une Interprétation de « Sur l'égalisation des choses »*. Étant donné que des recherches antérieures ont suffisamment discuté de la façon dont Zhang a réinterprété le *Zhuangzi* conformément à ses théories bouddhiques, ce chapitre se tourne vers un chemin rarement emprunté, retracant le syncrétisme de Zhang des Trois Enseignements jusqu'à la tendance syncrétique croissante de sa pensée bouddhique à travers l'étude de l'essai négligé de Zhang en 1908 sur l'origine du bouddhisme Mahāyāna avec ses deux annexes. Par ailleurs, le chapitre tente de révéler la réflexion critique de Zhang sur les défauts de son utopisme en lisant entre les lignes d'*Une Interprétation de « Sur l'égalisation des choses »*.

Le chapitre 6 a pour sujet la relation de Zhang avec les communautés bouddhistes. Semblable au chapitre 4, il établit une perspective globale tout au long de la vie de Zhang, mais accorde plus d'attention à la période républicaine. Le chapitre est divisé en trois sections : la première sur les attentes de Zhang concernant le rôle du bouddhisme dans la société chinoise, les réformes bouddhiques, la relation entre moines et laïcs, et celle entre bouddhisme et confucianisme ; le second sur les réseaux sociaux de Zhang avec d'éminents moines bouddhistes, le cercle autour de Yang Wenhui et de jeunes savants bouddhistes, ainsi que sa position dans les associations bouddhistes ; le troisième sur l'interaction de Zhang avec Taixu et Ouyang Jingwu, deux des figures bouddhistes les plus influentes de la Chine moderne. En couvrant une série de sujets moins étudiés, ce dernier chapitre nous permet d'acquérir une compréhension complète de l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang.

* Conclusion *

Pour conclure la thèse, je synthétise ses principaux résultats, en particulier ses idées originales, en six points. Mes réflexions sur des problèmes plus généraux, la méthodologie et les défauts restants sont classées en conséquence.

Le premier point concerne l'évolution des idées de Zhang sur les notions de bouddhisme et de religion. Cette perspective d'analyse conceptuelle, couvrant les sujets des six chapitres, servira d'un des fils conducteurs pour faire avancer mes futures recherches. Alors que les recherches précédentes ont bien discuté de divers aspects de cette question, une perspective cohérente fait toujours défaut. L'intelligentsia de la fin de Qing s'est efforcée de faire face à l'impact intellectuel des connaissances occidentales qui a remis en question les notions et les cadres théoriques fondamentaux du système de connaissances indigènes. Au début de sa carrière politique, Zhang a montré moins de volonté de s'adapter à la vogue du nouveau savoir, par rapport à beaucoup au sein des cercles réformistes. Fidèle au paradigme de l'école de Han, il a traité les textes bouddhiques comme des matières premières à exploiter pour des études empiriques de géographie et d'ethnicité (chapitre 1). L'attitude de Zhang est passée de la résistance à la réception active vers 1902 à la suite de sa lecture approfondie de l'anthropologie, la sociologie et la

philosophie occidentales traduites en japonais. Semblable à Liang Qichao, il a remplacé la notion indigène d'« enseignement » (*jiao* 教) par le néologisme « religion » (*zongjiao* 宗教). Ce glissement conceptuel lui a permis de réévaluer la tradition religieuse chinoise à l'échelle mondiale et la temporalité de l'histoire profonde, comme le démontre l'édition révisée du *Livre de l'urgence*. Dans son discours de 1906, Zhang a explicitement promu le bouddhisme comme le candidat le plus prometteur pour la religion de la Chine moderne. Cette promotion impliquait une approbation de la fonction de la religion en général (chapitre 2), qui n'allait pas durer longtemps. Dans sa conférence bouddhique de 1911 au plus tard, Zhang avait reclassé le bouddhisme comme un enseignement philosophique au lieu d'une religion. Parallèlement, il se référait de plus en plus au bouddhisme par le terme d'« enseignement/loi bouddhique » (*fofa* 佛法, le *dharma* prêché par le Bouddha) plutôt que de « religion bouddhiste » (*fojiao* 佛教) (chapitre 5). Le retour aux concepts traditionnels était étroitement lié à sa réserve sur la propagation religieuse du bouddhisme tout au long de la période républicaine (chapitre 6). Pour faire avancer les recherches sur la conception de Zhang du bouddhisme et de la religion, il faudra consacrer plus d'énergie à tracer les chaînes translinguistiques de nouveaux termes et paradigmes. Le manque de compétences linguistiques m'empêche de rechercher le contexte japonais de cette question. Je suis néanmoins capable d'explorer les liens avec ses origines anglophones et francophones.

Le deuxième point vise à mieux appréhender les points de vue bouddhiques de Zhang en les contextualisant dans l'actualité et en révélant ses interlocuteurs implicites. En guise de conclusion générale à mon interprétation des textes de Zhang, nombre de ses discussions apparemment académiques étaient dirigées contre les opinions de ses rivaux contemporains, ce qui est également vrai pour ses textes bouddhiques. Les pulsions émotionnelles expliquent également la rhétorique excessive couramment observée dans ses écrits polémiques. Sur la base de cette prise de conscience méthodologique, la thèse met en évidence Kang Youwei comme l'interlocuteur le plus important de Zhang (bien que Liang Qichao et Tan Sitong aient également été importants). La différence d'affiliation académique et d'approches réformistes des deux personnes est un fil conducteur indispensable pour comprendre le refus de Zhang d'intégrer le bouddhisme dans le

nouveau savoir (chapitre 1). L'hostilité de Zhang envers les défauts moraux et l'opportunisme politique de Kang a constitué une raison majeure de sa critique radicale contre Confucius et des Confucéens en général (chapitre 2). Malgré la confrontation de longue date, l'influence de Kang et de ses partisans sur Zhang, moins discutée qu'elle ne devrait l'être, a persisté. La proposition de Zhang d'un bouddhisme réformé en tant que nouvelle religion résonnait, intentionnellement ou non, avec la religion confucéenne de Kang (chapitre 2). Ses cinq négations dystopiques peuvent être considérées comme une réponse critique à l'imagination audacieuse de ce dernier de la Grande Unité (chapitre 3). De plus, Zhang a en fait appliqué la méthode analogique et la cosmologie syncrétique dans ses études bouddhiques, contrastant avec sa critique antérieure de telles méthodologies par le parti de Kang (chapitre 1). Dans les débats de Zhang avec les anarchistes chinois et japonais, nous trouvons une situation similaire à deux faces, à savoir l'acceptation et le terrain d'entente à côté de profondes divergences (chapitre 3). Par ailleurs, l'accent mis sur l'information contextuelle nous aide à saisir la position nuancée de Zhang vis-à-vis de la confrontation entre Taixu et Ouyang Jingwu (chapitre 6). Le principal défaut de mon travail lié à ce point, je n'accède pas suffisamment aux textes originaux des interlocuteurs de Zhang qu'ils soient ses adversaires ou ses amis proches.

Basée sur des études intertextuelles minutieuses, la thèse révèle les autoréflexions rigoureuses mais souvent tacites de Zhang, ce qui est le sujet du troisième point. Bien que les changements de la pensée bouddhique de Zhang au fil des ans aient été décrits à plusieurs reprises, les raisons sous-jacentes et la manière dont ces raisons s'entrelacent n'ont pas été pleinement révélées. À certaines occasions, les autoréflexions étaient explicitement présentées, même si dans un texte négligé. Le meilleur exemple est la lettre de 1911 de Zhang à Cai Yuanpei concernant le changement de son attitude envers le sino-babylonisme, le Laozi et le Zhuangzi, et le système parlementaire. Les réflexions plus profondes, comme le soutient le chapitre 3, visent la limite du nationalisme et l'abus de l'évolutionnisme en tant qu'idéologie, qui ont considérablement réorienté la pensée bouddhique de Zhang vers 1907. À plusieurs reprises, cependant, Zhang a réfléchi critiquement sur ses idées antérieures d'une manière implicite. C'est le cas de l'enquête de Zhang, dans « Sur les cinq négations », sur les fondements éthiques du nationalisme, la

révolution et la religion, qui peut être considérée comme l'expression d'un besoin de transcender le stade du nationalisme, avec lequel le bouddhisme réformé alliés selon son discours de 1906 (chapitres 2-3). Un cas plus inspirant apparaît au chapitre 7 d'*Une interprétation de « Sur l'égalisation des choses »* lorsque l'auteur a interprété Zhuangzi comme l'incarnation de l'idéal du bodhisattva à la fois pour le but et les moyens de l'enseignement de Zhuangzi. Le style obscur des paroles de Zhang a longtemps empêché les chercheurs de Zhang de se rendre compte qu'ils prévoyaient non seulement des tournants théoriques généraux, mais signifiaient également des autocritiques spécifiques contre la doctrine de la non-origine (chapitres 3 et 5). Les études intertextuelles susmentionnées nous rappellent le dialogue et la tension constante dans la pensée bouddhique de Zhang. D'une part, nous devons prêter suffisamment d'attention aux tendances et à la logique cohérentes de sa pensée bouddhique ; d'autre part, il ne faut pas se référer à ses textes bouddhiques comme si leur contenu était homogène.

Le quatrième point. En étudiant la réinterprétation philosophique de Zhang des doctrines et de l'histoire bouddhiques, la thèse met l'accent sur ses caractéristiques hybrides et syncrétiques. Le terme « hybride » indique les tentatives de Zhang pour apporter de nouvelles valeurs au bouddhisme en recourant à des connaissances et des idées étrangères hétérogènes ou même en les assimilant au premier. A titre d'exemples, on voit son adoption (malgré des résistances antérieures) de la méthode analogique (chapitre 1), la réinterprétation de l'épistémologie bouddhique en accord avec la philosophie de Kant et Schopenhauer (chapitre 2), et la réconciliation entre la théorie de la transmigration karmique et l'évolutionnisme (principalement au chapitre 1). « Syncrétique » fait référence à la tendance de Zhang à intégrer le bouddhisme (chinois) à d'autres enseignements indigènes ainsi qu'aux traditions religieuses indiennes, présupposant que les sages des deux pays avaient atteint la même sphère spirituelle et poursuivi le même objectif moral. Au cœur de son syncrétisme se trouvait la convergence entre la conscience d'*ālaya* et l'embryon de *tathāgata* au niveau ontologique, un sujet auquel le chapitre 4 consacre de nombreuses pages et est également étroitement lié à diverses questions du chapitre 6. Ce sujet est lié à plusieurs idées originales appartenant à ce point, concernant la découverte des études négligées de Zhang sur les généalogies et les écritures bouddhiques indiennes,

la corrélation entre son syncrétisme des Trois Enseignements et ses idées bouddhiques syncrétiques antérieures, et les discussions de sa divergence théorique fondamentale avec Ouyang Jingwu et ses disciples. Cependant, il existe des défauts considérables dans la mesure où je n'exploite pas les résultats scientifiques récents de la bouddhologie et je n'enquête pas suffisamment sur les critiques d'Ouyang, Lyu Chen et Xiong Shili contre les études bouddhiques de Zhang.

Le cinquième point est d'explorer la pratique et l'expérience riches et permanentes de Zhang du bouddhisme et d'autres traditions religieuses. Rassemblés au chapitre 4, la plupart des contenus sont soit originaux, soit discutés de manière informelle et non systématique dans les recherches précédentes. Ainsi, au lieu de proposer un résumé des idées originales, j'ai choisi de réfléchir à certaines questions méthodologiques. Tout d'abord, ce chapitre montre comment des matériaux fragmentaires, s'ils sont collectés avec patience et dans un but clair, peuvent aider à construire une image relativement complète d'une question longtemps négligée. Deuxièmement, la collecte et l'arrangement chronologique de sources jusqu'alors ignorées sont loin d'être la seule raison de la production d'idées originales. L'introduction d'une nouvelle discipline (dans ce cas, la science religieuse) et, par conséquent, l'interaction et la combinaison de différents paradigmes, sont également cruciales pour de nouvelles connaissances sur même les textes les plus connus. Ensuite, à titre de deux exemples, le concept de religiosité me guide pour traiter les aspects intellectuels et pratiques de l'engagement bouddhique de Zhang dans son ensemble, tandis que celui de la culture religieuse m'aide à reconnaître la familiarité et la curiosité limitée que Zhang avait pour les croyances et pratiques religieuses populaires, ce qui n'était pas en contradiction avec ses attaques sévères contre elles. Les attaques de Zhang ont été notées dans ses écrits, mais ses connaissances religieuses intérieurisées l'étaient rarement. Le contraste de visibilité facilement conduit beaucoup à négliger le fait que Zhang a eu recours à diverses méthodes religieuses en temps de crise personnelle. L'étude de la vie religieuse de Zhang fournit un nouveau cas pour démontrer la culture religieuse persistante et diffuse parmi les lettrés de la fin de Qing, même si certains d'entre eux ont joué un rôle important dans la promotion de la sécularisation de la société chinoise. En proposant une perspective comparative concernant Zhang, son maître et ses disciples,

la thèse aborde davantage (bien qu’insuffisamment) la transformation générationnelle de la population chinoise éduquée en termes d’attitude et de conception de la religion. Par ailleurs, le contraste de visibilité évoqué plus haut conduit à une autre réflexion méthodologique sur la production et la conservation des textes. Dans le cas de Zhang, une grande partie de ses écrits, en particulier ceux de ses dernières années, ont été enregistrés et édités par ses disciples, dont la plupart étaient spécialisés dans les études classiques et textuelles et certains étaient hostiles à la religion en général. Ce fait est en partie responsable de l’invisibilité du bouddhisme au cours des deux dernières décennies de la vie intellectuelle de Zhang. Enfin, la religiosité partagée entre Zhang (et de nombreux autres lettrés réformistes) et les laïcs bouddhistes de l’époque m’amène à remettre en question la distinction problématique entre les laïcs bouddhistes et les savants bouddhistes, à laquelle j’ai consacré un article.¹⁰⁵⁷

Le sixième et dernier point concerne les activités de Zhang au sein des réseaux sociaux bouddhistes et des idées connexes, le sujet du chapitre 6. Il s’agit d’un autre sujet négligé par les chercheurs de Zhang et auquel les historiens du bouddhisme chinois moderne ne se réfèrent qu’occasionnellement. La section sur la pensée sociale de Zhang du bouddhisme nous permet de confirmer la cohérence entre sa pensée théorique inspirée du bouddhisme, son avis sur l’application politique et morale du bouddhisme, sa pratique religieuse basée sur le bouddhisme et son attitude envers le rôle bouddhique dans la société chinoise. Sur la base des études des réseaux sociaux de Zhang ainsi que de son influence sur Taixu dans ses premières années, il devient clair que Zhang a exercé son influence sur les communautés bouddhistes républicaines non seulement par ses études bouddhiques, mais aussi par sa promotion directe et indirecte des réformes bouddhiques. La comparaison entre Zhang et Ouyang en termes d’anticléricalisme montre que les laïcs bouddhistes pourraient être beaucoup plus radicaux que les savants bouddhistes (soi-disant moins attachés aux conventions du monachisme bouddhique). L’introduction des études religieuses aussi évoque des idées originales sur ce point. Un cas remarquable est la corrélation de la réserve de Zhang concernant la propagation religieuse du bouddhisme avec son hostilité envers les sociétés rédemptrices en expansion rapide pendant les

¹⁰⁵⁷ Lyu Yuchen, à venir.

premières années de la République de Chine. En raison du caractère inattendu de cette découverte, le chapitre ne parvient pas à approfondir la question, la laissant dans un état inachevé, ce qui m'oblige à entreprendre des recherches plus avancées dans ma future carrière.