

YUET KEUNG LO

CHANGE BEYOND SYNCRETISM:
OUYI ZHIXU'S (藕益智旭) BUDDHIST
HERMENEUTICS OF THE *YIJING* (《易經》)

While the growth of Buddhism in China has long been a subject of many scholarly investigations, its specific encounter with the *Yijing* (《易經》) (Classic of Changes) is seldom studied. In fact, the venerated oracular–philosophical Confucian classic and the imported Buddhist doctrine had a lengthy history of exegetical interactions, dating back to the early years when the foreign religion had barely gained a foothold on Chinese soil.¹

As early as the first decades of the third century, for instance, when the Sogdian monk, Kang Senghui (康僧會), preached the Buddhist teachings in the state of Wu (吳) in South China, the ruler was skeptical of its truthfulness. As the Chinese host was particularly keen on seeking a Buddhist answer to the issue of moral retribution, in an effort to win him over, Senghui referred and appealed to the principle of sympathetic resonance (*ganying*) (感應), which was a living faith in China around this time, according to which human conduct had a direct impact on nature, such that natural phenomena occurred in response to, and as a result of, human action. Sweet rain would fall and a good harvest would ensue, as Senghui claimed matter-of-factly, if the emperor nurtured his subjects with kindness. The monk then cited famous quotations from two Chinese classics, including a paraphrase from the *Yijing*—“Accumulated goodness results in good fortune”²—arguing that Confucianism and Buddhism were compatible with each other. When asked about the usefulness of the Buddhist religion if Confucianism already had what it claimed to offer, Senghui confidently asserted that the teachings of the Duke of Zhou and Confucius merely touched upon what was obvious and close at hand. It was the Buddhist doctrine of moral retribution—with its concepts of heaven and hell, hitherto unknown to third-century China—that thoroughly plumbed the subtleties of the human mind.³ Senghui’s rhetoric of persuasion not only secured imperial acceptance of Buddhism, but also claimed its superiority over Confucian authority on moral

YUET KEUNG LO, Associate Professor, Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore. Specialties: Chinese philosophy, Chinese Buddhism, Chinese women. E-mail: chsloyk@nus.edu.sg

matters. From a hermeneutical perspective, his strategy was one of accommodation and cooptation.

The question of retribution and reincarnation continued to be one of the crucial issues in the exchanges between Chinese thoughts and Buddhist beliefs.⁴ Initially, the relevance of the *Yijing* was limited to its moral warning of inherited retribution. In time, the oracular classic and its accompanying commentaries began to play broader and deeper philosophical roles in the bicultural engagement as Buddhism gradually became fully sinicized around the seventh century. In fact, the erstwhile cross-cultural exchange became a self-contained, rarefied project of philosophical investigation and experimentation within the Chinese monastic community. Fazang's (法藏) (643–717) attempt, even if subconsciously, to reconcile Huayan (華嚴) Buddhism with the *Yijing* was a classic example.⁵ Thus, the history of the philosophical encounter between Buddhism and the *Yijing* deserves a full-fledged study, which, needless to say, cannot be attempted here.⁶ This article merely examines one episode of the encounter, showing the ways in which the late-Ming Buddhist monk, Ouyi Zhixu (藕益智旭) (1599–1655), brought about a philosophical integration of Buddhism and the *Yijing*. If Kang Senghui privileged Buddhism over the *Yijing*, Ouyi contended that they shared the same insight into the ultimate truth, in spite of their separate, peculiar articulations. We shall examine Ouyi's notion of change as the truth and how it relates to his Buddhist identity by critically unpacking the oft-presumed syncretic nature of the *Zhouyi Chanjie* (《周易禪解》) (A Chanist Explanation of the *Changes*), his well-known commentary on the *Yijing*. Our focus is primarily on Ouyi's hermeneutic strategy and motivation rather than his thought as exhibited in the commentary.⁷

I. OUYI THE "SYNCRETIST"

Famously known as one of the four great Buddhist masters in the late Ming, Ouyi is relatively obscure in Western scholarship.⁸ He is invariably cast as a Buddhist "syncretist" in virtually all modern accounts, even though what he exactly did in that role is not always clear. Much of the Chinese scholarship considers Ouyi a "syncretist" because he interpreted Confucianism in Buddhist terms by matching Confucian ideas with Buddhist ones,⁹ or because he held the view that the teachings of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism all shared the same origin.¹⁰ Seen in this light, Ouyi is an accommodationist in terms of the *substance* of his Buddhist philosophy. He was willing to compromise what Buddhism was really about for

nondoctrinal and undogmatic considerations. The accommodationist almost always appears to be on the defensive and tends to be apologetic in his attempt to rectify the presumed misunderstanding of Buddhism by its critics. He typically tries to gloss away the genuine differences between Buddhism and Confucianism, thereby making them compatible and gaining, in the process, acceptance for Buddhism.

On the other hand, a syncretist need not be defensive and apologetic; he can be “offensive” or “aggressive” in his response, as Chunfang Yu aptly puts it. While cognizant of the differences between the two doctrines, he can read Buddhist meanings into Confucian texts and make them conform to his philosophical schema so that “Confucian classics were made out to contain esoteric meanings which become instantly clear only when read with the hermeneutic of Buddhism.”¹¹ An aggressive syncretist may be considered an appropriationist as he is keen on co-opting indigenous Chinese ideas for Buddhist manipulation. Among the late Ming Buddhist masters she studies, Yu sees Ouyi as an aggressive syncretist and considers his response to Confucianism to be the most systematically offensive.¹² It should be noted, however, that accommodation and appropriation are merely strategies; the same syncretist may employ them on different occasions for different considerations. In fact, he can be an accommodationist and appropriationist at once. Kang Senghui was no doubt ever ready to highlight the compatibility between Buddhism and Confucianism, but he also went so far as to say that the former was indeed superior to the latter.

Indeed, syncretism can be a value-laden and thus polemical term in religious studies and as such can easily obscure the reality under scrutiny. As scholars have noted, it “is not a determinate term with a fixed meaning, but one which has been historically constituted and reconstituted.”¹³ This remains true when we reduce the historical scale to the chronology of a thinker’s personal life. Throughout his life, he struggles to grapple with the *personal* meaning of the various doctrines and philosophies. He strives not only to understand them but, more important, he also seeks to live and experience them. In this enduring process of meaning formation, coherence must be found in an endless series of constitution and reconstitution of tentative conclusions. Even if Ouyi was indeed in some sense a syncretist, it does not mean that he invariably assumed the same role throughout his life, which was beset with intellectual vicissitudes, spiritual struggles, religious conversions, and dynastic change. Instead of prejudging him as a syncretist, it seems more fruitful to first examine what he actually attempted to do in his voluminous writings in the particular context of his life.

II. "THEY COULD NOT BE MORE WRONG!"

Ouyi cared so much about the meaning of his life that three years before his death, he took the trouble to write his autobiography, which he entitled "Biography of the Man of Dao Named 'Eight No's'" (*"Babu Daoren Zhuan"*) (*"八不道人傳"*).¹⁴ He explains the strange title and the values it embodies:

The Man of Dao¹⁵ by the name of Eight No's is a "recluse" of China. In ancient times there were Confucianism, Chan, *Vinaya*, and Doctrinal Buddhism, but the Man of Dao feels inadequate to follow them. Nowadays, there are also Confucianism, Chan, *Vinaya*, and Doctrinal Buddhism, but the Man of Dao would be upset to stoop to them. That is why he calls himself "Eight No's."¹⁶

The epithet itself immediately tells us that Ouyi was no sectarian. He admired Confucianism and Buddhism of the past as much as he deplored them in their current state. Evidently, he did not favor either in terms of affiliation. Further, he was interested in living the truth (*zhen*) (真)¹⁷ as he saw it—a truth that would not compromise his personal dignity and temperament. He was not interested in demarcating doctrinal boundaries when talking about the identity and meaning of his life. This is the spirit he wanted readers of his spiritual autobiography to acknowledge before they proceeded to examine his life.

Ouyi wrote his autobiography at the age of fifty-four, and for a life of fifty-four years the details given are relatively meager. Undoubtedly, they were recorded for their special significance for Ouyi's self-identity. We can readily see that since the age of thirty-two, the activities recorded are limited to scholarly endeavors, particularly the writing of annotations and commentaries on Buddhist scriptures and *vinaya* as well as Confucian classics such as the *Yijing* and the *Four Books*.¹⁸ Of the sixteen anecdotes between age 7 and age 31 included in his autobiography, the vast majority concerns his intellectual and spiritual struggles. It is clear that he was intently interested in finding the truth about life and in life, the truth that he could actually embody in lived experience. In this light, the epithet of Eight No's, in spite of its seemingly whimsical air, was not meant to be playful.

At the age of twelve, Ouyi began to study Confucian texts in pursuit of what he called sage learning (*shengxu*) (聖學)¹⁹ and decided then to take it upon himself to eradicate the teachings of Buddhism and Daoism. Learning, to Ouyi, always required action. He wrote several dozens of anti-Buddhist essays, and it was during this time that he met Confucius and his beloved disciple, Yan Hui (顏回), in a dream. When he was seventeen, he read the works of the Buddhist master, Zhuhong (株宏) (1535–1615).²⁰ Thereupon, he burned all his anti-Buddhist

essays and stopped attacking Buddhism. A critical juncture came three years later when Ouyi was attempting to interpret a passage in the *Analects*—"The whole world takes to humaneness" (*tianxia gui ren*) (天下歸仁). He was stuck and could not bring himself to eat or sleep for three days and nights. Then, all of a sudden he became awakened to what he called the "method of the mind-heart" (*xinfa*) (心法) that Confucius had transmitted to Yan Hui. In the winter of that year, he gained knowledge of the original vows of Ksitigarbha, the *bodhisattva* associated with the salvation of those in hell.²¹ Thereupon, he aspired to leave the secular world. At age 22, he devoted himself to chanting the Buddha's name and reduced to ashes over two thousand essays he had written. A year later, he listened to a lecture on the *Sūrangama Sūtra*²² and became bewildered about two lines in the scripture: "The world lies in emptiness, and emptiness gives birth to great awakening" (*shijie zai kong, kong sheng dajue*) (世界在空，空生大覺). He wondered how this great awakening came about and how the existence of the realm of emptiness could be justified. Perplexed and exasperated, he could not concentrate on his personal cultivation. Finally, he decided to leave his mundane life in order to fathom and experience the ultimate truth. Ouyi became a monk at age 24.

Seen through sectarian lenses, Ouyi's paths of knowledge can be categorically delineated along the doctrinal lines of Confucianism and Buddhism. This seems to be the case when he was a teenager, switching his allegiance from Confucian sage learning to Buddhism. But if the change of faith was purely a matter of sectarian concern, it would be difficult to explain why Ouyi would struggle for three entire days and nights over the meaning of one line in the *Analects* and why he would aspire to become a renunciate upon being inspired by Ksitigarbha's original vow later that same year, after he had just fully grasped the Confucian "method of the heart-mind." This rapid development does not seem to be a reversal of doctrinal allegiance; Ouyi's determination to emulate Ksitigarbha's compassion to save all sentient beings was by no means an intellectual fancy. Furthermore, soon after this dramatic turn of events, Ouyi concentrated on the invocation of the Buddha's name and burned all his writings from the past, which certainly included his works on Buddhism. His intellectual progress necessitated corresponding actions, and his pursuit of life's meaning transcended doctrinal boundaries. Ouyi's intellectual and spiritual odyssey thus resists sectarian analysis, as suggested by the epithet of "Eight No's" and its prominent placement in his autobiography.

Ouyi himself explicitly dismissed the possibility of genuine boundaries among various schools of Buddhism. At age 24 he listened to

Dharma Teacher Gude's (古德) lecture on *Weishi Lun* (唯識論), a key text in Consciousness-only Buddhism. He questioned the apparent conflict between the Consciousness-only doctrine and the Huayan doctrine he had learned from the *Sūrangama Sūtra*, but the master warned him that they were not amenable to reconciliation. The young Ouyi found this odd as he did not believe the Buddhist Dharma could be split into two different truths. In the following year, Ouyi attained a spiritual breakthrough by his own strenuous efforts. By his own account, "his body, mind and world all disappeared suddenly," and he had thoroughly comprehended the doctrines of Consciousness-only and Huayan, thereby realizing that they never did contradict each other. Only deluded teachings would tell people otherwise. Ouyi claimed that all Buddhist scriptures and discourses, as well as the Chan *gongan* (公案) (*kōan* in Japanese, "public cases"), revealed themselves to him and he became awakened. Moreover, he understood that his awakening did not come about for the sake of testifying for the buddhas, so he never divulged his experience to anyone.²³ As time went on, he further notes, he found his mind to be completely empty, such that not even a single word could stay there any longer,²⁴ much less any doctrinal boundary. Ouyi was then twenty-five years old.²⁵

If we view Ouyi's early life in terms of conventional doctrinal boundary, the issue of sectarian allegiance seems to loom large in his consciousness. This makes sense, but we are also prejudging Ouyi. Based on his own confession, it seems clear that in the first half of his life, Ouyi was perhaps by nature and temperament disinclined to view things as pigeon-holed entities. Rather, he was fundamentally interested in seeing them as an interrelated whole. To him, Truth is unitary. On the intellectual and spiritual levels, he was intensely keen on acquiring a holistic understanding of the ultimate truth, one that integrates everything. His intellectual and spiritual odyssey was not an incremental succession of Eureka moments in which new Buddhist awakening continually displaced fallible Confucian understanding, thereby resulting in a reversal of religious allegiance.

On the other hand, Ouyi did not try to piece together the ultimate truth from an assortment of doctrines from diverse traditions.²⁶ To him, Truth is a holism and he calls it the "One" (*yi*) (一) or "One Pattern" (*yili*) (一理). He said,

Once the One is intelligently attained, everything can be concluded. What kind of thing is this One after all? If [you say] the One is a thing, but things are disparately uneven. And if you talk about the One Pattern without reference to things, then where is this One Pattern [to be found]? If you say it is like emptiness, then it is still a thing rather than a pattern. If you say it is not an event or a thing, neither is it emptiness, isn't it then comparable to the hair of a

tortoise or the horns of a hare? Thus I know, to someone who truly understands it, each and every event and thing is the One. As long as you are confused about the origin of events and things and mistakenly conceive an independent pattern, then this pattern is nothing but a mere image of events and things.²⁷ It is an illusion to conceive events and things [of self-existence]. And it is illusion upon illusion to consider the mere image of events and things to be the One Pattern. It is the error of errors.²⁸

In light of Ouyi's understanding of a unitary One or One Pattern, which is atemporal,²⁹ he is not a syncretist insofar as syncretism involves "a process of selection and reconciliation."³⁰ The "One Pattern" Ouyi envisions is not a collage of doctrines. Neither is it the "mere image" of Buddhism and Confucianism, which do not have their own self-existence; nor is it a reconciliation of, or compromise between, the two doctrines. His choice of the term *li* (理) is crucial as it literally means the intrinsic striations of a piece of jade or stone. As he understands it, the One Pattern captures all and is manifested in each and all of everything. Ontologically, it does not differentiate its constituents because there are no constituents in the first place. It becomes differentiated into various constituents only when it is analyzed conceptually in the practice of everyday life. To Ouyi, *li* to its constituents is much like ocean to droplets of water in it.³¹

At age 32, eight years after he became a monk, Ouyi toyed with the idea of annotating the *Fanwang Jing* (《梵網經》)³² (*Brahmajāla*) (Sutra of Brahma's Net), a scripture on Buddhist prohibitions, and it occurred to him that he should take a particular perspective in his explication. He had four options in mind—Huayan, Tiantai (天台), Consciousness-only, and his own interpretation (*zili zong*) (自立宗). As a means to arrive at a decision, he cast lots. As the outcome repeatedly favored Tiantai, he decided to concentrate on this school of Buddhism. Yet he refused to call himself a Tiantai follower precisely because adherents of Tiantai, Chan, Huayan, and Consciousness-only in his time obstinately confined themselves to their own doctrine and refused to accommodate one another. Even though his contemporaries regarded him as an exclusive devotee of Tiantai Buddhism, Ouyi accused them of "seeing with their ears" and proclaimed, "They could not be more wrong!"³³

Here, we gain several important clues about Ouyi's intellectual orientation. As a monk, he naturally took the Buddhist stance when interpreting a Buddhist scripture, but even though he had been practicing Chan Buddhism up to this time, he did not adopt the Chan perspective by default. Instead, he opened himself up to all three major Buddhist approaches, and most important, he included his own interpretation. That he had his own view as a distinct option is most revealing of his nonsectarianism. Seven years earlier, he had claimed

that “all Buddhist scriptures and discourses as well as Chan koans revealed themselves to him and he became awakened” and he found “his mind completely empty such that not even a single word could stay there any longer.” Apparently, he had then developed his unique understanding of the ultimate truth, which, in his graphic characterization, was void of words, thereby also free of sectarian biases. He believed he had seen the One Pattern. But Ouyi’s grasp of Truth probably remained intellectual at this time. Many years after his sudden enlightenment regarding the Confucian “method of the mind-heart” at age 20, Ouyi recalled his struggle with the *Analects* passage and admitted that the understanding he gained was intellectual in nature, being a result of book learning.³⁴ His Buddhist awakening at age 25 was probably similar in nature. Ouyi himself confessed that in spite of his reputation for his knowledge of the *vinaya*, he had not purified himself of the afflictions of the Three Poisons of body, mind, and speech at age 31.³⁵ He was acutely aware that his religious practice was not exactly commensurate with his intellectual knowledge of the *vinaya*, and he was ashamed of it. Besides his nonsectarian outlook, there must have been anxiety and uncertainty when Ouyi was making decisions on the annotation of the *Fanwang Jing*. He resorted to divination. This was not the first time he sought aid in divination, nor was it his last.³⁶ As we shall see, Ouyi’s faith in divination will have a crucial bearing on his interpretation of the *Yijing*.

III. ZHOUYI CHANJIE—BEYOND SYNCRETISM

Ouyi acknowledged that divination was a common practice in the late Ming monastic community.³⁷ He embraced and practiced it himself. At age 33, he met a Buddhist layman who introduced him to the *Zhancha Shan’e Yebao Jing* (《占察善惡業報經》) (Scripture on Divining Good and Evil Karma).³⁸ Ouyi took great trouble in acquiring a copy from far away. He was overwhelmed with sorrow and joy when he read it. Four years later, he lectured on the scripture in a Buddhist temple. At that time he wanted to write a commentary but desisted on account of illness. It was not until he was fifty-two that he finally fulfilled his long-cherished goal. He emphasized then that in the latter days of the Dharma there was simply no other way for people to observe the Buddhist precepts of purity than following the methods offered in the *Zhancha Shan’e Yebao Jing*.³⁹ Ouyi himself practiced divination using the scripture at least on two occasions when he was thirty-eight and forty-six. In the latter case, he wished to seek endorsement of his repentance efforts from the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and he felt much relieved when the divinatory sign

appeared to authenticate them.⁴⁰ Still, three years after he had annotated the *Zhancha Shan'e Yebao Jing* and less than two years before his death, Ouyi reworked and finalized another long-term project that had consumed his passion for over four decades. It was a chart called *Xuan Fo Pu* (《選佛譜》)⁴¹ (Chart for Selecting Buddhahood), which was used to divine one's spiritual achievement with regard to one's eventual position in the ten dharma-worlds, or states of existence.⁴² In his 1653 preface to the chart, Ouyi carefully detailed its origin and described how, in the course of forty-two years, he searched for the original chart in vain and why he eventually decided to create and devise his own for the benefits of sentient beings.⁴³

Ouyi's enduring passion and faith in divination begs an explanation. As a renowned Buddhist master, he is invariably regarded in modern scholarship as a Buddhist in a sectarian sense—he was not a Confucian or a Daoist, or, for that matter a Catholic. Even if he is called a syncretist, he is nonetheless a *Buddhist* syncretist. Nobody has paid serious attention to Ouyi's lifelong passion and faith in divination.⁴⁴ Does the fact that Ouyi practiced divination as a Buddhist also made him a syncretist? What was the meaning of divination to Ouyi?

Since he was born into a Buddhist family, and we have no evidence that Ouyi was preparing for the civil examinations, we can safely assume that his early interests in Confucianism was purely intellectual and personal. That explains why he reacted so violently against Buddhism and Daoism with his initial understanding of Confucianism. We do not know exactly when Ouyi began to study the *Yijing*, but it is possible that he read it when he was exposed to the Confucian texts for the first time. Ouyi began to write his *Zhouyi Chanjie* when he was forty-three in 1641. It was composed for the benefit of someone who came to seek his instruction on the oracular classic.⁴⁵ In his preface to the commentary, Ouyi baldly stated that the reason he explicated the *Yijing* was “none other than introducing Chan into Confucianism in order to entice the Confucians to understand Chan” (*Yi chan ru ru, wu you ru yi zhi chan er*) (以禪入儒，務誘儒以知禪耳).⁴⁶ The motivation behind the composition of the *Zhouyi Chanjie* is critical when we try to characterize Ouyi's identity on the basis of this work. Clearly, Ouyi read the *Yijing* as he did for the specific purpose of exhorting his inquirer to come to Chan Buddhism.⁴⁷ In this sense, he did not necessarily consider the two doctrines compatible, or incompatible for that matter. Pragmatic pedagogy is not tantamount to doctrinal substance. In fact, Ouyi deplored the Buddhists in his age who tried to pander to popular taste by forcibly wedding the words of the Buddha to Confucian teachings.⁴⁸ For him, as long as the *Yijing* was susceptible in some way to his Chan manipulation, he could

unpack the meaning of changes whichever way his creative impulses might lead him, but only for pedagogical exigencies. He did not intend to be a matchmaker between Confucianism and Buddhism.

If we examine the *Chanjie* carefully, two basic facts become evident. First, Ouyi invariably begins his commentary on the *Yijing* in strictly traditional Confucian terms, even though he clearly favors the line of interpretation that goes against the authority of Zhu Xi (朱熹) (1130–1200), whose commentaries on the *Yijing* and the *Four Books* were regarded as official orthodoxy in Ming China. Only then will he introduce his Buddhist reading. Second, while he annotates virtually every line of the *Yijing*, he only inserts his Buddhist remarks occasionally, if frequently, in a somewhat haphazard manner. Overall, the vast majority of the classic, including the *Ten Wings* (十翼), contains sparse and random Buddhist comments. In fact, from hexagram #46 (*Sheng*) (升) (Rising) onward, the last nineteen hexagrams include no Buddhist interpretations at all (more below).

No doubt, then, the composition of the *Chanjie* was pragmatically motivated; it was not intended to be a serious comparative study of Chan and the *Yijing* or a project of Buddhist–Confucian syncretism. In Buddhist parlance, the commentary provided an expedient means (*upāya*) for Ouyi to enlighten his inquirer through his understanding of Buddhism while honoring his request to learn about the *Yijing*. This explains why Ouyi’s non-Buddhist and Buddhist remarks are, without exception, placed sequentially alongside each other with little analytical comparison or conscious reconciliation between them. The Buddhist remarks in fact read like afterthoughts, as opposed to rejoinders, to the non-Buddhist commentaries and often appear, in a Chan-like fashion, to have no connection to the *Yijing* text that they explicate. By contrast, the non-Buddhist commentaries are direct and spot-on; they are genuine and, at times, insightful commentaries on the *Yijing*. Less all the Buddhist remarks, the *Chanjie* remains a perfectly competent *Confucian* commentary on the *Yijing*. In short, we do not see any attempt to reconcile the two kinds of commentaries even if the Buddhist remarks appear to be selective. Thus, it seems unjustifiable to characterize Ouyi’s *Chanjie* as “syncretic” in nature.

The exact nature of the *Chanjie* in fact puzzled even Ouyi’s disciples. In his Preface to the commentary, Ouyi recorded the following exchange.

My attendant asked, “Master, is your commentary about the *Yi*?”

“Indeed,” I replied.

Looking at me, he asked again, “Master, is your commentary not about the *Yi*?”

“Indeed,” I replied.

He looked at me again, and asked, “Master, is your commentary about the *Yi* and at the same time not about the *Yi*?”

“Indeed.”

He looked at me yet again, and asked, “Master, is your commentary neither not about the *Yi* nor not ‘not about the *Yi*’?”

“Indeed.”

The attendant burst into laughter upon hearing my reply, and said, “In that case, you have fallen into the trap of the ‘four phrases’ [of differentiation] (*siju*) (四句).”⁴⁹

“Have you not heard that the ‘four phrases’ cannot be spoken of at all, yet, when the conditions are right, they can be spoken of as well?” The conditions are the four *siddhāntas*.⁵⁰ People call me a Buddhist, but I am also well-versed in Confucianism and capable of explicating the *Yi*, so they are joyful. Thus, if they say my commentary is about the *Yi*, I would agree. This is called the mundane *siddhānta*.⁵¹

And if people ask how come I, being a Buddhist as I am, explicate the *Yi* and make myself one of the vulgar Confucians, [this shows that] they know I am not actually explicating the *Yi*, and their hearts of goodness are aborning. So I concur with them when they say I am not explicating the *Yi*. This is called adaptive *siddhānta*.

Or, people may say there is probably no difference between Confucianism and Buddhism, and if they realize explicating the *Yi* and not explicating the *Yi* are definitely different, then they can see they are the same in spite of their difference and they are different in spite of their sameness. Thus they will not err on being imprecise. So, when they say I am explicating the *Yi* and yet I am not explicating the *Yi*, I concur. This is called diagnostic *siddhānta*.

Still, people may say Confucianism and Buddhism certainly are the ultimate truth, and if they know I am not explicating the *Yi*, then they would realize Confucianism need not invariably be Confucianism. Similarly, if they know I am not “not explicating the *Yi*,” they would realize Buddhism need not invariably be Buddhism. [Confucianism and Buddhism] are only names; they are without reality. As soon as people realize this, they immediately see the unthinkable pattern (*li*) therein. Thus when they say I am not explicating the *Yi* and neither am I not “not explicating the *Yi*,” I concur. This is called the highest *siddhānta*.⁵²

This exchange and Ouyi’s explanation, which constitute the entire preface, clearly concern the doctrinal nature of the *Chanjie*. Ouyi’s response, which is modeled after the famed Buddhist tetra lemma, undoubtedly highlights the indeterminate identity of his *Yijing* commentary.⁵³ Sectarianism is a matter of mere names.⁵⁴ The Man of Dao named “Eight No’s” evidently is at work here. The attempt to characterize the *Chanjie* as Buddho–Confucianism seems unjustified as

the purpose of the preface was precisely to tell readers that its author wanted to transcend sectarianism of any brand.

IV. A CHANIST UNPACKING OF *CHANGES*

Besides his abiding interest in divination, which may account for Ouyi's research on the *Yijing*, the fact that the classic originated in trigrams and hexagrams must have appealed to him as well—Ouyi was very much fond of diagrams and charts.⁵⁵ As a lifelong Chan practitioner, Ouyi knew all too well the inadequacy of language—Chan Buddhism explicitly distrusts and denounces the reliance on language and writing. A vast majority of Chan koan literature indeed ridicules the inefficacy of language by turning an ordinary dialogue into seeming gibberish. Often, the punch line to a serious question such as “What is the Buddha?” consists of nothing but a simple image—three pounds of flax, dried dung, or the cypress in the courtyard.⁵⁶ An equally common answer is an enigmatic act or statement or counterquestion, such as “Before you came, did you wash your bowl?” It is natural that Ouyi looked at the hexagrams and mysterious statements in the *Yijing* with his habitual Chan eyes.⁵⁷

His explanations, for instance, of the first two hexagrams, *Qian* (乾) and *Kun* (坤), demonstrate an unusually meticulous scrutiny of the multiple variations in each hexagram when he interprets each of its lines. As each variation in effect creates a new hexagram which carries its own sets of connotations, Ouyi will then examine how the new hexagram and its connotations may contribute to the holistic meaning of each line of the hexagram under discussion. Since each line implicates three other hexagrams computationally, Ouyi effectively draws in eighteen hexagrams each to interpret *Qian* and *Kun*, respectively.⁵⁸ At the beginning of his commentary, Ouyi lays down his overall understanding of the hexagrams and their dynamic lines:

In terms of events and things, each event and thing may correspond to one hexagram or one line; each event or thing may also encapsulate all sixty-four hexagrams and 384 lines. In terms of hexagrams and lines, each hexagram or each line may correspond to one event or one thing; each hexagram or each line may also determine myriad events or things and even all the events and things in this realm of birth and death as well as the realm beyond birth and death. Further, all events and things are at the same time each event and thing, and each event and thing are at the same time all events and things. All the hexagrams and lines are at the same time each hexagram and each line, and each hexagram and each line are at the same time all the hexagrams and lines. Thus [*Yi*] is understood as interchange (*jiaoyi*)

(變易) and transformation (*bianyi*) (不易). In reality, this is [what the Buddhists call] the dharma realm where all dharmas conform to external causes and conditions while unchanging, and they remain unchanged while conforming to external causes and conditions (*Bubian suiyuan, suiyuan bubian*) (不變隨緣，隨緣不變).⁵⁹

This is practically a manifesto of the operating hermeneutical principle in the *Chanjie*. It is premised on his Buddhist philosophy of interpenetrating accommodation, reciprocal illumination, and mutual manifestation.⁶⁰ Each hexagram and line remains unchanged while taking on different meanings vis-à-vis new contextual variations, yet the new configurations of reality do not compromise the original character and nature of each hexagram and line. Individual hexagrams and lines and their shifting and emergent meanings and significance are mutually inclusive of one another and mutually creating one another.

In Ouyi's hermeneutic vision, images and encrypted words associated with them are echoed from hexagrams to hexagrams. The hexagrams refuse to be fixed in their isolated imagistic identity and cry out to be considered in each other's light. Consequently, the meaning that emerges can accommodate a broader confluence of reality and a more inclusive vision of truth. After all, every enigmatic utterance in Chan koan is supposedly unique and cannot be repeated to achieve the same result, as its situation-specific meaning lacks a fixed essence and its spiritual import is necessarily indeterminate. In light of Ouyi's adamant aversion to pigeon-holed entities, his Chanist interpretation of the sixty-four hexagrams clearly attempts to go beyond the confines of their sets of six predetermined lines; he tends to see the identity and character of each hexagram as fluid. He, therefore, articulates them in the context of an intricate web of cross-referential and intertextual relationships.

Ouyi's interpretation of the *Yijing* is grounded on but not limited to the hexagrams. As he puts it, it is inspired by an inscrutable wonder (*shen*) (神) which, being "attuned with the eight trigrams but not identical to the trigrams themselves" (*ji bagua er fei bagua*) (即八卦而非八卦), can reveal the full and complete meaning of the *Yijing* in its fluidity.⁶¹ The inscrutable wonder mediates hexagrams and meaning, and in fact, it translates images into understanding. Therefore, he who excels in learning the way of the sages aims at acquiring the inscrutable wonder and would not allow himself to be encumbered by its traces, namely, their words and deeds.⁶² As is well known, the *Xici* (繫辭) *Commentary* distinguishes the Dao, which lies beyond form and "implements" (*qi*) (器), which are contained and manifested in forms. To Ouyi's Buddhist eyes, Dao and *qi* interpenetrate each other in a dynamic holism. What lies beyond form

is actually “an implement yet not an implement” (*qi ji buqi*) (器即不器). Thus, there is not an implement that is not at once the Dao; nor is there a Dao that does not incorporate completely all the implements.⁶³ This is the new understanding of the sage learning that Ouyi developed after he had studied and practiced a variety of Buddhist doctrines for years. Evidently, this holistic interpenetration of the mundane and the supra-mundane transcends sectarianism or syncretism.

How is it possible that *shen* can work such wonder of truth meditation? To Ouyi, the myriad things (or implements) all have a beginning and an end; they have images and boundaries. On the other hand, only the mind (or mind consciousness, mind nature, or simply, nature) has neither beginning nor end, imageless and without boundary. Nowhere can it be sought. Thus, it is the mind that gives rise to the myriad things.⁶⁴ To Ouyi, this is not exclusively a Buddhist view or the Buddhist view, for he understands the Confucian method of the heart-mind in the same way. “Only when the heart-mind exists can there be heaven and earth and the myriad things,” he says, “and what the sages and the worthies transmitted to one another was nothing but a process of sealing heart-mind onto heart-mind.”⁶⁵ In other words, the Confucian heart-mind, too, transcends doctrinal boundaries. Thus, to Ouyi’s nonsectarianism, the basic set of eight trigrams originates in the mind, which is neither nothing, although it is nowhere to be found, nor something, although it gives birth to the plenitude of heaven and earth and the myriad things.⁶⁶

The mind is the intrinsic nature (*benti*) (本體) which is a state of fundamental being by virtue of itself, making cultivation and practice (*gongfu*) (功夫) possible in the first place. Cultivation and practice in actualized sentient beings are necessary and teleological by virtue of the mind nature and their relation to it. Spiritually, sentient beings aim to embody and actualize the intrinsic nature that is called mind nature. Actualized intrinsic nature knows of no doctrinal boundaries. Thus, the mind or mind nature can be understood in two modes of functionality. “When it illumines in the everlasting state of tranquility, it is called stillness (*zhi*) (止). When in the state of tranquility, the mind illumines ceaselessly, it is called contemplation (*guan*) (觀).”⁶⁷ This is a staple Tiantai doctrine of ontology and moral cultivation. But for Ouyi, ontology and moral cultivation merge into epistemology. Stillness is the intrinsic mind nature whereas contemplation is its process of actualization and means of teleological consummation. It is the mind that makes knowing possible and it allows access to the One Pattern by inspiring *shen* into being. *Shen* is the efficient cause that translates the knowing capacity of the mind into actual understanding. It is through this epistemological vision that Ouyi could comfort-

ably see the Buddhist revelation in the *Yijing*, and in this encounter between Buddhism and *Yijing* the revelatory truth admits of no sectarian or doctrinal boundaries.

Inscrutable and indeterminate as *shen* may seem, there is always a fundamental principle (*zongyao*) (宗要) in Ouyi's hermeneutics that threads through a text, and the reader must follow its words wherever they are and contemplate the meaning of the entire text.⁶⁸ While the unchanging hermeneutical principle can be translated from text to text, Ouyi does specify something unique regarding the interpretation of the *Yijing*, thereby, in Buddhist terminology, conforming to the changing circumstances from without. Traditionally, the term *yi* (易) (change) in the title of the oracular classic since Han times has three meanings—change, unchanging, and simple and easy. Ouyi highlighted a new Buddhist-inspired meaning of “interchange” or “turnover,” which brings to the forefront the notions of mutual transformation, fluidity of identity, and all-inclusive truth, as well as the distinctly Tiantai Buddhist idea of simultaneity of conventional truth and ultimate truth. Perhaps, the most succinct expression of this boundary-crossing epistemology is the synopsis of the *Yijing* that Ouyi presents at the beginning of the lower section (*xiajing*) (下經) of the classic. He says,

“The upper section [of the *Yijing*] begins with *Qian* (Creative, hexagram #1) and *Kun* (Receptive, hexagram #2), and ends with *Kan* (坎) (Water, hexagram #29) and *Li* (離) (Fire, hexagram #30). These are images of heaven, earth, sun, and moon. They also represent the virtues of tranquility and illumination, concentration and insight. This section sums up the beginning and end of intrinsic virtues (*xingde*) (性德). The lower section begins with *Xian* (咸) (Sensing, hexagram #31) and *Heng* (亨) (Constancy, hexagram #32), and ends with *Jiji* (既濟) (Ashore, hexagram #63) and *Weiji* (未濟) (Stranded, hexagram #64). These are images of sensing and response, being stranded and being ashore. They also represent expediency and instruction seeking out each other. This is the image of benefiting all things in the Three Periods of past, present and future. This section sums up the beginning and end of cultivated virtues (*xiude*) (修德).” Also, the upper section begins with the intrinsic virtues of *Qian* and *Kun*, and ends with the cultivated virtues of *Kan* and *Li*. This is the fulfillment of cause and result of one's own practice. The lower section begins with the expediency and instruction of *Xian* and *Heng*, and concludes with the endless cycle of being ashore and getting stranded. This is the fulfillment of the agent and recipient involved in the process of enlightenment.

This is the gist of the two sections [of the *Yijing*].⁶⁹

Clearly, Ouyi's explanation integrates the traditional (Confucian) symbolic meanings of the hexagrams and their Buddhist interpretation, synthesizing them in a summary statement about intrinsic virtues

and their cultivated manifestations. It would be misleading if we recognized only the Buddhist twist of the symbolism of the hexagrams. In fact, in his opening summation of the *Xici Commentary*, Ouyi makes it abundantly clear that Confucius expounded on the same essence of the *Yijing* in similar language—penetrating the origin of intrinsic nature and cultivated practice, breaking through to the convergence of heaven and man, reaching the limits of large and small matters, and threading through the subtleties of everyday functions. In Ouyi's Buddhist terms, Confucius was saying that

the pattern of Change lies in “conforming to external conditions without change and staying unchanged in conforming to external conditions”—this is how heaven and earth and the myriad things come into existence.⁷⁰

Again, Change is understood as interchange and transformation. Change itself transcends doctrinal differences.

Philosophically, the idea of *jiaoyi* is expressed in Ouyi's nonsectarianism and his idea of the all-inclusive One Pattern. In terms of his existential life, Ouyi experienced numerous changes in his intellectual developments and spiritual struggles, and perhaps the most traumatic of all was the dynastic change from the Ming to the Qing, which he painfully witnessed in 1644 when he was forty-seven years old. Ouyi started writing his *Chanjie* in Fujian back in 1641, and he completed it only three and a half years later in 1645 when he took residence in Suzhou. In his 1645 postscript to the *Chanjie*, he lamented:

Alas! Alas! It is merely three thousand some *li* from Min (Fujian) to Wu (Suzhou) and there are merely 1200 some days from the winter solstice of the year of Xinsi (1641) to this summer, but the events in the world had transpired like an illusory dream. Indeed, there have been myriad changes and differences. Are they turnovers (*jiaoyi*) (交易)? Or are they transformations (*bianyi*) (變易)? I have experienced the myriad changes of all these worldly events, and both the locale and time [where and when they took place] have changed, yet what is unchanging remains the same as always. . . . Apprehend the unchanging in order to respond to the most profound of all changes; contemplate the most profound of all changes in order to bear personal testimony to the unchanging. Permanence and impermanence, they always come in pairs like mandarin ducks traveling together.⁷¹

The dynastic turnover was a radical change in real life; it was neither a matter of academic debate nor religious aspiration to syncretism. Interestingly, in his commentary on the final nineteen hexagrams, which he wrote in 1645, Ouyi did not include any Buddhist remarks at all.⁷² That also explains why he seemed to compare himself in the postscript only to King Wen, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius, and not to the Buddha or any other Buddhist figures. In other words, once the specific purpose of instructing a curious inquirer no longer

existed, Ouyi's interest in the *Yijing* was solely and appropriately focused on fathoming the nature of Change. The erstwhile strategy of interpretation was purely expedient and incidental and the *Zhouyi Chanjie* was never a calculated project of Buddhist–Confucian syncretism. Ouyi's hermeneutical principle concerns not only reading and interpretation, but above all, practice as well.⁷³ In fact, his hermeneutics is an epitome of his worldview, vision of truth, and living practice. With regard to the *Yijing*, it is the fundamental business of divination that had preoccupied him for much of his life until its very end, rather than any particular school of classical interpretation, Buddhist or otherwise. And to Ouyi, divination unravels truth rather than demarcates doctrinal boundaries. His mourning of the tragic dynastic turnover made him no less a Buddhist; nor did his abiding aspiration to and attempted embodiment of the ultimate truth compromise his Buddhist identity. The One Pattern he was interested in, which reveals itself dynamically in ever-shifting changes, encapsulated and transcended all. The feeble syncretist label is inadequate to characterize him.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nearly three decades ago, Judith Berling counseled us,

To clarify our understanding of the role of syncretism in Chinese history, it is necessary to study specific instances of syncretism in their historical and social contexts.⁷⁴

She said, “Syncretism may be tentatively defined as the borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices of one religious tradition into another by a process of selection and reconciliation.”⁷⁵ This article examines Ouyi's *Zhouyi Chanjie* as one specific example in order to determine if he was indeed a syncretist, as modern scholarship seems to uniformly suggest. Ouyi did not purposefully select any particular Confucian concepts, symbols, or practices for integration into his eclectic Buddhism; nor did he attempt to reconcile the two distinct doctrines. Inasmuch as a standpoint or perspective is inevitably implicated or necessitated in any form of syncretism, Ouyi is undeniably a “syncretist” in that he almost always spoke as a Buddhist practitioner when discussing the Confucian doctrine. But this is a trivial sort of syncretism. On the other hand, Ouyi may be considered an eclecticist in a meaningful way by Berling's useful definition—“Eclecticism is idiosyncratic or whimsical, a bold openness to experimentation.”⁷⁶

Instead of looking at Ouyi's thought as doctrinal polemics or expressions of doctrinal identity, it may be more fruitful to understand him as

a thinker and person in his own terms. As one intensely concerned with pursuing the ultimate truth, Ouyi experienced numerous ups and downs in his intellectual and spiritual odyssey, whose trajectory was an unfolding process of Change. Nagged by anxiety and uncertainty, he gradually came to believe in the inscrutable power of divination and eventually developed great faith in it as his life was profoundly transformed by changes. As Ouyi saw it, the mutual transformation of each hexagram in the *Yijing* and its unavoidable fluid identity constitute Change itself. At the same time, the Buddhist project of Truth inexorably implicates illusion as its reverse. Between Truth and illusion, the ultimate awakening and liberation hinges critically on a discerning insight into Change itself. In his *Zhouyi Chanjie*, Ouyi was not so much interested in reconciling Buddhism with Confucianism as fathoming the multifarious nature of Change. The ultimate truth is dynamic, revealing itself in changes. Ultimate transformation in personal terms lies in understanding the revelation of Change by virtue of the inscrutable power of *shen* inspired by the mind in a uniquely and idiosyncratically personal way. For Ouyi, the hexagrams in the *Yijing* are elemental and archetypal symbols of the mind; they are multidimensional, taking on different import in relation to one another. Transformation, interchange, and changelessness are hexagrammatically revealed in this dynamic and interpenetrating operation called Change. To Ouyi, the mind that reveals its functions in Change is the void in itself, and therefore, naming it Confucian or Buddhist is inadequate. “Whoever calls it only by one name and refuses all others,” he warned, “is no doubt subdued by demons.”⁷⁷

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
Singapore

ENDNOTES

1. For an overview of this interesting encounter, see Su Huimin, “Fojiao Shiye Zhong de Fo Yi Jiaoshe,” *Gansu Shehui Kexue* 1 (2006): 113–16.
2. The paraphrase comes from the *Wenyan Commentary* on the *Kun* hexagram, and the original reads: “A family that accumulates goodness is sure to have good fortune left behind while a family that accumulates evil is sure to have misfortune left behind.” See *Shi Zhixu, Zhouyi Chanjie*, in *Wuqiubei Zhai Yijing Jicheng*, vol. 67, compiled by Yan Lingfeng (Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1976), 62.
3. See the biography of Kang Senghui in Huijiao’s (497–554) *Gaoseng Zhuan*, in Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, 85 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1922–1934).
4. For a discussion of the central importance of the Buddhist belief in causal retribution in early medieval China, see my “Destiny and Retribution in Early Medieval China,” in *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China*, eds. Alan K.L. Chan and Yuet Keung Lo (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), (forthcoming).
5. See Whalen Lai, “The *I-ching* and the Formation of the Hua-yen Philosophy,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 7, no. 3 (1980): 245–58.

6. For a first attempt, see Wang Zhongyao, *Yixue yu Fojiao* (Beijing: Zhongguo Shudian, 2001).
7. The singular published work on the *Zhouyi Chanjie* is Xie Jinliang, *Rongtong Chan-Yi Zhi Xuanmiao Jingjie* (Taipei: Wenshizhe Chubanshe, 2007), esp. 165–298. And Chen Jinyi has recently written a doctoral dissertation on Ouyi's *Zhouyi Chanjie*, see his “*Ouyi Zhixu Yi Fo Huitong Yanjiu*” (“A Study of Ouyi Zhixu's Integration of the *Yijing* and Buddhism”) (Taipei: Soochow University, 2003).
8. To the best of my knowledge, there is yet no monographic study, or doctoral dissertation, or even a full article in English on Ouyi. Ouyi left us with a voluminous corpus of Buddhist scholarship but none has been translated in a scholarly fashion. Thomas Cleary has translated Ouyi's commentary on the *Yijing* for popular consumption but it does not meet scholarly standards. See Chih-hsu Ou-i, *The Buddhist I Ching* (Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, 1987), and Kidder Smith's review in *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 108.2: 350–52. It should be noted that Cleary's translation, while being presented as a complete one, is actually highly selective. His omission of many non-Buddhist portions of Ouyi's commentary is particularly misleading if we rely on his translation to understand Ouyi and his view on the *Yijing*. While Ouyi receives more scholarly attention in Chinese scholarship, there is, in my knowledge, only one monograph on his Buddhist thought, which is actually a translation of a work in Japanese written by a Chinese scholar-monk. See Shi Shengyan, *Mingmo Zhongguo Fojiao Zhi Yanjiu*, tran. by Guan Shiqian (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng Shuju, 1988).
9. See, for instance, Guo Peng, *Ming Qing Fojiao* (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), 279ff, and his *Zhongguo Fojiao Sixiang Shi* (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1995), vol. 3, 453ff.
10. See Shi Shengyan, *Mingmo Zhongguo Fojiao Zhi Yanjiu*, 35–37. Cf. Guo Peng, *Zhongguo Fojiao Sixiang Shi*, 461–64.
11. Chun-fang Yu, “Some Ming Buddhist Responses to Neo-Confucianism,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 15, no. 4 (1988): 382.
12. Ibid.
13. Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw, “Introduction: Problematizing Syncretism,” in *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Syncretism*, eds. Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw (New York: Routledge, 1994), 6.
14. Ouyi himself penned the accounts up to the fifty-fourth year of his life, and events in the remaining three years were recorded by his disciples. For a brief biography of Ouyi, see *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1, eds. L. Carrington Goodrich, et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976): 244–46. See also Xie Jinliang, “*Mingmo Gaoseng Ouyi Zhixu Shengping Shishi Kaobian*” (“An Examination of the Life of the Late Ming Eminent Monk Zhixu Ouyi”), *Zongjiaoxue Yanjiu*, 1 (2006): 63–67.
15. To Ouyi, the term *daoren* appears to be a contracted form of *xue dao zhi ren* (a person who learns about the Way). It does not mean “recluse,” per se, even though Ouyi lived in the monastery most of his life. See Ouyi, “*Shi Yangde*” (“Letter to Yangde”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun* (Beijing: Beijing Tushuguan Chubanshe, 2005), 122.
16. Ouyi, “*Babu Daoren Zhuan*” in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 797. Ouyi even went so far as to say that one must break free of the sectarian fettering of Buddhism of his time in order to go back to the original doctrine of the Buddha. See “*Shi He Dekun*” (“Letter to He Dekun”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 139.
17. Ouyi called Truth *zhen* and its antithesis *wang* or illusion. The process of attaining Truth is called learning (*xue*). See Ouyi, “*Shi Yuzheng*” (“Letter to Yuzheng”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 122. To Ouyi, both Confucianism and Buddhism share one common goal—honor the Truth and despise falsehood. See Ouyi, “*Yue Yangming Quanshu Bi Oushu Er Ze*” (“Two Random Notes upon Reading the *Complete Works of Wang Yangming*”) in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 273.
18. For a translation of one of Ouyi's commentaries on the Buddhist scriptures, see *Mind-Seal of the Buddhas: Patriarch Ou-i's Commentary on the Amitabha Sutra*, trans. by J. C. Cleary (New York, Francisco, Niagara Falls, and Toronto: Sutra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada, 1996).

19. As we shall see, when Ouyi finally developed his own vision of truth, his notion of sage learning actually would include Buddhism. See Ouyi, “*Shengxue Shuo*” (“On Sage Learning”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 250–51.
20. For a study of Zhuhong, see Chun-fang Yu, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-Hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).
21. For a full study of Ksitigarbha in Chinese Buddhism, see Zhiru, *Making of A Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).
22. *Sūrangama Sūtra* teaches that all things proceed from the *bhūtatahatā*, that is, the *dharmakāya*, and that all phenomena are of the same essence as the noumenon.
23. In his later years, Ouyi continued to uphold this principle. He said, “Even when you yourself thoroughly penetrate into the innermost recess of the heart of the Buddha, you should not casually reveal it to other people against their wishes.” See Ouyi, “*Shi Yuhuan*” (“Letter to Yuhuan”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 130.
24. Ouyi, “*Babu Daoren Zhuan*” in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 797–98.
25. In his later years, Ouyi continued to insist that Buddhism, or what he called the “Mind-seal of the Buddha” (*Fozu Xinyin*), transcends individuality and prejudices and does not confine itself to any particular characterization, even among different Buddhist traditions. See Ouyi, “*Shi Wu Yunping*” (“Letter to Wu Yunping”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 152.
26. Ouyi was famous for his knowledge of the *vinaya* rules and he annotated and wrote a work on the *vinaya* called *Bini Shiyi Jiyao* (Assorted Essentials on the Meanings of the *Vinaya*), for which he had consulted numerous related studies. See his preface to the work in *ibid.*, 394–95. This was a different kind of factual truth that required a different approach from Ouyi’s search for the ultimate truth.
27. The metaphor of “image” is a regular refrain in Ouyi’s epistemology; it refers to the conditioned and illusory nature of phenomenal existence, so sometimes he also uses the term “conditioned image” (*yuanying*). See “*Shi Liudu*” (“Letter to Liudu”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 122.
28. Ouyi, “*Shi Mingyi*” (“Letter to Mingyi”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 115–16.
29. Ouyi said, “The Great Way lies in man’s mind; there has only been this One Pattern from the past to the present, it is not something that the Buddha, the sages or the worthies could monopolize as their private possession.” See his preface to his “*Ru Shi Zongchuan Qieyi*” (“My private view on the transmission of the doctrinal principle in Confucianism and Buddhism”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 330.
30. Judith Berling, *The Syncretism Religion of Lin Chao-en* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 9.
31. Ouyi, “*Xingxue Kaimeng Ziba*” (“Self-Postscript to the *Pointers to the Learning of Nature*”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 798.
32. *Taishō* 1484.
33. Ouyi, “*Babu Daoran Zhuan*” in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 798.
34. Ouyi wrote in a letter to a lay disciple, “After Yen Tze [Yan Zi] died, the learning of sages disappeared. This is indeed sad. . . . Wang Yang-ming rose after two thousand years. Living among the barbarians for three years he attained the sudden enlightenment about innate knowledge. He eliminated in one stroke the vulgar habit of Han and Sung [Song] Confucians and received directly from Confucius and Yen Hui [Yan Hui] the transmission of the learning of the mind-and-heart (*hsin-hsueh* [*xinxue*]). What I gained in enlightenment when I was twenty was similar to that of Yang-ming. However, because Yang-ming gained it through experiential effort its power was strong and its use was extensive, I gained it through intellectual understanding while reading books, therefore its power is weak and its use limited.” Translation borrowed from Chun-fang Yu. See her “Some Ming Buddhist Responses to Neo-Confucianism,” 383.
35. Ouyi, “*Babu daoran zhuan*,” in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 798.
36. The first time Ouyi sought help from fortune-telling was when he was twenty-one years old. He inquired a fortune-teller about the life span of his mother. Since then, he resorted to divination on several other occasions including one when he was

- thirty-eight years old, having just forsaken his monkhood. He wanted to find out what would be his best course of action in his future. For an illuminating discussion of Ouyi's practice of divination, see Shi Shengyan, *Mingmo Zhongguo Fojiao Zhi Yanjiu*, 245–51.
37. Ibid., 246. There were also Buddhist scriptures that were used for divination purposes particularly the *Zhancha Shane Yebao Jing* (*Taishō*, 839).
 38. *Taishō* 839.
 39. See Ouyi's postscript to his commentary on the *Zhancha Shane Yebao Jing*.
 40. Shi Shengyan, *Mingmo Zhongguo Fojiao Zhi Yanjiu*, 246–50.
 41. Complete Works of Master Ouyi, <http://haihui.ntcu.edu.tw/data/54/index.asp?t1=7&t2=4&t3=0>.
 42. Namely, the hells (or purgatories), pretas, animals, asmas, men, devas, śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. It is interesting to note that the essence of the *Yijing*, to Ouyi, is about changes, and the classic in a sense is nothing but a revelation of images which encapsulate changes. See his commentary on the *Xici Commentary II*, in Shi Zhixu, *Zhouyi Chanjie*, 525. It seems clear that Ouyi was fascinated with the imagistic or diagrammatic representations of the inconceivable or unknown.
 43. Ouyi, “Xuan Fo pu xu.” In the colophon to the chart, Ouyi further noted that he wished the chart he made would generate merits for all sentient beings so that they could attain wondrous awakening and vow for rebirth in the Pure Land. Ouyi also made a particular note for the thirty-fifth year of his life that he lectured on the *Zhancha Shane Yebao Jing* at the West Lake Temple. In fact, that was the only activity he listed under that year in his autobiography.
 44. Shi Shengyan is the only scholar who noticed Ouyi's preoccupation with divination but he did not discuss its significance in Ouyi's vision of Buddhism and his Buddhist identity. See n. 35.
 45. For a detailed personal history behind Ouyi's composition of the *Zhouyi Chanjie*, see Xie Jinliang, *Rongtong Chan-Yi zhi Xuanmiao Jingjie*, 56–79.
 46. Ouyi, Preface to *Zhouyi Chanjie*, in *Zhouyi Chanjie*, 4. As indicated earlier, Ouyi became interested in divination as early as he was twenty-one when he practiced it for the first time, and he lectured on the Buddhist scripture of divination *Zhancha Shane Yebao Jing* when he was thirty-four. It is conceivable that he had acquired some reputation for his expertise on divination. And that may explain why his instruction was sought on the *Yijing*.
 47. Chun-fang Yu argues, on the basis of the *Zhouyi Chanjie*, that “more than helping his Confucian contemporaries to understand Buddhism, Chih-hsu (Zhixu) wanted to prove that the real Confucian teaching could only be understood in the light of Buddhism.” See her “Some Ming Buddhist Responses to Neo-Confucianism,” 388. This, however, is not Ouyi's theological intention, and certainly not the motivation behind the composition of the *Zhouyi Chanjie*.
 48. Ouyi, “*Shi* Wu Yunping” (“Letter to Wu Yunping”), 152.
 49. The “four phrases” refer to the four terms of differentiation of all things into the existing, nonexistent, both, and neither.
 50. The four *siddhāntas* refer to the four modes of teaching by the Buddha: (i) mundane or ordinary modes of expression; (ii) individual treatment, adapting his teaching to the capacity of his hearers; (iii) diagnostic treatment of their moral diseases; and (iv) the perfect and highest truth. The praxis of four *siddhāntas* was the modus operandi of Ouyi's hermeneutics. It appears *passim* in his voluminous works. For example, he matches the contributions of Fu Xi, King Wen, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius to the *Yijing* with the character of the four *siddhāntas* respectively. See Shi Zhixu, *Zhouyi Chanjie*, 11–12.
 51. This refers to the Buddha's line of reasoning in mundane or common terms to exhort sentient beings to the higher truth.
 52. This refers to the highest universal gift of Buddha, his teaching which awakens the highest capacity in all beings to attain salvation.
 53. It should be noted that Ouyi seems to favor the inclusive yet differentiating approach epitomized by the Buddhist tetra lemma to viewing the world and people.

- See, for instance, his commentary on *Analects* 15.8, in Zhixu, *Zhouyi-Sishu Chanjie* (Beijing: Tuanjie Chubanshe, 1996), 434. Elsewhere Ouyi said, “The sages of the Three Teachings simply kept their original mind unclouded (*benxin bumei*). As long as one’s original mind is unclouded, one may be a Confucian, a Daoist, or a Buddhist, or all three of them. If it is beclouded, one will not be a bona fide Confucian, or a bona fide Daoist, or a bona fide Buddhist. What is this original mind after all? Is it on the inside or on the outside, or in the middle? Is it in the past, or the present, or the future? Is it something, or nothing? Is it something and nothing at once? Or is it neither something nor nothing?” See Ouyi, “*Shi Pan Gongchen*” (“Letter to Pan Gongchen”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 94.
54. In his preface to his commentary on the *Four Books*, Ouyi at age 49 recalled that after a life-threatening illness when he was thirty-nine years old, “his myriad thoughts had been turned into ashes and his heart-mind had nothing to cling to anymore, only then did he realize that Confucianism, Daoism, Chan, *Vinaya*, Doctrinal Buddhism were nothing but yellow leaves and empty fists”—they were merely skillful means that the Buddha employed to inspire the unenlightened to the ultimate truth. See Ouyi, *Zhouyi-Sishu Chanjie*, 315.
 55. He included in a separate scroll titled “*Tushuo*” (Explanations of diagrams”) a list of eight diagrams for the *Yijing*, some of them inherited from the tradition while some devised by himself. See Shi Zhixu, *Zhouyi Chanjie*, 581–98.
 56. Ouyi himself referred to these famous koans in his teaching, and he explicitly said that koans such as these were nothing but expedient means for instructions. See, for instance, “*Shi Shengke*” (“Letter to Shengke”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 130. In another letter, he recounted the story of a Chan patriarch who routinely practiced paying homage to the *Lotus Sutra*. Once, while bowing to the word “dung,” he suddenly awakened to the secrets of the scripture. See “*Shi Guo Shanyou*” (“Letter to Guo Shanyou”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 94.
 57. It is noteworthy that much of the Buddhist philosophy in the *Zhouyi Chanjie* is based on the Tiantai notion of triple truth (namely, phenomena are empty of self-nature, yet they exist in this world in a conventional sense; so phenomena are empty of self-nature and exist provisionally at once.) and has little to do with Chan, per se, it does not seem to make sense to call his commentary Chan unless we take it that Ouyi was actually reading the hexagrams and their summary statements and line statements as a kind of Chan koan. In this sense, we may call his commentary Chanist. In fact, this is exactly what Ouyi did in his commentary on the *Analects*; he treated at least some of the chapters explicitly as if they were each a recorded koan. See, for instance, his commentary on *Analects* 12.1 and 18.7, in *Zhouyi-Sishu Chanjie*, 406–407 and 455–56.
 58. Shi Zhixu, *Zhouyi Chanjie*, 12–70.
 59. Ibid., 10–11. See also Ouyi’s interpretation of this Tiantai doctrine with a pair of concepts of “old” (*gu*) and “new” (*xin*) from the *Analects* in “*Shi Xinzhi*” (“Letter to Xinzhi”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 94.
 60. Elsewhere, Ouyi reiterated the same hermeneutical principle. He said each hexagram or each line in the *Yijing* contains the ten dharma realms and the ten essential qualities of things, as well as the five periods and eight kinds of doctrines into which the Buddha’s teachings were divided according to the Tiantai doctrine. The key to understanding was to grasp the meaning beyond the written words. He criticized Song scholars for getting bogged down by the written words and fabricating new readings different from Confucius’s original meaning. See Ouyi, “*Shi Guo Taijue*” (“Letter to Guo Taijue”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 92.
 61. See Ouyi’s remarks on the *Shuogua Commentary*, one of the *Ten Wings*, in *Zhouyi Chanjie*, 557. Similarly, Ouyi also says, “The Way does not lie in words, nor is it separate from them.” See “*Shi Rumu*” (“Letter to Rumu”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 145.
 62. Ouyi, “*Shi Li Poufan*” (“Letter to Li Poufan”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 127–28.
 63. Ouyi, “*Faqi Shuo*” (“On the Implements of Dharma”) in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 249–50. Ouyi compares analogously the Confucian notions of *dao* and *qi* with the Buddhist notions of *fa* (dharma) and *qi*.
 64. Ouyi, “*Shi Cai Erbai*” (“Letter to Cai Erbai”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 127.

65. Ouyi, “*Shi Ye Tianji*” (“Letter to Ye Tianji”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 135.
66. Ouyi, “Meng Jingyi chongke *Yiguan xu*” (“Preface to the Reprint of *Yiguan* by Meng Jingqi”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 388.
67. Ouyi, “*Shi Zhisheng*” (“Letter to Zhisheng”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 118.
68. Commenting on *Analects* 2.2 where Confucius summed up the gist of the *Book of Songs*, Ouyi says, “This spells out the principle of the whole classic. It asks the reader to follow the text and enter into contemplation—to hear and to ponder and to *practice* therein. If you understand the principle of the *Book of Songs*, then you will realize that the myriad scriptures and treatises all share the same principle.” Ouyi, *Zhouyi-Sishu Chanjie*, 331.
69. Shi Zhxu, *Zhouyi Chanjie*, 259. Translation adapted from Cleary, *Buddhist I Ching*, xiii.
70. *Ibid.*, 466.
71. *Ibid.*, 578–79.
72. According to Ouyi’s own account, he first completed the *Ten Wings* and then the upper section of the *Yijing* which consists of thirty hexagrams, but he finished barely half of the lower section which consists of thirty-four hexagrams. If we assume he finished fifteen of them, it means that the final nineteen hexagrams were not treated in 1641. See Postscript to *ibid.*, 578.
73. Ouyi emphasized elsewhere that the goal of the learning of Truth lies in the dual accomplishment of understanding and practice. Without awakened understanding there is no way to arrive at the Way and without vigorous practice there is no way to realize the Way. See Ouyi, “*Shi Zhenxue*” (“Letter to Zhenxue”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 66.
74. Berling, *The Syncretism Religion of Lin Chao-en*, 3.
75. *Ibid.*, 9.
76. *Ibid.*, 5.
77. Ouyi, “*Shi Wan Yunyu*” (“Letter to Wan Yunyu”), in *Lingfeng Zonglun*, 66.