SHADOWS AND ECHOES OF THE MIND—HANSHAN DEQING’S (1546-1623)
SYNCRETIC VIEW AND BUDDHIST INTERPRETATION OF THE DAODEJING

By

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this study is Hanshan Deqing’s (憨山德清, 1546-1623) Commentary on the Daodejing (laozi daodejing hanshan zhu 老子道德經憨山註), a work which contains his syncretic view of the Three Teachings (i.e., Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism) as well as his Buddhist interpretation of the Daodejing. The central argument of this study is that Hanshan’s Commentary on the Daodejing reflects his syncretic character and his unique Buddhist understanding. I argue that each syncretist’s interpretation or misinterpretation contributes to the variety and complexity of syncretic activity. Taking Hanshan as a case study, this study explores how an individual participates in the discourses of syncretism through interpretation. I propose that Hanshan tried to integrate the Three Teachings under the frame of the Buddhist concept of Mind and he adopted many Buddhist concepts in his interpretation of the Three Teachings.

In addition, I propose that Hanshan’s discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings was one of his responses to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism, which also reveals Hanshan’s Buddhist position and syncretic view. In order to support my argument, this study shows that Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude to all the teachings and interpreted all the teachings based on his Buddhist understanding. To serve as the background for understanding Hanshan’s interpretation, Chapter 2 demonstrates that both Hanshan’s life and thought reflected his syncretic character and his status as a Buddhist monk; Chapter 3 discusses the intellectual context of late Ming Buddhism and the responses of the Four Great Masters. In order to show how Hanshan’s syncretic view and his Buddhist understanding impacted on his interpretation, the last two chapters
demonstrate that Hanshan’s syncretic view of the Three Teachings and his interpretation of the *Daodejing* all reflect his syncretic view and Buddhist understanding.

This study demonstrates that Hanshan tried to find a satisfying interpretation as well as harmonizing with the established tradition while promoting the excellence of Buddhism. He also employed a new approach and hermeneutic method to respond to the challenge of Buddhism of the late Ming. In order to find a satisfying interpretation, Hanshan treated all the teachings as the manifestation of the Mind in terms of “shadows and echoes of the Mind.” Based on this inventive term, Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude to the Three Teachings.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is Hanshan Deqing's Commentary on the Daodejing (laozi daodejing hanshan zhu 老子道德經憨山註), a work which contains his syncretic view of the Three Teachings (i.e., Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism) as well as his Buddhist interpretation of the Daodejing. Although the subject is just one of Hanshan Deqing's (hereafter Hanshan) works, this study is concerned with two broad issues, namely the syncretism of the Three Teachings and the interpretation of the Daodejing. I argue that to serve as one of his responses to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism, Hanshan actively participated in the discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings via his unique Buddhist interpretation, which is clearly demonstrated in his Commentary on the Daodejing.

While the term “syncretism” has been heavily used within the comparative study of religions, many scholars in religious studies feel that “syncretism” is no longer an adoptable term owing to problems with the word itself and its historical usage. However, others advocate a recasting of the term by arguing that it seems unnecessarily limiting to avoid an existing term to describe the important topic of religious synthesis. I follow the latter opinion and adopt the term “syncretism” in this study since I feel that no matter

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how contentious this term is, syncretism is the very term to describe Hanshan's sort of synthesis just because of its contentiousness.

Not only is the term contentious, but the concept of syncretism is full of controversy as well. To some, syncretism has positive significance; to others, it is taken to imply "inauthenticity" or "contamination." Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw suggest that syncretism "is not a determinate term with a fixed meaning, but one which has been historically constituted and reconstituted." I agree with their proposal to focus on processes of religious synthesis and on discourses of syncretism rather than treat syncretism as a category—an "ism."

As Judith Berling has proposed, syncretism has the function of reconciling elements from more than one religion. She treats syncretism as "a process of religious interaction and change" and "a process of selection and reconciliation." While she emphasizes the pattern of selectivity in syncretism, she argues that in general syncretists do not perceive conflict between ideas they select; they reconcile them by redefinition and alter elements to fit a new context. I agree with Berling's view in treating syncretism as a process of religious interaction and reconciliation. Thus, from one perspective, syncretism is how an individual participates in religious interaction.

This study intends to highlight the role of a syncretist's interpretation in the constitution of syncretism. I argue that each participant's interpretation or misinterpretation contributes to the variety and complexity of syncretic activity. Taking

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5 See Berling, Lin Chao-en, 5-8.
Hanshan as a case study, this study explores how an individual participates in the discourses of syncretism through interpretation. I propose that Hanshan tried to integrate the Three Teachings under the frame of the Buddhist concept of Mind and he adopted many Buddhist concepts in his interpretation of the Three Teachings. While interpretation is closely connected with interpreter's position and understanding, this study also investigates Hanshan's life and thought as well as the intellectual context of his time.

Hanshan was a prolific writer, a talented literatus, a Chan practitioner who had experienced enlightenment, an admirer of Huayan teachings, an advocate of syncretism of the Three Teachings, and was later regarded as one of "The Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism (mingmo sidashi 明末四大師)". He left a large body of works that reflect his thought, his talent for literature, and his wide range of interests in various Chinese traditions. Furthermore, Hanshan was the only Buddhist monk of late Ming times, and one of the few in Chinese history, whose commentaries cover most of the important texts of the Three Teachings. While the majority of his commentaries are related to Buddhist texts, he also commented on what were considered as Daoist texts such as the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi, as well as such Confucian texts as the Great Learning (daxue 大學), the doctrines of Mean (zhongyong 中庸), and Zuo's Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals (zuozhuan 左傳). Especially in his

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6 "The Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism (mingmo sidashi 明末四大師)" is an honorable title directed to Yunqi Zhuhong (1535-1615) 淑楼 祥宏, Zibo Zhenke (1543-1603) 紫柏 真可, Hanshan Deqing (1546-1623) 慈山 德清, and Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1655) 覃益 智旭, due to their great achievements and contributions to the Late Ming Buddhism. Although the origin of this honorable title is not certain, it is used in many studies, such as Lü Cheng, Zhongguo fuxue sixiang gaiyi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban, 1982), 297; Guo Peng, Mingqing fujiao 明清佛教 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chuban she, 1982), 176; Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fujiao zhi yanjiu 明末中國佛教之研究, trans. Guan Shiqian (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1988), 32.
“Introduction to Commentary on the Daodejing” (daodejing jie fati 道德經解發題) and in his essay “Contemplating [the teachings of] the Laozi and the Zhuangzi as Shadows and Echoes” (guan laozhuang yingxiang lun 観老莊影響論) he offers a comprehensive discussion about the syncretism of the Three Teachings. These works clearly demonstrate his participation in the discourses of syncretism.

Thus, an important part of Hanshan’s syncretic view is preserved in his Commentary on the Daodejing. His Commentary on the Daodejing is one of a few Buddhist commentaries written on this text between the Five Dynasties and the late Ming period. In this period, the Chan tradition was the dominant school in Chinese Buddhism. Chan was notorious in its rejection of doctrinal studies and, thus, doctrinal studies were quite weak during this period. Hanshan, however, made a breakthrough. Although he was a Chan practitioner, he commented on not only Buddhist texts but also the important texts of Confucianism and Daoism. In his Commentary on the Daodejing, he clearly proposed his syncretic view.

Hanshan’s Commentary on the Daodejing, the subject of this study, has been a popular work from the late Ming till now. As a matter of fact, his commentary has not only been reprinted many times in various versions but also compiled into a Daoist collection. This special treatment demonstrates well the significant position of Hanshan’s Commentary on the Daodejing.

\[\text{Footnotes:}\]

7 In XZJ 127, 827a-830b. An English translation of Daodejing jie fati 道德經解發題, see Appendix A.

8 XZJ 127, 817a-826b.

9 According to Yan Lingfeng, there are more than ten versions of Hanshan’s commentary on the Daodejing; see his Laoliezhuang sanzi zhijian shumu 老列莊三子知見書目 (Taipei: Zhonghua congshu bianji weiyuanhui chuban, 1965), 146; for a discussion of some versions of them, see Zhang Fangling, “Shideqing,” 107-110. Hanshan’s commentary on the Daodejing is compiled into Hu Daojing et al., eds.,
The *Daodejing* is not only an important text to the Chinese people, but also a great legacy of human spirituality. It is one of the most well known and most interpreted texts in the world. Because of its rich meaning, as well as its ancient, terse, and obscure expressions, it fascinates people and invites many interpretations. Hundreds of commentaries on it have been written throughout Chinese history. In the West, the number of translations and interpretations of the *Daodejing* continues to grow. With regard to the commentaries on the *Daodejing*, many perspectives have been applied, such as linguistic, philosophical, religious, cosmological, moral, political, military, and alchemical. Thus, the interpretations of the *Daodejing* present an interesting phenomenon showing the diversity of perspective and the fact that each interpreter interprets the *Daodejing* based on one's context. Hanshan's interpretation of this text, accordingly, also reflects his understanding and position. While Hanshan imposed his Buddhist understanding on this text with characteristic syncretism, he also provided a comprehensive discourse about the syncretism of the Three Teachings in his "Introduction to Commentary on the *Daodejing*.

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Advocate of Syncretism

A focus of this study is Hanshan’s role as an advocate of syncretism. Throughout Chinese history there has been a controversy about whether or not the Three Teachings could be or should be syncretized. Hanshan was obviously on the affirmative side. The fact that Hanshan promoted the idea of cutting open boundaries clearly shows his role as an advocate of syncretism, while those who opposed syncretism delineated clear boundaries between traditions. Hanshan was critical of people who were limited by their own traditions. He pointed out, “The followers of later age are all bound by [their] teachings. Those who study Confucianism are restricted. Those who study Laozi are wild. Those who study Buddhism are narrow.” Hanshan rejected the idea of limiting oneself to any one tradition. In accordance with his argument, he valued all three Teachings, and urged Buddhists to expand their knowledge. He stressed, “If one studies Buddhism yet does not understand various philosophical schools, he not only does not understand worldly knowledge, but also does not understand Buddhism.” In his “Introduction to Commentary on the Daodejing” and GLYL, Hanshan offers his discourse of syncretism from a Buddhist perspective.

I suggest that Hanshan’s discourse of syncretism can be regarded as one of his responses to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism. A perennial problem for Chinese Buddhists concerns how to adapt Buddhism into Chinese culture, how a foreign religious culture can be fit into China’s indigenous culture. The problem of adaptation

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13 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830a.
14 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 819b.
and assimilation had been the challenge for Chinese Buddhists since Buddhism was introduced to China.\(^{15}\) Like a plant, Chinese Buddhism has been rooted in Chinese soil, nurtured with Chinese fertilizer. In order to adjust to Chinese climate, it inwardly mutated its genes, and outwardly adapted to Chinese culture. Sometimes it was dormant, looking barren on the surface. Yet its seeds were imbedded in the soil waiting for suitable conditions to sprout, though was difficult to predict when it would germinate. Once conditions became suitable, it grew again like the amazing bloom of desert flowers after timely rains.

The adaptation of Chinese Buddhism can also be seen as a history of Chinese Buddhists’ struggle for survival. Although Chinese Buddhism declined in some periods, it nevertheless survived through many severe attacks. The seventeenth century witnessed a short period of prosperity of Chinese Buddhism.\(^{16}\) In this period, Hanshan followed his Buddhist predecessors to fight for the survival of Chinese Buddhism. Hanshan sensed the challenge of adaptation and adopted a strategy of syncretism as his solution.

Syncretism of the Three Teachings had its historical context in China. From the Later Han period on, various syncretic models were proposed by different figures

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responding to the intellectual climate of that specific period. In Chinese intellectual history, different Chinese traditions coexisted, interacted, and competed for survival. Many religious debates took place in Chinese history beginning from the third century. Several Buddhist compilations of materials preserve debates and controversies between Buddhism and other Chinese traditions, such as Sengyou's 僧祐 Hongming ji 弘明集, Daoxuan's 道宣 Guang hongming ji 廣弘明集, his Ji gujin fodaolunheng 集古今佛道論衡, and Xu gaoseng zhuang 續高僧傳 as well as Zanning's 賛寧 Songgaoseng zhuang 宋高僧傳. Although these materials are not free from biases, the records of these debates provide us information about how Buddhists fought for the survival of Buddhism in China. For instance, in the Wei-Jin period, many Buddhists adopted popular Daoist terms of that time to explain Buddhist concepts. They used the method of “matching concepts (geyi 格義)” to interpret Buddhism. These materials provide precedent for the processes of syncretism in Chinese intellectual history.

In the late Ming, Hanshan also participated in the process of syncretism. He found it necessary to propose a new discourse of syncretism. In order to gain a footing on Chinese soil, it was necessary for Chinese Buddhists to adopt Chinese ways of expression, yet at the same time they could not compromise the essence of Buddhism. Hanshan’s syncretic view of the Three Teachings follows this principle. While trying to reconcile the Three Teachings, Hanshan preferred to adopt those Buddhist teachings that had been


blended with Chinese culture as the basis of his syncretic view. For example, he mostly adopted the thought of Chan 禪 and Huayan 華嚴 Schools in his interpretation.

As a result of adaptation, the Chan, Tiantai 天臺 and Huayan schools of Chinese Buddhism all have strong Chinese character and influence. The Huayan School is considered to be “Sinicized” Buddhism from its Chinese mode of interpretation and expression, and is referred to as “the greatest adaptation of Mahāyāna Buddhism among the various philosophical systems organized by the Chinese.”²⁰ Oh Kang-nam suggested that Daoist philosophy was possibly the most important influence on the development of the Huayan School.²¹ Daoist terms and concepts were widely used in the commentaries of Huayan tradition. While Faxiang 法相 and Sanlun 三論 Schools have less Chinese influence, these two Schools are not as popular in China as Chan, Huayan and Tiantai Schools. Since each person has his preference, the different traditions of Chinese Buddhism offered various choices for the needs of Chinese people. Among these traditions, Hanshan preferred Chan and Huayan Schools.

The fact that Hanshan inherited the results of earlier syncretism of the Three Teachings and proceeded to interpret these teachings helps us to understand the progress of acculturation. In the development of Chinese intellectual history, Chinese Buddhism underwent centuries of development and numerous adaptations and assimilation with Chinese culture before it finally became an integral part of the Chinese religious tradition. Chinese Buddhism, as a part of Chinese culture, has changed and enlarged with time, until it appears quite different from it’s original form. It is suitable to view Chinese


Buddhism as a combination of Chinese culture and Indian Buddhism through various interpretations. Since Chinese Buddhism had passed through the critical acceptance of Chinese culture, one of the most impressive characteristics of Chinese Buddhism lies in the magnitude of blending between Chinese culture and Indian Buddhism. By the late Ming period, Buddhism had been interpreted by Chinese people for more than a thousand years and had obvious Chinese features. As a result, the late Ming Buddhism was no longer the so-called “pure Buddhism,” or “original Buddhism” of India. Hanshan inherited the result of centuries of blending of Buddhism and Chinese culture; based on this heritage, he proceeded to interpret these teachings and contributed his interpretation to later generations.

Thus, the investigation of Hanshan’s syncretic view will help us to understand the syncretism of the late Ming and the transition of Chinese culture. Since syncretism in Chinese religions is a quite complex phenomenon, generalizations and slogans such as “The teachings are three, but the Way is one,” and “Confucianism governs the state, Daoism governs the body, Buddhism governs the mind,” are not sufficient to clarify how various Chinese religious elements are reconciled. Furthermore, John R. McRae convincingly argues that historical and religious realities are far more complex than a simplistic or traditionalistic model would imply and he suggests a multiplicity of perspectives to look at them. Since each theory of syncretism has its own unique position, it is necessary to investigate specific cases of syncretism from various

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22 A brief discussion of this topic, see Berling, Lin Chao-en, 23-61.
23 See Berling, Lin Chao-en, 6.
perspectives in order to clarify the complex phenomena of syncretism in Chinese history. Hanshan’s view can serve as one of the “multiplicity of perspectives” in understanding the complexity of the phenomenon of syncretism in the late Ming and will contribute knowledge to the transition of thought in Chinese intellectual history.

While many syncretic views had the character of borrowing, Hanshan’s way of syncretism was chiefly by interpretation, not borrowing. To him, it was unnecessary to borrow from other traditions since Buddhism included all kinds of teachings. Moreover, as Judith Berling proposed, syncretists usually base their arguments on a home tradition and have a sense of internal orthodoxy; based on the internal orthodoxy, syncretists often attack others as heretical. Hanshan also based his argument on Buddhism and had a sense of internal orthodoxy. However, he showed little interest in the controversy of orthodoxy and he seldom criticized other Chinese traditions. On the contrary, he tried to establish a harmonious relationship with other Chinese traditions. Based on Buddhism, he reconciled elements of the Three Teachings by his unique interpretation.

In order to reconcile the Three Teachings, Hanshan first proposed that the substance and function of the Three Teachings were all the same. Based on Buddhist concept of no-self and benefiting sentient beings, Hanshan argued that the Three Teachings all treated no-self as the substance, and regarded benefiting sentient beings as their function. To him, the differences lay only in depth and extent. In addition, he employed Buddhist concepts such as One Mind, Eighth Consciousness, Enlightened Mind, cultivating the mind, stillness and contemplation, expedient means, manifestation of Mind, and

27 *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 829a.
destroying attachment to self to interpret Confucianism and Daoism. All in all, Hanshan chiefly proposed his syncretic view by Buddhist interpretation.

Particularly, Hanshan invented the term “shadows and echoes of the Mind (xin zhi yingxiang 心之影響)” to interpret all the teachings. In Huayan Buddhism, Mind is regarded as the substance that produces all the dharmas, including all the teachings. Hanshan followed this tradition and referred all the dharmas to shadows and echoes of the Mind. He argued,

Then, all the forms are shadows of Mind; all the sounds are echoes of Mind. Therefore, all the sages are those who [realize] the origin of shadows and all the teachings are echoes that are compatible [with the Mind], for the ten thousand dharmas are the manifestation of Mind-only.28

Based on the thought of Mind-only and the term “shadows and echoes,” Hanshan tried to cut open the boundaries of different traditions. In addition, he could also defend Buddhism from the criticism of other traditions since all the teachings are from the same origin of Mind. Hanshan also proposed that viewed from the perspective of “the three realms are Mind-only, and the ten thousand dharmas are Consciousness-only (sanjie weixin wanfa weishi 三界唯心，萬法唯識),” the principle of the Three Teachings was originally the same; thus, the debates among different traditions were unnecessary. He wrote,

If viewed from [the perspective of] sanjie weixin wanfa weishi, not only the principle of Three Teachings is originally the same, but also all matters and mental objects originate from the Mind. If viewed from the “Equal Dharma Realm (pingdeng fajie 平等法界),” not only the substance of three sages is originally the same, but also, no part of person or thing is not manifested from

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28 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 818a.
the power of the “Ocean-seal samādhi (haiyin sanmei 海印三昧)” of Vairocana.29

Influenced by Yanshou’s famous argument “One Mind as Principle (yixin weizong 一心為宗)” that synthesized all Buddhist perspectives, Hanshan went further to synthesized all the Chinese traditions by the concept of sanjie weixin wanfa weishi. While Hanshan strove to transcend the boundaries among different traditions, the concepts of sanjie weixin wanfa weishi provided him with a device to integrate all the teachings.

Based on this argument, Hanshan drew all the teachings under the frame of Buddhist concept of Mind. He further claimed that from ancient times only a few of those who tried to trace the origin of teachings could diagnose the origin of disease; most people could not overcome their wrong views. Hanshan proposed that Mind was the origin of all teachings and recommended that one should take “contemplation of Mind-only and Consciousness-only (weixinshi guan 唯心識觀)” to view all the teachings. He wrote,

Like diverse colors mutually shine within a fully illuminating jewel and like various sounds echo with the transmitting sound of empty valley, if using Mind-and-Consciousness-only to contemplate all the dharmas, they cannot go beyond its (the Mind’s) shadows and echoes.30

According to him, if one views by means of this perspective, one will realize that all the teachings are but shadows and echoes of the Mind.31

Further examining the term “weixinshi guan” is helpful in understanding how Hanshan proposed a syncretic view from a Buddhist perspective. The term “weixinshi

29 GLYL, in XZ/127, 820a. Here, Hanshan’s arguments show the obvious influence of the Huayan tradition evidenced by his use of key terminology of that tradition such as “Equal Dharma Realm” and “Ocean-seal samādhi.”
30 GLYL, in XZ/127, 817b.
31 GLYL, in XZ/127, 817b.
"guan" is composed of two parts: weixinshi and guan. The term "weixinshi" contracts the longer phrase "sanjie weixin wanfa weishi 三界唯心 万法唯识," a combination of the main concepts of the Tathātagatagarbha tradition’s teaching of Mind-only and the Yogācāra tradition’s teaching of Consciousness-only. Although these two concepts have discrepancies in their details, they agree in the ontological position that the Mind or Consciousness is the origin of all phenomena. In late Ming Buddhism, the concept of “the three realms are Mind-only, and the ten thousand dharmas are Consciousness-only (sanjie weixin wanfa weishi)” still prevailed in almost every school, from Chan and Pure Land to Tiantai and Huayan. Hanshan inherited this concept and argued that all the collected sutras that recorded the Buddha’s teaching in forty-nine years taught only eight characters: sanjie weixin wanfa weishi. Hanshan even concluded that all the teachings of the Buddha were embodied in these eight characters.³²

As for guan, it is one of the two essential practices in Buddhism, namely zhi (stillness) and guan (contemplation). Basically, the purpose of the practice of zhi is to still the distracted mind. When one stills the distracted mind, one is able to contemplate one’s body and mind and all the dharmas. According to Buddhism, the practice of guan will lead to the realization of wisdom. In the development of Buddhism various zhi and guan have been proposed. Hanshan added his version of “weixinshi guan” to the tradition.

Hanshan’s “weixinshi guan” has his specific meaning. For example, he emphasized the role of enlightenment in employing “weixinshi guan.” He admitted that he did not realize the meanings of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism before he attained

³² MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 850a.
enlightenment of the Mind through serious practice of meditation. After his enlightenment, he employed *weixinshi guan* (contemplation of Mind-only and Consciousness-only) to examine all the teachings, only then he realized that all the teachings were but the shadows and echoes of the Mind.33

As Judith Berling defines syncretism as “a reformulation of traditions in personal religious experience,” Hanshan also took “the experience of the enlightened Mind” as the basis of his discourses of syncretism. Hanshan argued that if one did not experience the enlightened Mind, he could not understand the sages’ teachings. He defined the sages as those who had enlightened the “marvel” of Mind. All of their teachings flowed from their enlightened Mind. Moreover, only those who have enlightened the Mind could understand the sages’ Mind and are able to correctly interpret the teachings of the sages. He observed that the debates among the followers of the Three Teachings were but a kind of playing at theory, since they could not grasp the sages’ Mind. He argued that only those who enlightened the Mind could grasp the sages’ Mind and realized the marvel of all the teachings. Otherwise, Hanshan proposed, “It is like the sorrow and joy of stage players. Although they seem joyful, they are not joyful [in their mind]; although they seem sorrowful, they are not sorrowful [in their mind]. Their sorrow and joy are in fact not originated in themselves.”35

Therefore, Hanshan advocated the practice that led to the realization of *sanjie weixin wanfa weishi*. For instance, he promoted the Buddhist practice of “contemplating the mind (*guanxin 觀心*)” in understanding the sages’ teachings. The term “*guanxin*” (Jpn.

33 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 818a.
35 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 818a.
kanjin) is a terminology and practice developed by Tiantai tradition and is widely used in Chinese Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. Hanshan adopted this concept as his main practice and he realized the concept of sanjie weixin wanfa weishi by this practice. He wrote,

In my youth, I regarded Confucius as teacher, yet I did not understand Confucius. I regarded Laozi as teacher, yet I did not understand Laozi. When I grew up, I regarded the Buddha as teacher, yet I did not understand the Buddha. Then I retreated deep into a remote mountain and [near] a great lake to practice quietness and to contemplate the mind (guanxin 観心). From that, [I] realized that the three realms are Mind-only, and the ten thousand dharmas are Conscousness-only.37

Hanshan’s syncretic character was also demonstrated in his adopting the popular Chinese philosophical frame of substance (ti 體) and function (yong 用) starting from Wei-Jin period in his interpretation. The ti and yong pattern, an explanation of the relation between reality and its manifestations, is perhaps the most prevailing and fundamental pattern in Chinese philosophy. This pattern has been widely used in Neo-Daoism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism.38 In this pattern, the term “ti” is directed to something transcendental, constant and original while the term “yong” means the phenomenal world that is the manifestation of “ti.” In Hanshan’s term, the Mind is substance; shadows and echoes are function. By adopting this structure and Buddhist


37 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 818a.

concept of Mind as well as the phrase “shadows and echoes,” Hanshan established his unique term for interpretation and applied it widely in his works.

The expression of “shadow (ying 影)” and “echoes (xiang 響),” as Hsu Sung-peng suggests, might have been inspired by Zhuangzi’s Qiwu lun 齊物論 (Essay on Equalizing all Theories about Things).\(^3^9\) Hanshan was aware of this term, since in his Commentary on the Zhuangzi he points out the connection between shadow and form as well as the metaphor of sounds. First, he argues that form is not the true ruler of shadow; the true ruler is the Mind.\(^4^0\) Thus, both form and shadow are the manifestation of the Mind. Second, Hanshan commented on the Zhuangzi's metaphor of strong wind and thousands of holes, and wrote,

> The strong wind and thousands of holes are but a metaphor. It means that to follow the Great Dao and the Creator as well as to diffuse in various people are like strong wind blowing through thousands of holes. Since people are endowed with different forms and sensibilities, their views will not be the same. The inequality of their arguments is like various holes receiving winds with different strength and depth and thus producing sounds with different tones, volumes, and intervals.\(^4^1\)

Here, Hanshan adopted the metaphor that various holes produce different sounds to clarify that the inequality of arguments were caused by various forms and sensibilities of people. He further incorporated the term ‘echoes’ to describe the differences of the Three Teachings.

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40 ZNHZ, 190; 273-275.

41 See *Laozi daodejing hanshan zhu, zhuangzi neipian hanshan zhu* 老子道德經憨山註 莊子內篇憨山註 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1973), 196.
Using the term "shadows and echoes of the Mind," Hanshan proposed the identity of the Three Teachings based on Buddhist concept of Mind. According to Hanshan, all the forms and sounds are shadows and echoes of the Mind. I suggest that Hanshan referred shadows and echoes to what we can see and can hear, including all kinds of arguments presented in words and languages. While Hanshan recognized that there were various arguments, he urged his audience to find identity in the origin of Mind and to accept the differences in its divergent tracks. Hanshan said,

Therefore, for the sages of the Three Teachings, what is identical is the Mind, and what are different are tracks. Taking the tracks to investigate their minds is like using a ladle to measure the sea. Using their minds to include the tracks is like a mustard seed containing all space. By forgetting both the mind and the tracks, the myriad branches will flow to the sea, and the hundreds of rivers will become one taste.42

All in all, Hanshan emphasized that the origin of the sages of the Three Teachings is identical, though the tracks of their teachings are different. In addition, he proposed that when one forgot the duality of both the Mind and tracks, all the differences would be eliminated—become one taste.

In order to clarify why the sages taught differently, Hanshan adopted the Buddhist concept of expedient means to interpret. He viewed all the teachings as expedient means for saving sentient beings, while they were taught according to capabilities and specific circumstances. However, this point was not invented by Hanshan since it had been a quite popular idea in Chinese Buddhism. Following the foregoing Buddhist argument, Hanshan treated Confucius and Laozi as dispatched by the Buddha to teach Chinese people. He wrote, "Because they were the persons who preached the Four Noble Truths according to

42 *DJFT*, in *XZJ 127*, 830b.
conventional words of the human realm and the heavenly realm, were these two sages originally not the forerunners of Buddhism dispatched secretly by our Buddha?" Here, Hanshan tried to include Confucianism and Daoism into Buddhism.

Hanshan also regarded Confucius and Laozi as Bodhisattvas who tried to benefit sentient beings by using conventional words as expedient means, as he commented, "In my humble opinion, Confucius and Laozi were transformation bodies of the Buddha." Furthermore, in order to show the specific functions of the Three Teachings Hanshan proposed, "Confucius focused on active engagement with the world (jingshi), Laozi focused on forgetting the world (wangshi), and the Buddha focused on transcending the world (chaoshi)." By these claims, he treated all the teachings as expedient means and valued the complementary functions of the Three Teachings. Chapter 4 provides a detailed investigation of Hanshan’s syncretic view of the Three Teachings.

Hanshan’s Buddhist Interpretation of the Daodejing

Another topic of this study, the subject of Chapter 5, is Hanshan’s interpretation of the Daodejing. The word “interpretation” is widely used in daily life and is perhaps the most basic act of human thinking. While interpretation is one of the essential elements in hermeneutic theory, understanding is also an important topic of hermeneutics.

43 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 820b-821a.
44 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830a.
45 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829a.
However, scholars have various definitions concerning understanding, interpretation, and hermeneutics.\textsuperscript{47} Although they propose different definitions, it is common that they refer hermeneutics to interpretation and the task of understanding texts. This dissertation demonstrates that Hanshan's interpretation of the \textit{Daodejing} is chiefly influenced by his unique Buddhist understanding.

Since the \textit{Daodejing} is multivalent, each interpreter focuses on just certain aspects of it.\textsuperscript{48} Moreover, each interpretation of the \textit{Daodejing} reflects the author's concern and understanding. For instance, Heshanggong's 河上公 commentary deals carefully with the language of this text. He gave every word indicatory and specific meaning. However, Wang Bi 王弼 criticized the method of Han dynasty as focusing on the detail yet not grasping the whole. For him, language was but a tool for understanding the truth. Wang Bi argued that in order to obtain the characteristics, one should forget the words; in order to obtain the meaning one should forget the characteristics. Thus, he turned his concern to the meaning behind the words.\textsuperscript{49}

Hanshan's interpretation also has the imprint of his Buddhist understanding. His interpretation of the \textit{Daodejing} was mostly viewed from his Buddhist perspective. While Hanshan proposed that the teaching of the \textit{Daodejing} focused on explicating the substance and function of the Dao as well as the practice of entering the Dao, most of his

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} Alan K.L. Chan, "A Tale of Two Commentaries," 101-102; and his \textit{Two Visions of the Way}, 32-35.
\end{itemize}
interpretation of the *Daodejing* was based on Buddhist concepts. An obvious example is that he adopted the term "the originally illuminated essence of consciousness (shijing yuanming 識精元明)" of the *Lengyan Sutra* 楞嚴經 to interpret the substance of Dao.\(^{50}\) He also highlighted the Buddhist practice of contemplation (guan 観) as the method of entering the Dao. In addition, he introduced the Buddhist practice of stillness and contemplation as well as the contemplation of both being (you 有) and non-being (wu 無) in his interpretation.\(^{51}\) However, Hanshan's interpretation of the *Daodejing* also has a syncretic tendency. He included Chinese concepts of Heaven and earth as well as yin and yang in his interpretation. For example, he argued that the function of Dao was the transformation of the Heaven and earth, which comes from the changes of yin and yang.

Another feature of Hanshan's interpretation is his emphasis on the crucial role of the enlightened Mind, though whether enlightenment experience can provide the final criterion for interpretation or not is debatable.\(^{52}\) David Chappell pointed out that a central hermeneutic principle of Buddhist thought is the emphasis on the individual's spiritual development in the understanding of a text.\(^{53}\) Hanshan's interpretation also emphasized his spiritual development, since he argued that his understanding was not intellectualized knowledge but had been obtained only through sincere practice and enlightenment.\(^{54}\) Hanshan opposed the method of commenting the *Daodejing* according to words. Instead,

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50 *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 827a.
51 A detailed study of Hanshan's interpretation of the *Daodejing*, see Chapter 5.
54 *ZDX*, in *XZJ* 127, 488a.
he emphasized that one should first enlighten the Mind; then, one could really understand this text and correctly comment on it.\textsuperscript{55}

The fact that Hanshan emphasized the role of enlightenment in his interpretation also reveals Hanshan’s confidence in his enlightenment. Since Enlightenment belongs to the category of mysticism, whether a person is enlightened or not goes beyond the ken of ordinary people. While Hanshan’s enlightenment experience is by nature mystic, it goes beyond ordinary people’s recognition. However, in his autobiography, Hanshan described many of his enlightenment experiences and expressed his confidence in his enlightenment. We can assume that Hanshan believed that he had enlightened his Mind. Based on his confidence in enlightenment, he highlighted the role of enlightenment in his interpretation.

As Lin Zhenguo proposed, an interpretation often reveals more of its interpreter’s position than what a text says.\textsuperscript{56} Hanshan’s \textit{Commentary on the Daodejing} demonstrates this fact quite well since both of his syncretic view and his interpretation of the \textit{Daodejing} reflect his Buddhist position and his thought. In order to clarify how Hanshan’s position and his thought impact his interpretation of the Three Teachings and the \textit{Daodejing}, Chapter 2 provides an analysis of his life and thought. Although Hanshan has been the subject of Hsu Sung-pen’s study, Hsu’s main focus is showing how Hanshan adopted his philosophy of Mind to interpret different kinds of thought.\textsuperscript{57} The focus of this chapter, however, is to show Hanshan’s role as a Buddhist monk and his syncretic

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{DJFT}, in XZJ 127, 8278.


\textsuperscript{57} See Hsu Sung-peng, \textit{A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch’ing} (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979, x-4.)
character, and to demonstrate some salient features of his thought that are relevant to his interpretation of the *Daodejing*.

I propose that Hanshan’s life and thought showed both his Buddhist position and his syncretic character. While recognizing that Hanshan’s life and thought were interrelated, I divide them into two parts for discussion. Although Hanshan’s autobiography is his own subjective and selective account, this text provides first-hand and valuable materials, which is the main source of this study, to investigate his life. In the discussion of Hanshan’s life, I demonstrate his role as a Buddhist monk, his efforts of reviving the late Ming Buddhism, his enlightenment experiences, and his syncretic character. Hanshan also left many works for us to explore his thought. In the analysis of his thought, in addition to showing Hanshan’s tendency towards syncretism, I discuss his thought about the concept of One Mind, expedient means as well as his emphasis on practice and enlightenment since these factors are relevant to his syncretic view and his interpretation of the *Daodejing*.

Like other interpreters of the *Daodejing*, Hanshan could not isolate himself from the influences of the intellectual context. Many scholars consent that each interpretation of the *Daodejing* had close connection with the intellectual trend of it author’s time. For example, Heshanggong’s commentary on the *Daodejing* focused on managing the body and the state, and used the concept of *qi* 氣 to explain the origin of the universe, which was a popular trend of that period. In addition, Heshanggong’s interpretation featured the cosmological trend of his time. However, Wang Bi no longer emphasized the method of

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managing the body; on the contrary, his main emphasis shifted to the ontology of Dao, the problem of being and non-being, and the subjects of spontaneity (ziran 自然) and non-action (wuwei 無為). His commentary revealed the impact of qingtan 清談 and the Dark Learning of Weijin period.\(^{59}\)

As is suggested above, Hanshan’s interpretation of the Three Teachings can be regarded as one of his reactions to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism. In addition to showing the impact of intellectual context on individuals by comparing the cases of Hanshan and Yinshun 印順, Chapter 3 provides a brief sketch of the intellectual context of late Ming. I also propose that the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism, namely Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲 袞宏, Zibo Zhenke 紫柏 真可, Hanshan Deqing 憲山 德清, and Ouyi Zhixu 譩益 智旭 all reacted to the challenge of Chinese Buddhism with various viewpoints. Although they could not represent all the diversity of views of this period, their works form a large and valuable share of the publications of late Ming Buddhism,\(^{60}\) which provide most valuable and available materials to understand the new Buddhist movement of the late Ming. Since they played key roles in the new Buddhist movement of the late Ming, I discuss how they defended and revived Chinese Buddhism. In addition, since the view on the Three Teachings, the concept of One Mind, and enlightenment experiences are crucial in Hanshan’s interpretation, I also compare their viewpoints on these subjects. Through the investigation of their works, we can see

\(^{59}\) For a discussion of these two commentaries, see Alan K.L. Chan, Two Visions of the Way; and his “A Tale of Two Commentaries: Ho-shang-kung and Wang Pi on the Lao-tzu,” in Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching, eds. Livia Kohn, and Michael Lafargue (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 89-117.

\(^{60}\) A study of the publication of late Ming Buddhist literature, see Shi Shengyan, Mingmo fojiaoyanjiu 明末佛教研究 (Taipei: Dongchu Chubanshe, 1987).
features of late Ming Buddhism through the lens of their perspectives and learn the diversity of their concerns and interpretations.
CHAPTER 2
HANSHAN’S LIFE AND THOUGHT

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate salient features of Hanshan’s life and thought that are relevant to his syncretic view and interpretation of the Daodejing. Given the Buddhist perspectives apparent in Hanshan’s syncretic view and interpretation of the Daodejing, I argue, both Hanshan’s status as a Buddhist monk and his Buddhist thought played an important role in his syncretic view and interpretation of the Daodejing. However, while Hanshan was a Buddhist monk, his life and thought also showed syncretic character. Thus, this chapter first elucidates Hanshan’s status as a Buddhist monk along with his syncretic character. Then, I discuss the features of his thought that are relevant to his syncretic view and interpretation of the Daodejing such as the concept of One Mind, expedient means, his emphasis on practice and on enlightenment, and his tendency towards syncretism. This chapter focuses on just those features that are relevant to his syncretic view and his interpretation of the Daodejing; thus, it is not a detailed investigation of his life and thought.61

Hanshan’s works are the best source to explore his life and thought, which are mostly preserved in the Xuzangjing 续藏经, including his commentaries on Buddhist texts and the collection of his various writings entitled “Hanshan dashi mengyou quanjí 憨山大師夢遊全集 (Master Hanshan’s Complete Collection of Dream Roaming).”62 In addition, Hanshan gave a first-hand description of his life in his chronological

61 A more detailed study of Hanshan’s life and thought in English, see Hsu Sung-peng, A Buddhist Leader in Ming China.

62 MYQJ 1-55, in XZJ 127, 205a-1001a.
autobiography, *The Record of the Old Man Hanshan’s Chronological Autobiography* (hanshan laoren xixu nianpu shilu 憨山老人自序年譜實錄). His works demonstrate not only his talent for literature and his wide-ranging interests, but also his inclusive attitude towards various teachings. While Hanshan’s main focus was on Buddhist texts, he also commented on the texts of Confucianism and Daoism. Hanshan’s writings are fluent, beautiful, and splendid, demonstrating clearly his talent for explanation and his keen analytic skill. In addition, he was aware of the device of publication for spreading his thought. Thus, he urged his disciples to publish his works. As a result, many of his works were published and popular in his lifetime and have been preserved until the present.

Hanshan was a prolific writer. The volumes of his extant works exceed 170 fascicles. Although Hanshan had shown his talent for literature in his teen years, he burned all of the works he had composed in that period after becoming a Buddhist monk and devoting himself wholeheartedly to practice meditation. Most of his works were composed after he was exiled. The earliest of his extant works, *Hanshan xuyan* 憨山緒言 (Hanshan’s Introductory Remarks), was written in his thirty-first year. From age thirty-one years to fifty, he left only three other short works, namely *Lengyanjing xuanjing* 楞嚴經懸鏡 (The Hanging Mirror of the *Śūraṇgama Sūtra*, one fascicle), *Borexinjing zhishuo* 般若心經直說 (A Straight Exposition on the *Heart Sutra*, one fascicle), and an essay titled *Guan laozhuang yingxiang lun* 觀老莊影響論 (Contemplating [the teachings of] Laozi.

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63 *MYQJ* 53-54, in XZJ 127, 946b-977a.
64 See Qian Qianyi’s preface of *MYQJ*, in XZJ 127, 205b.
65 *MYQJ* 53, in XZJ 127, 948b-949a; *MYQJ* 47, in XZJ 127, 857a.
66 *MYQJ* 45, in XZJ 127, 830b-837b.
and Zhuangzi as Shadows and Echoes, one fascicle). Since his other works were composed after he was exiled, they can be regarded as reflections of his mature thought.

Investigating briefly the Buddhist texts he commented on, we can see that he did not confine himself to just one Buddhist tradition. He commented on most of the popular sutras in Chinese Buddhism, including the sutras of the Huayan tradition, Tiantai tradition, Chan tradition, Sanlun tradition, and Faxiang tradition. His commentaries on Buddhist texts include Qixinlun zhijie (A Direct Exposition on the Awakening of Faith, two fascicles), Zhaolun luezhu (A Brief Commentary on the Book of Zhao, six fascicles), Jingangjing jueyi (Resolution of Doubts of the Diamond Sutra, one fascicle), Fahuajing jijie (The Essential Teaching of the Lotus Sutra, one fascicle), Fahuajing tongyi (Penetrated Meaning of the Lotus Sutra, seven fascicles), Huayan gangyao (An Outline of Avatāmśa Sūtra, eighty fascicles), Guan lengqiejing ji (Notes on the Lārīkāvatāra Sūtra, eight fascicles), Lengyanjing xuanjing (The Hanging Mirror of the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, one fascicle), Lengyanjing tongyi (Penetrated Discussion on the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, ten fascicles), Baifamingmen lunyi (Exposition on the Gate to the Knowledge of the One Hundred Dharmas, one fascicle), Bashiguiju tongshuo (General Exposition on the Principles of the Eight Consciousnesses, one fascicle), Borexinjing zhishuo (A Straight Exposition on the Heart Sutra, one fascicle), and Yuanjuejing zhijie (A Straight Exposition on the Complete Enlightenment Sutra, two fascicles). According to modern classification of Buddhism, these texts belong variously to the Mādhyamika,

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67 These works are included in XZJ.
Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha traditions. Thus, Hanshan crossed the boundaries of Buddhist sects, striving to present his viewpoints on the major Buddhist texts of his time.

Hanshan’s works also crossed the boundary of Buddhism itself. He commented on the major texts of Confucianism and Daoism. With Daoism, he commented on the Daodejing and the inner chapters of the Zhuangzi. Moreover, he proposed his syncretic views of the Three Teachings in his “Introduction to Commentary on the Daodejing” (daodejing jie fati) and the essay “Contemplating [the teachings of] Laozi and Zhuangzi as Shadows and Echoes.” With Confucianism, his works include Daxue jueyi (Resolution of Doubts in the Great Learning), Chunqiu zuoshi xinfa (The Essence of the Spring and Autumn Annals with the Zuo’s Commentary), and Zhongyong zhizhi (The Direct point of the Doctrine of the Mean).

There is no doubt that Hanshan was broadly learned, and it is quite probable that he was influenced by the Huayan Sutra’s idea that a Bodhisattva should be proficient in worldly knowledge. The subjects he discusses range from religion, philosophy, medicine, fengshui, myth, travel, people, and Chinese chess, all clearly demonstrating Hanshan’s erudition and broad range of interests. In the collection of his writings titled “Hanshan dashi mengyou quanji (Master Hanshan’s Completed Collection of Dream Roaming) 55 fascicles, we can see Hanshan’s proficiency in various literary styles and his broad learning. In addition to eleven fascicles of his Words of Dharma (fayu

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68 For example, the Heart Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, and the Zhaolun belong to Mādhyamika; Baifamingmenlun and Bashiguiju belong to Yogācāra. The others belong to Tathāgatagarbha.


70 See XZJ 127, 827a-830b; XZJ 127, 817a-826b.

71 Chunqiu zuoshi xinfa is lost. However, its preface is preserved in XZJ 127, 484b-486b.
Hanshan’s way of commenting on Buddhist sutras did not follow the tradition of doctrinal studies. His commentaries were mostly composed according to his insights obtained from meditation; thus, he wrote, “When I commented on a sutra, I always concentrate my mind to contemplate [it] in order to accord with the Buddha’s Mind.” Some of his commentaries might lack in doctrinal accuracy, I argue, yet they are valuable materials for the study of contemplative mysticism because he recorded many of his insights obtained through contemplation in them. It is strange that as a Chan practitioner Hanshan composed many commentaries, whereas Chan monks were notorious for their dismissal of doctrinal studies. Hanshan was aware that those who practice Chan did not appreciate his action of commenting on Buddhist texts. In addition, those who belonged to doctrinal studies did not agree with his method of commenting since he did not follow their traditions. Hanshan said, “Now those who belong to doctrinal studies generally regard me as not following the ancient [tradition], and those who practice Chan generally view me as a master of words.” We can see that Hanshan’s pursuit was not to be a scholar monk since he did not follow the tradition of doctrinal studies; however, he liked to express his insight obtained from meditation.

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73 *MYQJ* 46, in *XZJ* 127, 841a.
74 See Araki, “Confucianism and Buddhism,” 55.
75 *MYQJ* 19, in *XZJ* 127, 487b.
Hanshan was a creative writer. Generally speaking, he was not satisfied with the commentaries he encountered. On the contrary, he preferred to propose his own, new, understanding. Furthermore, he was skeptical of ancient methods and argued that those methods were not necessarily applicable to his time. He tried, instead, to find methods suitable and applicable to his time. From the fact that he proposed many new viewpoints, it is fair to argue that he was an independent thinker regardless of whether his points were correct or not.

Hanshan was confident in his new understanding and he dared to find fault with earlier commentaries. For example, Hanshan pointed out that the ancient commentaries' classification of the last eight chapters of the *Lotus Sutra* as "the section of circulation (liutongfen 流通分)" was wrong. As is commonly known, in Chinese Buddhist tradition a sutra was generally classified into three sections, i.e., preface, main body, and circulation sections. Although Hanshan was aware of this classification, he proposed a new classification in his commentary on the *Lotus Sutra*. He did not follow tradition and used the four words i.e., opening, indicating, enlightening, and entering (kai shi wu ru 開示悟入) to classify the sections of this sutra.\(^76\)

Hanshan also proposed a new understanding of the *Diamond Sutra*. He argued that the purport of this sutra was to discard doubts. Moreover, the scope of doubts was not necessarily confined to the list of twenty-seven kinds of doubts of earlier commentaries. He proposed that the sutra indicates that one should immediately destroy any doubt that occurs and one should not employ thinking to deal with doubts. Once all the streams of

\(^{76}\) *MYQJ* 19, in *XZJ* 127, 481a.
thought are stopped, any subtle doubts will clear away. As a result, one realizes his original wisdom.\textsuperscript{77}

As for the \textit{Lengyan Sutra} 棣巖經, he criticized its earlier commentaries for only analyzing words, while not showing thoroughly the purport of this sutra, especially about principle and the method of contemplation. Since Hanshan had a new understanding of this sutra based on his enlightenment experience, he proposed that the concept of “Three contemplations of One Mind (\textit{yixin sanguan} 一心三觀)” could comprehensively grasp the purport of this sutra. He further argued that the core of this sutra was “Delusion and enlightenment do not reside outside the One Mind; the Ultimate [Truth] is not separate from the Three Contemplations.”\textsuperscript{78} These cases show clearly that Hanshan liked to present his original understanding of Buddhist texts.

Hanshan’s works also show that he was fond of intellectual adventure. As mentioned above, he strove to find new understandings that satisfied him. He liked to challenge difficult texts until he found a satisfactory interpretation. One salient example of this characteristic is shown in his \textit{Commentary on the} DaoDejing since he spent 15 years to complete it. In addition, like a competent guide Hanshan was able to guide his audience to experience the marvel he discovered. He sometimes amazed his audience with his new discoveries. He also intended to share his new discoveries with his audiences, including those of later generations, by writing them down.

George Herbert Palmer held that “the tendencies of an age appear more distinctly in its writers of inferior rank than in those of commanding genius. The latter tell of past and

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{MYQJ} 19, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 483b.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{MYQJ} 19, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 480a.
future, as well as of the age in which they live. They are for all time. But on the sensitive responsive souls, of less creative power, current ideals record themselves with clearness. It is not my intention here to judge whether Hanshan was a genius who stepped ahead the tendencies of his age or a sensitive responsive soul. However, Hanshan seemed to regard himself as more of a genius than a responsive soul since he lamented that few people in his time could understand what he taught. He also proposed that if one’s thought transcended his time, it was difficult for his thought to be appreciated by his contemporaries. Thus, he wrote down his thought for later generations, preserving his journey to the marvels of the intellectual world.

Hanshan’s Life

Hanshan’s autobiography was the first complete autobiography composed by a Chinese Buddhist monk, perhaps inspired by the intellectual milieu of that time. He adopted the format of *nianpu* 年譜, a chronological description and analysis of his life. As Wu Pei-yi suggests, his *nianpu* may also be regarded as his spiritual autobiography. Since the author of an autobiography is subjective and selective about the description of his life, the text reveals the image the author wishes to project to the reader. We should first bear in mind that Hanshan’s autobiography is in accord with this point. In other words, Hanshan’s autobiography is his subjective and selective account. Nonetheless, this text is the primary source for investigating his life.

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80 *MYQJ* 32, in XZI 127, 676b.

In his autobiography, Hanshan provides a detailed account of his life, including his childhood, studies, travels, his retreat in the Wutai mountains, his enlightenment experiences, communication with scholars and officials, exile experience, teaching, writing, and his reform of the Caoxi monastery. From his description, we can see that Hanshan’s life was full of changes. As a result, the changes of his life not only enriched his spiritual journey but also deepened his intellectual understanding. In addition, Hanshan recorded many of his viewpoints regarding the historical events that took place in the late Ming. His viewpoints did not necessarily reflect the historical fact of the late Ming. However, he provided his Buddhist perspective for us to better understand the history of this period.

*Status as a Buddhist Monk*

Hanshan’s autobiography gives readers the impression that he tried to present his status as a Buddhist monk. Hanshan states that he was born at the time of *chou* 丑 on the twelfth day of the tenth lunar month of 1546 to a Cai 蔡 family in Anhui province. After telling of his hometown and birth date, he continues,

> My surname is Cai; my father’s name was Yangao 彦高. My mother, whose maiden surname was Hong 洪, was fond of worshiping the Bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音 (Skt. *Avalokiteśvara*) in her life. In an earlier day, my mother dreamt that the Bodhisattva brought a child into the gate [of our house]; she received and embraced the child. Then, she became pregnant.”

Hanshan starts his autobiography with his mother pregnant after her dream of the Bodhisattva Guanyin. Since Bodhisattva Guanyin was one of the most worshipped

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82 *MYQJ* 53, in *XZJ* 127, 946b.
figures in Chinese Buddhism, we can see that Hanshan intended to show his close connection with Bodhisattva Guanyin and Chinese Buddhism.

Hanshan’s autobiography also shows that he was precocious in the religious search, specifically regarding to Buddhism. He reflected that he had been quite sensitive and curious about the matter of birth and death from childhood. When he was seven, he experienced both his uncle’s death and his aunt’s giving birth to a baby. The young Hanshan questioned his mother: “Uncle’s body is still here, where did he go?” His mother replied that his uncle was dead, yet her answer did not satisfy Hanshan. Moreover, to answer his questions about the birth of his cousin and how the baby got into his aunt’s belly, his mother asked him a question in reply: “How did you go into your mother’s belly?” Certainly, this reply did not resolve Hanshan’s question. Thereafter, the matter of birth and death became a lingering question in the young Hanshan’s mind.\(^{83}\)

Hanshan also tells us that he was interested in Buddhism and had the intention of becoming a Buddhist monk in his early days. When he was 9, he always followed his mother to worship the statue of Bodhisattva Guanyin. He could recite the chapter of the Bodhisattva Guanyin (pumen pin 普門品) in the *Lotus Sutra* not long after he became acquainted with this sutra, which pleased his mother greatly. At ten years of age, he expressed to his mother his desire to become a Buddhist monk. When he was 11, he saw some roaming monks come to his home when begging alms. His mother paid high respect to them, from which Hanshan recognized the honor of being a Buddhist monk, strengthening his resolution to become a Buddhist monk.\(^{84}\)

\(^{83}\) *MYQJ* 53, in *XZJ* 127, 947a.

\(^{84}\) *MYQJ* 53, in *XZJ* 127, 947b-948a.
Hanshan described that he decided voluntarily to live in a monastery when he was twelve years old, not because of family’s economic problems as did some other monks. According to his nianpu, he refused his father’s arrangement for his marriage in that year. One day he happened to hear from a Buddhist monk about the virtue of the Abbot Xilin of the Baoen monastery in Jiangling (the present Nanjing). Hanshan requested his father’s permission for his intention of following the abbot. His father refused his request at first. However, after consulting with his mother, they eventually agreed to send him to the monastery in Nanjing. These events show that Hanshan intended to be a Buddhist monk while still quite young.

From his twelfth to eighteenth years, Hanshan stayed at the Baoen monastery for his education. In this period he improved his knowledge of Confucianism and Buddhism as well as his skills in literature. Many examination candidates studied in monasteries in the late Ming. As a matter of fact, the Baoen monastery was an educational institution not only for Buddhist monks but also for the students pursuing the civil service examination. Hanshan learned Buddhism, Confucianism, and the art of the eight-legged essay for civil service examination. Since the Abbot Xilin recognized the importance of Confucianism, he urged Hanshan to study it. Hanshan performed well in studying. According to his words, he had an excellent memory. For instance, when he was fourteen years old he memorized most of the Buddhist sutras he encountered.

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85 MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 948a.
86 About Hanshan’s training in the Baoen monastery, see also Jiang, Wanming fojiao, 91-202.
88 MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 948b.
Hanshan faced a major crisis in his life when he was nineteen years old. He had to make a decision between pursuing the civil service examination and becoming a Buddhist monk. Since he was intelligent and expert in prose writing, some urged him to pursue the civil service examination. In this period, Hanshan also hesitated to become a Buddhist monk because he did not like the corruption and character flaws of some Buddhist monks of his time. While he was hesitating, it happened that Master Yungu 雲谷, a famous Chan master, visited the Baoen monastery. Knowing Hanshan’s doubt, Yungu inspired Hanshan’s belief with the superiority of enlightenment and asked him to read biographies and works of former prominent Buddhist monks. Hanshan followed his advice and started to read the Zhongfeng guanglun 中峰廣論, a collection of master Zhongfeng 中峰 of the Yuan dynasty. Before he finished the whole text, Hanshan had realized that Buddhism was what he liked; he made up his mind to become a Buddhist monk and eventually became the disciple of the Abbot Xilin.

The decision to become a Buddhist monk not only changed Hanshan’s later life but also altered the history of late Ming Buddhism, since Hanshan played an important role to the revival of the late Ming Buddhism. Furthermore, his status as a Buddhist monk also influenced his perspective in his writings. As a result, Buddhism became his first concern and the core of his thought. At the same time, he felt obliged to promote Buddhism and defend Buddhism.

Since Hanshan highlighted the role of enlightenment in his syncretic view and in his interpretation of the Daodejing, a discussion of his enlightenment experiences is essential. According to his autobiography, Hanshan had enlightenment experiences several times.89

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89 For an introduction of Hanshan’s enlightenment experiences, see Lu K’uan-yü (Charles Luk), Practical Buddhism (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), 43-55.
Although what he attained is beyond our knowledge, his description shows that he was confident in what he experienced. Hanshan stated that through these experiences he obtained some extraordinary abilities. For example, he could write without making error even when talking with others; he could predict the occurrence of a disaster. Moreover, he said that all doubt about death and birth was removed after one of his enlightenment experiences.

Hanshan’s enlightenment experiences through practice also enhanced his confidence in the Buddhist doctrines and in the efficacy of Buddhist practice. Many of Hanshan’s works were written after his enlightenment experience. He stated that his method of commenting on Buddhist sutras was not through employment of intellectual cognition but using the insight obtained from his enlightenment experiences. In addition, Hanshan admitted that he had not realized the meaning of certain sutras in his youth. However, after his enlightenment he suddenly understood the purport of those sutras. For example, he understood the meanings of the Lengqie Sutra (Laukāvatāra Sūtra) and the Lengyan Sutra after one enlightenment experience. Hanshan stated that after his enlightenment, the teachings of Buddhist sutras were as clear as “viewing the old stuff in the house.”

Hanshan’s enlightenment experiences were caused by his sincere practice. After Hanshan became a Buddhist monk, his main concern was how to transcend the suffering
of birth and death. In the beginning, he tried to practice Chan. However, he could not well grasp its method. Thus, he shifted to the practice of chanting the Buddha’s name (nianfo 念佛) when he was nineteen. Since his nianfo practice was very concentrated, not long after he dreamed of Amida Buddha appearing in the sky and he saw the Buddha’s face quite clearly; he prayed that he could see Bodhisattvas Guanyin and Shizhi 勢至; they appeared almost immediately. After this experience, Hanshan stated that the images of these three figures were manifest before his eyes clearly for a long time. Having had this experience, he was confident that Buddhist practice was efficacious. ⁹⁵

In addition to the practice of nianfo, Hanshan also benefited from the practice of Chan. Although Buddhism declined in late Ming, Hanshan was fortunate enough to meet many great masters who were helpful to him in his doctrinal studies and practice. When he was twenty, Hanshan joined a Chan program guided by Master Yungu. In the beginning, he did not know how to settle his mind. After receiving Yungu’s guidance, he grasped it well and could gradually focus his mind unshakably on the gongan 公案. Hanshan said that in the three months of this Chan program, he felt as if he was in a dream; he was so concentrated as to not notice the existence of other practitioners and his surroundings. When the program was over, this situation continued for a while, as he said, “When I walked on the street, I felt like nobody was there.” ⁹⁶ This Chan program further enhanced Hanshan’s confidence in Buddhist practice. Since Hanshan benefited from his practice of Chan and Pure Land, he had faith in the practices of both Chan and Pure Land.

⁹⁵ MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 949a.
⁹⁶ MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 950a.
His inclusive attitude to various practices was probably connected with these experiences, since the various practices were all beneficial in his efforts.

Hanshan experienced the first enlightenment when he was twenty-nine years old. One day when he revised the new block-print edition of the Zhaolun, he suddenly realized that all dharmas were originally without coming and going. He went to prostrate himself before the Buddha statue; he, then, realized the purport of not shifting. When he happened to see leaves flying in the sky, he understood the essence of not moving. And when he urinated, he was enlightened to the meaning of not running. After these experiences, he said, “Thereafter the doubt of coming and going as well as the doubt of birth and death were solved.” He told this experience to his friend Miaofeng. Miaofeng congratulated Hanshan that since he had this experience, he was able to retreat in the mountain for further practice.\(^7\)

Hanshan recognized that it was essential for him to deepen his meditation. Thus, in his thirties he decided to retreat in the Wutai mountains for self-cultivation. When he lived in the Wutai Mountains, in the beginning he was annoyed by the sound of water flowing in the valley. Then he followed Miaofeng’s guidance, and he tried to keep his consciousness unmoved regardless of any noise that would disturb him. After practicing a while, he was aware that when he moved his consciousness he heard the sound, and when he did not move his consciousness he heard nothing. One day he suddenly forgot his body. After that he no longer heard any sound. Thereafter all sounds became voiceless to him. Hanshan stated that the sound did not annoy him anymore.\(^8\)

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\(^7\) MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 954a.

\(^8\) MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 955b.
In the same year, Hanshan experienced a great enlightenment, in which he attained a state of *samādhi* for many days. According to him, this great experience resolved all his former doubts. He stated,

One day after having porridge, I went for a walk. Suddenly, I stood and entered a state of *sāmādhi*; I was not aware of my body or mind; there was only a realm of great illuminating brightness, which was perfectly clear and quiet, like a great round mirror; therein mountains, rivers, and the land were all reflected. When I was awake, it was still clear. I tried to find my body and mind, and there was nothing that I could find . . . From then on, both inside and outside of myself were clear, and there was no more the sign of sound and shape that can obstruct me. All the former doubts suddenly disappeared at that very moment. While I looked at my wok, it already had a layer of dirt on it. Since I was alone there, I did not know how long a time had passed.\(^9\)

Since there was a layer of dirt on his wok, he must have stayed in the *sāmādhi* for a long time. Hanshan told us that this enlightenment experience also enabled him to totally understand the purport of the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*. He wrote,

This year, after my enlightenment, since there was nobody for me to ask I opened the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* for proof. At first, because I had never listened to the explanation of this sutra, I did not understand its meaning at all. Therefore I used only my experience to contemplate on it. If a bit of thought arose, I did not let it continue. I stayed like this for eight months, and all the purports of this sutra were clearly understood; I was without any doubt in it.\(^10\)

From his description, we know that Hanshan’s enlightenment experience played key role in his understanding of this Buddhist text.

At thirty-one years old, he had another enlightenment experience consisting of dwelling in a state of *sāmādhi* for five days. On a day when he visited an official, the

\(^9\) *MYQJ* 53, in *XZJ* 127, 955b.

\(^10\) *MYQJ* 53, in *XZJ* 127, 956a.
official requested he compose some poems. When he started to think about how to write, many poems suddenly came to him so quickly that he could not stop them. Hanshan said that all the former poems that he had ever studied and read all presented themselves before him at the same time. There were too many for him to read them aloud. He realized that this was a kind of ‘defect of Chan (chanbing 禪癥)’; the only way to get rid of it was having a deep sleep. Thus, he tried to sleep. However, in the beginning he could not fall asleep. After a while, he forgot himself and sat there looking as if he had fallen asleep. Sitting like this, he could not be awakened by others by various methods for five days. Finally the official remembered a method by which a small bell could awaken a practitioner from the state of sūmadhi. Thus he tried to wake Hanshan up by ringing a small bell tens of times. As a result, Hanshan gradually opened his eyes. However, he forgot where he was; for him, it felt like just breathing once. He reflected the past of his life, and felt that his whole life was like a dream. Hanshan stated that his mind was empty, the environment was quiet, and his happiness was indescribable. This enlightenment experience deepened Hanshan’s realization of Buddhism.

When he was forty-one years old, he had another enlightenment experience. One evening he was practicing sitting meditation. When the night was coming he looked at the ocean and the sky, which were clear and quiet. At that moment, snow and the moon were illuminating each other. Suddenly, his body and mind in accompaniment with the world all sunk peacefully into a state in which he experienced clearly that there was only a realm of great illumination and there was nothing more. After that, he returned to his room; he took the Lengyan Sutra (Śūraṅgama Sūtra) for proof. Suddenly, he clearly

\(^{101}\textit{MYQJ} 53, \textit{in XZJ} 127, 956b.$
grasped all the objects of contemplation described in this sutra. And he realized the purport of this sutra that all of the body and mind, as well as mountains, rivers, space, and the earth were but things inside the subtle and illuminating True Mind. Thereupon, he started to write down his realization of this sutra and completed it before dawn, which was entitled as "The Hanging Mirror of the Śūraṅgama Sutra" (Lengyan xuanjing 棂殿懸鏡), one fascicle.102 From his description, we know that this enlightenment experience aided his understanding of the thought of True Mind, which became his primary theme and recurred in his writings. Since True Mind and One Mind were synonymous according to his understanding, it is not surprising that he also argued that everything was the manifestation of the One Mind and employed this concept in syncretic view and his interpretation of the Daodejing.

There were also incidents in which Hanshan became suddenly enlightened about the purport of certain sutras, though he did not attain a state of sāmadhi. For example, at his fifty-three, when he preached the Lotus Sutra, he was suddenly enlightened about the purport of this sutra. He realized that this sutra pointed out that the present place was identical to the realm of the Buddha. Thus, he wrote a commentary of this sutra based on this enlightenment. Furthermore, when he was sixty-four years old, he gained enlightenment about the meaning of the Diamond Sutra when he recited this text. As a result, he wrote a commentary on this sutra to reveal his new knowledge.103

From the above, we know that Hanshan's enlightenment experience helped his understanding of the purport of several sutras. Nonetheless, he realized the purport of the

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102 MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 961b.
103 MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 971b.
Diamond Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, the Laiikavatāra Sūtra, and the Śūraṅgama Sūtra in different situations, which implied that his enlightenment experiences did not enable him to understand all the sutras at once. Although his enlightenment experience could not guarantee him understanding all of the sutras, for Hanshan, it was helpful and necessary. Thus, he insisted that the enlightened Mind was the key in understanding various kinds of teachings. It is not surprising that Hanshan highlights the role of enlightenment in his syncretic view and his interpretation of the Daodejing.

While Hanshan was a Buddhist monk, he had close connections with officials and scholars, which enabled him to be acquainted with the intellectual climate of late Ming and respond to it. Hanshan did not view it as inappropriate that a Buddhist monk communicated with political figures. In Chinese Buddhist history, it was not uncommon for Buddhist monks to be associated with the court and its officials. Moreover, Mahāyāna Buddhism promotes the ideal that a Bodhisattva should be involved in this world to benefit all sentient beings. Hanshan grasped the essence of Mahāyāna Buddhism well and embodied it in his life. In fact, in Chan tradition, the Sixth Patriarch Huineng 慧能 (638-713) had advocated the concept of non-duality that Buddhism did not separate from the worldly activities, which opened a door for Chinese Buddhism to be actively involved in this world. Under this influence, Hanshan did not regard active engagement with the world as unsuitable. In addition, according to Confucianism and Daoism, a sage also

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104 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 818a.

governs the state. As a matter of fact, Hanshan accepted all of these arguments and actively engaged in this world.

Since Hanshan recognized that political power was necessary for the revival of Buddhism, he resorted to the support of the court and its officials. He was familiar with many political figures, from the dowager empress Li, court eunuchs, and high-ranking officials, to local governors. In an environment in which the bureaucratic system was powerful, Hanshan was capable of exploiting his connections with political figures to help fulfill his goal.\textsuperscript{106}

His autobiography shows that he had the charisma to attract political figures as well as the ability to persuade them to support him.\textsuperscript{107} Hanshan intentionally neglected the Buddhist precept that Buddhist monks should not be involved in political affairs. On the contrary, he triumphantly utilized officials’ support to fulfill his goal of reviving Buddhism. In addition, he could justify his action by the case of one of his favorite Buddhist models, Qingliang Chengguan 清涼澄觀, the Fourth Patriarch of Huayan tradition and the so-called “State Master of Seven Emperors” of the Tang dynasty since Chengguan also had close connection with the court. Hanshan imitated Chengguan and established connection with the court.

Hanshan obtained his reputation quite early and attracted many disciples, including officials and scholars. Hanshan had opportunities to be in contact with scholar-officials in his twenties when he visited the capital. While he retreated in the Wutai Mountains, he continued his communication with scholars and officials. Many of them regarded

\textsuperscript{106} MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 968b-969b.
\textsuperscript{107} See Guo, Mingqing fojiao, 224-225.
Hanshan as a capable and honorable Buddhist monk; they often asked him about Buddhism. When Hanshan was thirty-six years old, he seized an opportunity to become the supervisor of a state-supported Buddhist ceremony at the Wutai Mountain temple for the purpose of praying for the birth of an imperial heir. This ceremony achieved its result in the next year; the imperial family welcomed the birth of a boy. Owing to the success attributed to his ceremony, Hanshan was rewarded by the dowager empress, who treated him with high respect thereafter and granted many of his requests for support. Through this ceremony, Hanshan also established friendships with many court officials. In *MYQJ*, there are more than ninety pieces of Hanshan's correspondences with officials and scholars. Many of them were prominent figures in the late Ming. Since Hanshan had close connection with officials and scholars, it is quite possible that he had a clear understanding of the intellectual climate of his time.

Hanshan’s close connection with political figures was criticized by some of his contemporaries. For example, Guan Dongming 管東溟, a Confucian scholar, criticized Hanshan’s close connections with the court and its officials, and argued that such behavior was not suitable for a Buddhist monk. However, in order to revive Buddhism Hanshan realized that help from the court and its officials was necessary. Of course, I suggest, he could choose not to form contacts with the political figures and just retreat into the mountains for self-cultivation. Nonetheless, he preferred the Bodhisattva path.

108 *MYQJ* 53, in *XZJ* 127, 959a-961b.
110 See Araki, *Yōmeigaku*, 163.
112 *MYQJ* 15, in *XZJ* 127, 413b.
and he had the goal of reviving the Chan tradition through the reform of the Caoxi monastery. In order to fulfill his goal, it seemed that he had no choice but connection with the officials of the court.\textsuperscript{113}

Hanshan treated his connections with political figures as an expedient means to promote Buddhism. Although Hanshan had close connections with the court and its officials, his main concern was the revival of Buddhism, not political influence. Hanshan might be regarded as a "political monk;" however, he was quite aware of his status as a Buddhist monk and was not lost in the political illusion. Although he had to search for help from officials, most of his correspondences to them were his answers to their questions about Buddhism or how to revive Buddhism.\textsuperscript{114}

Exile to Leizhou 雷州 was a great event and a turning point in Hanshan's life. The exile changed Hanshan's thought, practice, and attitude. Most of his works were written after this time. His Commentary on the Daodejing was also completed during this period. When Hanshan was fifty, his close connections with the dowager empress and court officials drew him into a court struggle, which caused his defrocking as a Buddhist monk and his exile to Leizhou (in present Guangdong 廣東 Province) for ten years.\textsuperscript{115} He was deprived of his status as a Buddhist monk against his free will. Through the exile experience, Hanshan more deeply realized the uncontrollable nature of worldly dharmas and the principles of impermanence and no-self. He expressed this feeling in a poem, saying, "In my youth, I wished to become a Buddhist monk; in old age, I was forced to

\textsuperscript{113} MYQJ 14-18, in XZJ 127, 399a-477a.
\textsuperscript{114} MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 959a-961b.
\textsuperscript{115} MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 965ab.
However, Hanshan was able to treat the exile as a trial for his Buddhist practice. He admitted that he learned a great deal from it. In his correspondence while he was in Leizhou, he often expresses that the experience of exile helped his realization of Buddhism and helped reduce his attachment to self. While he might have wished to console friends with this statement, it may also be true that he benefited from the exile experience.

This great change also caused a transformation and breakthrough in his thinking. After he was exiled, he shifted his practice from self-cultivation to the Bodhisattva path. His autobiography shows that he was more active in teaching and involved in social relief activity. It happened that epidemics and famine disasters occurred while he was exiled to Guangdong province. Hanshan urged his disciples to do social relief work, such as sending out food to feed the starving people, burying corpses of those who died in the disastrous epidemic. In addition, he felt pity for travelers and established tea stations for them in desolate places. It is probable that his exile experience caused him to value various expedient means, including world learning.

In his exile, Hanshan showed keenly sympathy for all sentient beings and shared the same feelings with them. Hanshan was a Buddhist monk who had experienced enlightenment; however, he often showed his emotion with tears while he was exiled to Lingnan. For example, he was tearful when he saw the decline of the Caoxi monastery, when he saw thousands of dead caused by a disastrous epidemic, and when he heard of

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116 MYQQ 35, in XZJ 127, 727b.
117 MYQQ 14, in XZJ 127, 393a; MYQQ 15, in XZJ 127, 415b; MYQQ 16, in XZJ 127, 438b.
118 MYQQ 40, in XZJ 127, 798a; MYQQ 54, in XZJ 127, 966ab.
the plight of his good friends. In short, he became more sensitive to what he encountered.

The experience of exile also made him realize that he might die at any time. Since he was afraid that he would be buried and none of his thought would be preserved for later generations, he began writing. Most of his writings were composed after he was banished, including poetry and essays as well as commentaries on Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. Hanshan was quite aware of the limit of time. Thus he grasped every opportunity to compose commentaries. He expressed his concern, saying, “Ideals are waiting for [me to accomplish], yet my body has been [gradually] worn down. Although the day might be long, my life has been shortened. If I do not work hard with each breath I have and treat the Dharma as my life, I am afraid that one day I will be buried in a ditch and rot with the grass and wood.”

The exile experience also caused a change in his personality. After Hanshan was exiled, he sincerely reflected on his defects and tried to correct them. For example, he found that he was too proud, thus he tried his best to become humble and easygoing. For instance, Hanshan stated that he was originally a person of formality; however, at his fifty-five he started to greet his friends with brotherly manner because he recognized that it was important for him to soften the light and to merge with the ordinary people. This change is also reflected on his interpretation of the Daodejing since he promoted these virtues in his commentary on this text.

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119 MYQJ 32, in XZJ 127, 676b; MYQJ 40, in XZJ 127, 798b; MYQJ 51, in XZJ 127, 923a.
120 MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 966b.
121 MYQJ 15, in XZJ 127, 416b.
122 MYQJ 15, in XZJ 127, 426b-427a.
As a Chan practitioner, Hanshan took the revival of the Chan tradition as his responsibility. When Hanshan was exiled to Guangdong province, he was able to find support from officials to help his reform of the Caoxi monastery and devoted himself to the reform for many years. Before he was exiled, Hanshan and Zibo had made a resolution to revive the Chan tradition, and they planned to begin with the reform of the Caoxi monastery since they regarded it as the origin of the Chan tradition. Zibo vividly expressed the difficulty of reforming the Caoxi monastery after he visited the Caoxi monastery. He told Hanshan that it would be almost impossible to reform the Caoxi monastery even if the Sixth Patriarch himself could come back again. In order to deal with many difficult incidents associated with the reform, Hanshan had to resort to the help of officials. Hanshan had congenial connections with many officials and the ability to persuade them. Sometimes officials asked Hanshan for help. In return, Hanshan would invite them to support his reform of Caoxi monastery. Hanshan was able to effectively employ his influence and connections with officials in the reform of the Caoxi monastery.

Hanshan reformed many aspects of the Caoxi monastery. In addition to the rebuilding of the monastery, he also paid attention to Buddhist monks' education and practice. Hanshan observed that most of the monks of the Caoxi monastery had never heard of the Buddhist precepts, much less keeping them. Thus, he ordered the young monks to be ordained again as the basis for keeping Buddhist precepts. He urged them to follow Buddhist precepts and to recite the precepts of the Vinaya each half a month. He

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123 MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 968b-971b.
124 MYQJ 52, in XZJ 127, 936b.
125 MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 969a-971a.
also advocated the practice of finding personal faults and regretting transgressions. As a practitioner of Mahāyāna Buddhism, he also promoted the Bodhisattva precepts of the *Fanwang Sutra* 梵網經, since he regarded the Bodhisattva path as the supreme practice.  

While Hanshan established the rules for the Caoxi monastery, he stipulated that those who gravely broke the rules should be sent to the government office. From the fact that he had to resort to the governmental punishment, it is fair to argue that he was practical since he recognized that Buddhist concept of retribution was not sufficient to maintain monastic order among those people at that time. Because some Buddhist monks of the monastery did not approve his reform, his reform of the Caoxi monastery was only half completed. Failing to fully reform the Caoxi monastery, Hanshan expressed his discouragement, and lamented the difficulty of the Bodhisattva path. He once even had the idea of retreating into the mountain again. Shortly after, however, he continued on his Bodhisattva path; he turned his focus to writing and teaching.

**Syncretic Character**

While Hanshan was a Buddhist monk, his life also displayed his syncretic character. Since Hanshan was nurtured under the influence of Chinese culture, even his understanding of Buddhism was the Chinese Buddhism that had been assimilated to

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126 *MYQJ* 50, in *XZJ* 127, 903b-904b.
127 *MYQJ* 50, in *XZJ* 127, 910a.
128 *MYQJ* 50, in *XZJ* 127, 971b.
129 *MYQJ* 50, in *XZJ* 127, 972a-976a.
Chinese culture.\textsuperscript{130} There is no doubt that various Chinese traditions impacted his life. While he promoted Buddhism, he did not separate himself from the established traditions and did not criticize them. All in all, he promoted Chinese values and adopted an inclusive attitude towards different Chinese traditions. For example, Hanshan accepted the function of divination as well as the concept of reward and punishment. In his commentary on the \textit{Zuo's Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals}, he wrote,

\begin{quote}
The \textit{Change} values divination; the \textit{Spring and Autumn Annals} values the emperor and father; they are both the speech of the sages. The \textit{Change} manages that which has not yet emerged, the \textit{Spring and Autumn Annals} manages that which has been in chaos. The \textit{Change} talks about the good fortune and bad fortune of the divine path in order to scare people with obscurity; the \textit{Spring and Autumn Annals} talks about the rewards and punishments of the human path in order to scare people with the obvious [example]. These two are mutually dependent.\textsuperscript{131}
\end{quote}

Hanshan had acquainted himself with the Confucian Classics when he received training for the civil service examinations as a teenager, though he gave up this pursuit later. In the Baoen monastery, in addition to the learning of Buddhism, Hanshan started his study of Confucian texts in his fifteenth year. Hanshan stated that he memorized all the Four Books and was fond of the \textit{Laozi} and the \textit{Zhuangzi} in this period.\textsuperscript{132} In his early life Hanshan had opportunity to learn broadly. His proficiency in different Chinese traditions established a firm ground for him to propose his own viewpoints about Chinese traditions.

\textsuperscript{130} About this topic, see also Zürcher, \textit{The Buddhist Conquest of China}; Oh Kang-nam, “The Taoist Influence,” 277-297.

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{MYQJ} 19, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 485a.

\textsuperscript{132} \textit{MYQJ} 53, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 948b.
Hanshan also accepted and valued Confucian virtues such as loyalty, filial piety, and righteousness. First of all, his self-examination revealed that his disposition included loyalty and righteousness. He said, “I often think privately that as a man of spirit I reside in the world, yet I could not promote and fulfill the duty of human relationships. Fortunately, I am able to be a Buddhist monk; I ought to be a loyal vassal of the Buddha and his pious son.”

Sometimes, he lamented that “If one is without loyalty and righteousness, how can he practice Buddhism?” He also wrote, “In fact, [I] intend to support and preserve the vein of Buddhism by employing the mind of Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu in this age of desperate crisis. [I] hope that I do not fail to be a loyal vassal of the Buddha.”

Hanshan regretted that he could not fulfill the duty of human relationships. However, he transferred his loyalty and filial piety to the Buddha. In addition, Hanshan often expressed his loyalty to the emperor in his works and did not complain about his exile by the emperor. On the contrary, he expressed his gratitude to the emperor for giving him the opportunity to improve his Buddhist practice. However, it may have been the best strategy for him to not again offend the emperor.

Although it is not certain whether Hanshan’s claim was his true intention or not, it is clear that he consistently expressed his loyalty to the emperor in his works. Moreover, in order to show his loyalty to the dowager empress, since he was deprived of the status as a Buddhist monk when he was exiled, he regained his status of Buddhist monk when he was sixty-nine years old in front of a picture of the dowager empress from the time when

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133 *MYQ* 15, in XZJ 127, 416a.
134 *MYQ* 2, in XZJ 127, 231b.
135 *MYQ* 15, in XZJ 127, 416b.
136 *MYQ* 14, in XZJ 127, 393a; *MYQ* 16, in XZJ 127, 438b; *MYQ* 17, in XZJ 127, 452b.
he had held a memorial ceremony for her.\textsuperscript{137} Based on these events, it is fair to argue that Hanshan valued Confucian virtues. He promoted those virtues such as loyalty and filial piety, and felt obligated to be loyal to the emperor and the state.

Hanshan was also influenced by Chinese philosophy in that he often employed the popular \textit{ti-yong} 體用 and \textit{ben-mo} 本末 concept in his writings. The \textit{ti-yong} concept was first provided by Wang Bi and maturely developed in Jizang's works.\textsuperscript{138} In the late Ming, Wang Bi’s idea of “valuing the root and clipping the bud (\textit{chongben ximo} 崇本息末)” had been quite familiar to many Chinese people. Hanshan and his contemporaries often adopted the \textit{ti-yong} concept in their works. In addition, Hanshan was influenced by the teachings of Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi; he often cited their words to advise his disciples.\textsuperscript{139} There is no doubt that he appreciated those teachings. Nonetheless, Hanshan never discussed the teachings of Wang Yang-ming. Since Wang’s thought was quite popular in the Late Ming, Hanshan was most likely aware of his teachings. However, the fact that he often cited Confucius and Mencius yet he did not discuss Wang’s teachings reveals that he valued more the teachings of ancient sages.

Hanshan’s works show that he was endowed with an inclusive attitude and syncretic character to Chinese culture. He received and admired the rich heritage of Chinese civilization. Although Buddhist precepts prohibit Buddhists monks from indulging in worldly learning, he crossed this line. He particularly promoted the practice of \textit{fengshui} openly. Based on the concept of expedient means of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Hanshan

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{MYQJ} 54, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 973a.

\textsuperscript{138} See Jan Yun-hua, \textit{Yongming yanshou}, 123.

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{MYQJ} 2, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 237b-238a; \textit{MYQJ} 3, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 242b; \textit{MYQJ} 6, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 290b; \textit{MYQJ} 7, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 297a.
tended to embrace various worldly learning and techniques. He cited a passage from the *Huayan Sutra* that urges Bodhisattvas to learn worldly knowledge for the purpose of benefiting sentient beings: “In order to benefit sentient beings, the great Bodhisattva should learn all worldly techniques and arts.” In accordance with this statement, he adopted an inclusive and open-minded attitude towards all kinds of learnings.

Hanshan treated all the teachings as the words in dream, by which he implied that one should not become attached to any teaching. He often advised his disciples to contemplate all dhammas as dreams. The simile of dream is not only common in Buddhist texts, but also features prominently in the *Zhuangzi*. For example, a well-known paragraph of the *Zhuangzi* states that Zhuangzi dreamed he was a butterfly, yet he questioned which was real—was he a butterfly or a person? The *Diamond Sutra* also argues that all the dhammas are unreal, like dreams.

George Tanabe, Jr. argues that Mahāyāna Buddhism is closely connected with dreams by taking Myōe Shōnin (1173-1232), a Japanese Buddhist monk in Kamakura period, as a case study. While Tanabe calls Myōe “the dreamkeeper,” as a Mahāyāna Buddhist Hanshan treated the human world as a dream. To him, all arguments were words in dream. Hanshan wrote,

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140 See *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T10, no. 279, 192b.
141 *MYQJ* 47, in *XZJ* 127, 857a.
142 *MYQJ* 32, in *XZJ* 127, 672a; *MYQJ* 39, in *XZJ* 127, 789b.
143 *ZNHN*, 256-262.
144 *ZNHN*, 273.
As for the method of forgetting oneself, first thing is to view the human world as a dream, the arguments of right and wrong as matters in a dream, those who correct [the arguments of] right and wrong as the dream interpreters in the dream.\textsuperscript{146}

The idea that all the teachings are but words in dream also bolstered Hanshan's broad learning. Hanshan received training in literature, including prose writing and poetry composition in his seventeenth year. He said that he was outstanding in poetry and prose writing. He was confident that his works exceeded those of all the other students.\textsuperscript{147} Although he burned all his works after becoming a Buddhist monk, he started to compose poems after he was exiled. In order to justify composing poems, he stated that all the words and teachings were unreal since they were but words in the dream worlds.

Hanshan often used the image of dream in his writings. For example, he referred to his collection of poetry as "Dream-roaming." In the Preface of this collection, he said, "The Three Realms are [like] dream houses; the drifting life is like a dream. . . . As for these words, they are the records of the circumstance through which I roamed in dream. Nonetheless, the poems are true to circumstances. In short, they are all words in dream." In addition, Hanshan treated poetry as an expedient means because his poems were particularly for the purpose of supporting worldly needs.\textsuperscript{148}

In his \textit{MYQJ} there are hundreds of his poems collected in three fascicles.\textsuperscript{149} Hanshan expressed his deep feelings, keen observations, happiness of practice, and the

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{ZNHZ}, 276.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{MYQJ} 53, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 948b.
\textsuperscript{148} \textit{MYQJ} 47, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 857a-858a.
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{MYQJ} 47-49, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 857a-900a. For a survey of his poetry, see Zhao Chunlan, "Cong hanshan deqing sixiang tantu qi mengyoushi—yi 'shanjushi' wei zhongxin 從憨山德清思想探討其夢遊詩-以＜山居詩＞為重心" (Master's thesis, Huafan University, 1998), 275-361.
mood of meditation by poetry. Most of his poems, of course, are connected with Buddhist concepts such as impermanence, no-self, and no-attachment. While his poetry presented well his talent for literature, Hanshan also tried to present his Buddhist thinking through it. Here, I pick three of his poems to provide a glimpse of his talent for poetry and to demonstrate his inclusive attitude. The first one is a description of the place of his retreat, showing his keen observation and mood of quietude. He wrote,

Autumn water of smooth lake immerses with cool sky
The old trees [accompanied with] flying frost and those red fallen leaves
On the stone track and small bridge is without human trace
A small hut is locked deeply in white clouds

平湖秋水浸寒空 古木霜飛落葉紅 石徑小橋人跡斷 一竅深鎖白雲中

The second is a poem that shows his thinking of a friend, one in which we see his emotional side. He wrote,

Meeting or separating is as unexpected as the drifting clouds
My heart has never separated from the moment I saw you off
The two wheels of sun and moon are like flying birds
[They] come and go without stopping, which causes my thinking [of you] in this dream

聚散浮雲不可期 此心未離別君時 兩輪日月如飛鳥 來往無停促夢思

The third one shows the sense of peace of his meditation. He wrote,

I alone sit under a tall pine tree
As leisurely as the mind of a great ancient
[My] mind is like a high mountain and running water
who is again [my] confidant

獨坐長松下
悠然太古心
高山流水意
誰復是知音

\[^{150}MYQJ\ 49,\ in\ XZJ\ 127,\ 898a.\]
\[^{151}MYQJ\ 49,\ in\ XZJ\ 127,\ 893a.\]
\[^{152}MYQJ\ 49,\ in\ XZJ\ 127,\ 887a.\]
Hanshan sometimes showed his sense of humor in his poems. For example, in a poem describing the *budai heshang* (a legendary fat monk with cloth-bag), he said, “Why did you open your mouth and laugh loudly all the time? The reason you bared your abdomen and stomach might be that [you were] sensitive to heat.” All in all, Hanshan included poetry in his writings as expedient means for transmitting thought and feelings.

Hanshan’s syncretic character can also be seen through his comments on poetry. He wrote, “When the ancient people discussed poetry, they all compared it with Chan. They really did not know that poetry is indeed genuine Chan.” In addition, he praised Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 and Li Bo 李白 for having actually attained the marvel of poetry. As for Wang Wei 王維, Hanshan proposed that although Wang Wei adopted many Buddhist terms in his poetry and many people praised him as being skillful in Chan, he was not as good as Tao and Li since his poetry belonged to the category of the “Chan of words” (wenzichan 文字禪), while Tao and Li’s poetry transcended words. Here, Hanshan demonstrates syncretic character since he adopts the Buddhist concept of Chan to comment on poetry.

Hanshan’s syncretic character is also shown in his knowledge of Chinese chess. In a Preface written for a master of Chinese chess called Fang Zizhen 方子振, he wrote, “While persuasive politicians took chess as the metaphor for military strategy, I argue that chess can be compared with Chan since it resides in stillness to manage the moves. I assuredly propose that Zizhen’s chess takes Dao to be advanced in technique.” Hanshan further described that when Zizhen played chess, it looked like he was without intention;

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153 *MYQJ* 33, in *XZJ* 127, 692a.

154 *MYQJ* 39, in *XZJ* 127, 776b.
when he was in advantage, he acted like he did not compete. His attitude was leisurely, and his mind looked like the clear moon. While he predicted what would be going on, he followed the changing situation naturally. Hanshan stated that both Zizhen’s technique and character were wonderful. From his description, we can see Hanshan’s syncretic character since he includes Buddhist concept of without intention, and Daoist concepts of not competing to describe Zizhen’s technique and character.

Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude towards calligraphy; in addition, he introduced Buddhist concepts to comment on calligraphy. Hanshan was excellent in calligraphy; his works were valued and appreciated by his contemporaries and later generations. He stated that he was fond of imitating the examples of Jin and Tang calligraphers throughout his life. In addition, he expressed his views on calligraphy, stating that the subtlety of calligraphy was difficult to describe. Nonetheless, he was not satisfied with the earlier commentaries on calligraphy and proposed his own views. He said, “It is like wild geese across the vast sky and their shadows sinking into autumn water.” He held that calligraphy was like the saying of “entirely turning over” of the Chan tradition. He urged that those who practiced calligraphy should penetrate into this so then they could attain superiority in calligraphy. It is noteworthy that Hanshan tended to connect worldly learning with Chan, by which connection he not only showed his syncretic character, but could justify his involvement in worldly learning as well.

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155 MYQJ 21, in XZJ 127, 516b.
157 MYQJ 39, in XZJ 127, 776ab.
Hanshan’s syncretic character was also demonstrated in his viewpoint of Chinese medicine. He wrote a short essay about Chinese medicine as a gift to a master of Chinese medicine entitled Li Gaoshi 李高士. In opposition to common belief, he proposed that a physician was more enlightened than a Minister was. While a Minister did not necessarily forget merit, benefit, and fame, Hanshan proposed that a physician was endowed with those good characters. He wrote,

As for his duty, he takes life as his responsibility, takes benevolence as his mind, adopts righteousness as his character, treats others as oneself, regards discarding evil as his business, employs right *qi* as his principle, uses veins as his measurement, and treats expedience as function. Therefore, when he cures, he would certainly cause the ruler of mind to be in peace and arrange the four limbs to be in harmony. . . . When his cure proves effective, he has no concern for the benefit and he does not brag about his contribution. Is he not the one who acts yet does not control, and who has merit yet does not claim?\(^\text{158}\)

Here, Hanshan shows his syncretic character by describing his ideal for the physician with concepts of different Chinese traditions such as benevolence, righteousness, *qi*, veins, expedience, harmony, and not bragging.

Compared to the other three Great Buddhist Masters, Hanshan adopted a more inclusive attitude to other religions. Although he was a Buddhist monk, he did not merely honor Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and prominent Buddhist monks. He praised Chinese sages and the deities of popular religion. In his works, in addition to the praises to Confucius and Laozi, many eulogies are devoted to the figures and deities of popular religions, including Lü Chunyang呂純陽 (an immortal in Chinese Daoist tradition), Patriarch Peng 彭祖 (a legendary figure who lived to eight hundred years old), and

\(^{158}\text{MYQJ 39, in XZJ 127, 780b-781a.}\)
Wenchangdijun (Emperor of Prosperous Literature), etc.\textsuperscript{159} Hanshan also wrote Records for temples of popular religion, such as \textit{Yuhuangdian ji} 玉皇殿記 and \textit{Zhongyongmiao beiji} 忠勇廟碑記.\textsuperscript{160} The fact that Hanshan did not refuse the requests of popular religion for composing Records clearly shows his inclusive attitude towards popular religion.

Hanshan's inclusive attitude also made him a \textit{fengshui} believer. It is interesting to note that Hanshan's reform of the Caoxi monastery was theoretically and practically based on \textit{fengshui}. \textit{Fengshui} is a quite influential and popular tradition in China. Most Chinese people, from emperor to ordinary people, took \textit{fengshui} seriously. Hanshan also openly accepted the theory and practice of \textit{fengshui}. Although the Bodhisattva precepts of the \textit{Fanwang Sutra} prohibit Buddhist monks from being involved in \textit{fengshui} practice, Hanshan ignored this prohibition. On the contrary, he promoted \textit{fengshui} practice and justified his belief by his own theory.

His belief about \textit{fengshui} was demonstrated well in his argument about the decline of Chan tradition. He particularly proposed that because of the \textit{fengshui} defects of the Caoxi monastery, the Chan tradition declined. Thus, he decided to first reform the \textit{fengshui} of the Caoxi monastery. Hanshan wrote, "The vein of the Chan tradition under Heaven is originated from Caoxi. Now, its Dao is not illuminating. It must be obstructed in the origin, and should be dredged, which has been my vow for a long time."\textsuperscript{161}

Hanshan also emphasized the influence of \textit{fengshui} on the Chan tradition, as he said,

\textsuperscript{159} \textit{MYQJ} 35, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 722a-723a.

\textsuperscript{160} For example, \textit{Yuhuangdian ji} 玉皇殿記 (Records for the Palace of Emperor Jade), see \textit{MYQJ} 22, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 531b-532a; \textit{Zhongyongmiao beiji} 忠勇廟碑記, see \textit{MYQJ} 23, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 541a-542b.

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{MYQJ} 51, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 920a.
Although the Dharma has both prosperity and decline, and the generation has changes, the reason the vein of the great Dao [of Chan] has lasted through endless time and does not decay resides in the spirit of the mountains and rivers that connect with the teaching of the elephant (Chan tradition).'^162

From Hanshan's word, we know that he attached much weight to the influence of fengshui in regard to the prosperity of Chan tradition.

Thus, he major parts of his reform of the Caoxi monastery were connected with his belief of fengshui. When Hanshan tried to reform the Caoxi monastery, he first consulted with a fengshui master about the decline of the Caoxi monastery; he was convinced that the yin and yang of the monastery were not well arranged in that monastery.163 Hanshan proceeded to observe many defects of the fengshui of the Caoxi monastery and tried to improve them. For example, he found defective that the mountain range behind the Patriarch's Hall had been leveled down. Thus he asked monks to fill it up with earth and reshaped it as its origin. In addition, he changed the site and path of the monastery according to the theory of fengshui, and channeled a spring into the monastery as parts of the reform of fengshui.164 Later, he even confirmed that the Chan tradition was revived after his remodeling the fengshui of the Caoxi monastery.165

It is commonly known that Buddhist precepts forbid Buddhist monks indulging in the practice of divination and fengshui. These practices act as an obstacle to the achievement of enlightenment, since they can prevent the practitioner from understanding the right view of dependent origination. However, could an enlightened person adopt

\[162\] *MYQJ* 51, in *XZJ* 127, 921a.
\[163\] *MYQJ* 50, in *XZJ* 127, 512b.
\[164\] *MYQJ* 50, in *XZJ* 127, 902b.
\[165\] *MYQJ* 20, in *XZJ* 127, 499b.
them as expedient means to benefit sentient beings? For Hanshan, the answer is yes. He argued that a sage should be well versed in all kinds of worldly techniques in order to benefit sentient beings. Since Hanshan practiced the Bodhisattva path, he regarded it suitable to adopt the practice of fengshui.

It is difficult to explain why Hanshan put so much faith in the practice of fengshui as many Chinese did. However, his writings show his viewpoints about fengshui, at the same time revealing his syncretic character. First, Hanshan accepted the Chinese concept of harmonization among the heaven, earth, and human realms. In this concern, he followed the thought of the Daodejing. The Daodejing says, “The sage models heaven,” which means the sage follows the way of nature. Since fengshui is a phenomenon of nature, the sage also follows it. Hanshan believed that human beings reside within heaven and earth; hence they cannot rid themselves of the influence of fengshui. Thus, he tried to provide a better arrangement of the fengshui of an environment in order to benefit the people living there.

Hanshan valued the function of fengshui, while he realized that many people despised the practice of fengshui. He argued that although it was a minor technique, one should not look down upon it. Hanshan further assumed that there was an ultimate principle in it, though he did not accept all the theories of fengshui. Hanshan proposed, “Although all the theories of geomancy are not necessarily trustful, there is an ultimate principle in it.” Furthermore, in order to justify his belief, he connected fengshui with

166 MYQJ 45, in XZJ 127, 817b.
167 See MYQJ 21, in XZJ 127, 512a-513a; MYQJ 23, in XZJ 127, 546b-548a; MYQJ 50, in XZJ 127, 902a-903b; MYQJ 51, in XZJ 127, 920a-921b.

168 MYQJ 50, in XZJ 127, 902a.
the Buddhist concept of True Mind, and proposed that the earth, mountains, and rivers were all formed by the one and only True Mind.\textsuperscript{169}

Hanshan analyzed fengshui from the perspectives of other Chinese traditions too. For instance, he adopted the concepts of \textit{yin}, \textit{yang}, and \textit{qi} in his discussion of fengshui. He held, “A proverb says, ‘Heaven and earth have the same root, and the myriad things share the same body.’ Therefore, the great earth belongs to the same form; the \textit{yin} and \textit{yang} share the same \textit{qi}; birth and death have the same cause. . . . The inner and outer Five Phases are originated from the Oneness.”\textsuperscript{170} Here, Hanshan based his thought on the Chinese concept of the harmony among heaven, earth, and human to understand fengshui. Furthermore, he proposed, “Those who died are quiet, yet they have spirit; if they obtained the harmony of the mountain and river, they would bring fortune, longevity, health, and peace to their descendents. As for the united virtue of the heaven and human, its principle is very subtle.”\textsuperscript{171}

Hanshan also used the metaphor of body and acupuncture to interpret fengshui. He wrote, “With the human body, there are veins circulating the whole body; and the intersections of the veins form the acupuncture spots. Therefore, when a human is alive, if their illness has been punctured in the [correct] spots, it is sufficient to remove [them] from death; when human is dead, if the burial obtained a [correct] spot for the grave, it is sufficient to transform the fortune. Unquestionably, this is the principle.”\textsuperscript{172} Here, Hanshan introduced the metaphor of acupuncture to describe the effect of fengshui.

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{MYQJ} 50, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 902a.
\textsuperscript{170} \textit{MYQJ} 21, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 512b.
\textsuperscript{171} \textit{MYQJ} 21, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 513a.
\textsuperscript{172} \textit{MYQJ} 21, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 512b.
From these examples, we can see that Hanshan's belief in *fengshui* is blended with the Buddhist concept of True Mind and other concepts adopted from different Chinese traditions, such as *qi, yin* and *yang*, five phases, spirit, Oneness, and Chinese medication. Hanshan also argued that if one tried to correctly employ *fengshui*, he should realize Oneness first. He said, “The reason those people who are confused by geomancy wrongfully argue the theory of fortune and misfortune is because they do not realize Oneness.”\(^{173}\) Thus, he connected *fengshui* with practice. All in all, Hanshan’s belief in *fengshui* reveals his syncretic character.

Hanshan’s Thought

There have been many studies of Hanshan’s thought from various perspectives.\(^ {174}\) However, this section focuses on those features of his thought that are relevant to his syncretic view and his interpretation of the *Daodejing*. Although Buddhism is at the core of Hanshan’s thought, he did not reject other Chinese traditions. Basically, he adopted the concept of One Mind from Buddhism as his main guiding thought. Based on the concept of One Mind, I propose, he treated all the teachings as shadows and echoes of One Mind, which also enabled him to include all the teachings. Hanshan also regarded the various teachings as expedient means for the purpose of benefiting sentient beings. According to him, all kind of teachings flowed from the enlightened Mind of the sages; they taught according to the capacity of audience.\(^ {175}\) Furthermore, Hanshan also emphasized the role

\(^{173}\) *MYQJ* 21, in *XZJ* 127, 513a.


\(^{175}\) *MYQJ* 45, in *XZJ* 127, 818a.
of the enlightened Mind in understanding various teachings; in order to enlighten the Mind, he emphasized the primary role of practice.

While Hanshan regarded the thought of One Mind as supreme, he comprehensively grasped the basic doctrines of Buddhism such as impermanence, suffering, no-self, dependant-origination, *sīla*, *samādhi*, *prajñā*, and *nirvāṇa*. Nonetheless, he mainly promoted Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially the Huayan tradition. Since Hanshan regarded the *Huayan Sutra* as the highest of all teachings, he adopted the classification system (*panjiao* 判教) of the Huayan tradition. According to this system, all the Buddha’s teachings were classified into five categories, *xiao shi zhong dun yuan* 小始終頓圓 (i.e., Hīnayāna, elementary, final, sudden, and perfect doctrines). Hanshan did not, however, adopt the classification system of Tiantai tradition and he did not classify the *Lotus Sutra* as the supreme doctrine as did the Tiantai tradition. From the fact that he classified the *Huayan Sutra* as the supreme teaching, it is fair to argue that he preferred the Huayan tradition, though he was not a real lineage bearer of this tradition.

Hanshan’s inclusive attitude may have been enhanced by Huayan teachings. Hanshan often employed the teachings of the Huayan tradition in his writings. For instance, Hanshan introduced the term “*fajie* (dharmadhātu)” and the theory of “non-obstruction” of Huayan philosophy in his interpretations. In the Huayan tradition dharmadhātu is a synonym of True Mind. In *GLYL*, Hanshan wrote, “There is nothing that is not flowing from the dharmadhātu, and there is nothing that is not returning to the dharmadhātu.”176 In addition, he argued that all dharmas were established from One Mind, so that purity and defilement were interpenetrated, and there was no obstruction

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176 *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 818a.
among them. According to him, none of the teachings were different from Buddhism; both people and dharmas belonged to the One Mind; both Phenomena (shi 事) and Principle (li 理) were without obstruction. He proposed, “Once every thing is equal, is it necessary to distinguish this or that, and to debate right or wrong?”177 Thus, Hanshan’s inclusive attitude is connected with the theory of non-obstruction of Huayan philosophy.

In addition, since Chengguan, the Fourth Patriarch of Huayan tradition, was one of Hanshan’s favorite role models, Hanshan often cited Chengguan’s thought in his writing. Chengguan built on his predecessor Fazang’s argument that all phenomenal things, similar to Principle, interpenetrate each other without obstruction or hindrance to develop the basic Huayan theory of four-fold “dharmadhātu” (fajie 法界), namely dharmadhātu of phenomena (shi fajie 事法界), dharmadhātu of principle (li fajie 理法界), dharmadhātu of mutual non-obstruction of principle and phenomena (lishi wuai fajie 理事無礙法界), dharmadhātu of mutual non-obstruction of phenomena and phenomena (shishi wuai fajie 事事無礙法界).178 Similarly, in GLYL Hanshan proposed that both phenomena and principle were without obstruction.179 Chengguan further argued that everything in the universe is fluid, flexible, and related to each other since all things can interpenetrate each other without obstruction. Hanshan also followed this theory. Thus, he emphasized the interpenetration of the myriad things while admitting the identity of each thing.180

177 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 820b.

178 Fazang, Huayan fajie xuanjing 華嚴法界玄鏡, T 45, no. 1878, 653c; Chengguan, Huayan fajie xuanjing 華嚴法界玄鏡, T 45, no. 1883, 672c.

179 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 820b.

180 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 820b.
Concept of One Mind

Hanshan’s understanding of Mind is based on the sutras of Mahāyāna Buddhism and philosophy of Chinese Buddhist traditions such as Huayan and Tiantai. First of all, he argued that the doctrine of Mind-only was the highest teaching of Buddhism. He said,

The Buddha manifested himself in the world and taught the Dharmas for forty-nine years. All the collected sutras contained in the canon altogether simply talk about eight characters, namely “sanjie weixin wanfa weishi 三界唯心 萬法唯識 (The Three Realms are Mind-only and the myriad dharmas are Consciousness-only).” It had been forty years from the start till now; only then did he reveal the meaning of the phrase of “wanfa weishi.” Yet he still dared not to demonstrate the purport of “sanjie weixin,” because Mind-only was the ultimate principle of the myriad dharmas.181

In Hanshan’s view, the Buddha carefully taught according to the capability of his audience, and he did not dare to rashly teach the doctrine of Mind-only. Since the doctrine of Mind-only was the highest teaching, it was preached only after the great disciples had heard of the doctrines of Consciousness-only.

After preaching the doctrine of Consciousness-only, Hanshan argued, the Buddha revealed the doctrine of Mind-only. His intention was to lead sentient beings to enlightenment of the utmost ultimate One Mind. Hanshan argued that if one could combine both the contemplation of emptiness (kongguan 空觀) and the contemplation of provisional (kongguan 空觀) into One Mind, then he could perfect the One Mind and include them in the contemplation of the middle path (zhongdaoguan 中道觀), which was the so-called “Ultimacy of Principle (li jiujing 理究竟).”

\[181\] MYOJ 46, in XZJ 127, 850a.
In addition, based on the Lengqie Sutra 楞伽經, Hanshan held that the One Mind was called Tathāgatagarbha; it is neither being nor non-being; it is separated from designation and sign as well as the duality of sages and ordinary persons, and does not belong to the dual categories of practice and attainment. Hanshan proposed that the doctrine of this sutra is a sudden teaching. Once one realizes that delusion is without self-nature, he immediately gains enlightened understanding of the concept of the unborn. Hanshan proposed that this sutra was the “mind seal” between the first and second patriarchs of the Chan tradition. Thus, this sutra was only for those endowed with superior capability. The Buddha, Hanshan held, taught it only after he had taught for more than forty years. Hanshan reiterated that this fact showed that Buddhism was not easy to teach and practice, and that enlightenment was not easy to attain. In short, Hanshan argued that the doctrine of One Mind was the highest teaching.

Hanshan also argued that the Lotus Sutra taught the doctrine of One Mind. He proposed that after the Buddha had shown the doctrine of One Mind in the Lengqie Sutra, he continued to teach the Lotus Sutra for the purpose of showing that all sentient beings were endowed with Buddha nature, by which he revealed the Reality of all dharmas and demonstrated the Ultimacy of Phenomenon (shi jiujing 事究竟), which was the cause and condition of the great matter (of birth and death) that caused the Buddha to manifest in this world. Only through the Ultimacy of Principle and Ultimacy of Phenomenon, Hanshan wrote, could one exhaust the utmost ultimacy of One Mind. Hanshan concluded, “Therefore the doctrines that were taught before the Lengqie Sutra were the teachings of

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182 MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 850b.
expedient means for the Three Vehicles; the *Lengqie Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra* were the real teachings for the One Vehicle."

As for the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, Hanshan proposed that the Buddha taught his last doctrine in this text, in which he clarified the meaning of Buddha Nature and undoubtedly confirmed that all sentient beings would eventually attain Buddhahood. Having accomplished that, the Buddha completed his teaching and entered *nirvāṇa*.\(^{183}\) However, Hanshan also argued that the teachings that were taught within the Buddha’s forty-nine years were all directed toward to the doctrine of One Mind.\(^{184}\) All in all, Hanshan regarded the doctrine of One Mind, namely Tathāgatagarbha, or Buddha Nature as the highest teaching. It is not surprising that he adopted the highest teaching of One Mind in his interpretation of the *Daodejing*.

The concept of One Mind prevails in Hanshan’s writings. For example, he wrote,

> The purport of Buddhism takes One Mind as principle. As a matter of fact, this Mind is originally perfect, illuminating, broad, without defilement, pure, and there is nothing in it. Within it, there is originally without [the terms of] confusion and enlightenment, birth and death, as well as sage and ordinary people. The sentient beings and the Buddha are endowed with the same substance; there is no difference and distinction [between them]. Thus, [Master] Damo 堪陀 came from the West and straightaway directed this original True Mind to serve as the principle of Chan.\(^{185}\)

Here, Hanshan proposed that the One Mind was originally perfect and pure; all the sentient beings and the Buddhas had the same substance of Mind, or True Mind.

Furthermore, he treated the Mind as the principle of the Chan tradition. Since Hanshan

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\(^{183}\) *MYQJ* 46, in *XZJ* 127, 851ab.

\(^{184}\) *MYQJ* 19, in *XZJ* 127, 486b.

\(^{185}\) *MYQJ* 10, in *XZJ* 127, 434b.
regarded the doctrine of One Mind as the highest teaching, he valued those sutras that were connected with the doctrine of One Mind. In addition, he commented on many texts that promoted the doctrine of One Mind, such as the Lengyan Sutra, the Lengqie Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, the Huayan Sutra, the Yuanjue Sutra 圓覺經, and the Awakening of Faith 大乘起信論.

The Lengyan Sutra is one of Hanshan’s favorite sutras; he often cited this sutra in his teaching and writing, including his Commentary on the Daodejing. He highly promoted this sutra, and wrote,

As for the Lengyan Sutra, it is the great gate that grasps altogether all [the doctrines of] all the Buddhas and Tathāgatas as well as the secret seal of [their] Mind. [It] totally includes the whole canon, the [teachings of] Five Periods and Three Vehicles, the true and false between sages and ordinary people, and cause and effect about the deluded and the enlightened. [It] includes all dharmas entirely. The differences between right and wrong of cultivation and realization as well as the condition of transmigration and delusion are presented as clearly as seeing fruit in one’s palm. It is fair to argue that there is no sutra that is better than this sutra in penetrating the origin of One Mind and including the utmost of the myriad things.  

From his words, we can see that Hanshan praises this sutra as excellent in promoting the doctrine of One Mind.

It is noteworthy that Hanshan not only appreciated the doctrine of One Mind, but also he adopted this concept to interpret different traditions, including the doctrines of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra as well as Confucianism and Daoism. Although Hanshan classified the Heart Sutra as the doctrine that promoted absolute emptiness, he also commented on the Heart Sutra based on the thought of Tathāgatagarbha. He proposed

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186 MYQJ 19, in XZJ 127, 479b.
that everyone was endowed with original wisdom and brightness. In his *Borexinjing zhishuo* 般若心經直說, he wrote, “If one can suddenly become enlightened the original wisdom and brightness of one’s Mind that are so broad and spirited . . . What kinds of suffering cannot be transcended?”187 Similarly, Hanshan argued that the purport of the *Diamond Sutra* was to discard doubt and develop faith. As for faith, Hanshan proposed that this sutra held that one has to develop the faith that each person’s Mind is the same as the Buddha’s.188 We can see that he interpreted the faith of the *Diamond Sutra* from the perspective of One Mind.

Once we recognize that the doctrine of One Mind was the core of Hanshan’s thought, it is not surprising that he adopted that concept to interpret the doctrine of Consciousness-only. In his *Baifamingmenlun lunyi* 百法明門論論義, Hanshan indeed argued that the doctrine of Consciousness-only must be based on the ultimacy of One Mind. For example, he argued that the original One Mind or True-thusness turned deluded and then became the Eight Consciousnesses.189

Hanshan also adopted the doctrine of One Mind to comment on the texts of Confucianism and Daoism. For instance, in his commentary on the *Great Learning*, he interpreted the key term “ming mingde 明明德” of this text as “to enlighten one’s substance of Mind” that was original brightness and broadness.190 In his preface to his interpretation of Zuo’s *Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*zuozhuan* 左傳), he argued that Zuo’s commentary clarified the cause and effect of the One Mind. He

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187 *Borexinjing zhishuo*, in *XZJ* 41, 843a.
188 *MYQJ* 19, in *XZJ* 127, 483ab.
189 *Baifamingmenlun lunyi*, in *XZJ* 76, 851ab.
190 *Daxue jueyi*, in *XZJ* 127, 810a.
proposed, "As for Mind, it is the principle of the myriad things. As for the myriad things, they are signs of Mind. As for birth and death, they are the changes of Mind. As for goodness and evil, they are the tracks of Mind. As for retribution and transmigration, they are the shadows and echoes of Mind." Here, Hanshan also mentioned the term "the shadows and echoes of Mind." Likewise, he adopted the concept of One Mind in his commentary on the *Mean*. He wrote,

As for zhong 中, it is the whole substance of each person’s original Nature. Based on this Nature, heaven and earth are established, and there is the Principle of the transformation of myriad things. Sages and ordinary people are all endowed with it, which is great, subtle, and absolutely One.\(^{192}\)

Since Hanshan argued that sages and ordinary were all endowed with this Nature, we can see that he interpreted it with the concept of One Mind. These examples all show Hanshan’s tendency of employing the doctrine of One Mind to interpret Confucianism.

Similarly, Hanshan also commented on the texts of Daoism with the doctrine of One Mind. Aside from his *Commentary on the Daodejing*, his commentary on the inner chapters of the *Zhuangzi* also shows the influence of the doctrine of One Mind. For example, he commented,

This [section] clarifies that the great Dao is formless, yet it is the root of heaven and earth as well as myriad things. Each person is endowed with this formless great Dao to have life, which is the Genuine Ruler (zhenzai 真宰). If one is enlightened to this great Dao, he penetrates through heaven and earth as well as myriad things. His body, mind, and the world are all melted and mixed as one

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\(^{191}\) *Chunqiu zuoshi xinfaxu*, in XZJ 127, 485b.

\(^{192}\) *Zhongyong zhizhi* 中庸直指, 461.
substance. If one is totally enlightened to this principle, he is called a “Great Master (dazongshi 大宗師).”

Although he used the terms “great Dao” and “Genuine Ruler” here, we can see the implication of the thought One Mind in that each person is endowed with great Dao or Genuine Ruler. It is sufficient to see how Hanshan employed the doctrine of One Mind to interpret different Chinese traditions.

**Expedient Means**

Under the structure of substance and function, Hanshan treated One Mind as substance, and expedient means as function. While he treated the doctrine of One Mind as the core of Buddhism, he highlighted the function of expedient means. The concept of expedient means is one of the most important guiding values of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is natural that Hanshan as a follower of Mahāyāna Buddhism emphasized the concept of expedient means in his interpretation. Hanshan said, “As for Buddhism, saving sentient beings is its main concern. If [one] does not lure them into the path by gradual expedient means, but immediately teaches them the great Dharma, it will conversely cause them to generate unexpected doubt and slander.” No surprisingly, Hanshan also treated Confucianism and Daoism as expedient means.

Hanshan proposed that Śākyamuni Buddha taught Buddhism step by step according to the capability of sentient beings. In an essay titled as *Huasheng yigui* 化生儀軌 (The
Hanshan presented his view of how the Buddha adopted expedient means to preach. He proposed that expedient means included various devices. He also emphasized that the Buddha did not teach the greater teaching immediately since sentient beings were too deluded to accept it at the beginning. All in all, it was unskillful and harmful to show them the great teaching without knowing their capability.

Hanshan argued that Buddhism was originally only One Vehicle. However, for the purpose of helping sentient beings, the Buddha divided it into three vehicles, namely, the Great, the Medium, and the Small Vehicles. For those whom could not even practice the Small Vehicle, the Buddha taught the Heavenly and Human Vehicles. Hanshan proposed that in the beginning the Buddha preached the Five Precepts and the Ten Goodnesses for the lay disciples to serve as the essential practices of the Heavenly and Human Vehicles. He urged his disciples to practice the Five Precepts and the Ten Goodnesses and not to slight them since they were the grounds of the higher practices. As for Buddhist monks, Hanshan argued that the Buddha established precepts for them in order to prevent them from wrongdoing; keeping precepts was an advantage to further practice. Hanshan proposed that a Buddhist monk should first follow the precepts; based on precepts, he could obtain concentration; based on concentration, he could realize wisdom.

Of the teachings of Buddhism, Hanshan proposed that the Buddha gave only the Small and Medium Vehicle teachings during the first twenty years after his enlightenment. Those teachings are categorized as doctrines of being (youjiao 有教). In that period, the

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197 *MYQJ* 46, in *XZJ* 127, 841a-853b.
198 *MYQJ* 46, in *XZJ* 127, 841a.
199 *MYQJ* 46, in *XZJ* 127, 846a-847b.
Buddha taught the Small Vehicle of the Four Noble Truths; moreover, he treated all dharmas as real, as if sufferings and defilement were real, and as if nirvāṇa really can be attained. For those few disciples with greater capability, the Buddha taught them the Medium Vehicle of the twelve-fold dependent-origination. In this period, the Buddha still did not dare teach the Bodhisattva path since the capability of his disciples was too low to accept that great teaching.200

After twenty years’ teaching, Hanshan held, the Buddha knew that some were able to understand the teaching of the Great Vehicle. He started to teach the Bodhisattva path, including the Six Perfections of giving, virtue, patience, vigor, concentration, and wisdom. The Buddha preached the Great Vehicle for twenty-two years, focusing on the doctrine of prajñā (wisdom) that promoted the comprehension of absolute emptiness in order to destroy attachment to the false view of being held by those of the earlier two Vehicles.201

Hanshan further argued that the Buddha’s intention for manifesting in this world was to help the sentient beings attain Buddhahood. Thus, the Buddha taught many kinds of practices to assist them. Hanshan proposed that the Dharmas taught by the Buddha could be summarized as three kinds of contemplation: namely contemplation of emptiness (kongguan 空觀), contemplation of the provisional (jiaguan 假觀), and contemplation of the middle path (zhongdaoguan 中道觀). Of the three kinds of contemplation, Hanshan held that the doctrine of prajñā taught the contemplation of emptiness; the purpose of this contemplation is to destroy attachment to the doctrines of two Vehicles.

200 MYQI 46, in XZJ 127, 847b-848b.
201 MYQI 46, in XZJ 127, 847b-849b.
However, Hanshan admitted that contemplation of emptiness was not easy to accept because the Buddha taught it only after he had taught for twenty years; even then, disciples attached to the doctrines of two Vehicles did not accept it.\textsuperscript{202}

The Buddha nevertheless continued to teach the contemplation of provisional, Hanshan argued, since there were disciples attached to emptiness and not willing to be involved in this world to benefit sentient beings. For them, the Buddha taught the doctrine of Yogācāra (i.e., “Consciousness-only”), in which he argued that all the dharmas were manifested by Consciousness and were nothing but provisional dharmas. Hanshan argued that the purpose of the doctrine of Yogācāra was to harmonize the doctrines of emptiness and being, and to induce the Bodhisattvas to become involved in this world in order to benefit sentient beings. Hanshan admitted that contemplation of the provisional was difficult; however, it showed that the Buddha carefully taught suitable expedient means to fit the varying needs of his disciples.\textsuperscript{203}

Addressing the fact that all teachings were composed in language, Hanshan argued that language was but an expedient means for helping others. Hence, one should not become stuck in language. Hanshan wrote, “Therefore, the Buddha’s teaching was originally without unnecessary words. He simply destroyed sentient beings’ attachment accordingly, which is the so-called “using a wedge to [push] out a wedge.” Originally, [he] did not give any real Dharma to people.”\textsuperscript{204} According to Hanshan, one should forget words when one obtained their meanings, yet ordinary people are attached to language; therefore, the Buddha employed language to destroy their attachment to it. Hanshan

\textsuperscript{202} MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 849a.

\textsuperscript{203} MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 849b.

\textsuperscript{204} GLYL, in XZJ 127, 825a.
realized that language was like a raft for the purpose of crossing a river and should be discarded after having crossed over. In addition, he proposed that for the purpose of helping others, language was necessary. While Hanshan clearly argued that the Dharma was originally distinct from language, however, for those attached to wrong views, language was inevitable.\textsuperscript{205}

In order to show the error of attachment to language, Hanshan promoted the argument of the Chan tradition that the Buddha did not preach one word in forty-nine years. Hanshan argued that although the canon contained all kinds of teachings, the purport of One Mind was separated from the signs of speaking and thinking. Nonetheless, some Buddhists remain attached to language. Thus, the Buddha revealed this wordless Chan to destroy the defect of attachment to language. For Hanshan, language was but a device for approaching reality, not the reality itself. He said, “Chan is separated from the sign of language and speech, and is separated from the sign of thinking,” which explicates that reality and language belong to two separate realms.\textsuperscript{206} According to Hanshan, since Chan was separated from words, one should not grasp words as Chan.

For the purpose of helping sentient beings, Hanshan valued the function of language in transmitting ideas and destroying attachment. Thus, he composed many commentaries and essays. Once, he was asked why he talked so much while the Chan tradition promoted the idea of “forgetting words.” He answered, “As for the matter of language, it is surplus for those who are enlightened, yet it is medicine for those who are deluded. When patients are numerous, one is only afraid that the medicine is not strong enough to

\textsuperscript{205} MYQJ 19, in XZJ 127, 480a.
\textsuperscript{206} MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 851b-852a.
cure [the disease]. When the deluded are many, one is only afraid that the word is not pertinent enough [to move them].\textsuperscript{207} Hanshan treated all the teachings and practices as expedient means. Just as various kinds of painkillers are all able to still pain, Hanshan proposed that each expedient means was helpful in removing the sufferings of sentient beings. He, thus, treated the various kinds of teachings with an inclusive attitude. Based on this concept, Hanshan held that all the teachings, including the Three Teachings and all the worldly learning, had the function of benefiting sentient beings. He strongly argued that a Bodhisattva should be skillful in worldly learning for the purpose of benefiting sentient beings.\textsuperscript{208}

Hanshan had a tendency to simplify teachings for easy understanding and to serve as an expedient means for his students. Although he was acquainted with the complex terms of Buddhism, he taught his disciples with easy concepts and terms. For example, he proposed that the Heart Sutra contained the main purports of the whole canon of Prajñā Sūtras; furthermore, he suggested that the phrase “intuit the five skandhas as emptiness” was the essence of the Heart Sutra. He further singled out the word “intuiting (zhao 照)” as the practice for beginners.\textsuperscript{209} In his Commentary on the Daodejing, he also emphasized the practice of contemplation (guan 觀).\textsuperscript{210} As a matter of fact, in his writings he seldom exhibits his knowledge of the complex doctrines of Yogācāra.

\textsuperscript{207} MYQJ 19, in XZJ 127, 486b.
\textsuperscript{208} MYQJ 45, in XZJ 127, 830b.
\textsuperscript{209} MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 848b-849a.
\textsuperscript{210} LDHZ, 52.
Emphasis on Practice and Enlightenment

Hanshan’s confidence on the thought of One Mind, I suggest, was bolstered by his enlightenment experience. In the descriptions of his enlightenment experiences, Hanshan mentions that he transcended both his body and mind, and resided in a realm of great illumination that was perfect, clear, and quiet.\(^1\) Since Hanshan defined enlightenment as “To see thoroughly that one’s Mind is originally perfect, bright, broad, clear, and there is nothing in it,”\(^2\) we can see that he connected his enlightenment experience of residing in a realm of great illumination that was perfect and clear with the doctrine of One Mind. It is not surprising that he highlighted the role of practice and the role of enlightenment in his commentaries.

While Hanshan argued that each person is originally endowed with Buddha Nature, he insisted that if one did not practice one could not attain Buddhahood.\(^3\) In the \textit{MYQJ}, there are 11 fascicle records of Hanshan’s \textit{fayu} (Dharma talks), containing many of Hanshan’s instructions on how to practice Buddhism based on his disciples’ questions. In most of his instructions, Hanshan emphasized practice and enlightenment. Furthermore, his \textit{fayu} also revealed his inclusive attitude to various practices. As a matter of fact, he promoted Chan and Pure Land as well as other practices such as sutra recitation, sutra copying, prostration to the Buddha for absolving guilt, and mantra recitation. Since each of his \textit{fayu} had a specific audience, it is fair to state that Hanshan’s instructions were given according to the disciple’s disposition and capability.

\(^1\) \textit{MYQJ} 53, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 955b; 961b.

\(^2\) \textit{MYQJ} 2, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 222b.

\(^3\) \textit{MYQJ} 22, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 527b.
Hanshan emphasized the importance of practice and enlightenment to all his disciples. However, he advised each disciple with different directions and details. For example, in one of his instructions, he comprehensively listed ten points of how to practice. First, according to Hanshan, a practitioner should penetrate the real nature of all situations of the phenomenal world and he should not be disturbed by illusory conditions. Second, he must aim at the great matter of birth and death with strong determination. Third, he must discard all his former wrong thoughts and views. Fourth, he should give up all concerns for his body and sickness. Fifth, he should establish right faiths and right views. Sixth, he should imitate the sincerity and truthfulness of the ancient masters. Seventh, in daily activities he must maintain right mindfulness. Eighth, he must keep his mindfulness straightforward, and should not let his mind wait for enlightenment. Ninth, he must be steadfast and should not be satisfied with small achievement. Tenth, in practice he should discard all his thoughts again and again until there is nothing left.\textsuperscript{214}

Conversely, Hanshan directed another disciple just to contemplate on the unendurable suffering of hell and urged him to practice vigorously; he did not provide detailed instructions in any other forms of practice.\textsuperscript{215}

Hanshan proposed that Buddhist monks should primarily follow the Buddhist precepts, since the Three Learnings of Buddhism (i.e., virtue, concentration and wisdom) were the foundation of attaining Buddhahood. Other than following the Buddhist precepts, they should at least recite Mahāyāna sutras or chant the Buddha’s name as daily practice. Hanshan proposed that only those who were endowed with superior capability could

\textsuperscript{214} MYQJ 5, in XZJ 127, 264a; Hsu, A Buddhist Leader, 123.

\textsuperscript{215} MYQJ 2, in XZJ 127, 227a-228a.
practice Chan since it was not easy to practice. As for those who practiced Chan, they
should focus only on one thought and should not search for other methods.\textsuperscript{216} Hanshan
observed many defects of the Chan tradition of his time. He was critical of the many
Buddhist monks wrongfully claiming that they had attained enlightenment, even though
they did not know how to practice Chan.

According to Hanshan’s observation, although Many Buddhist monks promoted
Chan as the best practice and urged others to practice it, most of them were self-deceiving
or misled. In addition, many of them easily endorsed their disciples’ enlightenment even
if their minds were still filled with delusion.\textsuperscript{217} In addition, Hanshan despised the Chan
practitioner’s defect of showing off one’s wit. All in all, he lamented that Buddhists in the
degenerate age could not practice wholeheartedly; most of them valued Chan yet slighted
the practice of Pure Land. However, they just repeated the words of the patriarchs and
were not really devoted to the practice of Chan. As for those who studied doctrine,
Hanshan criticized, they indulged in vain talk and did not even know what Chan was.\textsuperscript{218}
Knowing these defects, Hanshan urged his disciples to practice sincerely.

While Hanshan promoted the practice of Chan, he realized that many individuals
who pursued the Chan path were easily misled. Therefore he argued that for those who
were incapable of Chan it would be better for them to be devoted to the practice of Pure
Land.\textsuperscript{219} Hanshan advocated the practice of Pure Land since he regarded that it was good
for all people. He said, “As for the practice of Pure Land, it cultivates the samādhi of

\textsuperscript{216} MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 847ab.
\textsuperscript{217} MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 852b.
\textsuperscript{218} MYQJ 19, in XZJ 127, 491a.
\textsuperscript{219} MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 852b.
contemplating the Buddha. This practice also fit altogether the three kinds of capabilities as well as sudden and gradual [capabilities] perfectly. Moreover, it can be accomplished in one lifetime. No other practice surpasses this.\(^{220}\) Hanshan also proposed that the practice of Pure Land was the most safe and sound, faultless and broad, as well as the easiest. Hanshan even urged his disciples to practice Pure Land by pointing out that many Chan masters also practiced Pure Land after they attained enlightenment.\(^{221}\)

Hanshan’s view on the practice of the Pure Land reflected his inclusive attitude. While Hanshan realized that the practice of the Pure Land depended on the other-power of the vows of Amida Buddha, he still gave emphasis to the role of self-power, such as keeping the Buddha’s name in mind all the time. He said, “When this mindfulness [of the Buddha’s name] is skillful, the mind will not be interrupted by any conditions of circumstance. Whether eyes are open or closed, [one should] clearly grasp each recitation of Amida’s name. Using the sound of the Buddha’s name, [one should] wipe away all craving for worldly affairs, parents, wife, and children as well as deluded thoughts. Doing so, one’s mind will be purified.”\(^{222}\) Hanshan thus connected the practice of Pure Land with the purification of the mind. In addition, Hanshan promoted the concept of “Mind-only Pure Land (weixin jingtu 唯心淨土),” arguing that when the mind was purified the present land became pure, since the land was the manifestation of the One Mind. In short, the Pure Land was not obtained from outside.\(^{223}\) In addition, he advocated the practice of sixteen kinds of meditation preached in the Pure Land

\(^{220}\) MYQJ 19, in XZJ 127, 491a.
\(^{221}\) MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 844a.
\(^{222}\) MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 854a.
\(^{223}\) MYQJ 20, in XZJ 127, 492ab.
Meditation Sutra.\textsuperscript{224} Hanshan guaranteed that if one attained concentration by \textit{nianfo}, he would certainly be reborn in the Pure Land.\textsuperscript{225}

Hanshan had confidence on various Buddhist practices and the attainability of enlightenment. While Hanshan admitted that his time belonged to an age of degeneration, he did not follow the belief that the Pure Land practice was the only hope for people of the degenerate age as some masters of Pure Land tradition argued. He still advocated the practice of Chan and strove to revive the Chan tradition regardless of how the Chinese Chan tradition had declined. Based on his enlightenment experiences he was confident that enlightenment was still attainable in this life. Since Hanshan treated various practices as expedient means for helping sentient beings, he proposed that Chan, \textit{nianfo}, and various other practices were all medicines to cure the diseases of mind.\textsuperscript{226} He argued that the purpose of Chan was to enlighten one’s Mind: “Therefore, [Master] Damo came from the West (India) and did not establish words. [He] focused only on [how to] enlighten one’s Mind.”\textsuperscript{227} Hanshan highly appreciated Chan’s idea of “not establishing words, directing straight towards people’s Mind, and seeing its Nature to attain Buddhahood.”\textsuperscript{228} As a result, he often advised his disciples that for the purpose of transcending birth and death, one had to practice Chan wholeheartedly until he attained the enlightened Mind.\textsuperscript{229}

\textsuperscript{224} \textit{MYQJ} 9, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 325b; 342b; \textit{MYQJ} 10, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 345b.

\textsuperscript{225} \textit{MYQJ} 46, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 854b.

\textsuperscript{226} \textit{MYQJ} 5, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 267b.

\textsuperscript{227} \textit{MYQJ} 3, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 239b.

\textsuperscript{228} \textit{MYQJ} 46, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 852a.

\textsuperscript{229} \textit{MYQJ} 8, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 315b; \textit{MYQJ} 11, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 369a.
Aside from the two main practices of Chan and Pure Land, Hanshan also taught other methods to his disciples. For instance, he advised his disciple do prostrations to the Buddha, recite sutras, regret wrongdoing, and chant *mantra* privately in their minds. He argued that these practices were all helpful. Hanshan praised that *mantra* was the Buddha’s diamond seal of Mind that could destroy all obstacles. If one chanted *mantra*, he would eventually attain Buddhahood. In addition, Hanshan held many ceremonies of “universal deliverance rituals” (*puji daochang* 普濟道場) to relieve epidemic disease; these ceremonies also included the practice of chanting *mantra*. From the fact that he promoted various practices, it is fair to argue that he adopted inclusive attitude to practice.

It is noteworthy that Hanshan did not highlight the this-worldly benefits of Buddhist practice. He treated birth and death as the most important matter; he directed practice primarily to this matter. Since the main goal of practice is to transcend the suffering of birth and death, he recommended that a Buddhist monk should avoid close connections with ordinary people as well as worldly thinking. Hanshan advised a disciple, “For us, to detest worldly affairs is difficult, yet the most difficult thing is to detest birth and death.” Moreover, he proposed that if one still had a thought connected with this world he was still dwelling in the realm of birth and death; thus, one should get rid of all of the worldly attachment, delusion, and grasping.

However, for Hanshan this did not mean that a practitioner should be separated from this world. He often urged his disciples to practice in daily life. Although Hanshan

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230 MYQJ 2, in XZJ 127, 224b.
231 MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 966b.
232 MYQJ 2, in XZJ 127, 227a; MYQJ 8, in XZJ 127, 311a-313b.
retreated into the mountains to practice for more than ten years, he rejected many of his disciples' proposals for retreating into the mountains. While he valued the function of retreat, he realized that it had become an excuse for lazy monks. For example, he advised a disciple, saying,

As for the Dao, it does not reside in the mountain. However, if one intends to retreat into the mountain, he should first see the Dao. If he sees the mountain yet forgets the Dao, the mountain is then the root of obstacles. If he sees Dao yet forgets the mountain, there is nothing that he encounters is not the Dao. . . . The subtlety of Dao does not reside in escaping for oneself into the mountain, eating a lot, and sleeping in leisure time to increase laziness and arrogance. 233

His advice might be a therapeutic treatment for the tendency of making retreat an excuse for self-indulgence. Besides, Hanshan realized that not everyone was capable of retreat unless they were equipped with a clear idea of how to practice. Therefore, Hanshan advised that instead of taking retreats Buddhist monks should devote themselves to monastic duties and should not be lazy. He was critical of the fact that many young Chan practitioners of his time liked to sit and enjoy the servitude of others, yet they did not do anything for others and did not feel ashamed of it. Hanshan, thus, took many ancient Chan masters as examples to show his students how a real practitioner acts. He stated that these great Chan masters could endure any difficulty and put serving others above their own lives. 234

Hanshan also observed the defect that many Buddhist monks separated themselves from society. He strongly argued that Buddhism could not be separated from worldly dharmas and the human realm. He said, “The reason why the Buddha did not reside in a

233 MYQJ 3, in XZJ 127, 244ab.
234 MYQJ 7, in XZJ 127, 307a.
heavenly realm, yet was born in the human realm, was to correctly show that the characteristics of cause and effect of the Ten Realms are all established from the human path."\(^{235}\) He proposed that the root of ignorance that caused birth and death resided in every thought of the present moment; thus, one should be aware of every thought in daily life and should penetrate through the realm of one’s body and mind in the present.\(^{236}\)

While Hanshan appreciated the concept of non-duality, such as “\textit{sātisāra} is identical to \textit{nirvāṇa},” and “defilement is identical to enlightenment,” he argued that it was also an urgent task to transform defilement into enlightenment in daily life and in the present moment. He said, “If one neglects the present moment yet he searches for liberation in other places, he is either crazy or stupid.”\(^{237}\)

As a Mahāyāna Buddhist, Hanshan was not only concerned with his enlightenment, but also strove for the Mahāyāna goal of releasing sentient beings from the suffering of transmigration. After many years of retreat and self-cultivation, Hanshan turned to the practice of the Bodhisattva path. He said, “Although I am old and useless, I only regard benefiting sentient beings as my business,” and “I wish that each pore of my whole body could become [as great as] space and flow out of the four matters to benefit sentient beings.”\(^{238}\) There is no doubt that he practiced the Bodhisattva path and urged his disciples to practice the Bodhisattva path too.\(^{239}\)

\(^{235}\) \textit{GLYL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 823b.

\(^{236}\) \textit{MYQJ} 7, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 306a; \textit{MYQJ} 10, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 338b.

\(^{237}\) \textit{MYQJ} 15, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 427a.

\(^{238}\) \textit{MYQJ} 15, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 413b; 418b. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the four matters are giving, affectionate speech, conduct profitable to others, and cooperation with others to lead them into the truth.

\(^{239}\) \textit{MYQJ} 5, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 277a; \textit{MYQJ} 46, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 853a; \textit{MYQJ} 52, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 935a.
Tendency of Syncretism

Hanshan’s thought reveals the tendency of syncretism. While Hanshan proposed the syncretism of the Three Teachings, he also showed his tendency towards syncretism within Buddhist traditions. It is commonly known that the controversies among Buddhist traditions increased along with the development of Buddhism, such as the controversy between the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra traditions. In the late Ming, the controversy among Buddhist traditions was still intense. Hanshan observed that there were controversies between doctrinal studies and the Chan tradition, between the practices of Pure Land and Chan, and between the School of Nature (xingzong 性宗) and the School of Characteristics (xiangzong 相宗). Hanshan made the following observation:

However, recently those who study doctrines do not engage in the [practice of] enlightening the mind, yet they grasp at words and treat them as the ultimate. Those who practice Chan generally take blind practice as correct [practice], and severely denounce doctrinal studies.\(^\text{240}\)

Moreover, he wrote, “Those who are attached to doctrinal studies criticized those who practice Chan; those who are attached to Chan defamed those who studied doctrine.”\(^\text{241}\)

As for the controversy between the School of Nature and the School of Characteristics, Hanshan recognized that the controversy between these two schools had great endurance in the history of Buddhism.\(^\text{242}\) In addition, Hanshan observed that many Chan practitioners in his time slighted the practice of Pure Land as inferior.\(^\text{243}\) In short, there were various controversies among different Buddhist traditions.

\(^{240}\) MYQJ 19, in XZJ 127, 487a.

\(^{241}\) MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 852a.

\(^{242}\) MYQJ 25, in XZJ 127, 565b.

\(^{243}\) MYQJ 9, in XZJ 127, 330a; MYQJ 19, in XZJ 127, 491a.
Hanshan disliked these controversies and tried to bring harmony to them. He basically adopted the concepts of One Mind and expedient means to reduce these controversies. As with his syncretism of the Three Teachings, he treated all the teachings of the Buddha as expedient means for liberating sentient beings. According to him, all the teachings were but shadows and echoes of the One Mind. All in all, he valued the different Buddhist traditions and argued that although there were differences between sudden and gradual practices, their attainments would be the same.\(^{244}\)

Based on the concept of Mind-only, Hanshan argued that there was no dharma residing outside the realm of Mind-only. In other words, the myriad dharmas all return to One Mind. Thus, it is unnecessary to make distinctions between the School of Nature, the School of Characteristics, Chan tradition, and doctrinal studies.\(^{245}\) He proposed that the controversy between the Chan tradition and doctrinal studies, and between the School of Nature and the School of Characteristics, were due to their disciples’ not penetrating the basis of Mind-only and Consciousness-only.\(^{246}\) In other words, if one can enlighten the Mind, then there is no distinction between the various teachings and they are all recognized as expedient means. Here, Hanshan also highlighted the role of the enlightened Mind in solving controversy.

In order to harmonize different Buddhist traditions, Hanshan also promoted the doctrine of *The Awakening of Faith* (*Qixinlun* 起信論). He argued,

> [Master Maming 馬鳴] composed the *Qixinlun* to destroy wrong attachments. [He] greatly opened the gate of the Dharma Realm of the One Mind, by which

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\(^{244}\) *MYQJ* 19, in *XZJ* 127, 491a.

\(^{245}\) *MYQJ* 25, in *XZJ* 127, 566b.

\(^{246}\) *MYQJ* 25, in *XZJ* 127, 565b.
he merged the School of Nature and the School of Characteristics into one origin and led the three Vehicles to grasp the ultimate [truth] . . . As for this text, it is the compass of Chan and of doctrinal studies, and the bright mirror of One Mind.

Here, Hanshan clearly pointed out that Master Maming built on the doctrine of One Mind in order to reconcile the different Buddhist traditions. Although the authorship of *The Awakening of Faith* remains unknown, there is no doubt that this text played a crucial role in the development of Eastern Asian Buddhism. *The Awakening of Faith* is a creative reconstruction of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought. Since this text contains rich meanings, such as non-duality, ontology, cosmology, soteriology, pedagogy, psychology, karma-effects, cultivation, and morality, as well as most of the thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism, it was widely adopted by Chinese Buddhist traditions, including Huayan, Tiantai, Chan, and Pure Land traditions. Since *The Awakening of Faith* has an inclusive tendency towards the skillful combination of the doctrines of Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha, it is not surprising that Hanshan adopted this text as a doctrinal proof for his syncretic view.

Hanshan also praised that Yanshou 延壽 composed the *Zongjinglu 宗鏡錄* by taking One Mind as the basic principle to reflect the myriad dharmas as a mirror, by which he removed the boundaries between different sects as well as revealed the subtle purport of the One Mind. Hanshan argued that the teaching of each school manifested the subtlety of Mind. He proposed that they were but medicines for curing the diseases of

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247 *MYQJ* 19, in *XZJ* 127, 487a.

Mind, not real dharmas. Nonetheless, Hanshan proposed, the followers of these traditions were attached to the written words; they did not realize the purport of Mind, and they criticized each other.\textsuperscript{249} Again, Hanshan treated all the teachings as expedient means and the manifestation of One Mind.

Based on the concept of One Mind, Hanshan held that Chan was identical to doctrinal studies; doctrinal studies were the foundation of Chan. He wrote,

\begin{quote}
The Buddha and patriarchs are \textit{the same in} One Mind; Chan is identical to doctrinal studies. Although Chan is a special transmission outside of doctrinal studies, it is not that outside the Mind there is a Dharma that could be transmitted. It (Chan) just urges people to discard language and words in order to become enlightened to the purport beyond language. Nowadays, those who practice Chan always criticize doctrinal studies. They do not understand that doctrinal studies explicate \textit{the purport of} One Mind, which is the foundation of Chan.\textsuperscript{250}
\end{quote}

Hanshan also advised his own disciple, and wrote,

\begin{quote}
If you do not realize your own Mind, Chan becomes evil knowledge and defilement; all of \textit{your knowledge} reside in the cave of affective consciousness. In addition, doctrinal studies are also wrong understanding and viewpoints; all of them become the objects of talking, not the ultimate truth. Do you not know that doctrinal studies are the Buddha’s eyes and Chan is the Buddha’s Mind?\textsuperscript{251}
\end{quote}

From his words, we know that Hanshan emphasized the role of the enlightened Mind. In addition, he adopted an inclusive attitude towards various Buddhist traditions. For instance, Hanshan argued that doctrinal studies were essential for practice, as he wrote,

\textsuperscript{249} \textit{MYQJ} 25, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 566ab.
\textsuperscript{250} \textit{MYQJ} 6, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 287ab.
\textsuperscript{251} \textit{MYQJ} 12, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 368b.
“If one neglects doctrinal studies yet tries to practice, it is like discarding one’s compass and square to search for round and square.”

Hanshan also promoted the sameness of the practices of Chan and Pure Land. He argued,

If one chanted the Buddha’s name so as to attain the concentration of mind, he discarded his defilement and clearly realized his Mind, which is called enlightenment. Likewise, chanting the Buddha’s name is identical to practicing Chan. As for Bodhisattvas, they do not give up chanting the Buddha’s name after their enlightenment. Therefore, the former patriarchs did not give up the practice of Pure Land. Likewise, chanting the Buddha’s name is identical to the practice of Chan, and through the practice of Chan one will be reborn in the Pure Land.

Hence, Hanshan’s view on the practice of Pure Land was mostly based on self-power and on the cases that many Chan masters advocated the practice of Pure Land. In short, Hanshan advocated the unity of the practices of Chan and Pure Land.

To serve as a background of understanding Hanshan’s syncretic character and his interpretation of the *Daodejing*, this chapter investigates factors of Hanshan’s life and thought. We can see that Hanshan’s life and thought revealed syncretic character and his Buddhist position. Not surprisingly, these factors also have an impact on his interpretation of the Three Teachings and the *Daodejing*. Since Hanshan’s syncretic view and his interpretation of the *Daodejing*, I propose, could be regarded as his responses to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism, the next chapter provides a brief discussion of the intellectual context of Hanshan’s time.

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252 MYQJ 8, in XZJ 127, 318a.
253 MYQJ 9, in XZJ 127, 330a.
CHAPTER 3
INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT AND THE RESPONSES OF THE FOUR GREAT MASTERS OF LATE MING BUDDHISM

This chapter first compares the cases of Hanshan and Yinshun for the purpose of showing the impact of intellectual context on different individuals. Then, I briefly introduce the intellectual context of late Ming and some salient features of late Ming Buddhism. I propose that when the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism, namely Yunqi Zhuhong, Zibo Zhenke, Hanshan Deqing, and Ouyi Zhixu faced the dominant Neo-Confucianism and the declined status of Buddhism, they reacted to these situations differently. In order to show the multiplicity of their viewpoints, I discuss their views on the defects of Chinese Buddhism, and their efforts to revive Buddhism. In addition, since views on the Three Teachings and the concept of One Mind are relevant to Hanshan’s syncretic view and his interpretation of the Daodejing, I also provide their viewpoints on these subjects to show the multiplicity of their perspectives.

The Cases of Hanshan and Yinshun

There is no doubt that intellectual context plays a role in shaping an individual’s thought. In order to show the impact of intellectual context on different individuals, first I would like to compare the cases of Hanshan and Yinshun. Because they lived in two different intellectual contexts, the gap between them is helpful to clarify the impact of intellectual context on them. Yinshun, one of the most influential Chinese Buddhist thinkers of the twentieth century, lived in a quite different intellectual context from
Hanshan’s. Since Yinshun grew up in an age of revolution, Yinshun’s thought obviously reflected the influence of this revolutionary trend.

Like the other revolutionaries of his time, Yinshun also criticized the defects of Chinese Buddhism, though he did not entirely oppose Chinese Buddhism. Instead, he advocated returning to original Indian Buddhism and primitive Mahāyāna Buddhism. As a result of his efforts, Yinshun provided modern Chinese Buddhism a revolutionary direction.254 Yinshun also benefited from modern research of Western and Japanese Buddhist studies, which provided him with new perspectives from which to view Chinese Buddhism. It is quite possible that if Yinshun were born in Hanshan’s time, he could not have proposed this kind of thinking. We may also ask if Hanshan were born in Yinshun’s time, would the revolutionary trend have a similar impact on him?

Two of Yinshun’s main principles are “returning to the original Buddhism” and “the Buddhism in human realm (renjian fojiao 人間佛教).”255 Yinshun strongly promoted the concept of returning to the original Indian Buddhism. He argued that Chinese Buddhism is not the original Buddhism, because it has been assimilated to Chinese culture and has lost its essence. Although many of his Buddhist contemporaries did not approve of his argument, his thought represented a revolutionary trend in modern Chinese Buddhism.

Compared with Hanshan, Yinshun did not advocate the syncretism of the Three Teachings while Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude toward the Three Teachings.

Yinshun was quite probably influenced by the revolutionary trend of the May Fourth Movement in early twentieth century China, which advocated the idea of discarding all Chinese traditional thought and promoting the concept of Western democracy and science. As a matter of fact, Yinshun pursued the revolution of Chinese Buddhism by advocating the idea of recovering the origin of Buddhism. Since Hanshan did not receive the impact of revolutionary trend as Yinshun did, Hanshan's thought lacked the taste of revolution. While Yinshun was clearly aware that Chinese Buddhism was different from the original Buddhism, Hanshan did not recognize that Chinese Buddhism had deviated from Indian Buddhism since he lacked the information of modern Buddhist studies. Hanshan tended to regard all the Chinese Buddhism as the Buddha's teachings.

Like most of the late Ming Buddhist monks, Hanshan advocated Mahāyāna Buddhism and treated the doctrine of Tathāgatagarbha as the Buddha's highest teaching, which also constituted the core of his thought. Nonetheless, although Yinshun is also a Mahāyānist, he proposes that the doctrine of Madhyamika is in accord with the Buddha's intention. He does not treat the doctrine of Tathāgatagarbha as the Buddha's highest teaching. On the contrary, he regards them as expedient means and the result of the development of Buddhism. While Yinshun argues that "dependent origination" is the core of Buddhism, Hanshan regarded the thought of "original enlightenment" as the highest. All in all, Yinshun's thought reveals the tendency of revolution and the influence of modern Buddhist studies; he dares to challenge Chinese traditions. On the contrary, Hanshan adopted inclusive attitude and valued all the Buddhist traditions and the other Chinese traditions.

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256 Yang Huinan, "'Renjian,'" 482-485.
While Hanshan and Yinshun possessed different tendencies, it is interesting to note that Hanshan and Yinshun both emphasized practice in the human realm. As mentioned above, Yinshun greatly advocates the thought of “Buddhism in the human realm.” However, his thought was inspired by his master Taixu 太虛, one of the most influential Buddhist masters of the early twentieth century. Taixu observed that most Chinese Buddhists only dealt with the affairs of dead persons; the Buddhism of his time gave less concern to human society, and instead retreated to the mountains. Taixu criticized this kind of Buddhism as “forest Buddhism (shanlin fojiao 山林佛教).” Thus, he advocated the movement of “rensheng fojiao 人生佛教 (Buddhism in human life)” and urged Buddhists to become involved in social activity and be concerned with living human beings.\(^{257}\) As a follower of Taixu, Yinshun corrected some directions of the movement of “rensheng fojiao” and promoted the so-called “renjian fojiao 人間佛教 (Buddhism in the human realm).”\(^{258}\) He highly promotes the position that the human realm is the best place to practice Buddhism.

Many scholars give the credit of the prosperity of Chinese Buddhism in recent Taiwan to Taixu and Yinshun. However, it is fair to argue that Hanshan had already proposed a similar observation in the seventeenth century, though he was not successful in executing his idea. In *GLYL*, Hanshan proposed that the human path was the ground of Buddhism, as he said, “Buddhism takes the human path as base; the human path takes Buddhism as the ultimate.”\(^{259}\) Hanshan did not approve of his disciples to retreating to


\(^{258}\) See Yinshun, *Fo zai renjian* 佛在人間 (Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe, 1992), 99-126; Yang Huinan, ““Renjian,” 486.

\(^{259}\) *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 823a.
the mountain; in most cases, he advised them to practice in daily life. Although it is not certain whether Taixu and Yinshun were influenced directly by Hanshan or not, it is clear that Hanshan proposed, though did not popularize, a similar observation earlier than they did.

Yinshun and Hanshan’s attitudes concerning Chinese culture also demonstrate their varying and subjective viewpoints. While Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude to Chinese traditions, Yinshun adopted an exclusive one. As shown above, Yinshun tried to exclude Chinese influence from Buddhism, yet Hanshan strove to reconcile the Three Teachings with inclusive attitude. While selection of an inclusive or exclusive viewpoint is a subjective matter, the intellectual context plays some role in forming an individual’s attitude. For example, when Chinese culture was severely criticized in the early twentieth century, Yinshun probably felt comfortable not to include Chinese culture in his thought. Nonetheless, since Hanshan lived in a world that Neo-Confucianism dominated, it seems that Hanshan’s best choice was to reconcile with it.

The Intellectual Context of Late Ming

In order to understand Hanshan’s syncretic view and his interpretation of the *Daodejing* better, a brief introduction of the intellectual context of the late Ming is necessary. Differing from the former standard view that late Ming China was static or stagnant, Wm. Theodore De Bary has suggested that the late Ming period witnessed not only great social and political changes, but also intellectual ferment and religious renewal. According to him, late Ming intellectual circles exhibited both pragmatic and utilitarian

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260 See Yinshun, *Yi fo fa yanjiu fofa* 以佛法研究佛法 (Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe, 1992), 1. Yinshun does not approve the argument of adopting worldly learning to interpret Buddhism.
tendencies, as well as the power of critical skepticism and an openness to new experience. The common intellectual characteristic of this period was an emphasis on personal experience, inwardness, free expression, and practicality. These trends stimulated intellects with the attitude of reform, self-cultivation, and open-mindedness.

In addition, there was also a current of free interpretation of the Classics and the Four Books. In this period, many thinkers presented diverse views concerning culture, social, and political problems. Various intellectual trends coexisted in late Ming times. As a counteraction to Neo-Confucianism, “Evidential research” also emerged during this period. It is likely that, as suggested by Yu Ying-shih, the Chinese mind was probably at a crossroads in the late Ming. It is fair to say that the late Ming intellectual climate was full of vitality, creativity, and liberalism. Living in this environment, it is possible that Hanshan was influenced by the intellectual climate of this period.

Owing to the liberalism of the late Ming, members of each Chinese tradition and school showed variety of thought. For example, Jiao Hong (1540-1620) belonged to the Taizhou School, the left wing of the Wang Yangming (1472-1528) School that emphasized the realization of one’s mind inwardly, yet he also contributed to the development of “evidential research” that is objective in nature. Wang Ji (1498-1583), a leading member of the same school, was sympathetic to both Buddhism and Daoism and advocated the syncretism of the Three Teachings. Yet Wang Gen

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262 See Araki Kengo, “Confucianism and Buddhism,” 53.

263 See Yu Ying-shih, “Chiao Hung Revisited,” 49.

(1483-1540), the founder of this school, was not an advocate of syncretism but a radical anti-Buddhist.265

During the Ming dynasty, Neo-Confucianism was still the dominant thought. I propose that Hanshan had to deal with the dominant Neo-Confucianism. Thus, a brief introduction of Neo-Confucianism of this period is inevitable. Within Neo-Confucianism, the Cheng-Zhu School was still influential, though the dominant intellectual trend of the Ming dynasty shifted to the Mind Learning (xinxue 心學) of Wang Yangming.266 Wang Yangming’s main argument was that the Way of the sages was endowed in our nature. He did not agree with Zhu Xi’s doctrine of seeking Principle in matter. Instead, he promoted the concept of “reaching innate knowledge (zhi liangzhi 致良知).”267 For him, the innate knowledge is “The nature of Heaven’s mandate and the original substance of our Mind that is naturally illuminating and awake.”268 He proposed that the reason why we could not reach the innate knowledge was because the Mind was covered by selfish desires. When one removed the selfish desires, he could return to the original mind. Although his theory was very close to the Buddhist concept of Mind, Wang Yangming

265 See Yü “Chiao Hung Revisited,” 34-35; Feng Youlan, Zhongguo zhexueshi 中國哲學史 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu, 1993), 969-972.

266 A detailed study concerning Wang’s Mind Learning and Cheng-Zhu’s Principle Learning (lixue 理學) in this period, see Araki Kengo, Minmatsu shūkō shisō kénkyū 明末宗教思想研究 (Tokyo: Sō Bunsha, 1979), 1-28.

267 See Feng, Zhongguo zhexueshi, 945-948. The term zhi liangzhi has various translations. For example, Chan Wing-tsit translated it as “the extension of innate knowledge,” see his “How Buddhistic is Wang Yang-ming?” Philosophy East and West 12 (1962): 204.

still criticized Buddhism as "selfish and employing cleverness" and escaping from human responsibilities.\textsuperscript{269}

As a matter of fact, Buddhism had been criticized by Neo-Confucians from the Song until the late Ming. Although Buddhism influenced the formation of Neo-Confucianism, Neo-Confucians adopted a position of highly self-conscious opposition to Buddhism.\textsuperscript{270} It is a well-known fact that the Song Neo-Confucians criticized Buddhism severely.\textsuperscript{271} Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) was a famous representative of this position. In his \textit{Jinsi lu} 近思錄, Zhu Xi wrote, "Cheng Hao 程颢 (1032-1085) said, 'The harm of Yang Zhu 杨朱 and Mo Di 墨翟 is greater than that of Shenz子 and Hanzi 韩子, and the harm of the Buddha and Laozi is greater than that of Yang and Mo."\textsuperscript{272} Influenced by Zhu Xi, the orthodoxy of Neo-Confucians had always considered Buddhism to be among the worst of all heterodoxies.

While Cheng Yi 程颐 (1033-1107) criticized Buddhism mostly from moral and social viewpoints, Song Neo-Confucians also criticized Buddhist metaphysics, as Zhu Xi said, "The Buddhists do not understand \textit{yin} and \textit{yang}, day and night, life and death, or past and present. How can it be said that their metaphysics is the same as that of the Sage?"\textsuperscript{273} He also cited Zhang Zai’s 张载 (1020-1077) words,

\textsuperscript{269} See Feng, \textit{Zhongguo zhexueshi}, 952-959.
\textsuperscript{270} See Koichi Shinohara, "Buddhism and Confucianism in Ch’i-sung’s Essay on Teaching (Yuan-tao)," \textit{Journal of Chinese Philosophy} 9 (1982): 401.
The Buddhists have false ideas about our Heaven-endowed Nature and do not know how to shape and bring into completion the functioning of Heaven. On the contrary, they regard such small things as the Six Sense Organs to be the causes of the universe. They cannot thoroughly understand these things, and consequently falsely assert that heaven, earth, the sun and the moon are illusory and false. . . . Can they be said to have investigated Principle to the utmost? . . . Can they be said to have fully developed their Nature?^274

Zhu Xi condemned Buddhist ideas of Emptiness and criticized Buddhists for mistaking mind for “Nature (xing 性).” Instead, he promoted the theory of “Principle (li 理)”. Zhu Xi stated, “With us Confucians, although the mind is vacuous, Principle is real. The Buddhists, on the other hand, go straight to their destination of Emptiness and Void.”^275

Owing to the dominance of Neo-Confucianism, after the Song dynasty Buddhism had been continuously regarded as heretical. In late Ming times, Buddhism was still regarded as heretical by most Neo-Confucians. Although the dominant Yangming School did not adopt such a severe attitude of anti-Buddhism as the Cheng-Zhu School did, many members of this school still criticized Buddhism. Moreover, in late Ming times, Zhu Xi’s commentaries on the Four Books and Five Classics were the official assigned textbooks for civil service examinations.^276 Candidates for the civil service examination had to memorize these standard commentaries. It is plausible that most of them were influenced by Zhu Xi’s anti-Buddhist attitude and formed a hostile atmosphere towards Buddhism. Only a small number of the intellectuals eventually converted to Buddhism or felt sympathy to Buddhism. Although we can find some arguments for syncretism in the


Confucianism of this period, most of these arguments belonged to those who showed less interest in a bureaucratic career or who did not belong to the mainstream of Neo-Confucianism. It is fair to argue that the anti-Buddhist attitude was still quite dominant in the late Ming.

According to the observation of another anti-Buddhist, Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695), Ming Buddhism was under severe and thorough attack. Huang proposed that Ming scholars made great progress in the philosophy of Principle, and in pointing out the wrong views of Buddhism. He wrote,

> It is often said that in literary and practical accomplishments the Ming did not measure up to former dynasties. Yet in the philosophy of Principle it attained what other dynasties had not. In everything Ming scholars made the finest of distinctions and classifications, as if they were sorting the hairs on an oxen or picking silk threads from a cocoon. They thereby discovered what other scholars had failed to discover. Though the Chens and Zhu Xi spent many words in refuting the Buddhists, they never got beneath the surface. They failed to point out Buddhism's specious reasoning and confounding of truth. But Ming scholars were so precise in their analysis that the Buddhists were completely exposed and trapped.\(^{277}\)

In addition to the criticism of Neo-Confucians, Buddhism had indeed declined and was in a subordinate position in the Ming dynasty due to other forces. Political power played a role in the decline of Buddhism. Since Ming Taizu was suspicious of any elements of religion, he employed tight control over religious activity in order to prevent uprising and rebellion. The Ming government also adopted Confucian ideology to govern the state for the purpose of maintaining social unity and order. An imperial edict even ordered that monks and nuns of any religion must not transgress Confucian customs such

as worshiping ancestors, paying respect to parents, and performing mourning. Under these conditions, Buddhist monks had to be careful not to offend the imperial order and Confucian norms. Moreover, in the Jiajing 嘉靖 period (1521-1566), the emperor favored Daoism and suppressed Buddhism. Buddhism was in a very weak situation in this period.\(^{278}\)

From the beginning of the Ming dynasty, political power had shaped the development of Buddhism. Emperor Hongwu divided Buddhist monks into three categories namely, Chan 禪 (meditation), jiang 講 (preaching), and jiao 敎 (ceremony). He replaced the Vinaya category of the former dynasty’s system with the jiao category in his system, and regulated government positions to govern Buddhist activities in every aspect. Without Vinaya-based monasticism, the Ming Buddhist monks gradually came to ignore the Buddhist precepts. In late Ming times, according to many records of this period, the Buddhist precepts were neglected in most Buddhist monasteries. Furthermore, only the ceremony monks (yuqieseng 瑜伽僧) were allowed to have contact with ordinary people and to perform religious ceremonies. People obtained their impression of Buddhism mostly from their contact with the ceremony monks, who generally did not follow the Buddhist precepts, but paid more attention to commercial benefit.\(^{279}\) Facing this circumstance, I propose that the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism were all concerned to meet this challenge; however they responded differently.

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\(^{278}\) See Shi Shengyan, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao*, 27.

The Responses of the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism

As Araki Kengo has suggested, there was a revival of Buddhism in late Ming times. Since the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism played key roles in the new Buddhist movement of late Ming, this section investigates how they responded to challenge of Buddhism and revived Chinese Buddhism. A detailed discussion of the revival of late Ming Buddhism is not the topic of this study; this section just investigates the revival of late Ming Buddhism through the viewpoints of the Four Great Masters. The Four Great Masters all reacted to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism from their concerns and perspectives. As a result, they not only contributed to the Buddhist revival in the late Ming, but also influenced the direction of later Buddhism. Even though they influenced late Ming Buddhism, it is true that they are not sufficient to represent the whole of late Ming Buddhism. However, since they were prolific, their works provide valuable materials for the exploration of their thought and their views concerning late Ming Buddhism. Through the analysis of their works, I intend to demonstrate some features of late Ming Buddhism through the multiplicity of their viewpoints.

Since Chinese Buddhism had been mixed with Confucianism and Daoism prior to the Ming dynasty, some scholars have argued that Ming Buddhism had lost its earlier purity and intellectual vitality. However, other scholars challenge this viewpoint. As Hsu Sung-peng suggested, it might be a better way to treat it as a new type of Buddhism and

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280 See Araki, “Confucianism and Buddhism,” 54.

281 For a study of the development of the Late Ming Buddhism, see Shi Jianye, “Mingmo fozjiaofazhanzhiyanjui—yiwanming sidashi weizhongxin 明末佛教發展之研究——以晚明四大師為中心” (Ph.D. dissertation, Zhongzheng University 1997.)
the late Ming as a time of vitality and diversity. Hsu’s argument is convincing to me, since the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism present a multiplicity of viewpoints. In this section, in order to demonstrate that they responded differently I will further explore their viewpoints.

As mentioned above, the late Ming was a period of intellectual ferment. Similarly, late Ming Buddhism was much more productive and creative than before. Late Ming times witnessed an upsurge in the writing and publishing of Buddhist literature. The volume of Buddhist works of this period was much larger than that of other periods. In the case of the Chan tradition’s “Lamb Record,” 50 texts in 386 fascicles were composed during this period. In addition, many works of the thought of Pure Land, Consciousness-only, and commentaries about different Buddhist sutras were published. Both Buddhist monks and lay disciples contributed to the prosperity of Buddhist thought.

Among the publication of Buddhist literature, I suggest, the works of the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism are essential in understanding late Ming Buddhism. Other than their comments on Buddhism, their writings contain their correspondences with contemporary celebrities, the elite, and officials, which reveal their reactions to the late Ming intellectual climate. Thanks to the success of the publishing industry of the Ming dynasty, most of their works were published and are extant. These documents

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284 For example, The collections of Hanshan and Zibo owed much to the effort of Qian Qianyi; see Lian, “Qian qianyi,” 364.
285 For a detailed study of the publication of the late Ming Buddhism, see Shi Shengyan, *Mingmo fojiao yanjiu*. 
provide valuable sources to investigate their thoughts and their reactions to the intellectual climate of the late Ming.

Despite the declining status of Buddhism in late Ming times, the Four Great Masters chose Buddhism as their faith, and insisted that Buddhism was the highest teaching. Based on their dedication to Buddhism, they fought for the revival of Buddhism. Each of the Four Great Masters set his sights on the problems of Buddhism first. They all sensed the crisis of Buddhism, and tried to reform Buddhism. However, in the Neo-Confucian dominated environment, they had to reconcile with the mainstream and deal with the contradiction between Buddhism and other Chinese traditions. By analyzing their views, we can understand, in brief, the challenge of Buddhism and how they reacted to the intellectual climate.

Hanshan, Zhuhong, and Zibo were active in the Wanli period (1573-1620), and thus are known as the “Three Buddhist Masters of Wanli period.” Since the empress dowager of the Wanli reign was a devoted Buddhist, her support and honor to Buddhist monks, including Zhuhong, Hanshan and Zibo, was helpful in the promotion of Buddhist status and the prosperity of the late Ming Buddhism. Born in the next generation, Zhixu was able to become the synthesizer of Late Ming Buddhism. As a synthesizer, Zhixu praised Zhuhong, Zibo, and Hanshan; he promoted them to an exalted position. For example, he listed them as the last three patriarchs of 18 patriarchs in his select version of

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287 See Lian, “Qian qianyi,” 359.
the transmission of Buddhism, beginning with Mahākāsyapa and ending with Hanshan.\footnote{LFZL 9-4, in DZJBB, 803-808.}

Not surprisingly, as a synthesizer Zhixu also tried to connect himself with these three Buddhist Masters. He was fifty-three years younger than Hanshan, yet he still had the opportunity to correspond with Hanshan about his intention of becoming a Buddhist monk. Owing to the great distance, he could not go to Hanshan’s monastery. Thus, he became a Buddhist monk under one of Hanshan’s disciples. As for Zhuhong, Zhixu said that he converted to Buddhism after he read Zhuhong’s two works, namely the “Record of self-knowledge (zizhilu 自知錄)” and the “Essay by the Bamboo window (zuchuang suibi 竹窗隨筆).” Furthermore, after Zhixu became a Buddhist monk, he visited the Yunqi 雲棲 monastery where Zhuhong lived, and received the Bodhisattva precepts before a picture of Zhuhong. By this, Zhixu built a tie with Zhuhong, though this initiation was not directly derived from the latter. Among the Three Buddhist Masters of Wanli period, Zhixu appreciated Zibo most, though they never met.\footnote{LFZL 6-3, in DZJBB 23, 691.}

It is also noteworthy that Hanshan had connections with the other three Great Buddhist Masters of the late Ming. He and Zibo were close friends, and they admired each other. After Hanshan was exiled, Zibo strove to save him and said, “If Hanshan does not return, this matter will be a great burden to me as a Buddhist monk.”\footnote{ZBZB, in XZJ 127, 146b.} As for Zhuhong, he visited Hanshan in the Wutai Mountains once, and they had many correspondences later. Hanshan lived longer than these two friends did. Thus, he wrote inscriptions, hymns, and biographies for them. As for Zhixu, although he never met
Hanshan, Zhixu corresponded with him by mail. Eventually, Zhixu was ordained by Hanshan’s disciple Xueling 雪嶺.

In accordance with the intellectual trend of the late Ming, the Four Great Masters emphasized personal experience. Particularly, the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism all had enlightenment experience. In addition, their deathbed behavior provided solid proof for their achievements in Buddhist practice. I suggest that their enlightenment experience and deathbed behavior enhanced their disciples’ faith in Buddhism as well as the authentication of their works. Because of their outstanding achievements in practice, their works were valued by Buddhists of later generations too. Since Chinese people value the achievement of enlightenment, it is fair to argue that their achievement in practice was one of the main reasons that they were respected. While these events are essential to their lives and achievements, I provide a detailed discussion of them.

Enlightenment is the final goal for a Buddhist practitioner; it also serves as authority to teach others. Hence, there have been many claims of enlightenment in the history of Buddhism, particularly in the literature of Chinese Chan tradition. The Four Great Masters all practiced Chan and had enlightenment experiences. As a result, they became spiritual models for many Chinese Buddhists. Among the Four Great Buddhist Masters, Hanshan, Zibo, and Zhixu were confident in their achievement of enlightenment, only Zhuhong was humble about it.

Zhuhong did not describe his enlightenment in his works. However, according to Hanshan’s inscription for Zhuhong, Zhuhong attained enlightenment suddenly on his way to Dongchang 東昌; then he wrote a verse to show it:
Twenty years ago this thing might be doubtful
When I encounter it three thousand li away, how marvelous is it
Burning incense and throwing halberd are all like dream
Māra and Buddha argue the right and the wrong in vain.
二十年前事可疑 三千里外遇何奇 樑香戰戟渾如夢 魔佛空爭是與非²⁹¹

While Zhuhong did not describe his enlightenment experience, Hanshan described many of his enlightenment experiences in his autobiography in detail. He also held that his enlightenment improved many of his abilities and understandings.²⁹² As for Zibo, according to Hanshan’s description, one day, Zibo heard, by chance, the verse “Cutting off the delusion will strengthen the sickness, directing to the True-thusness is wrong too.” At that moment, he had great doubt about it. Thereafter, he was so concentrated on this doubt that his head and face became swollen. He kept this doubt for more than a year. One day after a meal he suddenly became enlightened, and the swelling of his head and face disappeared immediately. Hanshan praised Zibo saying that after he had become enlightened he surpassed all other people.²⁹³

Zhixu’s enlightenment experience occurred in his twentieth year. According to his words, when he was twenty, one day when he commented on the Analects, he had doubt about the sentence “Under the Heaven all return to ren (tianxia gui ren 天下歸仁).” He was so absorbed as to forget sleep and eating for three days. Afterward, he suddenly realized the essence of the thought of Confucius and Yan Hui. He claimed that he had the experience that ren (benevolence) is identical to the substance of Mind.²⁹⁴ Zhixu

²⁹¹ See YQFH, in DZJBB 23, 98; Translation taken with modifications from Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism, 18.
²⁹² A detailed description of Hanshan’s enlightenment experience, see Chapter 2.
²⁹³ ZBZQ, in XZJ 126, 627b.
²⁹⁴ Onyi dashi nianpu, in DZJBB 23, 425.
proposed that Wang Yangming was one who directly received the transmission of Confucius and Yan Hui's teachings; he believed that his enlightenment was the same as that of Wang Yangming. Nonetheless, Yangming's enlightenment was more powerful and broader than his own because Yangming's enlightenment was attained from real circumstance, while his enlightenment was only from studying.²⁹⁵

In his twenty-fifth year, Zhixu had another enlightenment experience. during that summer he practiced Chan in the Jingshan 鶴山 monastery. He practiced wholeheartedly, and experienced the sudden disappearance of body and mind. By this he realized that the body was but the shadow manifested by stubborn delusion. Then he penetrated through both the School of Nature (xingzong 性宗) and the School of Characteristics (xiangzong 相宗), and realized that there was not a contradiction between them. In addition, he realized the meanings of all the sutras, śastras, and all the gongans 公案 (Jpn. koans) that emerged in his mind.²⁹⁶

The deathbed experiences of the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism also enhanced their disciples' faith in them. Chinese Buddhists emphasize practitioner's deathbed behavior and regarded it as the final proof of one's achievement in practice. Many Buddhist monks were described as dying peacefully; many of them could predict the time when they were going to die; some died in the meditation posture of sitting straight with crossed legs. The Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism all evidenced these behaviors. According to Zhuhong's inscription, he died peacefully when he chanted the Buddha's name in the upright sitting posture, facing the west. In addition, Zhuhong

²⁹⁵ LFZL 2-4, in DZJBB 23, 536-537.
²⁹⁶ Onyi dashi nianpu, in DZJBB 23, 426.
said farewell to his disciples and urged them to sincerely practice the Pure Land way several days before his death. 297

More strikingly, the remains of Hanshan, Zibo, and Zhixu were uncorrupted (mummy-like, yet not intentionally mummified), which was regarded as an extraordinary accomplishment in Buddhist practice. One of the famous examples is the uncorrupted body of Huineng 慧能, the Six Patriarch of the Chan tradition, which is still venerated in the Caoxi monastery. Hanshan’s uncorrupted body is also preserved and venerated beside Huineng’s in the Caoxi monastery. According to Zhixu’s description, twenty years after Hanshan’s death the shrine of his remains was opened; his disciples found that “his whole body was firm, the clothes clean, his hair and nails grew, and his skin was yellowish and as smooth and moist as alive.” Then it was protected with golden paint and venerated with the uncorrupted body of the Sixth Patriarch. As Zhixu said, “[People viewed the behaviors of] his life with faith or suspicion; at last, [this event] expelled all ridicule.” 298 From Zhixu’s words, we can see that Hanshan’s achievement of an uncorrupted body enhanced Hanshan’s disciple’s faith on him.

Zibo also achieved an uncorrupted body after his death. Based on Hanshan’s description, Zibo was arrested and put in jail owing to his involvement in the “devil book (yaoshu 妖書)” event in his sixty-first year. Eleven days later, he acknowledged that the court intended to put him to death. Thus he said, “If the world acts in this way, for what should I stay longer?” Thereafter he conducted several verses for his disciples. The next morning, he requested for ginger soup to clean his mouth and told a disciple that he was

297 YQFH, in DZJBB 23, 101 and 107.
298 See LFZL 9-4, in DZJBB 23, 808. It seems that Hanshan’s disciple did not expect the uncorrupted body of Hanshan since there was an interval of twenty years before they found it accidentally.
going to pass away. After reciting several times the name of the Buddha *Vairocana*, he sat uprightly and died peacefully. Waiting for juridical order for six days in the jail, the appearance of his bodily remains did not change. Hanshan noted, “As for the behaviors of master [Zibo] in his lifetime, people’s opinions were mixed with faith and doubt. As to the quickness and easiness of his last step, none of those whom heard of it would not praise and admire (him).” Afterward, the shrine of his remains was buried outside of the Cihui temple 慈慧寺 temporarily. Seven months later, his disciples planned to send his remains to the south. They opened the shrine of his remains and found that his face was peaceful and his body looked as alive. Each of them who saw this exclaimed, “It is marvelous.” Here, we can see that Hanshan greatly praised Zibo’s deathbed experience and his achievement of an uncorrupted body.

Zhixu’s remains were also uncorrupted. He died at fifty-seven years old. Since he was devoted to the Pure Land, when he was going to die he sat facing the west and chanted the Buddha’s name. After a little while, he raised his hand and died. Three years later, his disciples followed his will and prepared to cremate his remains. They opened the shrine of his remains, and saw that “His hair has grown so long as to cover his ears; his face looked as alive; he still sat majestically with cross legs, and his teeth did not decay.” Thus, they dared not cremate him. Instead, they built a tower on the right side of the Buddha hall to keep and venerate his uncorrupted body. Zhixu’s case also showed that his disciples venerated his achievement of an uncorrupted body.

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299 *ZBJQ*, in *XZJ* 126, 631b-632a; 638a; 643b.

300 *Ouyi dashi zizhuan*, in *DZJB* 23, 460.
Different Personalities and Concerns

While the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism had great accomplishments in practice, they presented different personalities and concerns. Owing to the differences in their personalities and concerns, I proposed that they viewed and reacted to the crisis of Buddhism differently. In addition, they adopted some of the following devices to revive Buddhism according to their concerns, such as reforming monasteries and the Buddhist order, revitalizing Buddhist precepts, promoting both practice and doctrinal studies, advocating lay Buddhist movements, commenting on Buddhist sutras, and preserving and publishing Buddhist texts. In other words, they illustrated the multiplicity of perspectives of the late Ming Buddhism.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Hanshan possessed a charismatic personality; he had close connections with the court, and attracted many intellectuals and officials as his disciples. His main goal was to revive the Chan tradition and to reform the Caoxi monastery. Although he was involved in some charity activities, he did not organize a group to popularize Buddhism as Zhuhong did. Hanshan also devoted himself to commenting on Buddhist sutras and other important Chinese classics. According to Zhixu’s description, Hanshan was a man of fortitude, brave, powerful, and concerned with Buddhism; he did not care about his fortune, and he practiced privately with profound results. Zhixu also pointed out that people judged Hanshan quite differently. He said, “The people who recognized him would say that he used his one hand to prop the sky, yet those who did not understand him would regard him as a fraud who obtained undeserved fame.”301 From Zhixu’s words, we know that there were discrepant

301 LFZL 9-3, in DZJBB 23, 798.
judgements about Hanshan. However, Zhixu appreciated Hanshan’s contribution to Buddhism.

As for Zhuhong, he was endowed with a humble personality. He said, “I am indeed an ordinary person and not capable of saving myself.” Since Zhuhong possessed a gentle disposition, he attracted many disciples to follow him. According to Zhixu’s statement, Zhuhong practiced Pure Land earnestly, and promoted Vinaya sincerely; he was plain in food and clothing and tried to remedy the insincere and superficial practice of that time by promoting easiness and honesty.\(^\text{302}\) In addition, Zhuhong strove for the reform of Buddhism both inside and outside the Buddhist order. Inside the Buddhist order, he revitalized the monastic rules and promoted Pure Land practice to correct the defect caused by Chan practice. While he promoted the practice of the Pure Land and Vinaya, he successfully organized a Buddhist group directed to social charity and saving animals’ lives. He also promoted morality, worldly responsibilities, charity, and the release of animals in his lay Buddhist movement. By introducing the “Record of Self-Knowledge,” his version of recording merit and demerit, Zhuhong promoted the practice of goodness in daily life. All in all, Zhuhong was successful in popularizing Buddhism among ordinary people.\(^\text{303}\)

According to Hanshan, Zibo had a personality of fortitude, might, and vigor. Zibo disciplined himself severely. After Zibo became a Buddhist monk, he did not lie down for more than 40 years and did not like to meet women.\(^\text{304}\) In addition, since Zibo was fond

\(^{302}\) *LFZL* 9-4, in *DZJBB* 23, 807.


\(^{304}\) *LFZL* 9-4, in *DZJBB* 23, 808.
of travelling and sightseeing, his life was like the roaming cloud and flying bird, possessing only a Buddhist robe, and not having a fixed dwelling place. However, because of his strictness, many were afraid of him, and only a few disciples were close to him.\(^{305}\) Hanshan praised Zibo, saying his realization of Buddhism was straightforward and reliable, which was equal to the ancient masters; Zibo was a Bodhisattva since he possessed compassion and vowed to benefit the sentient beings. Hanshan praised him, saying, “In the period of True Dharma, it was all right that they were without Masters Linji 臨濟 and Deshan 德山, yet in the period of degeneration, they could not be without this old man [Zibo].”\(^{306}\)

Zhixu also praised Zibo for advocating Buddhism as his responsibility. According to Zhixu, Zibo did not have a bit of attachment to self; he was straightforward and outspoken since he was not concerned with other’s criticism. Zibo inherited the good manner of Yanshou 延壽; he was expert on both Chan and doctrinal studies, and was perfect in both theory and practice, as well as removing the boundary between the two Schools of Nature and Characteristics (xingxiang erzong 性相二宗).\(^{307}\) In addition, Zibo promoted the publication of a new version of the Buddhist canon, “stitched book (fangce 方冊)” (the present Jiayingzang 嘉興藏), that was easy to carry for the purpose of popularization of Buddhism.\(^{308}\)

\(^{305}\) ZBZQ, in XZJ 126, 632b-633a.

\(^{306}\) ZBZQ, in XZJ 126, 633a.

\(^{307}\) LFZL 8-2, in DZJBB 23, 766.

\(^{308}\) LFZL 9-4, in DZJBB 23, 808. For the purpose of preserving Buddhist Dharma and popularization of Buddhism, Zibo argued that the fangce version was lighter in weight and cheaper in cost, hoping that it was easy to be approached by ordinary people; see ZBZQ 13, in XZJ 126, 854a-855a. For a discussion of the feature and value of the Jiayingzang, see Lan Jifu, “Jiaying dazangjing de tese ji qi shiliao ji zhi lunwenji 嘉興大藏經的特色及其史料價值,” in Fojiao de sizi yuan wenhua—yinshun daoshi bazhi jinliu shouqing lunwenji 佛教的思想與文化—印順導師八秩晋六壽慶論文集 (Taipei: Faguang chuban, 1991), 255-266.
As for Zhixu, he was regarded as a synthesizer of late Ming Buddhism, which was embodied in the wide-range of his writings.\textsuperscript{309} Zhixu showed a disposition for repenting since he felt regretful for his criticism of Buddhism in his youth. Educated under the Neo-Confucian system, in his youth Zhixu was determined to recover the Learning of the (Confucian) Sage and wrote several essays criticizing Buddhism.\textsuperscript{310} After reading Zhuhong’s preface of the “Record of Self-Knowledge,” he was converted to Buddhism.\textsuperscript{311} Nonetheless, in order to eliminate his wrongful criticism of Buddhism, he afterward devoted himself to the practice of repenting wrongdoing. In addition, Zhixu chiefly promoted the Pure Land practice and the revival of the Vinaya practice.

From the fact that the Four Great Buddhist Masters possessed different personalities and concerns, it is fair to argue that there was a liberal mentality in late Ming Buddhist circles. Even members of the same lineage, for instance, Hanshan and Zhixu, demonstrated many differences. Although Zhixu became a Buddhist monk under Hanshan’s disciple Xueling, his concerns and personality were quite different from Hanshan’s. While Hanshan had close connections with political figures, Zhixu did not like contact with officials. Since both Hanshan and Zibo went to jail because of their involvement in political struggle, it is quite probable that these events prevented Zhixu from close connection with political figures. Zhixu was cautious in communicating with political figures. In his writings, although there are correspondences with many officials, he omits their titles intentionally.\textsuperscript{312} He said, “I do not communicate with celebrities and

\textsuperscript{309} A detailed study about Zhixu, see Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fojiao.

\textsuperscript{310} Ou yi dushi nianpu 漢益大師年譜, in DZJBB 23, 425-426.

\textsuperscript{311} LFZL 9-4, in DZJBB 23, 807.

\textsuperscript{312} See Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fojiao, 6-7.
officials, and do not intend to serve the emperor.” While both Hanshan and Zhixu valued the practices of Chan and the Pure Land, Hanshan preferred the practice of Chan, yet Zhixu chiefly advocated the practice of the Pure Land. In addition, it is interesting to note that Hanshan never mentioned Bodhisattva Dizang (Ksitigarbha) in his writings, yet Zhixu highly honored Bodhisattva Dizang. In addition, Hanshan did not show any interest in divination, yet Zhixu often practiced divination according to method recorded in the *Zhancha shan e yebao jing* 占察善惡業報經. The foregoing demonstrates well that they were different in personality and concerns.

**Efforts towards the Revival of Buddhism**

No matter how divergent their personalities and concerns were, the Four Great Masters all strove for the revival of Buddhism. As mentioned above, during the late Ming Buddhism was in a state of decline. The Four Great Buddhist Masters recognized the defects of Buddhism. Their works provide their views on the crisis of Buddhism as well as their contributions to the revival of Buddhism. According to Hanshan, the Buddhist order was not functioning well and the level of Buddhist monks of this period was low. Hanshan lamented Buddhist monks’ vulgar behaviors, such as searching for worldly benefit, indulging in the pursuit of desires, and not following the Buddhist precepts. He observed that some Buddhist monks of his time did not know who the Buddha was, the purpose of Buddhist monasticism, or correct behavior for monks. Needless to say, they were not ordained to follow the Vinaya precepts; moreover, many of them behaved

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313 See Shi Shengyan, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao*, 210-216. The reason why Hanshan ignored Bodhisattva Dizang is not clear, since there is no clue about his attitude about Dizang.

dissolutely and kept close connections with their relatives and friends without any shame, while some even transgressed the laws of the state.\textsuperscript{315}

In addition, Hanshan observed that Buddhists of his time had many excuses in practice and learning. He wrote,

When I discussed doctrines with them, they (Buddhists) would say those are branches and leaves that are unnecessary to esteem. When I discussed the Six \textit{Pāramitā} with them, they would say those are the practice of Bodhisattvas, not what they dare to do. When I talked the Four Noble Truths with them, they would say those are Hinayāna and are not worthy to practice. When I talked about the four kinds of \textit{dhyāna} and eight kinds of \textit{samādhi} with them, they would say those are the practices outside of Buddhism that are unnecessary to mention. If \[I\] talked about the Human path with them, they were utterly ignorant about the duties of ruler, subject, father and son, and the conducts of benevolence, righteousness, ceremony, and wisdom. Alas! I do not know what they are.\textsuperscript{316}

Generally speaking, the level of Buddhist monks was inferior. Hanshan mentioned that when he taught in Guangdong province, few Buddhist monks understood his teaching. He wrote, “When I teach Buddhism, it is like talking to puppets.” Nonetheless, Hanshan continued his teaching and writing since he was aware that although few people in his time could understand his writings, there might be some in later generations that would understand his teachings. Thus, he commented on many Buddhist texts for the purpose of preserving his thought for later generations. Hanshan said, “I would like to preserve my poor opinion waiting for those who would understand my words in later generations under the heaven. Although I talked a lot, what does it matter?\textsuperscript{317}

\textsuperscript{315} \textit{MYQJ} 46, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 846b.
\textsuperscript{316} \textit{GLYL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 823b-824a.
\textsuperscript{317} \textit{MYQJ} 19, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 486b.
Zibo also observed many defects of the late Ming Buddhism. He lamented that Buddhist monks of the late Ming did not know what the Buddhist precepts were. Furthermore, he criticized Buddhist monks for wasting their time in useless talking and travelling. Zibo wrote, “[They] do not value the limited time, yet [they] lie down for sleeping after they have had enough food, and talk to each other idly about nonsense to pass the daytime.” He also criticized many Buddhist monks for indulging in travelling between states and counties yet regarding it as practice. Furthermore, according to Zibo, most monks did not really know what Chan and doctrinal studies were, however, once they learned a little bit of Buddhism, they claimed that they had penetrated through Chan and doctrinal studies.

While the Four Great Buddhist Masters all practiced Chan, they criticized the defects of the Chan tradition. The majority of the Buddhist monks of the late Ming belonged to Chan tradition. According to Qian Qianyi’s observation, the Chan tradition in the late Ming had become excessively formal. Chan practitioners did not value real practice, yet they liked empty talk or criticized each other. Furthermore, Wild Chan prevailed. Many monks wrongfully claimed themselves Chan masters; they misled people and ruined the real Chan. The Four Great Masters all lamented these phenomena. In their works, they often criticized those Buddhist monks who did not practice sincerely yet wrongfully claimed enlightenment. Since they had experienced enlightenment, they realized that this defect would mislead Buddhists. Thus, they tried to direct the defect of empty talk to the right path of sincere practice. Their works give us

\[\text{ZBZQ 4, in XZJ 126, 705a.}\]
\[\text{ZBZQ 5, in XZJ 126, 713ab.}\]
\[\text{See Lian, “Qian qianyi,” 346-348.}\]
the impression that they always urged their disciples to practice earnestly. In other words, the Four Great Masters emphasized the Buddhist ultimate goal of liberating from the suffering of birth and death through earnest practice; they decried empty talk.

Hanshan observed that most of the Buddhist monks relied on worldly cleverness, yet they did not practice sincerely. He wrote,

[They] slight the basic Five Precepts and Ten Goodnesses and do not practice them, yet they regard the fondness of Chan as the highest. They do not cultivate their bodily, verbal, and mental conduct. However, [they] read some ready-made gongans 公案 of the patriarchs and remember them. Thereupon, they show off their eloquence and quick-witted talks, and regard them as their marvelous enlightenment. They view this as right and do not realize their fault. Moreover, they criticize that the Mahāyāna sutras are but language, and not practicable; they laugh at those monks who practice sincerely as [the followers of the] Small Vehicle.”^321

Besides, Hanshan criticized that both lay Buddhists and Buddhist monks of his time did not know how to practice Chan, yet they boasted their realization of Chan; their minds were still full of delusive thoughts, yet they rashly claimed that they had become enlightened.^322

Zibo also criticized the defects of Chan. He observed that while Buddhist monks and lay disciples of that period only obtained slight understanding, they claimed that they had complete realization. He also observed that most Buddhists did not attain enlightenment, yet they bragged about their achievement. Zibo said, “Recently, the standard of [our] patriarch is withered, and Dao of Buddhism is barren. . . . Almost all

321 MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 843b.
322 MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 850b.
323 ZBQ, in XZJ 126, 633a.
[the Buddhists] are like the blind cocks that are not aware of whether it is dawn or not, yet they cried groundlessly when they heard other cocks’ crying.\textsuperscript{324} According to his observation, Buddhist monks or lay disciples of his time employed “cleverness,” and paid no attention to real cultivation.\textsuperscript{325} Since Hanshan and Zibo saw the defect of the Chan tradition of their time, they vowed together to revive Chan tradition. They tried to reform the Caoxi monastery first, since they regarded it as the origin of Chan tradition.\textsuperscript{326}

The controversy among different Buddhist sects was the other defect of late Ming Buddhism. For example, Zhixu said, “Recently, the great defect of [our] religion resides in that the mind for the true Dharma is not sincere and the predjudice for one’s own school is ardent.”\textsuperscript{327} In order to correct the controversy between Chan and Pure Land, Zhixu promoted the idea that both Chan and Pure Land were outstanding practices; they were taught differently according to the abilities of sentient beings. According to Zhixu, the ultimate truth is neither Chan nor Pure Land, and is both Chan and Pure Land, namely it transcends the distinction of Chan and Pure Land and, at the same time, does not depart from them.\textsuperscript{328} Concerning the controversy between doctrinal studies and the practice of Chan, Zhixu argued that both doctrinal studies and the practice of Chan were inevitable for Buddhism. He proposed that the ancient patriarchs valued both of them. He said, “How could Chan and doctrinal studies be separated? None of the ancient patriarchs [of Chan] dared to violate any word of the sutras; none of the masters of doctrinal studies did

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{324} \textit{ZBZQ} 23, in \textit{XZJ} 126, 1035a.
\item \textsuperscript{325} \textit{ZBZB} 3, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 120a.
\item \textsuperscript{326} \textit{MYQJ} 51, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 920a.
\item \textsuperscript{327} \textit{LFZL} 4-3, in \textit{DZJBB} 23, 620.
\item \textsuperscript{328} \textit{LFZL} 4-1, in \textit{DZJBB} 23, 603.
\end{enumerate}
not penetrate into the School of Mind (Chan tradition) to obtain its great function."\(^{329}\)

Zhixu recognized the controversy among different Buddhist sects and tried to harmonize them.

Hanshan also tried to reconcile the controversy between Chan and doctrinal studies. He observed that those who grasped at doctrinal studies criticized Chan, and those who grasped at Chan criticized doctrinal studies. Based on the concepts of One Mind and expedient means, Hanshan proposed his view on the cause of controversy. He held that people did not realize that the purport of doctrinal studies and Chan resided in One Mind, and both of them were the Buddha’s expedient means for benefiting sentient beings.\(^{330}\)

As for Zibo, he promoted both doctrinal studies and the practice of Chan. Zibo said, “As for Yogācāra and Consciousness-only, they are the texts that exhaust the number; as for Huayan and Lengyan, they are the sutras that exhaust the principle.” In addition, he insisted that the most important task was to penetrate the Chan tradition.\(^{331}\)

In the late Ming, there were also many controversies about orthodoxy inside the Chan tradition.\(^{332}\) The members of the Chan traditions had a strong sectarian sense. However, the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism were listed in the “lineage unknown” section.\(^{333}\) It is quite possible that because they did not belong to a clear lineage of Chan, they felt free to criticize the defects in the transmission of Chan tradition.

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\(^{329}\) LFZL 6-4, in DJBB 23, 703-704.

\(^{330}\) MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 852a.

\(^{331}\) ZBQ 4, in XZJ 126, 696b.

\(^{332}\) See Chen Yuan, Qingchu sengzhengji 清初僧诤記 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1989). Besides, in his dissertation, Jiang Wu gives a detailed investigation on this topic; see his “Orthodoxy, Controversy and the Transformation of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-century China” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2002).

\(^{333}\) See Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism, 224.
and the controversies about orthodoxy in their time. To the contrary, they promoted real enlightenment instead of formalistic transmission. Qian Qianyi, a famous lay Buddhist in the next generation, appreciated their efforts; he venerated Hanshan and Zibo as paradigms in correcting the defects of Chan tradition.

In order to revive the Buddhist order, the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism all advocated the practice of the Buddhist precepts. Along with the Buddhist precepts, Hanshan and Zhuhong also regulated monastery rules to guide the behavior of monks and to regulate the monastery. Furthermore, in order to raise the level of Buddhist monks, Hanshan paid attention to the education of young Buddhist monks in the Caoxi monastery. Since Hanshan valued both Buddhism and Confucianism, he invited able monks and Confucian scholars to teach them Buddhism as well as the Four Books.

Owing to the religious policy of the Ming dynasty, Buddhist activities were mostly restricted to the monastery. Although this religious policy became looser in the late Ming, Buddhist monks were not highly involved in social activity. The Four Great Masters recognized that in order to enlighten sentient beings, it was necessary for Buddhists to be in contact with ordinary people. Hanshan, Zhuhong, and Zibo were all concerned with social problems and were involved in the releasing of the burden of ordinary people.

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335 Qian Qianyi disliked the controversies about orthodoxy inside Chan tradition. In order to correct the defects, he devoted himself to collect and edit these two masters’ works to serve as a paradigm. See Lian, “Qian qianyi,” 364.
336 MYQJ 52, in XZJ 127, 941a-945b; Yunqi gongzhu guiyou 雲棲共住規約, in DZJB 23, 299-355.
337 MYQJ 50, in XZJ 127, 904a.
In his forty-eighth year, for instance, Hanshan was concerned with the famine in Shading province and strove to relieve the starving people.\footnote{MYQJ 53, in XZJ 127, 964a.} In his fifty-sixth year, Hanshan successfully employed his influence in advising an official to forbid his subordinates to abuse their power over people.\footnote{MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 969ab.} According to Qian Qianyi, Zibo was concerned with people’s suffering and employed Buddhism to solve worldly problems.\footnote{Lian, “Qian qianyi,” 325.} For example, Zibo tried to waive the heavy tax on mining factories for people, and said, “If the tax on mining factories is not waived, it is my great burden to awaken the world.”\footnote{ZBZB, in XZJ 127, 146b} As mentioned above, Zhuhong was also concerned with social problems; he promoted a lay Buddhist movement that was devoted to social charity.

All in all, the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism intended to correct the defects of late Ming Buddhism. They were all concerned with Buddhism’s decline and tried to revive Buddhism in various ways. Since they had experienced enlightenment, they all emphasized earnest practice while they criticized empty talk and wrongful claims of enlightenment. Although they emphasized practice, they did not neglect doctrinal studies. They promoted the Bodhisattva path and were concerned with social problems since they realized that the Bodhisattva path was the core of Mahāyāna Buddhism. They tried to direct Buddhism in the right direction by altering the trend of focusing on self-cultivation or retreating in the mountain to the image of Bodhisattva path of involvement in this world to benefit all sentient beings.
As is commonly suggested, the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism contributed to the revival of late Ming Buddhism. However, we should examine carefully the extent of their influence. I suggest that they did not immediately improve the status of late Ming Buddhism. Although they made contributions to the revival of Buddhism, their influences were limited. Among the Four Great Masters, only Zhuhong was successful in the reform of the Yunqi monastery and the promotion of lay Buddhism, yet his influence was most likely limited to that small area in his lifetime. As for Hanshan, he admitted that only a few Buddhist monks sincerely believed in Buddhism after he taught Buddhism in Guangdong Province for several years.\(^{343}\) Although Tao Naihan’s study shows that Hanshan’s effort had an impact on the popularity of Buddhism in Guangdong province, it lasted only for a short period after his death.\(^{344}\) Concerning Hanshan’s reform of the Caoxi monastery, unfortunately it was only half completed because some Buddhist monks opposed his reform in that monastery.\(^{345}\) While Zibo exerted himself in the publication of new editions of the Buddhist canon and the preservation of the stone sutras, his goal was not completed in his lifetime. Moreover, his strictness limited the number of his disciples. As for Zhixu, he strove to revitalize the Vinaya. However, he also lamented that only few monks could sincerely follow the rule of Vinaya.\(^{346}\) In short, the Four Great Masters did not see great improvement of Buddhism in their lifetime.

\(^{343}\) MYQJ 52, in XZJ 127, 937a.


\(^{345}\) MYQJ 54, in XZJ 127, 971b-972a.

\(^{346}\) Ouyi dashi nianpu, in DZJBB 23, 428.
If we agree that reform and transformation of social values could not be accomplished in a short period of time in such a big country as China, such was the case of the reform of late Ming Buddhism. Aside from the factor of time, the revival of Buddhism needed more factors to guarantee its success. However, in late Ming these factors were not sufficient. Considering the hostility of the mainstream of Neo-Confucian, the religious policy of the state, and the decline of Buddhism, we can imagine the difficulty for Buddhism in recruiting capable members. Although the number of temples and monks might have increased during this period, the lack of capable Buddhist monks would limit the revival of Buddhism; the revival of Buddhism would not have had a solid ground. According to Zhixu’s observation, Buddhism still declined in the next generation even after the efforts of the other Three Great Masters.

Araki argued that the rise of Chinese Buddhism depended heavily on the emergence of great Buddhist masters. Great Buddhist masters always played key roles in the rise of any new Buddhist movement. They influenced Chinese Buddhism by their thought and sometimes guided Buddhism in new directions. However, Chinese Buddhist leaders generally did not leave well-developed organizations, so the duration of the revival was short. Late Ming Buddhism was in accordance with this description. Buddhism declined again after the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism passed away.

Even though the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism did not successfully revive Buddhism to a great extent, their efforts were not in vain. They contributed greatly to the development of Chinese Buddhist thought, and reoriented Chinese Buddhism in a promising direction. The significance of their contributions, I suggest, resides in that they

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established a paradigm for later generations with such excellent personal qualities as devotion to Buddhism, earnest practice, the achievement of enlightenment, and the outstanding result of an uncorrupted body after death. In addition, they left abundant works that reflected multiplicity of perspective of late Ming Buddhism, which were valuable to later Buddhists. Eventually, their works became the heritage of Chinese Buddhism; their thoughts have gradually permeated the mind of Chinese Buddhists. At present, their works are still widely studied in Chinese Buddhist institutes and monasteries, and are becoming the subjects of many Buddhist studies.

Views on the Concept of Mind

Since the concept of Mind (xin 心) is essential to Hanshan’s syncretic view and his interpretation of the Daodejing, I provide a discussion of the Four Great Buddhist Masters’ views on the concept of Mind to demonstrate the multiplicity of their viewpoints. The concept of Mind prevailed in the late Ming, which was not only the dominant thought of the late Ming Buddhism, but also was the core of the “Mind Learning” or the “School of Wang Yangming,” the dominant intellectual trend of the late Ming.\(^{348}\) Although the concept of Mind was adopted by many Chinese traditions, each tradition interpreted it differently. Even the Four Great Masters presented various interpretations concerning the concept of Mind. In short, while the Four Great Masters all adopted the concept of Mind as the core of their thought, their viewpoints on the concept of Mind also demonstrated the multiplicity of perspectives in the late Ming Buddhism.

\(^{348}\) A discussion of the “School of Wang Yangming,” see Araki, Yōmeigaku, 3-34; Feng, Zhongguo zhexueshi, 928-974.
As is commonly known, the concept of Mind comprises the main part of Chinese Buddhism. Although the Madhyamika, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha (rulaizang 如來藏) traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism were all introduced into China, the Tathāgatagarbha tradition eventually became the most influential one in China. For example, Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan schools as well as those popular sutras such as the Avatāṃsaka Sūtra (Huayan Sutra 華嚴經), the Śūraṅgama Sūtra (Lengyan Sutra 棟嚴經), and the Awaking of Faith (dasheng qixinlun 大乘起信論) are all based on the thought of Tathāgatagarbha. The central argument of the Tathāgatagarbha tradition is that all the sentient beings are endowed with pure Mind or Buddha nature; however, they are defiled by delusion and cannot realize it. As members of Chinese Buddhism, the Four Great Masters all took the thought of Tathāgatagarbha as the core of their thought.

The Four Great Masters were also influenced by the “principle of One Mind” that was completed by Yanshou in the ninth century. While they were aware of the Mahāyāna doctrines of Madhyamika, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha and employed all of them in their works, they chiefly adopted the concept of One Mind in their writings. For instance, Zhuhong promoted the concept of “Mind-only Pure Land” and “the Amida Buddha of self-nature” (weixin jingtu zixing mituo 唯心淨土 自性彌陀). Hanshan favored the idea that the three realms are Mind-only, and the ten thousand dharmas are Consciousness-only (sanjie weixin wanfa weishi 三界唯心 萬法唯識). Zhixu’s thought

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350 A study of Yanshou’s thought of One Mind, see Jan Yun-hua, Yongming yanshou, 69-145.
was mostly based on the *Lengyan sutra*, which belongs to Tathāgatagarbha tradition.\(^{352}\) Similarly, Zibo followed the thought of True Mind according to the *Lengyan Sutra*.

While the term “Mind” has been widely used in the history of Chinese Buddhism, this term has been defined differently according to its context. The term “Mind” is mostly employed in two categories. First, it is used to represent the ultimate reality. Although the Buddha and the original Buddhism did not talk about the ultimate reality, in Mahāyāna Buddhism the ultimate reality became an important topic, which is expressed in various terms, such as Dharmakāya, Dharmadhātu, Reality, Buddha-nature, Self, Tathāgatagarbha, and Mind.\(^{353}\) As a movement of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Chinese Chan tradition was concerned with the ultimate goal: namely, to enlighten the Mind and to see the Nature (*mingxin jianxing 明心見性*). Here, the Mind means the True Mind and the Nature that is identical to the Buddha Nature. Second, the term “Mind” is used to express mental activities, when it is connected with the body or in the context of practice. The Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism all employed the term “Mind” in these two categories, mostly in the first category. Below is a brief discussion of the Four Great Masters’ views on the concept of Mind.

Hanshan chiefly used the term “Mind” in discussing the ultimate reality, while sometimes he used the terms “Nature” (*xing 性*) and “Principle” (*li 理*). Hanshan summarized that all the teachings of Buddhism are directed toward One Mind, as he said, “Which one of the teachings that [the Buddha] preached within forty-nine years is not directing straight to the Dharma of One Mind?”\(^{354}\) He further argued,


\(^{353}\) See Hsu, “Han-shan Te-ch’ing,” 417-418.

\(^{354}\) *MYQJ* 19, in *XZJ* 127, 486b.
As for the Mind, it is the principle of myriad things; as for the myriad things, they are the appearances of the Mind. As for death and birth, they are the transformation of the Mind; as for good and evil, they are the traces of the Mind; as for reward and transmigration, they are the shadows and echoes of the Mind.\textsuperscript{355}

Here, he treated the Mind as the principle of myriad things. According to Hanshan, the doctrine of Mind-only and the ultimate truth of principle (\textit{li 理}) were first fully revealed in the \textit{Lankāvatāra Sūtra}, while the \textit{Lotus Sutra} reveals the ultimate truth of phenomena (\textit{shi 事}). These two ultimate truths of \textit{li} and \textit{shi}, based on Hanshan’s description, constitute the ultimate truth of the One Mind.\textsuperscript{356}

Based on the thought of Tathāgatagarbha, Hanshan argued that all sentient beings were originally endowed with pure Mind, yet their minds were defiled by delusions and attachments. In addition, he proposed that the purpose of all Buddhist practices was to eliminate the defilement, and to realize the pure Mind, the so-called “un-born (\textit{wusheng 無生})” or “original nothing.” Interestingly, Hanshan also employed the thought of Tathāgatagarbha to interpret the doctrine of emptiness. For example, Hanshan interpreted the \textit{Heart Sutra} according to the thought of Tathāgatagarbha, even though this sutra belongs to the doctrine of Mādhyamika.\textsuperscript{357} Since Hanshan’s thought was based on Tathāgatagarbha, he also treated the following terms as the same: \textit{prajñā}, Mind, Tathāgatagarbha, Buddha Nature, and \textit{nirvāṇa}.

Hanshan also dealt with the connection between teachings and Mind. He argued that the phenomenal world was the projection of Mind. Thus, he treated all words and

\textsuperscript{355} \textit{MYQJ} 19, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 485b.

\textsuperscript{356} Hsu, \textit{A Buddhist Leader}, 149.

\textsuperscript{357} \textit{Borexinjing zhishuo} 般若心經直說, \textit{XZJ} 41, 843a.
arguments as the shadows and echoes of the Mind, which outlined the main argument of his syncretism of the Three Teachings. In addition, he argued that if one did not enlighten the Mind, one could not comprehend the meaning of the sutras. Therefore, he treated the enlightened Mind as the prerequisite for correctly employing language. He wrote, “As for those who enlightened the marvelous dharmas, they were called “well-versed in teaching.” Their teachings of managing world and actions for the benefit of sentient beings all accorded with the true Dharma.” According to him, those who enlightened the Mind could understand the sage’s Mind, and could teach correctly.

Zibo also followed the thought of Tathāgatagarbha. For example, he argued, “As for one’s own Mind, the sage and the worthy are generated from it, the earth and heaven are established from it. It is illuminating, great, and with perfect spiritual subtlety. In accord with the Lengyan Sutra, Zibo argued that the sage realized the constant existing True Mind and the illuminated substance of pure nature; yet ordinary people did not realize it and they employed various kinds of deluded thinking. Since their thinking was not real, they were subject to transmigration.” Furthermore, he proposed that Buddhism was the learning of Mind. From his arguments, we can see that Zibo chiefly adopted the thought of Tathāgatagarbha.

Since Zibo had experienced enlightenment, it is not surprising that he highlighted the role of realizing the Mind for the purpose of destroying wrongful distinction. He argued, “Because the deluded people do not realize their own Mind, they cannot destroy their affective views, and they produce wrongful distinctions. In Confucianism, they are

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358 GYI, in XZJ 127, 818a.
359 ZBZQ 13, in XZJ 126, 856b.
360 ZBZQ 7, in XZJ 126, 755a.
bound by Confucianism; in Daoism, they are killed by Laozi; in Buddhism, they are burdened with Buddhism. Here, Zibo emphasized the role of realizing the Mind, which was identical to Hanshan’s argument.

However, Zibo also classified the term “mind” into True Mind and deluded mind. He said, “The True Mind intuits circumstance and is un-born, the deluded mind is that which emerges with circumstance.” He defined cleverness as the deluded mind, because he regarded cleverness as being skillful at scheming and planning. Thus, he argued that Yan Hui’s dismissal of cleverness was to empty the deluded minds; when the deluded minds are empty, the True Mind will manifest. It is particular to Zibo that he emphasized contemplating body and mind equally, not just the mind. He proposed that “Buddhist practice is originally without other technique. If one could deal with his body and mind, that is all.” Thus, he promoted the practice in daily life, as he said, “How does one search his own mind? One should search for it in daily life.”

Zhuhong’s works also revealed the influence of the thought of Tathāgatagarbha. First of all, he argued for the sameness of the Mind, the Buddha, and sentient beings. According to him, sentient beings were originally the Buddha and the Buddha was originally the Mind. He further connected the Pure Land with the concept of Mind, the Buddha, and sentient beings. Since Zhuhong advocated the union of Chan and Pure Land,

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361 *ZBZQ* 5, in *XZJ* 126, 721b.
362 *ZBZQ* 9, in *XZJ* 126, 784a.
363 *ZBZQ* 3, in *XZJ* 126, 684a.
364 *ZBZQ* 9, in *XZJ* 126, 801a.
365 *ZBZQ* 12, in *XZJ* 126, 839b.
366 *ZBZQ* 6, in *XZJ* 126, 729a.
367 *YQFH*, in *DZJBB* 23, 361.
his thought of Pure Land combined both the practice of chanting the Buddha’s name and the concept of the “Mind-only Pure Land.” He said, “As for those who were reborn in the Pure Land, they were reborn in the Pure Land of their Mind. As for those who enlightened their Mind, they enlightened their Mind of the Pure Land.” In other words, he argued that Mind-only was identical to the Pure Land and the Pure Land was identical to Mind-only. Thus, he argued, “Outside the Mind, there is no Pure Land; outside the Pure Land, there is no Mind.”

Zhixu also adopted the thought of Tathāgatagarbha as the core of his thought. In addition, he employed the term “Mind-Nature (xin\linebreak[0]xing 心性)” to reconcile different traditions of Chinese Buddhism. He claimed that each tradition just clarified some aspects of the “Mind-Nature.” While the term “Mind-Nature” was widely used in different Chinese traditions, in Buddhism this term is identical to the “Nature of marvelous True-thusness of the Tathāgatagarbha (ruleizang miao zhenruxing 如來藏妙真如性) of the Lengyan Sutra.” Basically, Zhixu treated the Mind as the origin of the myriad things. He proposed, “Once the Mind had existed, then there were heaven, earth, and the myriad things.” In addition, according to Zhixu, “Mind-Nature” includes all the dharmas and creates all the dharmas; yet all the dharmas are all without real nature.

Zhixu’s view on the concept of Mind showed a synthesis of different traditions of Chinese Buddhism, since he had the goal of reconciling the two Schools of Nature and

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368 YQFH, in DZJBB 23, 362; 368.
369 See Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fojiao, 473.
370 See Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fojiao, 473.
371 LFZL 2-5, in DZJBB 23, 541.
372 LFZL 2-5, in DZJBB 23, 544.
Characteristics (xingxiang erzong 性相二宗). He adopted the viewpoint of Yogācāra to comment the Lengyan Sutra and the Awakening of Faith, the thought of Tathāgatagarbha, on the one hand. Based on the thought of Tathāgatagarbha, he commented the doctrine of Yogācāra on the other. Influenced by the concept of Tiantai School that the present mind includes all the possibilities of the world, Zhixu chiefly adopted the concept of the present mind in his writings. Specifically, he invented “one thought of Mind at present (xianqian yinianxin 现前一念心)” as a key term. According to him, the practices of Chan, stillness, and contemplation of the Buddha are related to the nature of one thought of Mind at present. He proposed,

To explore the nature of one thought of Mind at present is called practicing Chan, to realize the nature of one thought of Mind at present is called stillness (zhi 止) and contemplation (guan 観), and to contemplate uninterruptedly the nature of one thought of Mind at present is called contemplating on the Buddha (nianfo 念佛)."376

views on Chinese Traditions

Since Hanshan’s syncretic view is a topic of this study, in order to demonstrate his unique argument and show multiplicity of perspectives in Buddhist circles, I provide a discussion of the Four Great Masters’ views on Chinese traditions. Nurtured with Chinese culture, it is natural that the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism proposed their views on Chinese traditions. However, they presented various arguments on this

373 See Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fojiao, 463-464.
374 See Lü Cheng, Zhongguo foxue xianggalun, 363.
375 See Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fojiao, 421-425.
376 LFZL 5-3, in DZJBB 23, 656.
subject. This section shows that they were all concerned with the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism, yet they reacted differently.

Since they were educated in different Chinese traditions, they showed various interests in Chinese traditions. For example, Hanshan proposed that all the Three Teachings were helpful to him. He wrote,

Because I was born in the Human path, I did not go beyond the Human Vehicle and I treated Confucius as teacher in my childhood. Because I realized that the human desire was the ground of all sufferings, I aspired to the practice of getting rid of desire and I treated Laozi and Zhuangzi as teachers in my youth. By contemplating that the Three Realms are Mind-only and the myriad dharmas are Consciousness-only, I realized that the Ten Realms were the shadows and echoes of Mind-only, and then I became devoted to the Buddha.

As mentioned above, Hanshan also valued Confucian morality; he proposed that since he was a Buddhist monk, he intended to be both a loyal vassal and a filial child of the Buddha.

The other three Great Masters also valued different aspects of Chinese culture. Zhuhong was of a Confucian in origin and passed the local examination when he was seventeen. Confucianism naturally became an important part of his thought. Besides, he introduced the popular practice of *gongguoge* from Daoism to his disciples as daily practice. Zibo often cited Confucianism and Daoism in his writings. Besides, he valued the spirit of Chinese chivalry (*xia* 侠). As for Zhixu, he took the revival of the

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377 See Araki, “Confucianism and Buddhism,” 60.
378 *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 824a. Here, Hanshan used the term ‘shadows and echoes of Mind-only’ to describe the Ten Realms.
379 *MYQJ* 15, in *XZJ* 127, 416a.
380 *ZBZQ* 26, in *XZJ* 127, 22a.
Way of Confucianism as his responsibility in his youth. Later, although he regarded Buddhism as the highest teaching, his writings showed closed connection with Confucianism. He not only commented on the Yijing and the Four Books, but he also practiced divination based on Confucianism.

However, while the Four Great Masters concerned themselves with the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism, they presented different attitudes to various Chinese traditions. Among the Three Buddhist Masters of Wanli period, Hanshan and Zhuhong proposed many opposed attitudes about Chinese traditions. While Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude toward other Chinese traditions, Zhuhong showed an exclusive tendency. Zibo, however, revealed similar attitudes to those of Hanshan. Born in the next generation, Zhixu, as a synthesizer, followed those viewpoints he liked from his predecessors and neglected those he disliked.

After Hanshan became a Buddhist monk, he sensed the challenges from other Chinese traditions. He found it necessary that Buddhism should reconcile with other Chinese traditions. He criticized some Buddhists’ arrogant attitude on the one hand, and lamented Buddhist monks’ inability to communicate with other traditions on the other. According to Hanshan, owing to their self-centered attitude, many Buddhist monks limited themselves to Buddhism and did not want to understand other traditions. Furthermore, Hanshan disliked the mutual criticism among different traditions; he argued that it was caused by egocentricity. Thus, he proposed his viewpoint on how to harmonize

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GLYL, in XZJ 127, 819b.
different Chinese traditions, especially with the argument that all the teachings were the shadows and echoes of the Mind. Hanshan also adopted an inclusive attitude to worldly learning. He proposed that in order to benefit the sentient beings a Buddhist monk should learn various kinds of worldly techniques, and should not limit one’s knowledge strictly to Buddhism. Thus, he not only valued Confucianism and Daoism, but also respected some legendary figures of religious Daoism.

Hanshan was unique in treating Daoism as higher than Confucianism. He clearly stated, “As for Laozi, he regarded emptiness and nothingness as the marvelous Dao. . . . His teaching took ‘discarding sage and abandoning cleverness, as well as forgetting body and getting rid of desire’ as practice. That he took non-action as the utmost Principle was more advanced than Confucius.” 383 Hanshan also admired the doctrine of the Zhuangzi. He proposed that in China only Laozi and Zhuangzi carried views that transcended this world; except for the Buddhist sutras, only the Zhuangzi could penetrate the teachings of the Human and the Heavenly. Without the Zhuangzi, Chinese people of later generations would have had no idea about what a genuine man (zhenren 真人) is and how marvelous his (Zhuangzi’s) argument is. 384 However, Zhuhong argued that Confucius’ works were much better than Zhuangzi’s. He wrote, “Confucius’ literature is just and bright, like the sun and moon. As for that of Zhuangzi, the superior [passages] are like numerous stars and lightning, and the inferior [ones] are like the fire in the wilds.” 385

383 GYL, in XZJ 127, 824b.
384 GYL, in XZJ 127, 819a.
385 ZB, in DZZBB 23, 171.
While Hanshan promoted broad learning, Zhuhong had the opposite attitude. He argued that Buddhist monks should not pay too much attention outside of Buddhism. He said,

"Nowadays, there are monks who study the Laozi and the Zhuangzi, as well as those who study the texts for civil service examination... Now, [they] study recklessly the learning outside of Buddhism, and pay no attention to Chan. [I] do not regard it as appropriate."

Furthermore, Zhuhong regarded the study of Daoism and worldly learning as unacceptable for Buddhist monks. He viewed this trend as "degenerate features within Buddhism." He said,

"As for those who study the Laozi and the Zhuangzi, those who are slightly bright further comment on them, and those who study poetry, literature, calligraphy, and letters, they are all degenerate features within Buddhism."

Zhuhong held that a Buddhist monk should first fulfill his Buddhist duties. Thus, he lamented that Buddhist monks indulged in learning other than Buddhism. In other words, Zhuhong disapproved of Buddhist monks learning broadly. He said, "As for those Buddhist monks who lay aside and neglect their own duties, yet devote themselves to the learning of worldly learning, how pitiful it is, indeed." He also criticized those Buddhist monks who indulged in reciting the Daodejing and lecturing on the Zhuangzi. Since Zhuhong regarded that the release from the suffering of birth and death was the

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386 ZB, in DZZBB 23, 189.
387 ZEJ, in DZZBB 23, 249.
388 ZCEB, in DZZBB 23, 228.
389 ZCEB, in DZZBB 23, 234.
most urgent task for Buddhist monks, he urged Buddhist monks to practice wholeheartedly and not to be distracted by other learning.

Although Zhuhong imitated the gongguoge 功過格 from the practice of Daoism to serve as a device of daily practice for his disciples, he did not approve the syncretism of the Three Teachings in theory as Hanshan did. He wrote, “If one relied on language to analyze the principles in order to exhaust their profundity and subtlety, such will conversely become a play of theories.” As a matter of fact, Zhuhong did not comment on the texts of Confucianism or Daoism. With regard to the point that Chinese Buddhism contains many terms of Chinese philosophy, Zhuhong argued that Buddhists merely employed the language of Chinese philosophy to clarify Buddhism, their meanings were not totally the same.

Zhuhong clearly presented his opposition to the argument of the sameness of Confucianism and Buddhism. He admitted that Confucianism and Buddhism had their specific functions, as he said,

Then, if the study of Confucianism is sufficient to exhaust birth and death, what is the use of Buddhism? ... Confucius mastered the worldly matters, [yet] Sākyamuni Buddha mastered the dharmas that transcend the world. Although their minds are not different, their devices are not the same. Students must follow each gate separately.

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390 See Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism, 101-137. Gongguoge 功過格 is a list with detailed scores of merit and wrongdoing designed by Zhuhong for his disciples to reflect their thought and behaviors in daily life. The list includes the morality of various Chinese traditions with a syncretic character.

391 ZB, in DZZBB 23, 167.

392 ZB, in DZZBB 23, 171.

393 ZB, in DZZBB 23, 178.
He argued that since Confucianism and Buddhism had their unique focuses and functions, it was unnecessary to divide or unite them. He wrote,

By arguing definitely that Confucianism is identical to Buddhism, then the texts of the Six Classics, the Analects, and the Mencius have been prepared brilliantly and completely. Why is it waiting for the Buddha’s emergence and [Master] Bodhidharma’s coming from the West (India)? By arguing definitely that Buddhism is identical to Confucianism, then why do [we] not take the Lengyan Sutra and the Lotus Sutra to actively engage with the world?  

However, Zhuhong adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Confucianism. He argued that although Confucianism and Buddhism had different devices, they could be mutually supportive. For example, the theory of cause and effect of Buddhism could assist Confucianism in what the worldly law could not reach, and the worldly law could also help Buddhism in restraining monks’ illegal behavior. Zhuhong thus proposed that Buddhist and Confucian should not criticize each other.

Zhuhong did not agree with the viewpoint that Daoism was superior to Buddhism, as he wrote, “Among the worldly texts, the Zhuangzi is indeed ingenious. Yet how laughable it is to propose that [the Zhuangzi] is superior to the Lengyan Sutra.” He also criticized the Daoist ontological concept as without-cause and wrong-cause, which is not the Dao of Buddhism. We can see that he drew a clear line between Buddhism and Daoism. He wrote,

Moreover, that which he (Laozi) referred to as Dao is the model of spontaneity (ziran). If it is the case that Dao generates spontaneously without origin, [Master] Qingliang classified it as without-cause. If it is the case that Dao is

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394 ZCEB, in DZZBB 23, 231.
396 ZB, in DZZBB 23, 171.
generated based on spontaneity, Qingliang classified it as wrong-cause. Both without-cause and wrong-cause are heretic ideas, not the Dao that the Buddha talked about. The Dao of Buddhism resides in that the myriad dharmas come from one’s Mind, which is neither spontaneity nor non-spontaneity.\(^{397}\)

Concerning the Chinese practice of fengshui, Zhuhong also presented the opposite attitude to Hanshan’s. While Hanshan openly followed the practice of fengshui, Zhuhong criticized Buddhist monks’ involved in the practice of fengshui. Although Zhuhong considered fengshui to only be suitable for great Buddhist masters such as Baizhang 百丈, he lamented that Buddhist monks got involved in the practice of fengshui and divination. He wrote, “There are Buddhist monks who serve as masters of fengshui, as masters of divination, as masters of physiognomy, as physicians. . . . How extreme the defects of the degenerated period are.”\(^{398}\)

Zhuhong treated belief in fengshui as a kind of delusion. In one essay, he compared the beliefs on destiny and fengshui. Zhuhong said, “The worldly people believe more in fengshui than destiny. The reason for this may be that destiny is fixed in the beginning at birth, yet fengshui is what can be now arranged. Therefore, people’s belief in it is very sincere, and the search for it is very diligent. Few can destroy this delusion.”\(^{399}\) His view also reflects the fact that the search for this-worldly benefit by means of fengshui was quite popular in late Ming. However, Zhuhong criticized this tendency and did not approve the practice of fengshui. With critical thinking, Zhuhong questioned the efficacy of fengshui by pointing out that some families were very much concerned about fengshui, yet their descendents were led into miserable situations, such as the case of the First

\(^{397}\) ZB, in DZZBB 23, 193.
\(^{398}\) ZCSB, in DZJB 23, 249
\(^{399}\) ZDL, in DZJB 23, 345.
Emperor of Qin. He also noted that various fengshui masters had different views about a certain grave site, sometimes causing conflict among the family members who wanted to choose an auspicious site. All in all, Zhuhong opposed the practice of fengshui, and he concluded, “Wherein does the theory of fengshui reside? [My] crazy words are grating, but only the wise could be aware of them (my words).”

Thus, Zhuhong criticized the Buddhist monks of his monastery for paying too much attention in finding a good site for his grave. He said,

I am already sick and old. The monks intend to select a site for the pagoda [for my remains]. They have changed the site many times. I lament and say, “The worldly people try with every effort in arranging fengshui for the hope that their descendents should always be wealthy and honorable. Do you [monks] expect to have a “State Master with purple gown” by the influence of the [grave] site?”

From Zhuhong’s description, we know that the monks of the Yunqi monastery still believed in fengshui. Zhuhong realized that his argument opposed their beliefs, yet he still criticized them.

In Buddhism, the prohibition of involvement in the practice of fengshui and divination is in the category of the minor precepts. To neglect minor precepts had been a trend in Chinese Buddhist history since many of those minor precepts were not practicable in China. Hanshan followed this trend and neglected the minor precepts. On the contrary, he treated fengshui as an expedient means to benefit sentient beings. However, Zhuhong emphasized the direction of keeping Buddhist precepts and was critical to the practice of fengshui. Thus, he opposed Buddhist monks indulging in the practice of fengshui.

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400 ZDL, in DZJBB 23, 345-346.
401 ZB, in DZJBB 23, 169.
As for Zibo, he did not comment on the texts of Confucianism and Daoism systematically, yet he presented his viewpoints on these traditions in many of his essays. Many of his viewpoints were similar to Hanshan's. First of all, Zibo praised Hanshan's discourse of the syncretism of the Three Teaching. After reading Hanshan's *GLYL*, he said that "It is enough to remove the everlasting delusion," and urged his disciples to publish it.\(^{402}\) Zibo also valued Confucian morality and reconciled it with Buddhism. He proposed that the Buddha presented the utmost filial piety since he preached Buddhism to his mother and led his mother to enlightenment.\(^{403}\) While Hanshan advocated broad learning, Zibo urged his disciples to widely study the commentaries and texts of Three Teachings before they realized the Mind.\(^{404}\) Similar to Hanshan, Zibo argued that the sages and worthy kings of Confucianism, the genuine men (*zhenren* 真人) of Daoism, and the Buddhas were all the manifestation of Bodhisattvas.\(^{405}\) In addition, Zibo argued that the reason why the followers of the Three Teachings criticized each other was because they did not realize the sage's Mind.\(^{406}\)

As Hanshan emphasized the role of enlightened Mind in understanding various teachings, Zibo had similar idea. He said, "Generally speaking, in the practice of supra-mundane Dharma first of all one should enlighten one's Mind. Then one should clearly extend the boundary of Mind and exhaust both the texts of Buddhism and worldly learning."\(^{407}\) Zibo also proposed that if one were proficient in the doctrines of

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\(^{402}\) *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 826b.

\(^{403}\) *ZBZB* 4, in *XZJ* 127, 142b.

\(^{404}\) *ZBZQ* 24, in *XZJ* 126, 1052b.

\(^{405}\) *ZBZQ* 21, in *XZJ* 126, 1004a.

\(^{406}\) *ZBZQ* 15, in *XZJ* 126, 902ab.

\(^{407}\) *ZBZQ* 7, in *XZJ* 126, 749a.
Consciousness-only, he would realize that all the forms of worldly learning are the same as Buddhism. In addition, he argued, "If one intends to search for the mind of Mencius, he should search in himself. When one realizes one's own Mind, he realizes the Mind of Confucius and Mencius." Like Hanshan, Zibo also adopted the concept of Mind to interpret the Three Teachings. However, he treated the Mind as reality, the Three Teachings as designations, slightly different from Hanshan’s in terminology.

Zibo expressed his unique views on the Three Teachings too. Concerning Buddhism and Confucianism, he argued that there was originally identicality between the Three Refuges of Buddhism and the Three Bonds of Confucianism; similarly, there was no difference between the Five Precepts of Buddhism and the Five Constants of Confucianism. In addition, Zibo expressed his view about Neo-Confucianism. He said, "Although the daoxue has defects, it exceeds worldly learning quite a lot. Although the Chan tradition has defects, it exceeds daoxue quite a lot." Zibo also advocated the study of the Classic of Change and argued that the Change (Yi) could manifest Dao and the virtues. In regard to Daoism, while Hanshan argued that the Zhuangzi clarified the obscure meaning of the Laozi, Zibo argued that Zhuangzi was not the disciple of Laozi.

408 ZBZQ 7, in XZJ 126, 759b.
409 ZBZQ 5, in XZJ 126, 729a.
410 ZBZQ 9, in XZJ 126, 797a.
411 ZBZQ 7, in XZJ 126, 748b.
412 ZBZQ 2, in XZJ 126, 661b.
413 ZBZB 4, in XZJ 127, 142a.
414 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 818b.
415 ZBZQ 9, in XZJ 126, 785a. Zibo wrote, "After I read the Zhuangzi, I realized that Zhuangzi was not the disciple of Laozi. After I read the Mencius, I realized that Mencius was not the disciple of
As a synthesizer of late Ming Buddhism, Zhixu not only had the opportunity to select the viewpoints he liked from his predecessors, but he also proposed his own viewpoints. For example, similar to Hanshan, he viewed all the teachings as expedient means.\footnote{LFZL 6-1, in DZJBB 23, 677.} In addition, Zhixu regarded that the Mind as the origin of the Three Teachings.\footnote{LFZL 7-4, in DZJBB 23, 747.} Zhixu treated all the teachings as traces, and advised his disciples not to grasp the traces. According to him, it was unsuitable to regard the traces (teachings) as identical to the Dao. He proposed, “While [the teachings of] ultimate and provisional are all traces, they do not depart from the Dao. However, if one grasps the traces to discuss the Dao, then Dao will be obscured.”\footnote{LFZL 5-3, in DZJBB 23, 659.}  

Additionally, Zhixu emphasized the role of an enlightened Mind in understanding the Three Teachings as Hanshan did. He stated, “The sages of the Three Teachings were those who did not delude the Mind. If one does not delude his Mind, Confucianism, Daoism, and Confucianism are all suitable [for him].”\footnote{LFZL 2-3, in DZJBB 23, 517.} Zhixu also adopted the Buddhist concept of Mind to interpret the Confucian concept of benevolence (ren 仁).\footnote{LFZL 9-5, in DZJBB 23, 747.} He treated the substance of ren as the Mind, and argued that everyone was endowed with it; the most important thing was to realize it directly.\footnote{LFZL 9-5, in DZJBB 23, 747.} Moreover, he argued that Yao 尧, Confucius. Why is that? Laozi did not debate, yet Zhuangzi was good at debate. Confucius talked about the Nature with flexibility, yet Mencius talked about it with inflexibility. When one debates, he loses the genuine. When it is inflexible, it is not efficacious.”\footnote{LFZL 7-4, in DZJBB 23, 747.}  

\begin{itemize}
\item Ouyi Zhixu, Sishu ouyi jie buzhu 四書誦益解補註 (Taipei: Zhongsheng wenhua Chuban, 1995), 174. See also, DZJBB 23, 425.
\end{itemize}
Shun, Confucius, and Yan Hui realized nothing more than that there was no dharma outside the Mind.\textsuperscript{422}

Like his predecessors, Zhixu agreed that the sages of China were the manifestation of Bodhisattvas who were dispatched by the Buddha to teach the Chinese people. Zhixu also argued that Confucianism and Buddhism could clarify each other.\textsuperscript{423} In addition, Zhixu proposed that Confucius was the sage of the Human realm, Laozi was the sage of the Heaven realm, and the Buddha was the sage who really exhausted Nature and attained pure Dharmakāya. Slightly different from Hanshan’s argument, Zhixu argued that Confucius and Laozi focused on active engagement with the world, yet the Buddha focused on transcending the world.\textsuperscript{424} In addition, Zhixu proposed that Buddhism was more profound than Confucianism. He proposed, “The deep principle of Buddhism is not what ordinary Confucians can understand. Only a man with great wisdom can truly believe [in it].”\textsuperscript{425} As the other three Great Masters did, Zhixu did not include religious Daoism in his discourse of syncretism; he proposed that alchemy was not the teaching of Laozi. He said, “As for the inner alchemy and outer alchemy, they are not originally the purport of Laozi, thus there is no necessity to discuss [them].”\textsuperscript{426}

Zhixu also tried to reconcile Buddhism and Confucianism. For example, he commented on the Classic of the Change (yi) and the Four Books of Confucianism. He wrote, “The reason why I comment on the Change (yi) is nothing other than taking Chan

\textsuperscript{422} LFZL 2-5, in DZJBB 23, 541.
\textsuperscript{423} LFZL 3-1, in DZJBB 23, 579-580.
\textsuperscript{424} LFZL 5-3, in DZJBB 23, 659.
\textsuperscript{425} LFZL 2-1, in DZJBB 23, 500.
\textsuperscript{426} LFZL 5-3, in DZJBB 23, 659.
to deal with Confucianism, and introducing Confucians to understanding Chan.  

In addition, he highly valued the function of Confucianism and held that Confucianism would nurture sincere Buddhist monks, as he proposed, “The rise or decline of Buddhism is connected to the prosperity or decay of Confucianism. The moral practice and learning of Confucianism are indeed the vein and marrow of Buddhism. Therefore a sincere Confucian in the mundane world could then be a sincere Buddhist monk when he became a monk.” In order to defend Buddhism from the Confucian’s attack that the Buddhists did not practice filial piety, Zhixu argued that both mundane and supramundane dharmas took filial piety as their principles. Zhixu also reconciled the Three Teachings. He proposed that the sages all took the same principle of great compassion of Buddhism. In addition, he argued that Dao was neither mundane nor supramundane; Dao was neither one nor three. Therefore, one should not be attached to any teaching.

Zhixu also proposed unique viewpoints on the Three Teachings. First, he argued that the Principle of Change (Yi) of Confucianism that existed before the Great Extreme (taiji 太極) was identical to the origin of Buddha nature; Laozi’s concept that Dao produces the heaven and earth also implies the same meaning as the Principle of Change and the origin of Buddha Nature. Second, he argued for identity between the One Mind of Buddhism and the virtues of Confucianism, such as loyalty (zhong 忠) and reciprocity (shu 忠). 

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427 LFZL 6-2, in DZJBB 23, 682.  
428 LFZL 2-4, in DZJBB 23, 537.  
429 LFZL 4-2, in DZJBB 23, 610.  
430 LFZL 2-1, in DZJBB 23, 499.  
431 LFZL 5-3, in DZJBB 23, 659.  
432 LFZL 3-1, in DZJBB 23, 580-581.  
433 LFZL 2-3, in DZJBB 23, 519.
Third, he often adopted terms and concepts from Neo-Confucianism, and cited the words of Neo-Confucians in his discussion, such as Zhu Xi, Lu Xiangshan, and Wang Yangming.\textsuperscript{434}

To serve as the background for understanding Hanshan’s interpretation, this chapter discussed the impact of intellectual context on individuals, provided a brief introduction of the intellectual context of the late Ming, and demonstrated the viewpoints of the Four Great Masters of late Ming Buddhism. We can see the Four Great Masters’ similar concerns and the multiplicity of perspectives when they reacted to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism. I have shown that the Four Great Masters presented a plurality of viewpoints on Chinese tradition. The next chapter investigates in detail how Hanshan proposed discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings with his Buddhist interpretation.

\textsuperscript{434} LFZL 3-1, in DZBB 23, 576-582.
CHAPTER 4
HANSHAN’S SYNCRETIC VIEW OF THE THREE TEACHINGS

Hanshan presented his syncretic view of the Three Teachings mainly in two essays, namely “Introduction to Commentary on the Daodejing” (daodejingjie fati 道德經解發題) and in the “Contemplating [the teachings of] the Laozi and the Zhuangzi as Shadows and Echoes” (guan laozhuangyingxiang lun 觀老莊影響論). In these two essays, Hanshan proposed detailed discourses of syncretism of the Three Teachings. Many scholars pointed out that Hanshan adopted Buddhist concepts to reconcile the Three Teachings. Based on this argument, I propose that Hanshan presented a syncretic character in his discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings while he reconciled the Three Teachings through his unique Buddhist interpretation. In order to demonstrate this argument, this chapter investigates in detail Hanshan’s syncretic view and his Buddhist interpretation of the Three Teachings.

Before discussing Hanshan’s syncretic view, I would like to make a brief comment about the syncretism of the Three Teachings. In Chinese intellectual history, there existed simultaneously both pro and con attitudes regarding syncretism of the Three Teachings. Because of the lack of statistics, it is difficult to judge which trend was dominant in any given period of history. Nonetheless, many Chinese thinkers expressed their viewpoints.

about syncretism and provided valuable materials for us to explore the complex phenomenon of syncretism. Chinese intellect’s attitudes to the Three Teachings could roughly be divided into two major groups. One group regarded one’s own tradition as the best, and criticized others’ traditions as heterodox. The other group intended to harmonize the contradictions among different teachings, and valued the functions of different teachings. In each of the three traditions, we can find intellectuals belonging to either group.

In addition, there was an inclination for the mainstream to ignore or suppress the alternative tradition. For instance, when Buddhism dominated in the Tang and the Five Dynasties, many prominent Buddhist monks, such as Jizang and Yanshou, criticized Confucianism and Daoism, and they valued Buddhism as the highest teaching. Similarly, when Neo-Confucianism occupied the predominant position after the Song Dynasty, Neo-Confucians criticized Buddhism and Daoism severely. It was more likely, when a tradition was subordinated, that its followers would adopt the position of syncretism. Nonetheless, even when Buddhism was dominant in the Tang Dynasty, there were Buddhist monks, such as Zongmi, who proposed the syncretism of the Three Teachings.

Many scholars agree that Zongmi’s (780-841) thought on the syncretism of the Three Teachings plays a significant role in Chinese Buddhist intellectual history. Before him, Buddhist monks, such as Jizang of the Sanlun School, Fazang

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of the Huayan School, and Daoxin of the Chan tradition, criticized the doctrines of Laozi and Zhuangzi.\textsuperscript{438} Zongmi’s master, Qingliang Chengguan, opposed the mixing of the doctrines of Buddhism with Confucianism and Daoism, and criticized Chengying’s adopting Buddhist concepts to comment on the Laozi and Zhuangzi.\textsuperscript{439} However, Zongmi adopted a more inclusive attitude toward Confucianism and Daoism. He introduced the Buddhist concept of Mind to reconcile the Three Teachings.

In Chinese intellectual history, the pursuit of orthodoxy accompanied with various kinds of criticism was also an endless competition among followers of the Three Teachings. For example, Zhu Xi harshly criticized Buddhism for being harmful to the morality of mankind. He said,

\begin{quote}
The mere fact that they discard the Three Bonds (between ruler and minister, father and son, and husband and wife) and the Five Constant Virtues (righteousness on the part of the father, deep love on the part of the mother, friendliness on the part of the elder brother, respect on the part of the younger brother, and filial piety on the part of the son) is already a crime of the greatest magnitude. Nothing more need be said about the rest.\textsuperscript{440}
\end{quote}

Based on Confucian morality, he severely criticized Buddhism and advised students to keep away from Buddhist doctrines.

Facing other tradition’s criticism, in order to survive, Chinese Buddhists had to deal with the hostility from other Chinese traditions. The rise of Neo-Confucianism

\textsuperscript{438} See Kamata Shigeo, \textit{Shūmitsu kyōgaku no shisōhi-teki kenkyū} 宗密思想史的思考研究 (Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppansha, 1975), 164-172.


\textsuperscript{440} See Wing-tsit Chan, \textit{A Source Book}, 646.
accompanied with severe attacks on Buddhism formed a tough situation for Chinese Buddhist monks to deal with. In response, they generally defended Buddhism by adopting an accommodative attitude towards Confucianism.  

In the late Ming period, Hanshan felt obliged to deal with the subject of how to reconcile Buddhism with Confucianism. Living in a Neo-Confucian dominated environment, Hanshan was clearly aware of the harsh situation for Buddhism. Once he became a Buddhist monk, he immediately faced criticism from the mainstream Neo-Confucians. Based on this observation, he proposed his syncretic view of the Three Teachings in response. Without exception, the other three Great Buddhist Master also dealt with this challenge. While they proposed different views about the Three Teachings, they all tried to reconcile with mainstream Confucianism.

In this period, other Chinese traditions also proposed various syncretic views. Syncretic forces flourished in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). In the first place, syncretism gained legitimacy through the imperial founder, Ming Taizu (r. 1368-1398), proclaiming the unity of the Three Teachings. Although his syncretism had a political purpose, his essay “On the Three Teachings (sanjiao lun 三教論)” became a source of authority and political support for Ming syncretism. There were advocates of syncretism from different levels and traditions such as Neo-Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and popular religion. According to Judith Berling, in the late Ming each of the Three Teachings had the syncretic character of borrowing, influence, and debts to other traditions, regardless of whether their followers were aware of it or not.

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441 See Koichi Shinohara, “Ch’i-sung’s Essay,” 401.
442 See Berling, Lin Chao-en, 46-61.
Considering the great number of Chinese people and the trend to freely express oneself in late Ming times, we can expect great diversity of thought in this period. Within Neo-Confucians, the followers of the Cheng-Zhu School still adopted an anti-Buddhist attitude. Only a few members of the Taizhou School who rejected the orthodoxy of the Cheng-Zhu School were sympathetic to Buddhism and advocated the syncretism of the Three Teachings. Generally speaking, the arguments for syncretism mostly came from outside Confucianism, that is, from Buddhism and Daoism. Besides, various kinds of syncretism of the Three Teachings were also manifested in the beliefs of popular religion and new religious movements of this period.

Although many arguments for syncretism of the Three Teachings were proposed in the late Ming, I argue, this trend was not the mainstream of this period. As a matter of fact, Neo-Confucianism was the dominant trend of this period. In the dominant Confucian bureaucracy of late Ming times, Daoism and Buddhism were suppressed by this system. For example, some officials declared that in the civil service examination those examined should not be selected if they cited words from Buddhist or Daoist texts. In the pursuit of civil service examination, it is imaginable that the majority of those examined did not dare to show sympathy openly to Buddhism and Daoism. Only a few members of the Taizhou School, such as Wang Ji, Jiao Hong and Li Zhi, were sympathetic to Buddhism and Daoism openly. When Li Zhi presented his rebellious character, he was criticized severely by mainstream Confucians and was eventually accused and died in jail. Without exception, other figures that promoted the syncretism of

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444 Zhen Zhiming, Mingdai sanyijiaozhuyanjiu (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1988), 60.
the Three Teachings also faced criticism from the Confucian mainstream. Thus, most of
the intellects of this period were careful not to openly show sympathy to Buddhism and
Daoism. It is fair to maintain that the syncretism of the Three Teachings was not part of
mainstream thought during this period.

Even if syncretism was not the dominant trend during the late Ming, it will not
reduce the significance of those arguments for syncretism from this period, since these
opinions reflect an alternative trend and demonstrate the diversity of thought in this
period. A brief introduction of their syncretic arguments will help our understanding of
the variety of viewpoints on this subject. Within Neo-Confucianism, many of the
arguments of syncretism came from members of the Taizhou School. Within the Taizhou
School, Wang Ji’s (1498-1583) theory of syncretism of the Three Teachings was most
influential. Wang Ji was a leading member of Taizhou School. He was a student of Wang
Yangming. However, he was not totally satisfied with Wang Yangming’s doctrine of
Mind. Interestingly, he regarded the teachings of Huineng 慧能, the Sixth Patriarch of
Chan tradition, as the highest. His Buddhist influence was clearly shown in his
commentary on the Analects (IV: 8), in which he says,

The Way has neither birth nor death. Having heard the Way one can therefore
sweep through the barrier between day and night as well as unify birth and death.
[With one’s mind] being vacuous, tranquil and full of light, one then leaves the
world as if transcending it. There is neither birth nor death to be spoken of.
Hence the saying, “He may die in the evening without regret” which means that
he has experienced the state of neither birth nor death.445

The concept of “neither birth nor death” is clearly Buddhist, which shows the strong
influence of Buddhism on him.

However, Wang Ji proposed his syncretic strategy of "Three Teachings returning to Confucianism" from a Confucian perspective, which was later followed by Lin Zhaoen and Li Zhi. Basically, he grounded his syncretism of the Three Teachings on Wang Yangming’s doctrine of innate knowledge (liangzhi 良知). However, he also questioned the Neo-Confucian view that Daoism and Buddhism were heterodoxies. Like many advocates of syncretism argued that the Three Teachings were complementary for mutual understanding based on their own traditions, Wang Ji also pointed out, “The truths of the other two teachings can be fully confirmed only if Confucianism is clearly understood.” Jiao Hong, one of Wang Ji’s followers, also advocated syncretism of the Three Teachings from Confucian perspective; he treated Buddhism as a Confucian commentary.

While Confucians proposed syncretic view from Confucian perspective, Buddhists tended to propose their syncretic views from Buddhist perspective. For example, Hanshan argued that in order to understand the Laozi and the Zhuangzi one should penetrate Buddhism first. He stated,

I propose that those who read the Laozi and the Zhuangzi should first be well acquainted with Buddhist teachings and penetrate thoroughly the Lengyan Sutra. When one has understood the Buddha’s argument of destroying attachment, then one will not be confused by their (Laozi and Zhuangzi’s) words.

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446 See Yü, “Chiao Hung Revisited,” 34-35. For a detailed study of Lin Zhaoen, see Berling, Lin Chao-en.

447 See Feng, Zhongguo zhexueshi, 969-972.


449 Edward T. Ch’ien, “Chiao Hung and the Revolt,” 280. For a study of Jiao Hong’s syncretic view, see Ch’ien, Chiao Hung, 67-113.

450 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 827b.
Likewise, Daoist scholars also based themselves on Daoist perspectives to propose their syncretic view. For example, Lin Xiyi and Lu Xixing argued that Buddhism originated from Daoism. From these examples, we can see that each of them proposed a discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings based on one's own tradition.

The syncretism of the Three Teachings was also obvious in popular religion and the new religious movement such as *Luojiao* 羅教 and *Sanyijiao* 三一教. In the Ming dynasty, although the state employed tight control over religious activities, religious needs did not decline; various kinds of religious activities were still active. Many new religious movements emerged in this period and attracted numerous followers. New religious movements tended to borrow the teachings of the ancient sages and mix them to form new doctrines. They included various teachings as their guide to behaviors. They also mixed various teachings and interpreted them as eventually the same. An obvious example was *Sanyijiao*’s basic argument of “uniting the Three Teachings as one (*sanjiao heyi* 三教合一).” In addition, Luo Qing 羅清, the founder of *Wuweijiao* 無為教 (School of Non-action), also conducted his teaching by mixing his enlightenment experiences with the doctrine of the Three Teachings, which is preserved in the collection of his writings, the *Five Volumes and Six Books* (*wubu liuce* 五部六冊). Luo Qing presented his classification on the Three Teachings. For instance, Luo Qing identified

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451 *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 817a.


Confucianism with the principle of “uprightness” (*zheng* 正), Daoism with that of “honor” (*zun* 尊), and Buddhism with that of “greatness” (*da* 大).\(^{454}\) While he adopted many Buddhist concepts in his writings and mixed them with Confucianism and Daoism, his teachings were not well organized.\(^{455}\)

**Hanshan’s Syncretic View**

In the late Ming period, Hanshan provided his discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings from a Buddhist perspective. I argue that in Buddhist circles, Hanshan presented the most inclusive attitude to the Three Teachings in comparison with the other three Great Buddhist Masters. First, Hanshan argued that the Three Teachings were all essential and none of them could be neglected. He commented,

> I always take three things to encourage myself, namely, if one does not understand the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, one cannot actively be involved in the world; if one does not understand the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*, one cannot forget the world; if one does not practice Chan, one cannot transcend the world. [If one] realized this, I would like to discuss these teachings with him.\(^{456}\)

In addition, Hanshan proposed that the Three Teachings were complementary. He noted, “An ancient honorable once said, ‘Confucius is helpful to the precepts since he was serious in regulating the body. Laozi is helpful in concentration since he was proficient in forgetting himself. The teachings of the two sages and that of the Buddha

\(^{454}\) This distinction comes from the Yuan’s syncretist Liu Mi’s *Sanjiao pingxin lun* 三教平心論. See Liu Mi, *Sanjiao pingxin lun*, T 52, no. 2117, 781.


\(^{456}\) *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 819b-820a.
should be mutually dependent and functioning." Third, Hanshan emphasized the practice in the human path, by which to reconcile with Confucianism. He proposed, “Viewing from this, [If we] give up the human path, there is nowhere to establish Buddhism, and if there is no Buddhism, there is no way to exhaust the one Mind. Hanshan proposed that Buddhism took the human path as base. Since he was a Buddhist monk he argued that the human path took Buddhism as the ultimate.”

Hanshan’s syncretic view, I propose, was one of his responses to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism. In his writings, Hanshan sensed the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism. For example, he lamented that most Buddhists of his time were ignorant about other traditions and were unwilling to study them. He stated,

I always saw that [Buddhist] students opened and read the commentaries of sutras. When they unexpectedly ran across the citations from collections of philosophers and history, they regarded them as a tiger that blocked the street, and were too frightened to go forward. If [I] instructed them to study them, they would say, “those are the teachings of other schools,” and turned their head away.

Thus, he advocated broad learning and said, “If one studies Buddhism yet he does not penetrate the philosophy of the various [other] schools, he knows neither worldly knowledge, nor Buddhism.”

Hanshan, in particular, held that Buddhists should learn all the Three Teachings since just using Buddhism was not enough to engage in the worldly affairs. He wrote,

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457 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 825b-826a.
458 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 823a.
459 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 819b.
460 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 819b.
As for the Buddhists of the later time, if they do not understand Laozi, they will merely look into the emptiness; in front of them everything is obstacle, and each thing is not free. If they do not understand Confucius, and just use Buddhism to engage in worldly affairs, definitely, they do not understand the worldly way or human affairs. When they meet with people, they immediately talk about darkness and subtlety, which is as useless as selling [them] the head of a dead cat.\(^{461}\)

From his description, we can see that Hanshan urged Buddhists to learn Confucianism and Daoism.

Not surprisingly, Hanshan promoted the idea that a Bodhisattva should learn broadly for the purpose of benefiting sentient beings from a Mahāyānist viewpoint. Citing a paragraph of the *Huayan Sutra* as example, he noted,

As for the sage of the stage of Fifth Ground (*wudi shengren* 五地聖人), when he engaged in the world for the purpose of delivering sentient beings he had to be well-versed in worldly texts, techniques, medical recipes, and various kinds of theories concerning books and seals. Then [he] was able to accord with the capability of his audience.\(^{462}\)

From the above, we know that Hanshan adopted inclusive attitude to the Three Teachings and worldly learning, including various kinds of theories and techniques since he regarded them as expedient means to relieve sentient beings.

Under the dominance of Neo-Confucianism, Hanshan found it necessary to defend Buddhism. The orthodox Neo-Confucian attack on Buddhism as amoral was focused on the Buddhist institution of monasticism or “leaving the home” (*chujia* 出家) that goes against Neo-Confucian value of the family and escapes from social responsibility. In facing the challenge of Neo-Confucianism, Chinese Buddhists had to tackle the ethical

\(^{461}\) *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 830a-830b.

\(^{462}\) *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 830b.
problem they had been criticized for.\footnote{See Charles Wei-hsun Fu, "Morality or Beyond: The Neo-Confucian Confrontation with Mahāyāna Buddhism," \textit{Philosophy East And West} 23.3 (1973): 395.} Hanshan was aware of this situation and tried to defend Buddhism from Confucian criticism via his syncretic strategy.

First, Hanshan took Śākyamuni Buddha as an example to illustrate that the Buddha also emphasized worldly morality. Hanshan argued that the Buddha was certainly concerned with the Human path and he had demonstrated his human relations. Hanshan commented,

\begin{quote}
Therefore, the fact that the sage of our Buddha was not born from emptiness and why he took Jingfan 淨梵 as father and Moye 摩耶 as mother demonstrates that there are ruler and parents. Taking Yeshu 耶輸 as his wife demonstrates that there are husband and wife. Taking Luohou 羅候 as his son demonstrates that there are father and son. \footnote{\textit{GlyL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 823b.}
\end{quote}

Hanshan further argued that the Buddha fulfilled his filial piety, as he wrote, “After he had attained Buddhahood, he entered the palace to carry his fathers’ coffin, and went up to Heaven Daoli 忉利 to teach Buddhism to his mother, by which he demonstrated that the way of Buddha did not give up the way of filial piety.”\footnote{\textit{GlyL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 823b.}

Second, Hanshan proposed that many of the Buddha’s behaviors were for the purpose of demonstrating the value of Buddhism; one cannot judge by his behaviors without knowing his intention, yet criticize that the Buddha was not concerned with this world. All in all, Hanshan argued that the Buddha recognized the human relations, yet his intention was to get rid of all kinds of cravings and desires and to transcend Human and Heavenly realms. He proposed,
Moreover, that he (the Buddha) must leave his parents and became a monk is not that he was without ruler and parents, but to cut off the passion for ruler and parents. That he discarded and ignored the glory of the state is to demonstrate that rank and benefit are burdensome. That he cast aside his wife is to demonstrate the harm of craving. That he retreated into the deep mountains for asceticism is to demonstrate the practice of getting rid of desire. That he first practiced the other school’s four kinds of pervasive concentration is to demonstrate that he could leave the Human realm and enter the Heaven realm. That he gave up these and realized the way of perfect enlightenment is to demonstrate that the practices of the Human and Heavenly are not valuable.  

Third, Hanshan argued that the Buddha was actively engaged in the world. He wrote, “Then he (the Buddha) said, ‘I attained Buddhahood (cheng dengzhengjue 成等正覺) in the bodies of all sentient beings,’ . . . Once he engaged in this world to deliver sentient beings, if this [action] was not active engagement with the world, what was it?” In order to show that Buddhism also advocates active engagement with the world, Hanshan demonstrated the sameness between benevolence of Confucianism and precepts of Buddhism. He wrote,  

Therefore, Confucianism takes benevolence (ren 仁) as essential; Buddhism takes the precepts as essential. For example, both the saying “Filial piety and brotherly love are the essence of benevolence” and the Buddhist saying “Filial piety is named as a precept” are in fact the same. Viewed from this perspective, does Buddhism entirely lack means for active engagement with the world?  

Furthermore, Hanshan proposed that the Five Precepts of Buddhism were identical to the Five Constants (wuchang 五常) of Confucianism and the Ten Goodnesses of Buddhism were identical to the methods of cultivation of Confucianism such as rectifying the mind  

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466 GYLJ, in XZJ 127, 823b.  
467 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829b.  
468 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830b.
and being sincere. By these claims, he tried to defend Buddhism from the criticisms of Confucianism.

Buddhism was also criticized as a foreign teaching from the West (India). In order to defend Buddhism from this criticism, Hanshan upheld the universality of Buddhism. He argued that the Buddha was concerned with all sentient beings; in addition, his teachings could benefit sentient beings of all regions, including China. He wrote,

Moreover, the Buddha was the teacher of the Three Realms and the father of four kinds of living beings; were his teachings only preached for the people of that region, and were the people of hundreds of thousand miles away totally outside of the scope?

Hanshan also adopted the concept that all the people were endowed with Buddha nature to defend against the criticism that the Buddha was a person from the West. He wrote,

Those who read [Buddha’s] teachings did not examine this carefully, but said, “Those were people of the west, and these were people of eastern land.” [I would say that] the people have the distinction between those and these; however, are there two kinds of Buddha nature?

Furthermore, based on Buddhist theory of Eighth Consciousnesses, Hanshan argued that all the sentient beings had attachment to self and he implied that only Buddhism could destroy the attachment to self. He commented,

Yet all the sentient beings are based on the Eighth Consciousness to have birth and death. As for the emotion of stubborn attachment to self, did only the

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469 MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 842a-843a.
470 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 825a.
471 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 825a.
472 The Eighth Consciousness is a distinctive concept of the Yogācāra Buddhism. This term is a specific concept promoting by Yogācāra tradition. In the Yogācāra tradition, the Eighth Consciousness is the “storehouse-consciousness,” which is the basis of the former seven Consciousnesses and is also the common basis of all dharmas. Thus, it is regarded as the root of birth and death.
sentient beings of that region have attachment, and the sentient beings here have no attachment?\footnote{473}

Hanshan disliked the mutual criticism among the followers of different traditions. In order to reduce the mutual criticism, Hanshan provided this analysis,

However, each of the philosophers regarded his small knowledge and view as correct. Each of them is attached to his self-view, and regarding only their own view as certainly correct. Once one regards his view as correct, he regards everyone else under heaven as wrong. As a result, none is really correct.\footnote{474}

Here, Hanshan pointed out that ordinary people tend to grasp at the views of their traditions, which in turn causes controversies. Because people are egocentric and stick to their particular teachings, most people limit themselves within their traditions. Hence, he described them thus: “What a pity! The followers of the later age were all bound by [their own] teachings.”\footnote{475}

Thus, Hanshan advocated the concept of cutting open boundaries, which was one of Hanshan’s unique arguments about the syncretism of the Three Teachings. He proposed that the controversies among different traditions were caused by those followers who did not enlighten the Mind. Accompanying his emphasis on the enlightened Mind, he tried to cut open the boundaries of the Three Teachings. Thus, he proposed his discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings to deal with the controversies among different Chinese traditions.

In Chinese intellectual history, it is common to deal with a problem from the root and origin, not from the branch and tip. Hanshan also followed this tendency. In order to

\footnote{473} \textit{GLYL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 825a.
\footnote{474} \textit{ZNHZ}, 189.
\footnote{475} \textit{DJFT}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 830a.
harmonize the Three Teachings, he mostly took the teachings of Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi and the Buddha as the subjects in his discussion. He did not include the thought of later Neo-Confucians and later Daoists in his discourse of syncretism. In addition, Hanshan did not include religious Daoism in his discourse of syncretism. According to him, the alchemical practice of Quanzhen 齊真 Daoism was both wrong and useless.476

In order to reconcile the Three Teachings, Hanshan first treated all the teachings as having originated from the Mind. He adopted Zhuangzi’s metaphor that under the same wind, holes of different shapes sounded differently as his basis. He argued that since human beings are endowed with various capacities, it is natural that they propose diverse viewpoints. Thus, he invented the term “shadows and echoes of Mind” to view all the teachings. According to him, regardless of how diverse all the teachings are, they have the same origin of Mind; one should realize the origin while admitting their differences.

While Hanshan tried to reconcile the Three Teachings, he criticized the syncretic view of popular religions saying that they borrowed concepts from the main Chinese traditions and mixed them with vulgar words. Hanshan expressed his opposition to Wuweijiao, a popular religion he encountered in Shandong province in his forties. He observed that the followers of Wuweijiao were a group of people who were vegetarians yet they did not know the correct path of Buddhist practice. He regarded the teaching of the Wuweijiao as mixing the phrases stolen from Buddha and patriarchs with vulgar language in order to delude foolish people. Many people of that area followed the teaching of Wuweijiao, and did not pay respect to Buddha, instead slandering Buddhism.

476 MYQJ 10, in XZJ 127, 346a.
Hanshan felt pity for these people because they possessed the good will to practice, yet they were not aware that they were misled to a wrong path. Hanshan hoped that these people could give up the wrong path and return to the right path. In short, Hanshan did not agree with their anti-Buddhist attitude and he regarded the teaching of Wuweijiao as heterodoxy.

Hanshan also employed the concept of expedient means in his syncretic view. Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes the concept of expedient means (Skt. upāya; Ch. fangbian 方便) in awakening sentient beings, which enables Buddhists to explain why there are various teachings in Buddhist sutras. Hanshan proposed that it was essential to teach according to the capability of the audience, as he wrote, “Therefore a patriarch also said, ‘If the teaching does not accord with the capacity of the audience, it is essentially vain speech.’” Hanshan strongly argued that the sages all employed expedient means in their teaching. Just as a physician makes prescriptions based on the conditions of the disease, the sages tried to solve the problems people face. Therefore, they provided different therapies to cure various problems.

In order to reconcile the Three Teachings, Hanshan especially proposed that the substance and function of the Three Teachings were all the same. While many held that the Three Teachings are identical in substance yet different in function, Hanshan argued that the substance and the function of the Three Teachings were all the same. He pointed out that the Three Teachings were different only in depth. Although he recognized that the Three Teachings were different in their perspectives on active engagement with the world,

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477 MYQJ 46, in XZJ 127, 842b.
478 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830b.
forgetting the world and transcending the world, he sought to emphasize their identity. He argued,

The substance and the function are all the same, but they are different in depth and extent. If Confucius really had had an ego, he would have planned only for his own benefit; how could he actively engage with the world? If the Buddha and Laozi really had rejected the world, they would have aimed at their self-salvation; how could they benefit sentient beings?

Logically, in order to reconcile the Three Teachings Hanshan had to argue that the substance and function of the Three Teachings were the same. Therefore, he promoted the belief that all of the Three Teachings had the same substance and function.

In order to clarify that the substance and function of the Three Teachings are the same, Hanshan further analyzed them in detail. He argued the Mind that was un-moved, pure, and bright was the substance, and the actions of benefiting sentient beings manifested from the substance of the enlightened Mind was the function. In addition, he argued that the function was the spontaneous manifestation of the substance of the enlightened Mind.

Hanshan further proposed that in both Confucianism and Daoism, there were examples talking about substance which was identical to the Buddhist concept of no-self, and examples talking about function which was identical to the concept of benefiting sentient beings. In regard to Confucianism, Hanshan treated the phrase “being quiet and un-moved” of the *Classic of Yi* as referring to substance and the phrase “he responded and penetrated under the heaven” as referring to function. In addition, “Being illuminated, then it is sincere” of *The Doctrine of the Mean* referred to substance, “Being sincere, then

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479 *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 829a.
it manifests” referred to function. While “rectifying the heart and making the mind sincere” of the *Great Learning* referred to substance, “Cultivating oneself, regulating family, ruling state, and pacifying under the heaven” referred to function. As for the *Laozi*, Hanshan proposed that Laozi’s nameless referred to substance and “Being non-action, yet it acts” referred to function. Via these examples, Hanshan could justify his argument.

Citing passages from the important texts of the three Teachings, Hanshan proceeded to demonstrate the sameness of the substance and function of the Three Teachings. As for Confucianism, Hanshan pointed out that Confucians said “Only heaven is great, and only Yao followed its greatness; being so vast, the people could not name it,” and “The person who took non-action to govern was Shun 禹 indeed.” Hanshan proposed that in these passages Confucius talked about the substances of nameless and non-action of Daoism.

In regard to Laozi, Hanshan proposed that Laozi took non-action to actively engage with the world to show that Laozi also had the function of engaging with the world of Confucianism. He wrote, “As for the phrases in this text, such as ‘Act, yet do not govern,’ and ‘When the merit has been accomplished, do not occupy it,’ all take non-action as the great function of active engagement with the world.” As for Buddhism, he cited from the *Liezi 列子* that “There was a great sage in the West; he was without word, yet [he was] truthful; he was non-action, yet [people] transformed” to prove that the Buddha also had the substance of nameless and non-action of Daoism.

Hanshan proposed that the Mind of sages was all the same and he viewed all the teachings as flowing from the sages’ enlightened Mind. He wrote, “As for the ancient

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480 *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 829ab.
481 *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 829b.
482 *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 829b.
sages, they were nothing but those who enlightened the marvel of the Mind. All of their discourses and teachings flowed from their marvelous enlightened Mind.”^483 In addition, Hanshan proposed that the sages were the same since they were all endowed with compassion, non-action, and actively engaged with the world to show the sameness of the sages’ Mind. According to him, the sages of the Three Teachings knew each other. He wrote,

I have ventured to say, “If Confucius had not understood Laozi, he definitely would not have been happy; if he had not understood the Buddha, he definitely would not have been patient. If Laozi had not understood Confucius, he would not have continuously talked about governing by non-action; if he had not understood the Buddha, he definitely would not have taken compassion as treasure. If the Buddha had not actively engaged the world, he definitely would not have stayed in the world to teach sentient beings.”^484

According to Hanshan, since the sages’ teachings flowed out from the enlightened Mind, they were not contradicted. However, ordinary people did not understand the sage’s Mind, yet they grasped their traces, as Hanshan well put it:

Yet the disciples did not understand the sage’s Mind, and they were likely to say, “His Dao is like this, and that is all.” Therefore, [they] grasped the traces of the ancient kings and were anxious about rank and honor. They had stubborn attachment to self with reckless greed, and thus were troubled by their lives.^485

All in all, the sages’ teachings were all the same; the contradiction among the Three Teachings was caused by the attachment of ordinary people.

^483 GYL, in XZJ 127, 818a.
^484 DJFS, in XZJ 127, 830a.
^485 GYL, in XZJ 127, 821a.
While Hanshan argued that the substance and function of the Three Teachings were all the same, he recognized that their approaches were different because they had various concerns. He argued that the sages taught different teachings in order to fit the capacity of their audiences.\textsuperscript{486} Hanshan also argued that the difference among the Three Teachings resided in the sages' different concerns. The Buddha's concern was how to liberate sentient beings from the suffering of birth and death. Confucius' concern was the social order and peace of the human realm. Laozi's concern was how to transcend the human realm and attain the heavenly realm; thus, he advocated the teachings of separating from desire.\textsuperscript{487}

Hanshan further analyzed the different devices of the Three Teachings. Based on the concept of Mind, Hanshan wrote, "All the doctrines of the Three Teachings are to protect their follower's mind, gradually from shallow to deep, and from near to far."\textsuperscript{488} Hanshan also proposed that although their approaches were different, there were no differences in their Mind. Hanshan held, "From this, we know that Confucius' principle of Mind had never disagreed with Laozi's. But in order to establish norms for his school and to protect the worldly standard, he had no other choice."\textsuperscript{489} Hanshan concluded, "This is why their functions are different in extent. Therefore, we know that for the sages of the Three Teachings, what is identical is their Mind, and what is different are their traces."\textsuperscript{490}

\textsuperscript{486} \textit{GLYL}, in XZJ 127, 820b.

\textsuperscript{487} \textit{GLYL}, in XZJ 127, 821a-821b.

\textsuperscript{488} \textit{GLYL}, in XZJ 127, 821a.

\textsuperscript{489} \textit{DJFT}, in XZJ 127, 829a.

\textsuperscript{490} \textit{DJFT}, in XZJ 127, 830b.
According to Hanshan, Confucius tried to prevent human beings from embodying animal behaviors; thus, his rules were strict. In addition, Confucius’ teaching was in accordance with his time and the human condition. Therefore, it was easy to practice. Hanshan argued,

Confucius intended human beings not to have the behaviors of the tiger, the wolf, and other animals. Therefore, he took benevolence, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom to help them. Tentatively, [he] caused them to discard evil and follow good, and to transform from being animals to being human. . . . His rules were strict, yet his doctrines were feasible, close to the human situation and easy to practice.491

Furthermore, he proposed, “Because Confucius intended to support the worldly Way, tentatively he started from oneself, family, state, and then reached the realm. Therefore his teachings remained [only] in China.” However, Hanshan stated, “Because Confucius rejected the barbarians, his teachings have been practiced only in China.”492

As for Laozi, Hanshan argued that Laozi saw the degenerated minds of his time and the defective misuse of Confucian morality; thus, he advocated the concept of discarding sages and abandoning cleverness. Hanshan wrote, “He (Laozi) saw the degenerated minds of his time, therefore he thought to return to great antiquity.”493 By that, Laozi intended to guide people with better behaviors. Hanshan also argued that while Laozi pointed out the dangers of blind pursuit of fame and benefit, he was not really retreating from the society. According to Hanshan, Laozi had the intention of improving society, just as Confucius did. Moreover, the sage described in the Daodejing was one who

491 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821a.
492 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 830b.
493 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830a.
governed the world by non-action and spontaneity. Thus, Laozi’s concern of benefiting people was the same as that of other Chinese traditions. Nonetheless, his doctrines were too deep to be understood by ordinary people. Hanshan proposed, “Therefore every phrase he spoke was different from ordinary talk. Because he knew that his Way was too great to be tolerated [in China], he went far away to the desert.”

Hanshan also maintained that the purpose of Zhuangzi’s criticism of Confucius was to defame those attached to the trace of Confucius’s teaching, which is similar to the Buddha’s scolding those attached to the traces of the Two Vehicles. Hanshan wrote,

Nonetheless, when the Buddha criticized the Two Vehicles, he did not [really] criticize [the teaching of] the Two Vehicles but criticize those attached to the tracks of the Two Vehicles. [He] expected that they would discard the Small [Vehicle] and turned to the Great [Vehicle]. As for the allegation “Zhuangzi defamed Confucius,” he did not [really] defame Confucius but criticized those who studied [only] the track of Confucius. [He] expected that they would discard sagehood and abandoned cleverness.

Hanshan further argued that Zhuangzi’s words were for the purpose of destroying attachments. Although Zhuangzi’s words were severe, Hanshan proposed, his intention was the same as other sages.

Hanshan also followed the former Chinese Buddhist syncretic strategy in treating Confucius and Laozi as transformations of Bodhisattvas. He said, “Were these two sages (Confucius and Laozi) originally not the forerunners of Buddhism dispatched secretly by

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829b.}
\footnote{DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830a.}
\footnote{GLYL, in XZJ 127, 826a.}
\footnote{GLYL, in XZJ 127, 826a.}
\footnote{GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821b.}
\end{footnotes}
In regard to Confucius, Hanshan proposed, "If viewed from the perspective of his intention of liberating the world, was he not a person who taught the way of active engagement with the world according to the Bodhisattva Vehicle? There is a great reason why a sutra calls him 'Confucian youth (rutong 儒童)." Except Confucius and Laozi, Hanshan also proposed that Zhuangzi was a forerunner of Buddha. He wrote, "I argue that he (Zhuangzi) was our Buddha's forerunner for destroying attachment, and his words are trustworthy. If people could not understand even his words, how could they understand Buddhism?"

In Hanshan's discourse of syncretism, he classified the Three Teachings under the system of Buddhist classification of teachings. He adopted the Buddhist classification of the Five Vehicles to include Confucianism and Daoism. The Five Vehicles contain Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas, Śrāvakas, Heaven, and Human Vehicles. Hanshan identifies Confucianism as belonging to the Human Vehicle, Daoism as belonging to the Heavenly Vehicle. The other higher three Vehicles, of course, are in the category of Buddhism. Hanshan argued,

From this, we realize that Confucius was the sage of the Human Vehicle. Therefore, [he] dedicated himself to Heaven in order to manage the human being. Laozi was the sage of the Heavenly Vehicle. Therefore, being purified and without desire, [he] left the Human realm and entered the Heavenly realm.

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499 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830a. This idea was mentioned in Pozielun 破邪論 and Bianzhenglun 辯正論; see T 52, 478c; T 52, 493c.

500 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821a. The sutra Hanshan mentioned is Qingjing faxing jing 清淨法行經, a spurious scriptures promoting that Confucius, Yan Hui, and Laozi were the manifestation of Bodhisattvas. This sutra is not extant; however it is cited by Buddhist essays such as Erjiaolun 二教論 and Pozielun 破邪論; see T 52, 140a; T 52, 478c.

501 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 822a.

502 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 820b.
However, in order to reconcile Confucianism and Daoism, Hanshan also proposed that Confucianism and Daoism were in accordance with Buddhism. He proposed, “Viewed from this perspective, then all of the teachings of the Five Vehicles are the Buddhist teaching; all of the practices of the Five Vehicles are the Buddhist practice.”\(^{503}\)

In addition, he argued that Confucius had also preached the Bodhisattva Vehicle;\(^{504}\) he praised Zhuangzi, saying his Mind was like a Bodhisattva’s. He said, “If viewed from the perspective of his mind of compassion and benefiting the world, he included both the Human and the Heavenly [Vehicles], and contemplated both being and non-being, which was like a Bodhisattva’s (mind).”\(^{505}\)

In particular, Hanshan promoted Laozi to the Pratyekabuddhas Vehicle while he also regarded Laozi as a Bodhisattva. Hanshan treated Laozi’s teachings as the teachings of Two Vehicles. He stated,

As for the teachings of Laozi, he argued that nothing is more troublesome than having the body. Therefore, [he] destroyed his body in order to return to nothingness. There was nothing troubling the body earlier than having cleverness. Therefore, [he] discarded his cleverness in order to submerge in emptiness. [His teaching] was like the [teachings of] Two Vehicles (Pratyekabuddhas and Śrāvakas Vehicles).\(^{506}\)

He also wrote, “Born in a time without a Buddha, he (Laozi) could realize emptiness by contemplating the transformation; he was like a Pratyekabuddhas.”\(^{507}\)

\(^{503}\) GLYL, in XZJ 127, 829b.

\(^{504}\) GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821a.

\(^{505}\) GLYL, in XZJ 127, 822b.

\(^{506}\) GLYL, in XZJ 127, 822b.

\(^{507}\) GLYL, in XZJ 127, 822b.
In order to reconcile Confucianism, Hanshan treated the practice of the Human Vehicles as the foundation of all stages of cultivation. He noted, “After all, the different stages of cultivation are indeed established from the Human Vehicle. Therefore, the Human [realm] is the foundation of both the sage and the ordinary person.” In addition, Hanshan argued that the Human path was easiest in terms of attaining enlightenment, and the Buddha did not neglect the worldly way. He wrote,

[The reason why] he taught in the human realm is to demonstrate that the Human path is easiest for attaining enlightenment. [The reason why] he was supported by kings and ministers shows that he actively engaged with the world and he did not go outside the worldly way.  

In Hanshan’s discourse of syncretism, he still placed Buddhism at the highest position and regarded Buddhism as the most inclusive teaching. First of all, Hanshan praised the Buddha as the sage who transcended the sage and the ordinary people and he could manifest in any form and in any realm:

The Buddha was the sage who transcended the sage and the ordinary people. Therefore, he could be a sage or an ordinary person; when he was in the Heavenly realm, he manifested as a heavenly being; when he was in the Human realm, he manifested as a human being. Even in different kinds of categories and shapes, there was nowhere that he did not enter.

Thus, Hanshan proposed, “As for the Buddha, his substance includes empty space, his function extends to numberless worlds; he manifests according to [the needs of] various kinds of sentient beings.” In addition, Hanshan wrote, “As for the Buddha, his teaching

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508 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 823a.
509 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 823b.
510 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 820b.
covers three thousand worlds, is vastly great, and does not make any distinction.511
Moreover, Hanshan argued that since the Buddha preached the Four Noble Truths in the
dialects of the frontier, the barbarians all followed his teachings.512 All in all, he treated
Buddhism as the most inclusive teaching.

Hanshan's syncretic view also reveals the influence of Chinese traditions. For
example, he adopted the term "sage" to describe Confucius, Laozi, and the Buddha. In
addition, Hanshan appreciated Zhuangzi's Dao of "inner sage and outer king." He wrote,

His (Zhuangzi's) teaching is about Dao of "inner sage and outer king," which
means that when he realized Dao in his mind, he was a sage inwardly; when he
had no other choice but responding to the world, he was a king outwardly. His
teaching includes substance and function; it is not empty word.513

Hanshan also adopted Daoist terms in his discussion. For example, he used the term
"genuine ruler (zhenzai 真宰)" as a synonym of the Mind. He noted, "If one tries not to
become attached to his viewpoint and not to regard one's view as correct, he must
enlighten his inherent genuine ruler (zhenzai), and get rid of the false self of the physical
body."514 Continuing this thought, he argued, "Yet people only follow what issues from
their personal desires, and do not know that the genuine nature is the ruler. Because they
are confused with the genuine ruler, they follow their desires and chase after things, and
are not aware of returning to the origin."515

511 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829b.
512 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 826a.
513 ZNH, 369.
514 ZNH, 190.
515 ZNH, 205.
Hanshan's Buddhist Interpretation of the Three Teachings

While Hanshan's discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings has a syncretic character, it also features his Buddhist interpretation. He chiefly adopted Buddhist concepts in his discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings. For instance, from a Buddhist perspective Hanshan established that the substance of no-self and the function of benefiting sentient beings of the Three Teachings were all the same. Hanshan argued that the sages of Confucianism and Daoism realized the Buddhist concept of no-self. Hanshan also argued that because the sages realized the substance of no-self, they manifested the same function of benefiting sentient beings. In regard to Confucianism, Hanshan proposed, “Only by no-self could one view all under heaven as oneself, therefore, it is said, ‘Yao and Shun regarded themselves as the same as the people.’” In addition, he pointed out that Yao and Shun realized no-self and employed that to actively engage with the world. As for Laozi, Hanshan proposed, “Laozi said, ‘[I] was constantly skillful in teaching people, therefore there were no abandoned people.’ If there are no abandoned people, all the people can become Yao and Shun.” Hanshan argued that Laozi also actively engaged with the world using no-self. He wrote,

Because all the people are possessed of the same substance, what makes them different is that they are obstructed by their selfishness. Because the people's minds are the same, once their minds are the same, they will not be obstructed by form. Therefore, [they] were untired of teaching them and managing them. This is the reason why one could actively engage the world with no-self.

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516 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829a.
517 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829b.
518 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829b.
519 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829b.
All in all, Hanshan argued that the sages of the Three Teachings all realized the concept of no-self.

Hanshan also adopted the Buddhist concept of attachment to self in his discourse of syncretism. He considered the causes of controversies among traditions as the result of attachment to self. According to Hanshan, because of attachment to self there arose the infinite debates concerning right and wrong.\textsuperscript{520} Therefore, Hanshan advocated the idea of destroying attachment to self to solve these debates. He pointed out that “The defects of these scholars are all caused by the evil of attachment to self. If one can work hard to destroy his attachment to self, he will then cut open the boundaries [among different traditions] and become a great master.”\textsuperscript{521} Thus, many of his discussions cluster around the subject of how to practice in order to destroy attachment to self.

Based on the Buddhist concept of attachment, Hanshan interpreted many aspects of the Three Teachings. Hanshan proposed, “If one intends to make various arguments even, he should first destroy his attachment to self.”\textsuperscript{522} He further argued that all the Three Teachings talk about destroying attachment to self. For example, Confucius taught Yan Hui to “overcome self (keji 克己),” according to Hanshan, which means destroying attachment to self; moreover, the four kinds of defects mentioned by Confucius also referred to attachment to self. Hanshan held,

\begin{quote}
The reason ordinary people are unable to act like a sage is because they are possessed of the defects of the four words of “yi 意 (intended),” “bi 必 (bound),” “gu 固 (obstinate),” and “wo 我 (egocentric).” Therefore they are not at ease, and they suffer whenever they act. Confucius realized that the root of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{520} ZNHZ, 197.

\textsuperscript{521} DJFT, in XZJ 127, 830a.

\textsuperscript{522} ZNHZ, 274.
ordinary people's defects resided here, therefore he seriously urged them to
discard them (these defects). This kind of teaching is identical with Buddha’s
and Laozi’s principle of no-self.  

As for Daoism, Hanshan argued that Laozi especially established his teachings on
the foundation of destroying attachments by discarding cleverness, neglecting the body,
separating from desires, and being pure. In order to show the sameness among Confucius’
four kinds of defects, Laozi’s “discarding cleverness and neglecting body,” and the
Buddhist concept of “destroying attachment,” Hanshan proposed,

As for Laozi, he surpassed ordinary people one step further, therefore he
established his teachings by focusing on destroying attachments in particular. He
urged people to discard cleverness, to neglect the body, to separate from desire,
and to become pure and quiet. Yet, the cleverness to be discarded is the selfish
cleverness, namely “yi” and “zi”; the body to be neglected is “gu” and “wo”; the
desire to be separated from is one’s selfishness. When purified, it is vast and
without obstacle, like the great empty space, which is Confucius’ “great fairness
(dagong 大公).”

However, Hanshan still held that Buddhism could destroy more attachments than the
other traditions. He concluded, “As for the attachments that are to be destroyed, the four
kinds of defects mentioned by Confucius are still gross attachments.” While the four
kinds of defects of Confucianism are gross attachment, Buddhism teaches the existence
of both gross and subtle attachments to self and Dharma. Hanshan commented,

As for the teachings of our Buddha, though they are vast and great, in summary
their purposes are to destroy sentient beings’ two kinds of gross and subtle
attachments to self and Dharma (euio wofa erzhi 靈細我法二執). When these
two kinds of attachments have been destroyed, one attains Buddhahood. All the

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523 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 828b.
524 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829a.
525 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829a.
In addition, Hanshan argued that only Buddhism was able to verify and guide the boasting words of Laozi and Zhuangzi. He wrote, “As for the boasting words of Laozi and Zhuangzi, I propose, except Buddhism, none is capable of verifying and guiding them.”

Furthermore, based on Buddhist perspective of One Mind, Hanshan analyzed the wrong views of Confucianism and Daoism. Hanshan proposed,

Based on the fact, those who are attached to Confucianism are involved in [the concept of] “causes and conditions,” and those who are attached to Laozi are plunged into [the concept of] “spontaneity.” In essence, neither of them has departed from the “Nature of Consciousness” because they could not completely investigate the one Mind. Nonetheless, the Buddha had departed from the Mind and Consciousness. Therefore, it (the *Lengyan Sutra*) said, “It is originally neither ‘causes and conditions,’ nor is it the nature of spontaneity, only by realizing this can one penetrate the origin of One Mind.”

All in all, Hanshan held that Confucianism and Daoism could not penetrate the origin of One Mind, which causes them wrongfully attach to “cause and condition” or the nature of spontaneity. Only the Buddha had penetrated the origin of One Mind.

Hanshan also introduced Buddhist practice in his discourse of syncretism. For example, he proposed, “The effect of contemplation is the greatest, and all the sages of the Three Teachings indicated this to the people.” He often adopted the concepts of stillness (*zhi*) and contemplation (*guan*) in his discussion. Basically, he argued

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526 *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 828b-829a.
527 *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 826a.
528 *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 825b-826a.
that the practice of Three Teachings all started from stillness and contemplation. According to Hanshan, Confucius’ methods belonged to the Human Vehicle and Laozi’s methods belonged to the Heavenly Vehicle while Buddhism included the stillness and contemplation of the Three Vehicles. Hanshan admitted that the Three Teachings are all concerned with how to destroy attachment to self by various practices, while they differ in depth. He said,

As for the concepts of stillness and contemplation of Buddhism, there are differences in depth, such as stillness and contemplation of the Three Vehicles, of the Human and of the Heavenly (Vehicles). As for Confucius, he belongs to the stillness and contemplation of Human Vehicle. As for Laozi, he belongs to the stillness and contemplation of the Heavenly Vehicle. Although the stillness and contemplation of the Three Teachings are different in depth, in essence, in dealing with the defects that they intend to cure, they all regard destroying attachment to self as the first step of practice.

With regard to the stillness and contemplation of Confucianism, Hanshan proposed, “Confucius also said, ‘By knowing stillness, then one attained concentration (zhizhi erhou youding 無所謂有定),’ and said, ‘Being sincere in oneself, one is illuminated (zhicheng ming 自誠明).’ This is the stillness and contemplation of the Human Vehicle.” The reason it belongs to the Human Vehicle is because it does not transcend relative distinctions. Hanshan commented,

Therefore, Confucius devised the teachings of benevolence, righteousness, ceremony, and wisdom as a dam to cause them (his disciples) to get rid of evil thinking, to discard evil, and to follow good tentatively. Since he regulated titles

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529 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 828a-829a.
530 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 828a.
531 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 822a.
and duties, and corrected the ranks of high and low, his way did not depart from distinction.\textsuperscript{532}

Hanshan argued that the stillness and contemplation of Daoism were higher than those of Confucianism, and categorized Daoism as belonging to the Heavenly realm. He quoted the \textit{Lengyan Sutra} to support his point, and wrote,

As for their (Laozi and Zhuangzi’\textquotesingle s) practice of stillness and contemplation, all of them \textit{[focus on]} leaving the body and discarding cleverness in order to depart from desire and become pure. This is what [The \textit{Lengyan Sutra}] says, \textit{“Disgust with the suffering and gross obstructions below, aspire to the pure and subtle separation above, and hope to leave the Human realm and enter the Heavenly realm.”}\textsuperscript{533}

Hanshan praised the accomplishment of Laozi’\textquotesingle s contemplation as not easy. However, he argued that it still could not destroy the cave of birth and death, namely the attachments to the Eighth Consciousness.\textsuperscript{534} He wrote, \textit{“Alas! Laozi was born in the Human realm, and in a period without the Buddha, yet he could exhaust the origin of transformation, and had deep insight to such an extent. His energetic practice indeed should not be slighted as easy. Yet he did not yet destroy the cave of birth and death.”}\textsuperscript{535}

Hanshan argued that Laozi could destroy the attachment of the former six Consciousnesses and suppress the mechanism of the Seventh Consciousness.\textsuperscript{536} He wrote,

\textsuperscript{532} \textit{GLYL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 824a-824b.

\textsuperscript{533} \textit{GLYL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 822a-822b.

\textsuperscript{534} According to Yog\={a}c\={a}ra theory, sentient beings typically mistake the Eighth Consciousness as their self, a form of ignorance and self-grasping.

\textsuperscript{535} \textit{GLYL}, in \textit{XZJ} 127, 825b.

\textsuperscript{536} In Yog\={a}c\={a}ra theory, one of the primary functions of the Seventh Consciousness is to perceive the subjective position of the Eighth Consciousness and erroneously regard it as one\textquotesingle s own self, thereby creating self attachment. In the \textit{Cheng weishi lun} 成唯識論, it is characterized as \textit{“continually examining and assessing.”} In this function, it is similar to the Sixth Consciousness; however, the Sixth Consciousness has interruptions, yet the Seventh Consciousness\textquotesingle s function is continuous. The Eighth Consciousness, on the
"[He] examined the deep pulse of the mechanism of life, by which he destroyed the attachment to the distinction of the former six Consciousnesses, and suppressed the mechanism of the arising and perishing of the Seventh Consciousness." According to Hanshan, Laozi had not yet realized the essence of Consciousness; he wrongfully regarded the Eighth Consciousness as the Dark truth or spontaneity. He wrote,

Regarding the Eighth Consciousness for those of other philosophical schools, some regarded it as the "Dark truth (mingdi 冥谛)," some regarded it as "spontaneity (ziran 自然)," others took it as "cause and condition (yinyuan 因緣)," and still others regarded it as "Spirit (shenwo 神我)." After all, Hanshan argued that no sentient beings could depart from the Eighth Consciousness. However, only the contemplation of Buddhism could destroy attachment to the Eighth Consciousness so as to transcend birth and death.

This chapter shows that Hanshan’s discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings was one of his responses to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism. He adopted syncretism as a strategy to reconcile with Chinese traditions and proposed the most inclusive attitude to the Three Teachings in the Buddhist circle. Hanshan particularly advocated the concept of cutting open boundaries, which clearly demonstrates his position as an advocate of syncretism. In his discourse of syncretism, Hanshan adopted many Buddhist concepts to interpret the Three Teachings. However, his viewpoint on syncretism also reflects his syncretic character.

other hand, while being continuous, is without the function of discrimination.

537 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 824b.
538 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 825a.
CHAPTER 5
HANSHAN’S INTERPRETATION OF THE DAODEJING

This chapter investigates how Hanshan interpreted the Daodejing. I propose that the most outstanding feature of Hanshan’s interpretation of the Daodejing lies in his unique Buddhist understanding while his Commentary on the Daodejing also reveals syncretic character. Hanshan chiefly adopted Buddhist concepts to interpret this text; however, he also included many native Chinese concepts in this commentary. Thus, Hanshan’s interpretation of the Daodejing reflects both his Buddhist understanding and his syncretic view, which contributes an interesting case to the hermeneutics of the Daodejing.

The fact that Hanshan commented on the Daodejing demonstrates well Hanshan’s syncretic character. First of all, he admitted that the Laozi and the Zhuangzi were popular works of Chinese literature. Like many other Chinese intellectuals, he was fond of the Laozi in his youth. However, because of the terse expression and subtle purport of this text, he could not well grasp its meaning at that time. He wrote, “In my youth, I was fond of reading the Laozi and the Zhuangzi. I was troubled by not understanding their meanings. But from the sections I had grasped, I could imagine their spiritual vein. Therefore, I somewhat understood their intentions that go beyond their words.” Nonetheless, Hanshan was not satisfied with his slight understanding; he tried to find the real meaning of the texts.

Since Hanshan tried to offer a satisfactory interpretation of this difficult text, his Commentary on the Daodejing was a careful and deliberate work. Generally speaking, he

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539 ZDX, in XZJ 127, 488a.
was a quick writer; many of his commentaries were composed in a short time. For example, *Lengyan xuanjing* (The Hanging Mirror of the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*) or *Daxue jueyi* (Resolution of Doubts in the *Great Learning*) was completed in one night. He could also compose dozens of poems in hours. Nonetheless, because of the terse and obscure expressions of the *Daodejing*, he took 15 years to complete it. He noted,

> In some cases, I comprehended a phrase through tens of days, in other cases, I comprehended a chapter through years. I started it at the Donghai (a place in present Shandong province) and finally completed it during my stay in South Yue (the present Guangdong province), from the year of *renchen* (1592) till the year of *bingwu* (1606), when fifteen years had passed.\(^540\)

During these fifteen years, Hanshan encountered the greatest change of his life. It is probable that his *Commentary on the Daodejing* revealed his thought during this period. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Hanshan was exiled to Leizhou for military service because of his involvement in the court struggle. This exile forced him to re-examine his past, and caused many breakthroughs and changes in his thought and attitudes. For instance, Hanshan became humble and tried to “soften the light” and merge with ordinary people. As a matter of fact, Hanshan praised these virtues in his commentary.

Interestingly, Hanshan observed the fact that each commentator interpreted the *Daodejing* from a certain perspective. He was critical of the fact that those commentaries he read were composed according to the authors’ viewpoints and they were not the real meanings of the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*. He commented, “When I searched (for the meanings) in various commentaries, most of (the commentaries) were written according
to (their) authors' own opinions. The more I wrestled with them, the more obscure their meanings became.\(^541\) Of course, we can also question whether Hanshan's interpretation can reveal the real meaning of the *Daodejing* or not. A fair answer would be that Hanshan’s interpretation of this text is also a reflection of his understanding.

Hanshan’s intention in commenting on this text also demonstrates the controversy among different Chinese traditions. According to Hanshan's preface to his *Commentary on the Daodejing*,\(^542\) he was not satisfied with other commentaries on this text; thus, he proposed his version through his understanding. In particular, he disagreed with two commentaries of the *Zhuangzi* by Daoist scholars, *Zhuangzi koyi* 莊子口義 and *Nanhua zhenjing fumo* 南華真經副墨,\(^543\) since it was difficult for him to agree with their viewpoints. According to Hanshan, these two commentaries often cited Buddhist sutras to interpret the *Zhuangzi*. However, whenever they found a Buddhist concept that fit with the *Zhuangzi*, they argued that Buddhism originated from it. Hanshan lamented that some ignorant people even agreed with them.\(^544\) He wrote,

Furthermore, I had often seen that scholars and gentlemen who studied the words of the *Zhuangzi* would cite Buddha's words as proof. Sometimes, when [they found] a word that fit, they would say, “All of the Buddhist canon is originated from it.” Alas! Could this be called penetration? ... If one comments on the *Zhuangzi* and regards it as exhausting the Buddhist sutras, he knows neither the intention of Buddha, nor that of Zhuangzi.\(^545\)

\(^{541}\) *ZDX*, in *XZJ* 127, 488a.

\(^{542}\) An English translation of Hanshan’s preface, see Appendix B.

\(^{543}\) These two commentaries are Lin Xiyi’s 林希逸 *Zhuangzi koyi* 莊子口義 and Lu Xixing’s 陸西星 *Nanhua zhenjing fumo* 南華真經副墨; see Zhang Fangling, “Shi deqing,” 94, n. 35.

\(^{544}\) *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 817a.

\(^{545}\) *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 819b.
Obviously, Hanshan could not endure this kind of interpretation. He felt obliged to correct their views, which was one of his motives in commenting on *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*.

Hanshan commented on the *Daodejing* mostly from his Buddhist perspective. First of all, Hanshan emphasized the mystical dimension of the enlightened Mind in his interpretation. As Benjamin Schwartz held, the *Daodejing*’s mystical dimension remains essential while it is variously interpreted.\(^{546}\) Hanshan also highlighted the role of the enlightened Mind in his interpretation. He proposed that only an enlightened one could understand the sage’s Mind.\(^{547}\) Thus, Hanshan disagreed with commentaries made by those who had not enlightened the Mind since they did not and could not understand the sage’s Mind.\(^{548}\) By arguing that the enlightened Mind is essential to understand the sage’s teachings, Hanshan implied that he was eligible to interpret the *Daodejing* since he had had enlightenment experiences. Although the enlightened Mind belongs to the category of mystical religious experience that cannot be discussed by language, Hanshan adopted it as a prerequisite of understanding in his interpretation of the *Daodejing*.

Hanshan also emphasized the role of practice in understanding the *Daodejing*. He proposed, “When Laozi talked about the marvel of Dao, all of his descriptions were what


\(^{547}\) For a discussion of the connection between enlightenment experience and interpretation, see Lopez, “Introduction,” 7-9.

\(^{548}\) *GLYL*, in *XZJ* 127, 818a.
he experienced in his Mind. . . . I hope that students can understand this and they can experience it through practice. In addition, he argued that Laozi's words came from his samādhi; one must first realize Laozi's Mind before he could understand his words. He commented,

Yet his practice began from quietness and stillness, and his words came from his samādhi. The people of later times took their own crooked viewpoint to look at him, and read his book by their impure and distracted minds; they were at a loss and did not know his purport. If they did not realize his mind before examining his words, it is appropriate that they would be frightened and could not understand.

Thus, Hanshan's approach to commenting went beyond philological analysis. For example, he emphasized practice as the basis of commenting on this text. In his commentary on Chapter 67, Hanshan lamented that scholars did not see the basis of practice in Laozi's words. He wrote,

Here, every word of Laozi is real method for practice (gōngfu 工夫), and is close to human feeling; therefore, it says, "It is very easy to understand and to practice (xīng 行)." [However] the scholars regard them as very high; most of them discuss them with [the words of] emptiness and darkness, and cannot practice wholeheartedly. Therefore, [they] do not obtain the benefit. What a pity!

He also pointed out that other scholars were limited to discussion only of the words of Laozi and Zhuangzi, yet did not understand them through practice. He said,

Furthermore, all of those who discussed these two masters did not intend to understand them through the practice of their own, but they just treated them as

549 LDHZ, 57.
550 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821b-822a.
551 LDHZ, 134.
literal language and words, such as zhi, hu, zhe, ye 之乎者也. Therefore, they were far away from reaching understanding of them.\textsuperscript{552}

Hanshan's way of commenting accords with his argument since his commentary was chiefly composed after his meditation sessions. He admitted that he benefited from his meditation in understanding the Daodejing. He wrote,

In my youth I recited the two sentences “Plot the difficult from an easy place, pursue the great from a small place,” and I viewed them just as [applying to] matter. Then I retired in the mountain to practice Dao; in the beginning, it was very difficult; my painstaking efforts were difficult to describe. After I grasped the key of employing the mind, I realized that it was very easy. Nevertheless, the difficulty in the beginning is identical to the easiness now, and vice versa. While managing the mind is like this, extending it to all things under the heaven is the same.\textsuperscript{553}

In addition, Hanshan adopted a meditative approach to comment on the Daodejing. According to him, he contemplated the text in his leisure time after meditation, and recorded the meanings that satisfied him. He wrote, “In the empty mountain and the leisure of my meditation, I carefully thought it over and reflected on it. When there were some words comprehended, I wrote them down.”\textsuperscript{554} However, he also tried hard not to be attached to language and not to distort words to fit in with his interpretation. He wrote, “[I asked myself that I] must obtain the meaning then forget the words, as well as seeing the meaning according to the words.”\textsuperscript{555} Thus, while Hanshan adopted his meditative insight to understand this text, he was also careful in the treatment of each word in his commentary.

\textsuperscript{552} DJFT, in XZJ 127, 828a.
\textsuperscript{553} LDHZ, 127-128.
\textsuperscript{554} ZDX, in XZJ 127, 488a.
\textsuperscript{555} ZDX, in XZJ 127, 488a.
Owing to the nature of multiple meanings of the Chinese character,\(^{556}\) in most cases Hanshan was able to select the meaning that made sense to his interpretation. In his commentary, Hanshan dealt with each difficult word and term; he tried his best to resolve them in order to reach a satisfactory interpretation. In order to smoothly fit in to his interpretation, Hanshan proposed many new definitions to the characters and terms of the *Daodejing*. For example, he defined the character *mou* 謀 of Chapter 64 with a new meaning. He wrote, “The character *mou* is not that which means plotting, it means sincerity and carefulness.”\(^{557}\) By this definition, he suggested that one should be careful about a thought before it arises. As for the character *chi* 持 of the same chapter, he argued that it means the power of employing the mind. Thus, he can clarify the sentence “When it is in ease, it is easy to keep (*qi an yi chi* 其安易持)” from a Buddhist perspective. He commented that in daily life the sage maintained his every thought clearly and without distraction; he intuited the thought before it had been born.\(^{558}\) Concerning the character *xin* 信 in the sentence “*qi zhongyou xin* 其中有信” of Chapter 21, Hanshan interpreted it from Buddhist perspective. He proposed that the substance of Consciousness responded to the six sense organs without any mistake and treated the character *xin* as trustful. He wrote, “Although this substance of Consciousness is formless, it responds to the six sense organs without any mistake. Therefore, it says, “There is something trustful within it.”\(^{559}\)

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556 For a discussion of this topic, see Isabelle Robinet, “Later Commentaries,” 122-123.
557 *LDHZ*, 129.
558 *LDHZ*, 129.
559 *LDHZ*, 77.
There are many other cases that Hanshan proposed new definitions in his *Commentary on the Daodejing*. For instance, in commenting on Chapter 33 Hanshan proposed his new understanding of “qiăngxingzhé youzhi 強行者有志.” He noted, “Only those who forcefully strive for Dao and virtue are people who have will.” Concerning the sentence “bushi qisuo zhé jiù 不失其所者久” of the same chapter, he argued that the character *suo* 所 implied Nature. Thus, he commented, “Only those who embrace Dao and concentrate their spirit so as to recover the genuine Nature are the people who illuminate their virtue forever and remain infinitely graced, of whom it is said ‘Those who do not lose their position last long.’” As for the sentence “*sì er buwangzhé shou* 死而不亡者壽,” he pointed it to those who have recovered the genuine Nature. He commented, “Only by nurturing Nature and recovering the genuine, will his form be transformed and will his Nature exist forever; [one] will attain [the realm] without birth and death, the so-called ‘Those who die yet do not perish live long.’”

Moreover, in commenting on Chapter 26 Hanshan endowed the characters zhong 重, qing 輕, jìng 靜, and zào 躁 with unique meanings to fit his interpretation. He wrote,

The character zhong 重 (heavy) denotes the body, the character qing 輕 (light) denotes matters outside the body, namely official rank, wealth, and honor; the character jìng 靜 (quiet) denotes nature and life, the character zào 躁 (restless) denotes the feelings that indulge desire. It means that the body is the foundation of life, which should be valued; official rank, wealth, sense enjoyment, and benefit of goods are events outside the body, which should not be valued.”

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560 *LDHZ*, 93.
561 *LDHZ*, 93.
562 *LDHZ*, 93. For a comparison of Wang Bi and Heshanggong’s interpretation of this paragraph, see Alan K.L. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way*, 163.
563 *LDHZ*, 83.
Hanshan proposed that the ruler should value the body instead of wealth and benefit, as well as value nature instead of sense desire.

Furthermore, Hanshan treated many terms of the Daodejing as similes, not as Laozi’s direct teachings. In commenting on Chapter 76, he proposed that Laozi valued softness and weakness. According to Hanshan, those persons and plants that are firm and strong are the fellows of death; those persons and plants that are soft and weak are the fellows of life. Different from other commentaries, Hanshan pointed out that troop is the simile of watchful and tree is the simile of an empty mind. He suggested that if one could be watchful like troop and not slight the enemy, he would have victory; the ruler who employed the empty mind was as soft as the branch of tree, he could reside above the people.\footnote{LDHZ, 144.}

Hanshan also proposed that Laozi took the body as a simile of high rank to clarify that high rank was the root of disaster. He wrote,

> Having the body, one cannot avoid the suffering of hunger, cold, and sickness, the great danger of birth and death, and various sufferings that all return to it. Therefore, it says, “The reason why I have great danger is because I have a body.” . . . Laozi proposed that if one realized that the body is a great disaster that is unavoidable, he would realize that high rank is a great disaster that is unavoidable.\footnote{LDHZ, 66.}

In his commentary, Hanshan proposed many new viewpoints on how to understand the Daodejing. First of all, he pointed out that the final sentence was the thesis of that very chapter, writing: “Moreover, the mechanical axis of his writing always resides in the final sentence, which is the thesis of that very chapter. As for the final sentence, it is the
title. If readers realize this, they have already understood more than half. He also analyzed the grammar of the *Daodejing*, and argued that its grammar was quite old; many readers misunderstood it. He proposed,

As for its syntax, there are many cases in which one character makes a sentence, two characters make a sentence, and three characters make a sentence. If people do not recognize this, yet they read them without separating them, neither do they grasp the marvel of Laozi’s doctrine, nor do they understand the wonder of his writing.567

In the *Daodejing*, many sections discuss how to govern the state, showing that Laozi had the same concern with statecraft that other thinkers of that period shared. Laozi’s advice was, however, quite unique. Laozi criticized the artificial projects of civilization and advised the ruler to govern by non-action.568 With an historical consciousness, Hanshan pointed out that Laozi’s argument was a discourse lamenting the times. He wrote,

This is because Laozi saw that the warlords of his time indulged themselves in attacking each other; [they] employed power, not virtue. [They] knew activity, not quietness. [They] saw only the difficulty of mutual obedience, and did not realize that the character low (xia 下) was the easiest method. This is his discourse lamenting the times.569

In commenting on Chapter 80, Hanshan proposed that Laozi blamed the defects of his time. He wrote, “What Laozi said blames the defects of his time. All [rulers] employed

566 *LDHZ*, 55.


568 Benjamin I. Schwartz, “The thought of the *Tao-te-ching*,” 204.

569 *LDHZ*, 124.
action and cleverness, and they were stubborn, fond of competing, and valuing benefits. They were selfish in treating themselves, yet they did not pity their people."\(^{570}\)

It is interesting to note that Hanshan proposed that Laozi was not totally anti-military. In commenting on Chapter 30, he asserts: "However, in order to assist the weak, to support those in danger, and to overthrow tyrants and save people, [the military] is something that we have no other choice but to employ, yet it should be employed in a good manner."\(^{571}\) Hanshan further argued that to employ it in a good manner was to reach the good, and then stop it. One should not brag about the victory or be proud of his achievement in the military.\(^{572}\) Hanshan also recognized that the military was an unauspicious device and that it was not the device of the noble man. When there is no other choice but employing it, the superior way is that of employing it with tranquility and indifference. He added, "As for one who is tranquil and indifferent, he is peaceful and contented; he does not regard exploit and benefit as good. Since he is not greedy for exploit and benefit, although he overcomes, he does not regard it as good."\(^{573}\)

Scholars present differing opinions about the dating of Laozi and Zhuangzi.\(^{574}\) However, Hanshan followed the traditional view that Laozi was earlier than Zhuangzi.

\(^{570}\) LDHZ, 148.
\(^{571}\) LDHZ, 89.
\(^{572}\) LDHZ, 89.
\(^{573}\) LDHZ, 90.
Hanshan proposed, “The Zhuangzi is the commentary on the Laozi. I have always said that the relationship between the Zhuangzi and the Laozi is like that between Mencius and Confucius. If one realizes thoroughly the Dao of the Laozi, then he could consider this text (the Zhuangzi) as being transformed from that (the Laozi).” In his commentary on the Zhuangzi, he traced many connections to prove that Zhuangzi had evolved from the Daodejing.

Hanshan also admitted that the Zhuangzi helped his understanding of the Laozi. He wrote, “When I had already well studied the words of the Zhuangzi, I seemingly understood some ideas about the Laozi.” Since Hanshan argued that the Zhuangzi was an authentic commentary on the Daodejing, he often cited the Zhuangzi to comment on the Daodejing. He proposed, “Because the text of the Laozi is terse and archaic and its purport is deeply dark, Zhuangzi was really the person who commented on it. If one can speculate on its meaning, one has already thought it through more than a half.” Furthermore, he found a connection between the Daodejing and the Zhuangzi. For example, he argued that the Chapter Qiulun of the Zhuangzi was the commentary on the sentence of Chapter 5 of the Daodejing.

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575 LDHZ, 153.
576 ZNHZ, 153; ZNHN, 191-192; ZNHN, 222; ZNHN, 346; ZNHN, 436; ZNHN, 440.
577 ZDX, in XZJ 127, 488a.
578 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 827b; ZNHZ, 153.
579 ZDX, in XZJ 127, 488a.
580 ZNHN, 191-192. The sentence is “The interval between heaven and earth is like a pipe or flute, which is empty yet not bending; the more it is stirred up, the more it produces [sounds]. Since talkativeness frequently leads to exhaustion, there is nothing better than keeping the middle.”
As with Wang Bi, Hanshan viewed the text of *Daodejing* as a whole and employed the method of cross-reference in his commentary. His interpretation drew many connections among different chapters of the *Daodejing*. For example, he argued that Chapter 64 clarified the sentence “Plot the difficult from the easy, pursue the great from the small” of Chapter 63, and showed that the sage could do what people could not do. In addition, he wrote, “This chapter [16] follows the last chapter to advise people to practice stillness; here, [it] shows the method of practice.” As a matter of fact, there are many other examples in his commentary.

Hanshan’s syncretic character was also shown in his adopting concepts of various Chinese traditions in his *Commentary on the Daodejing*. He often cited paragraphs from Confucianism in his interpretation. For example, he cited Mencius’ “Those who do not like killing people can unite them” to argue that Mencius deeply grasped Laozi’s intention of not killing. In addition, he adopted the *Classic of Yi* in his *Commentary on the Daodejing*, and wrote,

[The hexagram] *qian* 乾 [represents] heaven, and *kun* 坤 [represents] earth. If heaven and earth occupy correct position, it forms [the hexagram] *pi* 否 (misfortune); the myriad things do not generate. If the *qian* is below and *kun* is above, it forms [the hexagram] *tai* 泰 (prosperous).

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582 *LDHZ*, 128.
583 *LDHZ*, 70.
585 *LDHZ*, 142.
586 *LDHZ*, 135.
By this analysis, he concluded that the function of heaven resides below; therefore, the sage dwelled below to match the virtue of heaven.

In addition, Hanshan connected “mandate of heaven (tianming 天命)” with the Dao of heaven. “Mandate of heaven” is an important concept in Chinese culture, and was often used to justify the changes of dynasties. However, Hanshan proposed a unique interpretation; he treated it as the Dao of heaven that never misemploys reward and punishment. He wrote, “Thus the Dao of heaven is quite clear above, like a net stretching out. Although it is extensively vast and looks sparse, in fact the retribution of good and evil has never been missed even a little bit.” Worldly people do not realize that “mandate of heaven” acts like this, Hanshan further argued, resulting in the employment of daring and power to compete for fame and benefit, and not considering life and death.

Hanshan also adopted Daoism to interpret Daoism. For example, in his commenting on the Chapter Dechongfu 德充符 of the Zhuangzi, Hanshan argued that this chapter clarified the meaning of the sentence “[He] dwells in the place all people dislike, therefore he is very close to Dao” in Chapter 8 of the Daodejing. Hanshan also introduced Zhuangzi’s “forgetting oneself (wangwo 忘我)” to clarify the concept of the Daodejing that no one can compete with those who do not compete. He wrote,

Since he does not compete, no one under heaven can compete with him, which is what Zhuangzi said, “It is easy to simultaneously forget under heaven, yet it is difficult to let those under heaven forget oneself.” This, however, can let [people] under heaven forget themselves. Thus, no one could compete with him.

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587 A. C. Graham, Disputers of the Tao, 1.
588 LDHZ, 140.
589 ZNHN, 341.
590 LDHZ, 132.
This approach of interpreting Daoism by Daoism is similar to Yinshun’s approach of studying Buddhism by Buddhism. The difference between them is that Yinshun interpreted Buddhism with Buddhist concepts, yet Hanshan employed the concepts of all Three Teachings to interpret the Daodejing.

However, Hanshan’s Commentary on the Daodejing features Buddhist perspective. The primary Buddhist feature of Hanshan’s interpretation of the Daodejing can first be demonstrated by his various citations from Buddhist sutras. It is noteworthy that his citations of Buddhism in his Commentary on the Daodejing came mostly from the Lengyan Sutra, one of his favorite sutras. There is no doubt that the Lengyan Sutra was highly valued in China. More than one hundred commentaries on this sutra were written in Chinese history; the volumes of commentaries on this sutra reached their apex during the Ming dynasty. At least sixty commentaries were composed in that period; Hanshan contributed two of them. The popularity of this sutra was not limited to Buddhism; it was also widely discussed by other traditions. In addition, the thought of True Mind of this sutra became the guiding force of late Ming Buddhism. The other three Great Buddhist Master of the times also promoted this sutra. As Shengyan suggested, Zhixu was mostly influenced by the thought of this sutra. In short, the Lengyan Sutra plays a crucial role in Hanshan’s thought and that of other Buddhist monks of the late Ming.

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591 See Yinshun, Yi foja yanjiu foja, 1.
593 There are many studies about the Lengyan Sutra. See Zhang Mantao ed., Dasheng qixinlun yu lengyanjing kao 大乘起信論與楞嚴經考 (Taipei: Dacheng Wenhua, 1978). A study of the popularity of this sutra in Ming dynasty, see Araki, “現代における楞嚴經の流行,” in Yomeigaku, 245-274.
594 See Shi Shengyan, Mingmo zhongguo fojiao.
The origin of the *Lengyan Sutra* has long been the subject of doubt in Chinese history, since it contains various teachings including Chinese concepts of immortals (*xian* 仙) and the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行).\(^{595}\) However, because the *Lengyan Sutra* contains Chinese concepts, it can be adopted to harmonize Buddhism and other Chinese traditions. Hanshan was aware of the characteristics of this sutra, and felt comfortable enough to cite them. For example, he proposed that one should first understand the *Lengyan Sutra* before reading the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*.\(^{596}\)

Because the *Lengyan Sutra* was great help to his enlightenment, Hanshan highly promoted this sutra. He often cited passages from this sutra in his writings, including his *Commentary on the Daodejing*. For instance, in commenting on Chapter 21 of the *Daodejing*, Hanshan explicated the similarity between the *Laozi* and the *Lengyan Sutra* on the concept of essence (*jing* 精). He commented,

> Therefore it says, “Obscurely and darkly, there is essence in it. Its essence is really genuine (*qijing shenzhen* 其精甚真),” which is exactly what the *Lengyan Sutra* describes as “the only one genuine essence (*weiyi zhenjing* 唯一真精).”\(^{597}\)

Since the *Daodejing* and the *Lengyan Sutra* both use the same Chinese character *jing*, Hanshan interpreted the “jing 精” of the *Daodejing* with Buddhist concept of substance of Consciousness.

Hanshan also cited other terms of the *Lengyan Sutra* to interpret the substance of Dao. For example, he proposed that the substance of Dao of the *Daodejing* was empty and it transcended any expression and thinking. Then, he cited a term from the *Lengyan*

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\(^{595}\) See Li, “Lengyanjing,” 219.

\(^{596}\) *DJFT*, in *XZJ* 127, 827b.

\(^{597}\) *LDHZ*, 77.
Sutra to interpret it. He noted, “This is exactly what the Lengyan Sutra calls ‘the subtle and fine thought that is empty and without sign (wangxiang xuwu weixi jingxiang 国象虚無 微細精想).’ Viewed forward, this substance is without beginning. Thus, [it says,] ‘Facing it, [we] cannot see its head.’ Viewed backward, [it] is endless. Thus, [it says,] ‘Following it, [we] cannot see its rear.’” Since Hanshan found the similarity between them, he interpreted Laozi’s “sign of no sign (無象之象)” by the citation of the Lengyan Sutra.

Since the Lengyan Sutra talks about the hun 魂 and po 魄, Hanshan cited this sutra to interpret Chapter 10 of the Daodejing. He connected hun and po with delusive thinking as well as the state of distraction and sleepiness of the mind. He offered,

However, the ascending soul (hun) is restless and the descending soul (po) is still. By moving with the hun and po, the human being possesses delusive thinking. Therefore, when one is restless, he moves with the hun, which makes him disturbed and distracted. When one is still, he moves with po, which makes him hazy and sleepy. Each of them is not able to embrace the One. Therefore, the Lengyan [Sutra] says, “The essence and spirit as well as the hun and po are repeatedly separating and uniting,” which signifies this [case].

Hanshan also cited the Lengyan Sutra to comment on the Chapter 15 section regarding how to practice stillness. He proposed,

When the mind is as deluded as muddy water, if one deals with it by stillness, it will become clear. It is the so-called [in the Lengyan Sutra] “It is like clarifying muddy water, the sand and dirt will sink by themselves, then the clear water will appear,” which is called “the beginning in suppressing the defilement [that is like] the guest and dirt (chufu kechen fannao 初伏客塵煩惱).”
While Hanshan cited from the *Lengyan Sutra*, he also adopted various Buddhist concepts to interpret this text. While each interpretation of the *Daodejing* has its own unique features, Hanshan's interpretation upholds a Buddhist perspective. In his *Commentary on the Daodejing*, Hanshan employed various Buddhist concepts to interpret this text: Mind, no-self, non-attachment, reducing craving, freedom from craving, the Eighth Consciousness, and the essence of Consciousness (*shijing* 識精). By use of these concepts, he provided many new interpretations of this text. Through the investigation of his interpretation, we can clearly see the impact of Buddhism on his interpretation.

Hanshan's Interpretation of Dao

Since interpretations of Dao occupy the key position of the hermeneutics of the *Daodejing*, how Hanshan interpreted Dao is essential to understand his interpretation of this text. In the hermeneutics of the *Daodejing*, Dao has been interpreted from various perspectives such as ontology, epistemology, phenomenology, methodology, and mysticism. Hanshan adopted many perspectives to interpret it, such as ontology, phenomenology, and methodology. In addition, Hanshan's interpretation of Dao reflects both his syncretic character and his Buddhist understanding.

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Substance, Function, and How to Enter Dao

In his commentary, Hanshan chiefly employed the pattern of substance and function to interpret Dao. In addition, Hanshan highlighted the importance of practice in how to “enter the Dao (rudao 入道)" of the Daodejing. In commenting on the first chapter, he wrote, “This chapter talks overall about the substance and function of Dao, and the practice of entering the Dao. The teachings of Laozi are all in here." According to him, all the teachings of Laozi are completed in the first chapter; the other chapters are but explications of this chapter. In other words, according to Hanshan, the Daodejing has three subjects, namely the substance of Dao, the function of Dao, and how to enter Dao.

First, Hanshan interpreted the substance of Dao from an ontological perspective. He argued that the substance of Dao was something transcendental, constant, and the origin of the myriad things. He wrote,

> It is soundless and cannot be heard; it is formless and cannot be seen. Therefore, [Laozi] says, “Quiet and empty.” [It] transcends the myriad things, and its substance is constant and unchanged. Therefore [Laozi] says, “Independent and unchanged.”

Hanshan followed the Daodejing and argued that Dao was constant, as he said, “Dao exists before heaven and earth, yet it is not old; it exists after heaven and earth, yet it does not end.” In addition, he treated Dao as the root of the myriad things. He wrote,

> “However, Dao is the root of the myriad things. Therefore, without Dao, the myriad things will not be generated.”

In commenting on Chapter 39, Hanshan interpreted the
One as the substance of the Dao. He proposed, “The One is the substance of the Dao; its substance is utmost emptiness and non-action, it is essentially one and not two. All the beings take it as origin.” Here, Hanshan treated the substance of the Dao as the One and as origin. These examples show that Hanshan interpreted the Dao from an ontological perspective such as constant, the root, and the One.

In commenting on the phrase “gu shen busi 谷神不死,” Hanshan also referred to the substance of Dao, since he found a similarity between Dao and the Chinese characters for valley (gu), spirit (shen), and existing forever (busi). He wrote,

Valley is that which is empty and can respond, which serves as a simile that the substance of Dao is utmost emptiness and is marvelously spirited, yet it cannot be probed. It exists forever throughout the time. Therefore, it says, “Valley is spirited and does not die.”

Thus, he proposed that the Dao was utmost emptiness and spirited, and could exist forever. In commenting on the term xuanpin 玄牝, Hanshan defined it as a female animal and interpreted it as the substance of Dao. Hanshan proposed that since it generated the myriad things, it was the so-called “mother of the myriad things.”

The concept of reversal (fan 反) is quite important in the Daodejing. Hanshan interpreted it as the substance of Dao. He adopted the Buddhist concept of emptiness and non-duality of movement and quietness to interpret it. He proposed, “Reversal is the substance of Dao, which means that the substance of Dao is empty, utmost quiet, and is the master of all types of movement. Worldly people only treat movement as movement,

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606 LDHZ, 99.
607 LDHZ, 58.
608 LDHZ, 58.
and do not know that the very place of movement is identical with quietness.® Here, Hanshan followed Sengzhao’s argument in Things Do Not Shift that movement is identical with quietness. In addition, Hanshan argued that all kinds of movement were issued from emptiness and quietness; since “reversal” is the substance of Dao and is empty and quiet, “reverse” is the movement of Dao.® In short, Hanshan treated emptiness and quietness as the master of movement while he argued that “reversal” was the substance of Dao.

Second, Hanshan interpreted the function of Dao from a phenomenological perspective. He argued that Dao has the function of generating the myriad things.

According to him, Dao generates heaven and earth (the Two); heaven and earth generate the Three, which then generate the myriad things. In commenting on Chapter 1, he wrote,

Furthermore, the myriad things are all generated from the transformation of heaven and earth and yin and yang. This is the so-called “the One generates the Two, the Two generates the Three, and the Three generates the myriad things.” Therefore, [it] is the mother of myriad things. These two sentences talk about the function of Dao.®

In commenting on Chapter 25, Hanshan argued that Dao was the mother of all under the heaven and it circulated with the four seasons unexhausted. He proposed,

It circulates with the four seasons, and has never exhausted throughout time, therefore it says, “Circulating and not exhausted.” The character dai 帰 means exhausted. Heaven and earth as well as the myriad things are all generated from it, therefore it says, “[It] can be the mother of all under heaven.”®

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® LDHZ, 101.
® LDHZ, 101.
® LDHZ, 51.
® LDHZ, 82.
Hanshan also adopted Chinese cosmology to interpret the function of the Dao. For example, he states, “The myriad things are evolved from heaven and earth as well as from yin and yang; therefore heaven and earth that has a sign and a name is the mother of the myriad things.” Hanshan followed the concept of the Yijing that the myriad things were evolved from the changes of yin and yang. Therefore, Hanshan treats the second couplet of the Daodejing as talking about the function of Dao, since it shows that the heaven and earth are transformed from the substance of Dao, and in turn the myriad things are evolved from heaven and earth.

Thus, Hanshan proposed that one should realize Dao from both perspectives of substance and function. He wrote,

Thus, [we] know that Dao is the substance, and things are the function. Therefore, Dao is mother, and things are children. If one only knows that the substance of Dao is empty, yet does not know that things are generated from it, [he] knows the mother yet does not know children; then [he] will fall into nihilism. If [one] only know things yet does not know Dao, [he] chases things yet forgets Dao; then [he] will lose the authenticity of his nature.

Third, Hanshan interpreted Dao from a methodological perspective. He argued that the Daodejing included the method of how to enter Dao. For instance, he proposed that “contemplating both being (you 有) and non-being (wu 無)” of Chapter 1 was the method to reach the ultimate of Dao. Thus, Hanshan proposed that one should contemplate both being and non-being. He commented,

It means that when I contemplate non-being, [I] do not simply contemplate non-being. [I] contemplate that in the substance of emptiness, there is the marvel of transformation and generation. When I contemplate being, [I] do not simply

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613 LDHZ, 51.
614 LDHZ, 113.
contemplate being. [I] contemplate that all the phenomena of the world are identical to the principle of the empty and marvelous Dao. Thus by contemplating both being and non-being, [I realize that] they have the same substance. Therefore it says, “These two are the same.”

Differing from Wang Bi’s reading of the third couplet of Chapter 1, Hanshan separated changwu 常無欲 into changwu 常無 and yu 欲, and separated changyouyu 常有欲 into changyou 常有 and yu 欲. He interpreted “changwu yu” as “In daily life, I place my mind on non-being in order to contemplate the subtlety of Dao”; likewise, he interpreted “changyou yu” as “In daily life, I place my mind on being in order to contemplate the boundary of Dao.” He did not employ an ontological view to interpret this couplet. Instead, he interpreted it from the viewpoint of practice in daily life, which allowed him to avoid the paradoxical reading of “with desire (youyu 有欲).”

Hanshan also promoted the method of forgetting both mind and trace to realize the subtle Dao. He wrote,

It means that although [one] contemplates being and non-being simultaneously, if [one] does not forget both mind and trace, it is not really marvelous. Surely, [he] does not know that in the substance of the great Dao, it is not only cutting off the designation of being and non-being, but also separation from the traces of dark subtlety. Therefore it says, “Darken it and darken again.” When his practice attains to this extent, [he] forgets both his mind and outside matters. There is nothing that is not marvelous [to him].

In Commenting on Chapter 63, Hanshan also concluded that this chapter discusses the methods of how to enter Dao. He wrote, “This chapter talks about the essential skills of

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615 LDHZ, 52.
616 LDHZ, 51.
617 LDHZ, 52.
entering Dao, and shows people the method of real practices." In addition, he summarized Chapter 14: "This chapter talks that the substance of Dao as empty as well as transcending the expressions of sounds, forms, terms, and thoughts. The sages took this to govern the world." From these examples, we see that Hanshan interpreted Dao from a methodological perspective.

**Dao and Name**

The first couplet of the *Daodejing*: "dao kedao feichangdao, ming keming feichangming" 道,可道,非常道, 名,可名,非常名” occupies the core position of the *Daodejing*. The interpretation of this couplet reveals the interpreter’s understanding of the *Daodejing*. Hanshan especially adopted a Buddhist concept of “provisional name” to interpret this couplet. Since this couplet contains the concepts of the describable (kedao 可道) and the nameable (keming 可名), Hanshan had to tackle these terms. While he distinguished Dao as describable and not describable, as well as nameable and not nameable, he defined Dao as “the true and eternal Dao.” Then, he argued that the eternal Dao was originally without either sign or name, and thus it cannot be spoken. By this, he argued that Dao was something transcending language; that which can be talked about was not the eternal Dao. As for designation, Hanshan distinguished it as eternal name and provisional name. He argued that Dao was originally without a name; but now that it was

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618 *LDHZ*, 126.

619 *LDHZ*, 67.

forcibly named as Dao, this designation was just a provisional name, not an eternal name, which implies that any given designation is not an eternal name. He commented on this:

The so-called Dao is the true and eternal Dao. The Dao that can be spoken of is simply verbiage. It means that the true and eternal Dao is originally without signs and names, and cannot be spoken. What can be spoken is not the true and eternal Dao. Moreover, Dao is originally without name. Now that it is forcibly titled as Dao, that means that what can be titled are provisional names. Thus it is not eternal name.621

It is quite unique that he used the Buddhist term “provisional name” to explain the sentence “what can be named is not the eternal name.” In addition, Hanshan divided Dao and designation into two categories.

Hanshan proposed that Dao emphasizes namelessness,622 while Wang Bi treated Dao as being designated by non-being.623 Hanshan argued that the whole of Dao was originally nameless. In commenting on Chapter 25, he proposed,

There is a thing (youwu 有物) means the whole of the Dao is originally nameless; therefore, it only says, “There is a thing.” [It] is in one lump and there is no gap within it; therefore, it is called “mixed as a whole (huncheng 混成).” In the beginning there was this thing existing before heaven and earth; therefore it says, “[It] was generated before heaven and earth.”624

Here, Hanshan adopted the concept of nameless to clarify the term “There is a thing.” He argued that the whole of Dao was nameless and Dao was generated before heaven and earth.

621 LDHZ, 51.
622 LDHZ, 97.
624 LDHZ, 82.
Hanshan particularly proposed that the reason the Dao was eternal was because it was nameless. He argued that those with names are destined to change. He commented, “Dao is eternal, since it is nameless.” In addition, he treated the character pu 樸 as the metaphor of namelessness, writing:

That which has a name is destined to change. The reason why Dao does not change is because it is nameless. Therefore, it says, “Dao is eternal, since it is nameless.” The character pu is the metaphor of namelessness; the wood that has not yet been made into a utensil is called pu. ... If the pu is broken up to make a utensil, once it has been so made, it has a name. 625

Hanshan argued that namelessness was more valuable; therefore, the sage employed wordless teaching to transform people. He commented, “Therefore, the sage realized that empty appellation was not worthy of value, thus they dwelled in Dao of non-action to respond to things; [they] realized that words were not applicable, thus they employed wordless teaching to transform people.” 626

There are various interpretations of the relationship between Dao and “the One.” 627 Hanshan adopted the Buddhist concept of “provisional name” to interpret “the One.” According to him, Dao is nameless; “the One” is a provisional name. He comments,

Dao is originally nameless, and is forcibly named as “the One.” Therefore, it says, “Dao generates the One.” However, heaven, earth, humans, and things are all generated from it. Therefore, it says, “The One generates the Two, the Two...
generate the Three, and the Three generate the myriad things. Thus, the myriad things all carry yin and embrace yang.\(^{628}\)

Based on the theory of namelessness, Hanshan also pointed out from a Buddhist perspective that the substance of Dao was utmost emptiness, and it was the origin of heaven and earth; furthermore, the nameless Dao manifests heaven and earth that have names. He noted,

However, as for Dao of no sign and no appellation, its substance is utmost emptiness from which heaven and earth were transformed. Therefore [it] is the origin of heaven and earth. Thus the substance of the Dao that is without sign and without appellation manifests heaven and earth that have signs and appellations.\(^{629}\)

In short, Dao accomplished heaven and earth; the nameless generated the names.

Hanshan connected Dao with namelessness to solve the enigmatic statement “that which is nameable is not eternal name.”

**Spontaneity**

Spontaneity (ziran 自然)\(^{630}\) is one of the main doctrines of Daoism. The sentence “dao fa ziran 道法自然, Dao models spontaneity” in Chapter 25 is a crucial sentence in understanding Laozi’s thought. However, there are various interpretations of it. As

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\(^{628}\) LHZ, 103.

\(^{629}\) LHZ, 51.

suggested by Liu Xiaogan, spontaneity and non-action (wuwei 無為) are two essential notions in Daoism. Therefore the interpretation of these two terms plays significant role in understanding Daoism.

How did Hanshan interpret the concept of spontaneity? According to Hanshan, spontaneity is a factor belonging to the substance of Dao, which makes Dao honorable and valuable. First, he valued the spontaneity of the substance of Dao. He argued that because of this spontaneity, Dao was honorable and valuable, and no one was able to order it. He proposed,

Therefore, we know that Dao does not occupy positions, yet it is honorable; it is nameless, yet it is valuable. The reason it is so honorable is because of the spontaneity of the substance of Dao. Moreover, no one is able to order it, therefore it says, “None is able to order it, and it is constantly spontaneous.”

Second, in commenting on Chapter 25, he employed the concept of “separated from designation (liming juezi 離名絕字)” to interpret spontaneity. He commented,

However, Dao is indeed great, yet it still has designation. Only when it is separated from designation, is it the utmost marvelous and is accorded with spontaneity. Therefore, it says, “Dao models spontaneity.”

In this paragraph, Hanshan clearly expressed that Dao transcended any description by language. He interpreted spontaneity from the viewpoint of separating it from designation.

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632 LDHZ, 112.

633 LDHZ, 82.
Third, he proposed that the subtle Dao was the “originally illuminated essence of the Eighth Consciousness,” which is neither form nor emptiness. Because Laozi did not understand that heaven, earth, and myriad things were transformed from this, and he did not know how to describe it, he called it spontaneity. In other words, Laozi could not understand the essence of the Eighth Consciousness; therefore Laozi called it “spontaneity.” Here, he treated spontaneity as Laozi’s designation for the essence of the Eighth Consciousness. Basically, Hanshan treated spontaneity as a factor of the substance of Dao that is separated from designation. However, since Laozi did not know how to describe it, he called it spontaneity.

In addition, Hanshan suggested that all things were going to reverse when they reached their extreme, which was the spontaneity of the tendency of things. He noted, “However, the reason of the failure of the Qin Emperor resides in that his action was too excessive, and reached the utmost extravagance.” In addition, Hanshan treated Chapter 36 as talking about the spontaneity of the tendency of things. About the sentences of this chapter such as “If it is going to shrink, it must first be stretched,” and “If it is going to weaken, it must first be strengthened”, Hanshan did not agree with the point of earlier commentaries that Laozi was merely being clever here. Specifically, he held, “This chapter talks the spontaneity of the tendency of things, yet people do not realize it; it advises people to employ softness and weakness to act.” He argued that it was what Laozi intuited as the Dao of heaven and grasped as the action of heaven.

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634 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 827b.
635 LDHZ, 88.
636 LDHZ, 95-96.
Buddhist Interpretation of Dao

Hanshan also adopted Buddhist concepts to interpret Dao. For example, he introduced the Buddhist concept of emptiness in his interpretation. He proposed that since the substance of Dao is empty, its function is great. He commented, “The reason why it is constantly spontaneous and never lost is because its substance is utmost emptiness. Therefore, its function is utmost greatness, and the myriad things are based in it to be generated and nurtured.” In particular, Hanshan treated the Dao of Laozi as the substance of the Eighth Consciousness of the Lengyan Sutra. Although the term “the Eighth Consciousness” is included in the Lengyan Sutra, this term is a specific concept promoted by Yogācāra tradition. In the Yogācāra tradition, the Eighth Consciousness is the “storehouse-consciousness,” which is the basis of the former seven Consciousnesses and is also the common basis of all dharmas. Since in the Daodejing Dao is the root of heaven and earth, it is not surprising that Hanshan adopted the Eighth Consciousness to interpret the Dao of Laozi. He proposed,

The great Dao of emptiness and nothingness that Laozi took as principle is the so-called “refined and bright substance of the Eighth Consciousness (bashi jingming zhiti 八識精明之體) that takes dark obscurity as emptiness (huimei wei kong 昏昧為空)” in the Lengyan Sutra.

Here, Hanshan directly equated Dao with the substance of the Eighth Consciousness.

Hanshan also connected the Dao of the Daodejing with the substance of Consciousness based on the similarities between them. He commented,

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637 LDHZ, 112.
638 Peter Harvey, An Introduction to Buddhism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 107.
639 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 824a.
Since the substance of Consciousness had unthinkable gradual influence (busi yi xun 不思議薰) and unthinkable transformation, therefore [he] said, “darker and darker,” and called it the “marvelous Dao.” Since heaven and earth and the myriad things were all manifested from it, therefore [he] said, “[it was] the root of the heaven and earth, and the gate of all kinds of marvels.”

However, Hanshan proposed that Laozi misunderstood the substance of the Eighth Consciousness as the origin of the marvelous Dao. He commented,

And [he] regarded the refined and bright substance of the Eighth Consciousness as the origin of the marvelous Dao, which is the so-called “being empty and without image, [yet] with subtle and refined thinking” of the Lengyan Sutra. Therefore, [he] said, “Being blurred and dim, there is image in it; being dim and blurred, there are things in it.” Because this Consciousness is identical to the whole of ignorance and cannot be penetrated through, therefore [he] said, “being obscure and dark, there is essence in it. . . . and called it the marvelous Dao.”

Since “no-self” is a basic Buddhist concept, and Hanshan adopted the concept of no-self to interpret Dao, this is a clear demonstration of the impact of Buddhism on his interpretation. It is quite unique that he defined Dao as originally no-self, commenting, “Because [Dao] is originally no-self, it simply lets things become generated by themselves. Therefore, when it has accomplished the function of generating things, [it] does not regard them as its belongings.” Moreover, Dao united with things and had no intention to be a ruler, which means that Dao is no-self; on that he wrote, “Since [Dao] unites with things, although it takes care and nurtures the myriad things, it does not regard itself as the ruler.”

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640 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 824b.
641 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 824b.
642 LDHZ, 94.
643 LDHZ, 94.
While Hanshan argued that Dao was empty, he treated Dao as universal. He proposed, “This means that the entirely empty substance of Dao has accomplished the myriad things with designation, thus everything is where the whole body of Dao resides.” However, he also connected this argument with the Chinese concept of “Each thing is a Great Extreme (yiwu yitaiji 一物一太極).” He argued that since Dao resides in everything and everywhere, one should see the reality of Dao in daily life. He proposed, “Just at the present in daily life and in each thing and all matter, [one] should see the reality of Dao. There is nothing encountered that is not where Dao resides. Therefore, Zhuangzi said, ‘Dao resides in tares and weeds; Dao resides in excrement and urine.’”

Here, we can see that Hanshan’s interpretation was influenced by Chan thought. However, while Dao was inherent within us, he argued, ordinary people could not see it; only by practice, could one see it.

It is interesting to note that Hanshan also connected the concept that human nature is the same with his argument that Dao resides in the myriad things. He noted, “Since Dao resides in the myriad things, one can know that human nature is the same.” He implied that since Dao resided in the myriad things, each human being was endowed with the same Dao; thus, human nature is the same. He also suggested that Principle was also originally the same; although there was the distinction of good and evil, nature had never been different. Thus, “Yao and Shun are the same as other people.” Based on this concept, he commented on the sentence of Chapter 62 that under the heaven there is no person who can be abandoned.

644 LDHZ, 52.
645 LDHZ, 113.
646 LDHZ, 125.
Since both Buddhism and Laozi shared the concept of the degeneration in time, Hanshan adopted this concept in his interpretation. When he commented on Chapter 38, he wrote, "This chapter says that the world is degenerate; Dao is further declining and losing its genuineness; and advises people that they should return to the origin."\(^{647}\) Hanshan proposed that when time was degenerating and Dao was in decline, there would be mutual attacks and people could not live peacefully. He wrote,

> When the times were degenerate and Dao was in decline, the sage did not emerge, and the kings were violent. Each of them strove for powerful states and strong militaries. They were not weary of desiring, and they fought for benefit by mutual attacks and bred military horses in the outskirts. The outcome was that people could not live in peace; both cunning and cheating emerged at the same time. All of these are the defects caused by greed and discontent.\(^{648}\)

Based on Buddhist concept, Hanshan interpreted that the defect of mutual attack was caused by greed and discontent.

**Hanshan's Interpretation of Virtue (de 德)**

Besides Dao, the concept of virtue (de) occupies a crucial position in the *Daodejing*.\(^{649}\) Hanshan’s interpretation of the concept of virtue also demonstrates both his syncretic character and his Buddhist understanding. In his commentary, Hanshan followed most concepts of virtue of the *Daodejing* such as the concepts of non-action, being desireless, without intention, discarding the concept of sagacity, eliminating

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\(^{647}\) *LDHZ*, 97.

\(^{648}\) *LDHZ*, 107.

cleverness, not competing, keeping low, weakness, and softness. However, he also adopted Buddhist concepts to interpret the concept of virtue.

Hanshan argued that virtue had the merit of accomplishing things. He stated, “Furthermore, only Dao is able to generate them. Yet they are unable to be nurtured without virtue.” Hanshan employed the concept of without intention (wuxin 無心) to describe that the Dao of heaven and earth accomplishes things. He wrote, “This [chapter] says that the Dao of heaven and earth accomplishes things without intention.” In addition, Hanshan adopted the concept of “without intention” to interpret the superior virtue of the sentence “shangde bude shiyiyoude 上德不德 是以有德.” He stated,

As for superior virtue, it means that the sage of great antiquity darkly united with Dao, and had the same substance with things. Although he let things proceed with their lives, he did not regard himself as virtuous. Since he had no intention (wuxin) of being virtuous, his virtue benefited all the people, and was unforgettable throughout the time. Therefore, [Laozi] says, “Superior virtue does not [presume itself to be] virtuous, therefore it is virtuous.”

Based on the concept of “without intention,” Hanshan proposed that since the sages of great antiquity did not regard themselves as virtuous, they were virtuous. In addition, he wrote, “As for the sage’s virtue of “without intention,” he just gives and does not expect repayment. It is like a creditor possesses the reminding portion of a contract; although he possesses something, it seems that he possesses nothing.”

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650 LDHZ, 111.
651 LDHZ, 57.
652 LDHZ, 98.
653 LDHZ, 147.
As for inferior virtues such as benevolence and righteousness, Hanshan adopted the concept of having intention (youxin 有心) to interpret them. Hanshan proposed that benevolence and righteousness acted with intention and employed cleverness. He commented, “However, benevolence and righteousness all come from inferior virtue, and cannot avoid having intention to act.” Furthermore, while superior benevolence does not presume an intention, superior righteousness presumes it. According to Hanshan, virtue degenerated; therefore, “The ritual simply values the empty words, and no longer recognizes benevolence and righteousness.” Hanshan concluded that the reason it regressed was due to the fault of employing cleverness.654

Similarly, in explaining the sentence “dadao fei you renyi 大道废 有仁義,” Hanshan adopted the concept of “without intention” for interpretation; he treated benevolence and righteousness as inferior since both of them take care of things with intention. He wrote,

The great Dao takes care of things without intention, yet each thing is placed in the right position. Benevolence and righteousness take care of things with intention, thus there is distinction between near and far. Therefore, it says, “When the great Dao declined, there were benevolence and righteousness.”655

Here, Hanshan followed Chan’s concept of non-discrimination and pointed out the disadvantage of intention since it causes discrimination.

Hanshan also argued that virtue (de) emphasizes non-action.656 Non-action (wuwei 無為) is another essential concept of the Daodejing. However, it is also an obscure term.

654 LDHZ, 98.
655 LDHZ, 73.
656 LDHZ, 97.
that has been interpreted in various ways.\textsuperscript{657} Hanshan proposed that non-action was a negative term for “action (youwei 有為).” In other words, non-action does not mean doing nothing; non-action means not employing cleverness or intention to act. When he commented on Chapter 3, he wrote,

This chapter talks about the harm of worldly people that compete for the traces of action, value reputation, love of benefits, and indulge in desire. [He] advises the ruler [to adopt] a method of governance, in order to clarify the real effect of “dealing with things with non-action, and employing wordless teachings” as in the last chapter.\textsuperscript{658}

Hanshan also argued that Laozi employed non-action as a base to establish his teachings. He wrote, “Therefore, Laozi particularly employed the empty mind, non-action, and reserve as the basis to establish his teachings.”\textsuperscript{659} Hanshan argued that non-action was the state wherein both the environment and the mind were forgotten, and wherein self-centered desires were completely cleared up. From the perspective of practice, he proposed that non-action could be attained by practice. In commenting on the phrase “Those who practice Dao decrease daily,” he wrote,

Those who practice Dao discard [their] cravings, forget body, and eliminate cleverness, therefore [it says], “decrease daily.” In the beginning [they] employ wisdom to discard cravings, which could be termed “decrease.” When cravings have been forgotten, cleverness will have been eliminated too, therefore [it says], “decrease again.”\textsuperscript{660}


\textsuperscript{658} LDHZ, 54.

\textsuperscript{659} LDHZ, 144.

\textsuperscript{660} LDHZ, 108.
According to Hanshan, for the purpose of embodying non-action, one should clear self-centered desires, forget body and mind, and finally eliminate cleverness.

Hanshan proposed that designation caused the disasters of attacking and fighting; thus, Laozi promoted “discarding the concept of sagacity and abandoning cleverness.” He states,

And there were those who grasped benevolence and righteousness as the means of robbery and began the disasters of attacking and fighting. Therefore, Laozi pitied them and said that it was a fault caused by honoring sages and employing cleverness. “In discarding [the concept of] sagacity and abandoning cleverness, then the people will be benefited a hundredfold.”

Hanshan further argued that since the sage’s wisdom had been misemployed, it should be discarded. He wrote, “The sage’s wisdom was originally intended to benefit people. Now it has been misemployed, and has become reversed to the detriment of the people. By discarding it and letting people live peacefully and enjoy their jobs, [the people] will be benefited a hundredfold.” Besides, Hanshan proposed that measuring apparatus would cause greed and desire; thus, by cutting them off, the people will not compete with each other. He wrote, “By cutting off the dipping measure and breaking up the weighing apparatus, the people will not compete with each other. How extreme it is, the harm of greed and desire. Therefore, [he] said, ‘Do not reveal what is desirable. It gives causes to the undistracted mind.’”

In addition, Hanshan argued that Laozi recognized the defect of language and treated the teachings of words as the traces of action (youwei 有為). When Hanshan commented

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661 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821ab.
662 LDHZ, 74.
663 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821ab.
on the statement of Chapter 18: "While the six relatives are in disharmony, there are filial piety and kindness," based on the concept of a degenerate time he argued that the terms filial piety and kindness were established to regulate the disharmonies between fathers and sons.⁶⁶⁴ Hanshan proposed that while Laozi regarded language as artificial products, he argued that language caused conceit and tended to fail. In other words, language caused the disadvantage of action. He wrote,

> If there is word, there is trace; if there is trace, [one] relies on cleverness. If [one] relies on cleverness, [he] is conceited. Those who are conceited brag about their capability and like to act; those who like to act tend to fail. This is the teaching about words and the disadvantage of action (youwei).⁶⁶⁵

In the *Daodejing*, the concept of non-action often references governance. Hanshan followed this argument of the *Daodejing* and wrote, "Therefore, concerning governing, [he] promoted the method of the great antiquity, and his Dao was in accord with non-action. All of his discourses in this work do not surpass this, which is the fundamental purport of his teachings."⁶⁶⁶ Hanshan held that the rulers should first transform themselves with non-action before they could transform people.⁶⁶⁷ In commenting on Chapter 48, Hanshan argued that the ruler should reside in the state of non-action; then, the people would transform themselves. He noted, "This is why [Laozi] said, ‘I am non-active, yet the people transform themselves.’ If the people are indeed

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⁶⁶⁴ *LDHZ*, 73.
⁶⁶⁵ *LDHZ*, 104-105.
⁶⁶⁶ *LDHZ*, 148.
⁶⁶⁷ *LDHZ*, 144.
transformed, there is nothing that [he] cannot do. This is due to non-action, by which one can greatly act. Therefore, there is nothing that [he] cannot do.\textsuperscript{668}

Hanshan pointed out the harm of employing action such as crafty strategies and laws in governing. He wrote,

The reason why people become robbers is because those above drive them with something. Once [they] drive people to rob, they use crafty strategies and laws to govern them. Therefore, the more abundant the law is, the more robbers there are, which is the reason why the people are more difficult to govern.\textsuperscript{669}

Hanshan agreed with Laozi’s argument that the rulers in later times could not practice the Dao of non-action, yet they valued designation, established laws, and morality. Hanshan regarded this as absurd. He wrote,

Once the people have no faith [in Dao], those above should sincerely practice the Dao of non-action themselves to recover the people’s faith. By way of purifying and correcting themselves, they are able to shut out the people’s minds stealing and robbery. Unable to act like this themselves, they establish more laws and orders to forbid the people’s wrongdoing when they saw the people’s craftiness and robbery increasing. Yet, [they] promoted the importance of morality of benevolence and righteousness. The more they promoted those virtues, the less [the people] had faith [in Dao]. Wasn’t it absurd? Therefore, it says, “They were still valuing words.”\textsuperscript{670}

Hanshan argued that in order to correct this tendency Laozi advocated the method of the great antiquity and the Dao of non-action. Hanshan wrote,

In great antiquity, the ruler who possessed the Dao was pure, without desire, and practiced non-action, yet [the people were] transformed. Thus, the people lived

\textsuperscript{668} LDHZ, 108.  
\textsuperscript{669} LDHZ, 143.  
\textsuperscript{670} LDHZ, 72.
in peace and enjoyed their works. They did not use horses (for war); instead, they let them fertilize fields.\textsuperscript{671}

Thus, Hanshan proposed that the ruler should base himself on simplicity and plainness, and should not employ cleverness. In commenting on Chapter 65, he wrote, "Those above should not employ cleverness. They should purify themselves by separating from desire and craving, and look like an ignorant one. Then, the people would themselves in daily life be tranquil, and free from the thought of craving. The cleverness of the crafty and cunning would vanish, and acts of evil and robbery would automatically be abandoned."\textsuperscript{672}

In addition, Hanshan proposed that non-action means not to disturb people. He argued that the agitation and chaos in the realm was caused by the fault of active disturbance and excess desire. In Chapter 60, Laozi said, "Governing a big state is like cooking a small fish." Hanshan commented on it, saying, "When one cooks a small fish he should not stir them. If they were stirred, they would become pulpy and broken. So it is in governing people."\textsuperscript{673} Similarly, in commenting on Chapter 80, Hanshan suggested that the ruler should not disturb people. He wrote, "If a state disturbs people by excess events, such as indulging in wars to cause chaos, or heavy taxes to cause starvation, then the people could not live in peace, and they would treat death slightly and leave."\textsuperscript{674}

Hanshan agreed with Laozi's argument that an authentic ruler should employ the virtues of weakness, keeping low, indifference, and non-action. In commenting on

\textsuperscript{671} LDHZ, 107.
\textsuperscript{672} LDHZ, 130.
\textsuperscript{673} LDHZ, 123.
\textsuperscript{674} LDHZ, 148.
Chapter 57, Hanshan wrote, “It is suitable that the sage of antiquity said: ‘I am non-action, yet the people transform themselves. I am fond of quietude, yet the people correct themselves. I do nothing, yet the people are rich. I am without desire, yet the people themselves become plain.’” Hanshan also held that the ruler should learn from the Dao and dwell below. In commenting on Chapter 39, he argued that the Dao was originally nameless and keeping low; therefore all of heaven, earth and the myriad things could employ it. The ruler should realize this characteristic of the Dao and take keeping low as his origin and foundation. If they dwell in a high position, they will encounter the danger of stumbling. In commenting on Chapter 61, Hanshan agreed with Laozi’s argument that the ruler should employ quietude, not power; the great state of the realm should reside in low. He wrote,

This chapter says that those who govern the realm should employ primarily quietude to surpass [others], and should not value power. The low flowing, such as rivers and the sea, are where all waters return. Thus, as for the great state of the realm, it is where all the expectations return. Therefore, [it should be] like the low flowing to serve as the convergence under heaven, and to receive all kinds of dirt and filth. There is nothing that it is not embraced.

Since the Daodejing emphasized softness and weakness and slighted grace and high ranking, Hanshan had to tackle these concepts with reason. First, he argued that worldly people all regard grace with pleasure, yet they did not realize that grace was indeed disgrace and frightening. He explained that grace was a low and degrading matter, since a

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675 L DHZ, 120. Similarly, in his commentary on Chapter 78, Hanshan noted, “The sage said, ‘If one can employ weakness to dwell above, be indifferent and non-action, and receive the disgrace of the whole state, he would be the authentic ruler of the state’”; see L DHZ, 146.

676 L DHZ, 100.

677 L DHZ, 124.
subject had to prostrate to a ruler for it; once one obtained grace, one’s mind would become both concerned and be frightened about how to keep it.  

Second, he held that worldly people all treated high rank as desirable, yet they did not know that it was great danger just as the body is the origin of all misery.  

Third, Hanshan argued that because weakness was a disgraceful and unattractive title, worldly people did not like to practice it. Thus, worldly people regarded weakness as unworthy to adopt, and generally slighted it.  

*Buddhist Interpretation of Virtue (de)*  

Hanshan also adopted Buddhist concepts in his interpretation of virtue. For instance, he introduced the concept of emptiness to clarify that one can realize the advantage of non-action when one realized the use of emptiness. He wrote,

> If one employs emptiness to permeate things, there is nothing that is too tiny to permeate. It is like the space that permeates all forms, no matter if it is as minute as if dirt or an awn, because it is empty. If [one] realizes the use of emptiness, it is certain that he will realize the advantage of non-action.  

In addition, Hanshan highlighted the Buddhist concept of compassion to be the virtue of heaven and earth. In commenting on Chapter 67, Hanshan argued that among compassion, frugality, and reserve, compassion was the principal one; the sages regarded compassion as the best. He wrote,

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678 *LDHZ*, 65.  


680 *LDHZ*, 146.  

681 *LDHZ*, 104.
The great virtue of heaven and earth is called "generating (sheng 生); therefore when heaven is going to save people, it employs only compassion to protect them. Thus, the sages model heaven to regulate themselves, and regard compassion as the best. How could ordinary people realize it?\(^{682}\)

Hanshan also introduced the Buddhist concept of no-self to be the virtue of governing the realm. He wrote,

This chapter (61) teaches those who govern under heaven the virtue of no-self. Thus, all under heaven return to those rulers just as water goes downward. The waters of hundreds of streams, no matter clean or dirty, all return to the rivers and oceans. The reason the rivers and oceans receive hundreds of streams is because they are good at keeping low. This is the metaphor that the sage dwells above, yet those under heaven return to him because of his no-self.\(^{683}\)

Here, Hanshan connected the concept "below" with Buddhist concept "no-self."

According to him, although the sage dwelled in a high position, he had the virtue of no-self; therefore, people returned to him.

Hanshan’s Interpretation of the Sage

The sage is not only the main concern of the Daodejing, but also a common ideal of Chinese traditions. In the Daodejing, many qualities of Dao such as non-action, no mind, desireless, forgetting language, and forgetting both mind and body, are all illustrated in the figure of the sage. In his Commentary on the Daodejing, Hanshan’s interpretation of the sage demonstrates that he adopted both Buddhist and Chinese traditions to interpret the sage. Hanshan chiefly followed the descriptions of the sage in the Daodejing; however, he also employed Buddhist concepts in his interpretation of the sage.

\(^{682}\) LDHZ, 134.

\(^{683}\) LDHZ, 131.
First, Hanshan followed the *Daodejing* to interpret the sage. He proposed that the sage was one who realized Dao and embodied Dao. He wrote, “If one realized the great Dao, he would see through heaven, earth, and myriad things. The worlds of the sage’s body and mind would interfuse and mix as one.”

Hanshan further proposed that since the sage realized Dao deeply, his form and spirit were all marvelous. In addition, Hanshan pointed out the sage’s characteristics of not firmly holding opinion, not calculating benefit for himself, acting without the intention of repayment, and employing the forgetting of words to realize the darkness.

Furthermore, Hanshan proposed that the sage concentrated his Mind on oneness, thus he could realize Dao. According to him, the sage’s Mind is like great space, and anywhere is suitable for him; the sage’s Mind contains heaven and earth; his virtue embraces everything, just as the ocean receives hundreds of rivers. Furthermore, the sage is pure, plain, and spotless, yet he is able to accept dirt and disgrace and presents himself as an ordinary person. Although the sage’s virtue benefits all people, he does not regard it as merit. Hanshan also argued that the reason the sage possesses all the splendid virtues is because he empties his Mind to realize Dao and he does not compete with things.

Hanshan also followed Laozi’s argument that the sage was the ideal ruler who realized Dao and employed virtue to govern the realm. In commenting on Chapter 29,
Hanshan wrote, “This chapter explains that the sage who has completed Dao and perfected his virtues responds to the needs of his time and serves the world as a supervisor. [He] employs non-action and does not disturb people, and does not act excessively.”\(^{690}\) He further proposed that the sage’s virtue accorded with the virtue of heaven and earth, thus the harmonious \textit{qi} would bring about auspiciousness. In commenting on Chapter 60, Hanshan wrote, “If one employs Dao and virtue to govern the realm, the harmonious \textit{qi} will bring about auspiciousness. Although ghosts exist, they are not powerful. Not powerful means that [they] are unable to bring about fortune or misfortune.”\(^{691}\) Hanshan further argued that because the sage took care of the people like protecting a newborn baby, the deities did not hurt people and were unable to bring about fortune or misfortune.\(^{692}\) In commenting on Chapter 45, Hanshan proposed that the sage followed the way of heaven to govern. Since the heaven and earth are wordless, the sage employs the teaching of the wordless and non-action to transform people.\(^{693}\)

Hanshan included the concepts of various Chinese traditions to interpret the sage. For instance, Mencius’ concept that “Human nature is good” is widely accepted by Chinese people, which is similar to the Buddhist theory that all sentient beings are endowed with Buddha nature. Drawing from these concepts, Hanshan argued that since the sage had recovered the goodness of nature, the sage viewed all human nature as good. In commenting on Chapter 49, he wrote,

\(^{690}\) \textit{L}D\textit{H}Z, 87.
\(^{691}\) \textit{L}D\textit{H}Z, 123.
\(^{692}\) \textit{L}D\textit{H}Z, 123.
\(^{693}\) \textit{L}D\textit{H}Z, 106.
Because the sage has recovered the goodness of nature, he views all human nature as good. Thus he surely treats those good people with kindness, and even evil people he treats with kindness. [He would think], “Although they are evil, since I treat them with kindness, they will be influenced by my virtue, and will be transformed to good.”

Here, Hanshan used the Daoist term “genuine (zhēn 真)” and the common Chinese concept of “recovery of the Nature (fuxíng 復性)” to describe the sage. According to Hanshan, Nature is something that surpasses body and life, and is our true abode, having the same substance as the great emptiness, as he stated, “Moreover, the greatness of our Nature has the same substance as the great emptiness, which is our true abode. If we view the body from the [perspective of] Nature, it is like a bubble in the ocean, and like dust in great space; since it is very tiny, it is not worthy of valuing.”

Hanshan often adopted the concept of genuine to interpret the sage. In his commentary on Chapter 54, he wrote, “As for the sage, he recovers the genuine Nature and establishes Dao and virtue under heaven. The minds of people under heaven were truly firmly moved [by him].” Similarly, in Chapter 62, he emphasized the concept of recovering the genuine, proposing, “If there is one thought recovering the genuine, all guilt will be destroyed immediately. If [one] pursues [Dao] and obtains it, [he] will transcend ordinary people at that very place. Thus he becomes the honored one under heaven.” In addition, in commenting on the last chapter of the Daodejing, Hanshan adopted the concept of following the genuine to describe the sage. He wrote,

694 LHZ, 109.
695 LHZ, 139-140.
696 LHZ, 115.
697 LHZ, 126.
Since the sage forgets words and follows the genuine, he accumulates nothing. Since he does not accumulate, he is inexhaustible. It is the so-called: "[The sage is] empty yet not bending, the more he moves the more he produces. It is like the pivot residing in the middle of a circle, responding inexhaustibly." Thus, the more he acts for others, the more he obtains; the more he gives others, the more he owns.\footnote{LDHZ, 149.}

Hanshan argued that the sage loved people without intention. In commenting on Chapter 57, Hanshan employed various Chinese concepts such as energy (\textit{qi}), without intention, and original nothingness as his ground for interpretation. He wrote,

\begin{quote}
It means that although the heaven and earth generate myriad things, they do not have the intention of generating. It is because when energy (\textit{qi} \ (氣)) generates, it has no other choice but that of generating. Therefore, although they generate, there is nothing [in it]. For example, the straw-dog is originally a useless item. Yet when the priests use it, they have no other choice but to use it. Although they use it, there is originally nothing.\footnote{LDHZ, 57.}
\end{quote}

Since benevolence is taking care of things with intention, Hanshan could logically explain the sentence "The sages are not benevolent" by the concept of without intention. He wrote,

\begin{quote}
Although sages love people, they do not have the intention to love. It is because [they realized that they and people are] of the same union and should love [each other]; they have no other choice but love. Although they love, they have no intention (\textit{wuxin} \ (無心)).\footnote{LDHZ, 57.}
\end{quote}

Hanshan also emphasized the Chinese concept of origin in his interpretation of the sage. He pointed out that the sage was different from others in that he could grasp the origin of Dao and did not chase after things. He wrote, "All the people count on
cleverness and knowledge, and each of them has something to rely on. . . . I [the sage] alone have no knowledge and desire; I am stubborn and vulgar and look like the ordinary people. The reason why I alone am different from others is that I value [the way of] seeking nourishment from mother."701 In explaining the vague sentence “value [the way of] seeking nourishment from mother (gui qiushi yu mu 贵求食於母),” Hanshan added,

This means that the great Dao of emptiness can generate heaven, earth, and myriad things. Thus Dao is mother, and things are children. The character shi 食 (nourishment) means liking. All the people turn their backs on Dao and chase after things, which is like abandoning mother yet seeking nourishment from the children. The sage forgets things and realizes Dao, therefore he alone seeks nourishment from mother.702

Here, Hanshan emphasized the concept of grasping the origin of Dao and not chasing after things.

In another case, Hanshan adopted the Chinese concept of energy (qi 氣) to describe the sage. He argued that the sage’s qi unites with Dao and his Mind transcends things. He commented,

As for the sage, his qi unites with Dao and his Mind transcends things. Although nothing can match with him, he follows and submits to things. He changes with time and does not compete with things.703

There are various interpretations of the concepts of masculinity and femininity in the Daodejing. Hanshan provided his unique interpretation on these concepts and related femininity to the sage. He defined masculinity as Dao, femininity as dwelling in the low. He wrote, “That which nothing can match is called masculinity. . . . Dao transcends the

701 LDHZ, 76.
702 LDHZ, 76.
703 LDHZ, 86-87.
myriad things, there is nothing that can match with it, therefore it is called masculinity.” Hanshan further argued that “Know its masculinity and keep its femininity” implied that the sage who knows Dao submits to things. According to Hanshan, “Since [the sage] keeps its femininity, all the virtues return [to him] like water flows downward. Therefore, [he] becomes the valley under heaven.”

Hanshan also argued that Laozi took the quietness of the feminine as the simile of the sage’s virtue. He commented,

Moreover, he is empty and receiving like the female (pin) under heaven. The feminine of being is called pin, and the masculine is called mu. Mu is restless, yet pin is quiet. That which is restless does not bear; that which is quiet can bear; thus pin surpasses mu by quietness. [He] took this simile to refer to the sage’s virtue.

The term “without feminine (wuchi)” is a term difficult to fit in with the thought of the Daodejing, since the Daodejing chiefly emphasizes the concept of the feminine. However, Hanshan interpreted it cleverly and avoided the contradiction between feminine and without feminine by adopting the concept that “the sage employed his mind like a mirror” to comment on it. In commenting on “The gate of heaven opens and closes, yet it is without feminine,” he first treated the gate of heaven as connecting with the function of mind. Then, he wrote,

Feminine is the yin of things; because the yang gives and the yin receives, it has the meaning of storing. . . However, the sage employed his mind like a mirror, neither escorting nor welcoming [things that come]; when things come, nothing is stuck; when things go, no trace is left. It is the so-called “responding yet not not

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704 LDHZ, 86.
705 LDHZ, 124.
storing,” and is the so-called “The gate of heaven opens and closes, yet it is without female.”\textsuperscript{706}

According to Hanshan, without feminine implies not storing. Since the mirror just reflects images and does not grasp at the images, he found a way to interpret “responding yet not storing,” and “The gate of heaven opens and closes, yet it is without feminine.”

Since the \emph{Daodejing} pointed out many differences between the sage and ordinary people, Hanshan also interpreted these differences from his viewpoint. For example, Hanshan argued that while the sage recovers the genuine Nature, ordinary people only value their body, yet do not know that they possess Nature. He wrote, “Nevertheless, the reason people indulge only in desire, and do not sense fear is because they only know that they possess a desirable body and honorable life, and regard them as sufficient. Yet they do not know that they possess something that greatly surpasses them, that is Nature.”\textsuperscript{707}

In addition, Hanshan proposed that ordinary people regard learning as accumulating knowledge, increasing cleverness, and chasing after sensory desire, while the sage regards learning as eliminating knowledge, forgetting feeling, abandoning cleverness, and discarding desire.\textsuperscript{708}

In comparing with ordinary people, Hanshan praised the sage’s Mind as being firm as jade; the sage’s transformation as unlimited; nothing is unsuitable to him.\textsuperscript{709} Hanshan argued that the sage is bright in self-understanding. Thus he is skillful in cultivating it in mind and does not present it in words, since the reality of self-understanding cannot be

\textsuperscript{706} \textit{LDHZ}, 62-63.
\textsuperscript{707} \textit{LDHZ}, 139.
\textsuperscript{708} \textit{LDHZ}, 75.
\textsuperscript{709} \textit{LDHZ}, 102.
entirely grasped by words. Nonetheless, those ordinary people who are talkative do not have real understanding. Therefore, it says, “Those who understand do not talk; those who talk do not understand.” Furthermore, Hanshan proposed that only those who were few in words accorded with spontaneity. Thus, he suggested that the sentence “The whirlwind does not last all morning, wild rain does not last all day” was to demonstrate that those who liked to argue could not last long. Hanshan concluded that although the sage did not talk, people still trusted him.

Hanshan further pointed out that the sage is different from ordinary people in that he is bright, yet he keeps the appearance of confusion and ignorance. The sage realizes the glory of Dao, yet he keeps himself in a low and defiled state. The sage’s mind is the utmost emptiness and lowliness, yet all the virtues return to him like all the rivers return to the sea. Hanshan proposed that the sage has the character of humility and guards himself with lowness. In addition, the sage practices privately and employs his function secretly; he is concerned that people will know what he has given out. Besides, Hanshan argued that since the sage united with Dao, he models heaven to cultivate himself and he does not boast of his talent. He wrote, “The sage unites with Dao, and is the disciple of heaven. Thus he models heaven to regulate; he acts, yet he does not boast his talent; he accomplishes, yet he does not claim the credit, which is the utmost of ‘decreasing (sun zhi zhi 损之至).”

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710 LDHZ, 118.
711 LDHZ, 80.
712 LDHZ, 86-87.
713 LDHZ, 135.
714 LDHZ, 75.
715 LDHZ, 145.
Hanshan also compared the sage with ordinary people based on the concept of non-action. He proposed that the sage resides in Dao of non-action to guide the world. However, ordinary people do not understand Dao; they have the mind of distinguishing, grasping and valuing; thus, there are resultant traces in designation. He commented,

The sage resides in Dao of non-action to guide the world, [their] merits do not decay and [their] true names exist forever. It means that the principle of all things under heaven, if viewed from [the perspective of] the great Dao, is originally without traces of beauty and ugliness, as well as [traces of] good and evil. Indeed, because people do not understand Dao, they have the mind of distinguishing, grasping, and valuing. Therefore there comes the designation of good and evil. . . . Therefore, the designation of good and evil are products of comparison.\(^{716}\)

As a Chan practitioner, Hanshan preferred the concept of non-discrimination. While he proposed that there was no designation in the origin, he regarded all the designation as artificial and the trace of action, which were not worthy of value.

While the sage is different from ordinary people, Hanshan argued, the sage has to blend with ordinary people, so people will trust him. In commenting on Chapter 22, he wrote,

If the sage [reveals his] exalted Dao and splendid virtue, [he] is quite different from others, and is not close to human feeling. If [he] does not bend himself to follow others and the myriad things in order to mix with worldly people, people will not trust him. If people do no trust [him], Dao can not be extended out. Owing to [his] bending, Dao extends out. Therefore, it says, “By means of bending, it becomes straight.”\(^{717}\)

\(^{716}\) *LDHZ*, 53.

\(^{717}\) *LDHZ*, 78-79.
Buddhist Interpretation of the Sage

Hanshan also employed Buddhist concepts in his interpretation of the sage. For example, he proposed that the sage was one who had enlightened the Mind. In his commentary on Chapter 70, he says, “If [one] can suddenly enlighten the Mind at that moment, [he] is a sage immediately.” Here, he employed the Buddhist concept of the enlightened Mind to describe the sage. In addition, Hanshan proposed that the sage’s Mind includes the myriad things, which is the same as Buddhist concept that the Mind includes all the spaces. He wrote,

If one realized the true and constant Dao, [he] would possess the same root with heaven and earth, and would possess the same body with the myriad things. His mind would certainly include heaven and earth, and the myriad things. Therefore, [Laozi] says, “One who realizes the constant is inclusive (rong 荣).”

Hanshan also introduced the Buddhist concept of wisdom to his interpretation of the sage. According to him, the sage was endowed with superior wisdom. Hanshan argued that Dao surpassed common knowledge, and was not what a fool or small cleverness could realize. Only those who are endowed with superior wisdom can penetrate into Dao. Hanshan said, “As for those people with inferior capacity, even if they heard of it, they could not understand it even a little bit, and they would regard it as odd; therefore, they loudly laugh at it.” This claim showed that the Dao was not what ordinary people could understand; only the sage realized it.

Based on the Buddhist concept of no self-desire, Hanshan claimed that the sage’s wisdom could comprehend all things under the heaven without obstruction. He stated,

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718 LDHZ, 137.
719 LDHZ, 71.
720 LDHZ, 102.
Thus, his wisdom comprehends myriad things, and nothing is too dark to be discerned [by him]. Therefore, although the world is great, he could know [them] without going out the door; although the Dao of heaven is subtle, he could realize it without peeking through the window, because his self-desire has already been totally exhausted, and there is no obstruction anymore.\(^\text{721}\)

Hanshan also argued that the sage had to forget his body, discard his cleverness, decrease his knowledge, and separate from desire; if it were not so, his Dao would not be renewed. In this claim, Hanshan highlighted the Buddhist concept of separation from desire, commenting, “If it is worn out, it will be renewed” as “If his desire is not worn out, his Dao will not be renewed.”\(^\text{722}\) Similarly, Hanshan argued that since the sage realized the virtue of heaven and earth, he was not selfish. He wrote, “The sage realizes the virtue of heaven and earth, he is not selfish and he does not put himself ahead of others. Thus, people are willing to hold him in esteem without weariness. Therefore, it says, ‘[He] put his body behind, yet his body was in front.’”\(^\text{723}\)

Hanshan also adopted the Buddhist concept of benefiting living beings to describe the sage. According to him, the sage employed Dao to help living beings and the sage did not hold out concern for himself. Hanshan wrote,

Only one who realized Dao had no other choice but governing under heaven, and did not regard himself as glorious. Although he occupied the position, he only thought of how to employ Dao to help living beings, and did not regard himself as honorable, which is the honor that belongs to those under heaven, not that which belongs to oneself.\(^\text{724}\)

\(^{721}\) \textit{LDHZ}, 108. \\
^{722} \textit{LDHZ}, 79. \\
^{723} \textit{LDHZ}, 59. \\
^{724} \textit{LDHZ}, 66.
Hanshan interpreted the sage’s behavior by the Buddhist concept of expedient means so that the sage transformed others according to the capability of ordinary people. According to Hanshan, in order to transform worldly people the sage mixed with ordinary people and looked humble. Hanshan commented, “Therefore, when the sage traveled in the muddy world to transform people, [he] valued [the concept of] identifying himself with the soil and softening his brightness, and mixing with them without any trace.” Thus, Hanshan praises that although the sage was upright, he did not have the defect of showing off his intelligence. Although he was honest, he did not have the defect of cutting at others. Although he was straightforward, he did not have the defect of arbitrariness. Although he was bright, he did not have the defect of bragging.

Hanshan also employed the concept of the empty Mind and non-discrimination to describe the sage. In commenting on Chapter 20, he wrote, “I am not-knowing and no-self. Am I really stupid? I just look like the unbroken one, and do not distinguish things; that is all.” Hanshan also argued that the sage responded to things with an empty mind. He wrote,

Because the sage travels the world with an empty mind, he is quiet and unmoved. When things come, he responds accordingly; he perceives and then penetrates [them]. He applies his mind like a mirror, neither escorting nor welcoming [things that come]. When [things] come, nothing is stuck; when [things] go, there is no trace left. He forgets both his body and mind, and does not compete with others; this is the mind of the sage.

725 LDHZ, 121.
726 LDHZ, 121.
727 LDHZ, 76.
728 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 828b.
In addition, Hanshan highlighted the sage’s characteristic of separation from desire from a Buddhist perspective. He proposed, “The sages realized the harm of desiring things. Although they dwell in the [world with] five kinds of desire, they practice the path of separation from desire, they know the suitable amount [for them], and they are contented.” In commenting on Chapter 50, he adopted the Buddhist concept of the un-born to explain why the sage is without desire. He commented:

This chapter says that the reason the sage transcends birth and death is because he is contented and without desire, he forgets his body totally, and he well realizes the principle of the un-born. . . . It says that worldly people do not realize the principle of the un-born, they just nurture their body and crave life, yet they all will die even if they crave life.

Since Hanshan commented on Sengzhao’s Zhaolun, he was familiar with Sengzhao’s argument of “Prajñā is not-knowing.” Following Sengzhao’s theory, Hanshan adopted the concept that the sage was not-knowing to comment on Chapter 71. He proposed that the knowing of the sage independently intuited substance and was without distinction, which was different from ordinary people’s knowing. He wrote,

Yet worldly people’s knowing is the knowing that distinguishes and contradicts things, which has objects to know. The sage’s knowing is that which absolutely separates from things, and [he] independently intuits the substance that has no object to know. Thus, the sage’s not-knowing is not that of nihilism, but is not the worldly people’s knowing.

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729 LDHZ, 64.
730 LDHZ, 110.
731 LDHZ, 138.
Emphasis on Practice

Hanshan not only employed many methods of practice in his interpretation of the *Daodejing*, but also he highlighted the basis of practice of the *Daodejing*. For example, he said, “This chapter [54] says the reason the sage possesses infinite merit to benefit later generations is due to him taking real practice as his foundation.” Both Chinese philosophy and Buddhism include methods of self-cultivation. However, Buddhism provides more methods of practice. Hanshan was benefited by his knowledge of Buddhist practice; he introduced many methods of practice in his interpretation of the *Daodejing*. All in all, his *Commentary on the Daodejing* is filled with such topics as how to practice, how to enlighten the Mind, and how to realize Dao.

Hanshan introduced many Buddhist practices as the way of realizing the Dao of the *Daodejing*, such as contemplation (*guan* 觀), stillness and contemplation (*zhiguan* 止觀), and to keep the mind unmoved. In commenting on Chapter 1, he emphasized the methods of contemplation to view the subtlety of Dao. He wrote, “If [one] contemplates very deeply, [one] is able to view the subtlety of Dao. These two characters *guan* [of *guan qi maio* 觀其妙 and *guan qi jiao* 觀其徼] are of the most importance.” In commenting on Chapter 11, Hanshan said, “As for the teaching of Laozi, [one] should contemplate non-being based on being. If [one] contemplates non-being based on being, although it is

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733 Hsu Sung-peng pointed out that Hanshan emphasized on contemplation. See his “Han-shan Te-ch‘ing,” 423-4.

735 *LDHZ*, 52.
being, he does not regard it as being.” In short, Hanshan treated the practice of contemplation as crucial.

Moreover, in commenting on Chapter 52, Hanshan proposed that instead of chasing after things, one should contemplate his brightness inwardly. He noted,

However, as for the relation between Dao and things, when ears encounter it, it becomes sounds; when eyes encounter it, it becomes forms. If [one] runs after the sounds and forms and forgets to return, he chases after things and opposes to his Nature. [One] should retrieve his sight and pull back his hearing to contemplate inwardly his own brightness. Therefore, it says, “Close your gates.” Like this, [one] can employ it without effort throughout his whole life.

In discussing the word “resentment (yuan 怨)” of Chapter 63, Hanshan adopted the Chan method of contemplating it as original nothingness to interpret it. He commented,

Only the sage was not so; he found that before resentment was incurred, it was originally nothing; in the beginning, resentment was very little; when it had been incurred, [he] regarded it as not connected with himself. Therefore [he] did not have an obstinate mind or the ego that contradicts others. When it has passed, the resentment disappears and there is no sign left.

Hanshan argued that if people could contemplate from this point, they would not have the intention of revenge and others would regard them as virtuous.

Hanshan emphasized the basis of practice of Chapter 16 and employed many Buddhist concepts to interpret it. For example, he defined the character fu 復 in the sentence “wu yi guanqifu 吾以觀其復” as “the mind is not distracted.” Again, he proposed,

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736 LDHZ, 63-64.
737 LDHZ, 113.
738 LDHZ, 127.
739 LDHZ, 127.
The character “root (gen 根)” means that the root is original nothingness. While things are original nothingness, the mind is nothingness too. Thus both thing and self are forgotten, and become quiet and unmoved. Therefore, [Laozi] says, “Returning to the root (guigen 归根) means quietness (jing 静), and quietness means recovering life (fuming 復命).” As for the character “life (ming 命),” it is one’s self-nature, by which he lives. As for the character “Nature (xing 性),” it is the true and constant Dao. Therefore, it says, “Recovering life means constancy.” If a person can contemplate inwardly in order to realize this subtle nature that is true and constant, he can be called “bright (ming 明).” Therefore, it says, “Knowing the constant is called bright.”

In this paragraph, Hanshan defined terms of the Daodejing by Buddhist concepts. He used a Chan concept of self-nature to interpret the character ming of the Daodejing and introduced Buddhist method of contemplating inwardly to realize the true and constant Dao.

Hanshan proposed that Laozi promoted the Buddhist concept of separation from desire and managing the mind with quietness and stillness. He wrote, “Therefore, his (Laozi’s) teaching advocated separation from desire and being pure, managing the mind with quietness and stillness, not employing oneself in events, as well as being tranquil and non-active.” Based on Buddhist doctrine, Hanshan suggested that the Mind was originally empty and the external things were originally not desirable. Nonetheless, ordinary people regarded them as desirable. Thus, he promoted the practice of separation from desire. In his commentary on Chapter 12, he wrote,

This [chapter] talks about the harm of desire for external things, and teaches people the practice of separation from desire. It implies that the human mind is originally empty and bright, and the external sounds, colors, foods, and benefit

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740 LDHZ, 70-71.
741 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 821ab.
of things are also originally not desirable. Yet people regard them as desirable and crave for them.\textsuperscript{742}

Hanshan argued that Laozi also urged people to practice stillness in the turbid world. In commenting on Chapter 15, he wrote,

Therefore, Laozi pitied them and said, “Who can peacefully retire and cultivate himself in this turbid world, and keep his mind in stillness in order to let it gradually become clear?”\textsuperscript{743}

In addition, he pointed out that Chapter 16 showed people how to practice stillness. Hanshan employed the Buddhist concept of the originally non-existent and originally unmoved to interpret emptiness (\textit{xu} 虚) and quietness (\textit{jing} 靜); he urged people to examine outer things as originally non-existent for the purpose of not letting the mind be disturbed. He commented,

As for “\textit{zhixu ji shoujingdu} 致虛極 守靜篤,” \textit{zhi} 致 means to examine and to infer; \textit{xu} 虚 means that the outer things are originally non-existent; \textit{jing} 靜 means that the substance of the mind is originally unmoved. ... Now the method of practicing Dao has first to infer that the myriad things at present are originally non-existent. Thus, all the sound, color, goods, and benefit are by themselves false and unreal matters. While nothing seems desirable, the mind will naturally not be disturbed; it would discard greedy desire forever, and stay in peace.\textsuperscript{744}

There are other cases that show that Hanshan introduced various practices in his interpretation of the \textit{Daodejing}. For instance, he proposed that Laozi urged people to guard their sense organs. In commenting on Chapter 52, he defined the character \textit{dui} 允 as mouth and argued that one should employ quietness and not be talkative. He wrote,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{742} \textit{LDHZ}, 64.
\item \textsuperscript{743} \textit{LDHZ}, 69.
\item \textsuperscript{744} \textit{LDHZ}, 70.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Dui is the mouth, and men (gate) is the eyes and ears, which are the organs for seeing and hearing. It means that Dao is originally speechless; when words are produced, the principle is lost. If one is stirred up by false mechanism so as to be talkative, he is separated from Dao further. One should employ quietness to keep to himself; this is why [the text] says “Talkativeness often results in exhausting, and it is not better than keeping to the middle.” Therefore, it says, “Shut your mouth.”

In Buddhism, indulging in sense desires is an obstacle to practice. Hanshan also introduced the concept of not indulging in sense desires in his interpretation. He proposed that if those in high position indulged in sense desire, the people would imitate their behaviors and cause robbers. He wrote,

When those above are not contented, they impractically value vainglory and indulge exceedingly in sense desires. They dress in refined and colorful clothes, wear sharp swords, eat excessive foods, and accumulate wealth. Those below, therefore, would imitate the behaviors of those above as quickly as a shadow and an echo. Therefore, if those above were fond of something, those below would exceed them. Thus, the reason why the people become robbers is due to those above promoting their desires.

In addition, from a Buddhist perspective Hanshan argued that Laozi focused on destroying attachment. In his commentary on Chapter 37, Hanshan proposed that one should not even grasp the unpolished stuff of the nameless. He wrote,

Although the unhewn (pu 樸) of the nameless can obstruct desires, if one grasps it firmly, it will reverse to become the source of disturbance. Like using medicine to cure disease, when the disease has been cured, and one does not

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745 LDHZ, 113.
746 LDHZ, 114.
747 DJFT, in XZJ 127, 829a.
748 The translation of pu taken from A. C. Graham, Disputers of the Tao, 221.
forget the medicine, he has the fault of grasping medicine. Therefore, it says,
"The pu of the nameless is also not desirable."\(^749\)

The metaphor of grasping medicine or becoming addicted to medicine has been widely
used in Buddhist literature in order to clarify the concept of non-attachment. It is not
surprising that Hanshan adopted it.

Furthermore, Hanshan proposed that one should not become attached to attainment.
In commenting on Chapter 10, he proposed,

Dark view means that when the above-mentioned practices of embracing the
One and controlling the qi have become skillful, [one] will certainly attain the
realm of the darkly marvelous. If [one] holds this achievement in his mind and
grasps it, it will, conversely, become the defect of reaching Dao. One should just
clear it up until nothing is left; then [he] reaches [the state of] forgetting mind
and discarding traces, and only then does [he] reach the utmost Dao.\(^750\)

Hanshan used the term "hold" and "grasp" to interpret attachment; and proposed that one
should forget both mind and trace for the purpose of reaching the utmost Dao. Although
terms such as forgetting, not holding, and not grasping do not entirely belonged to
Buddhism, they are similar to the Buddhist concept of non-attachment.

Since both the Buddha and Laozi pointed out the defects of pursuing fame and
benefit, Hanshan agreed with Laozi’s viewpoint about fame and benefit.\(^751\) He
commented, "Therefore, as for heavy crimes under the heaven, there is nothing greater
than what is desirable, since it damages life and Nature, and ruins social relationships."\(^752\)

\(^749\) *LDHZ*, 96.
\(^750\) *LDHZ*, 62.
\(^751\) *LDHZ*, 65.
\(^752\) *LDHZ*, 107.
Furthermore, based on Buddhist doctrine he proposed that fame was unreal, thus it was not desirable. In commenting on Chapter 44, he wrote,

This chapter says that fame and benefit will harm [one’s] life, doing so to advise people to be contented. It means that worldly people just know that fame and benefit are desirable, therefore [they] forget their bodies and prefer to die for fame. [They] really do not realize that fame is but an unreal sound outside of the body.  

Moreover, he blamed human delusive thinking as the cause, as he wrote,

Therefore, wealth, sexual charm, fame, and food are not originally desirable. Yet the reason people desire them is caused by the fault of human delusive thinking. As for the sages’ treatment, [they] advised that people should first cut off the thought of delusive thinking. This method pulls out the root and blocks its origin; thus, it says, “Empty the mind.”

Using the Buddhist expression “Empty the mind,” Hanshan proposed that Laozi advised people to block delusive thinking from the origin of Mind.

Hanshan was unique in treating the character “se 儲 (stinginess)” as the sage’s practice of recovering Nature. In his commentary on Chapter 59, Hanshan defined se as “One has something yet he does not employ it.” He argued that ren 人 signifies desire for things, and tian 天 signifies the virtue of Nature. Concerning the sentence “In managing the human and serving heaven, there is nothing better than stinginess (se),” he proposed that although the sage possessed abundant things, he was without desire and did not use them. Although the sage’s wisdom embraced myriad things, he did not deliberate by

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753 LDHZ, 105.
754 LDHZ, 55.
self-cleverness so as to damage his genuine nature. He treated *se* as the practice that can quickly recover one’s Nature.\textsuperscript{755}

Hanshan also introduced the method of controlling *qi* in his commentary, which clearly showed that he combined both Buddhist and Daoist practices. He proposed, “The method of practicing Dao is first to control the *qi* in order not to let its improper movement influence the mind, and to control the mind in order not to let its improper movement rouse the *qi*. When the mind is still, the *qi* will surely be gentle.”\textsuperscript{756} In addition, he agreed with Laozi that one should learn from the newborn baby for nurturing the *qi*, essence, and spirit. He argued, “The reason human beings possess life is because they have spirit, essence, and *qi*. If these three were nurtured in [the same way] as a newborn baby, they would certainly not be harmed by external things.”\textsuperscript{757}

In chapter 55, he adopted the Buddhist concept of “keeping the mind undistracted” as the method of nurturing the energy (*qi* 氣), essence (*jing* 精), and spirit (*shen* 神). He commented,

Moreover, as for these three, spirit is regarded as master, essence is regarded as protector, and *qi* is regarded as keeper. Therefore, Laozi teaches people how to nurture them. First, one should nurture his *qi*, therefore, it says, “Knowing harmony is called constant.” Why? Since the essence is circulated with the *qi*, and the *qi* is generated following the mind, if the mind is stirred up, the *qi* will scatter; if the *qi* scatters, the essence will overflow. This is what [the *Lengyan Sutra*] says “When the mind yearns for sex, the sex organs of male and female will secrete liquid naturally.” Thus, those who are skillful in nurturing them should first keep his mind, and not let it be stirred up. If the mind is not stirred up, it will be peaceful; if the mind is peaceful, the *qi* will be harmonious; if the

\textsuperscript{755} *LDHZ*, 121-122.

\textsuperscript{756} *LDHZ*, 62.

\textsuperscript{757} *LDHZ*, 116.


According to Hanshan, qi is generated according to the state of the mind. Therefore, if the mind is peaceful, the qi will be in harmony. As a result, the essence will be firm and the spirit will be pacified. Here, Hanshan adopted the Buddhist practice of employing the mind as base to interpret Laozi’s method of nurturing qi, essence, and spirit. He proposed that through these practices one could recover his true and constant Nature. Hanshan further argued that Laozi’s method of cultivation originated from this. Hanshan criticized other scholars that did not understand his purport; they wrongfully framed numerous strange and heretical methods to interpret it.759

Hanshan also viewed Chapter 68 as talking about the practice of not employing qi. He noted, “The purport of this chapter all resides in the practice of not employing qi, which is identical to the above-mentioned ‘Concentrating [your] qi in order to reach softness, can [you act] like a new-born baby?’” He suggested that if one’s qi became pure and harmonious, his body would be transformed, his mind would be forgotten, and he would naturally keep low. He added,

When [one’s qi] reaches its utmost purity and harmony, his body will be transformed and his mind will be forgotten. Since he does not regard things as contradicting him, although he does not intend to keep low, he naturally keeps low.760

Concerning how to nurture one’s life, Hanshan directed the practice to the mastery of life, namely the Nature. He pointed out that the method of nurturing our bodies was

758 LDHZ, 117.
759 LDHZ, 117.
760 LDHZ, 135.
not essential. On the contrary, he emphasized how to realize no-self and the un-born in order to transcend birth and death. In his commentary on Chapter 50, he wrote,

I had ever heard that those who were expert in nurturing life did not nurture their life, but nurtured the mastery of life. However, that which possesses life is body, and that which masters life is Nature. Nature is the master of life. If Nature has been nurtured so as to recover the genuine, the body would itself be forgotten. If the body has been forgotten, the ego would itself be emptied. If the ego has been emptied, nothing could match [him].\(^61\)

For the concept of “embracing the One (baoyi 抱一),” Hanshan viewed it as a method of practice, which means the union of hun 魂 and po 魄. According to Hanshan, if one can embrace the One, his mind is alert, not distracted, still, and not sleepy. He commented,

As for embracing the One, it means to move with both hun and po together, and to cause them to unite and not to separate. If the hun unites with the po, [one] is moving yet [he] is constantly still. Although [he] is alert, [he] is not distracted. If the po unites with the hun, [he] is still, yet [he] is constantly moving. Although [he] is still and quiet, [he] is not sleepy.\(^62\)

In commenting on “The peace is easy to keep, and the unborn is easy to care for,” Hanshan introduced Chan’s method of employing mind to interpret it. He proposed,

\(An\) 安 (peace) and weizhao 未兆 (unborn) means the moment when the thought has not yet been born, joy and anger have not yet emerged, and when [the mind] is quietly unmovied. . . . When a thought occurs within it, he sees and knows it immediately; if it is good, he accepts it; if it is evil, he stops it, which is the so-called “recovering [it] early.”\(^63\)

\(^61\) LDHZ, 111.
\(^62\) LDHZ, 62.
\(^63\) LDHZ, 129.
His interpretation was like a Chan master’s teaching of how to employ mind.

Furthermore, he argued that because ordinary people could not employ their minds like this, they would be exhausted and tend to fail. On the other hand, the sages emptied their minds to contemplate; therefore, they were not attached to anything and did not fail.

Hanshan also adopted the concepts of putting down (fangxia 放下) and stopping the mind (xiuxin 休心) from Chan tradition to summarize Laozi’s practice. The concepts of putting down and stopping the mind are quite popular in Chan literature; both putting down and stopping the mind refer to the method of discarding delusive thinking and wrongful attachment. Adopting concepts from Chan tradition Hanshan proposed that Laozi’s practice centered on the method of putting down and stopping the mind. In Chapter 70, he commented,

As with the discussion above, such as “discarding sagacity and abandoning cleverness,” “empty mind and no-self,” “humble and not competing,” and “forgetting the body and releasing cleverness,” each of them is the easiest practice, which needs only putting down (fangxia), and does not need any other knowledge or understanding. It resides only in the two characters of xiuxin (stopping the mind), isn’t it the easiest way to understand and to practice? However, the reason why people could not understand it is because people only pay attention to knowledge.  

He simplified Laozi’s method with the two characters of xiuxin and regarded them as the easiest practice. Hanshan also employed this concept to interpret Chapter 9, as he wrote, “Laozi proposed that although [one] can keep it, it is not better than putting down and stopping. Therefore, [he says], ‘it is not better than putting it to an end.’”

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764 L DHZ, 137.
765 L DHZ, 60.
Not competing is one of Laozi’s main arguments. Hanshan interpreted this term from the viewpoint of practice. In commenting on Chapter 81, Hanshan held that Laozi’s direct method was “acting yet not competing.” Concerning “not competing,” Hanshan proposed a unique interpretation. In commenting on Chapter 66, he wrote, “The ultimate of no-self is identical to the virtue of not competing. Here, the character zheng does not mean competing; not competing means that the mind does not chase after things.” In commenting on Chapter 8, Hanshan argued that not competing means to follow the environment without like or dislike, which is similar to Chan’s concept of not distinguishing good from evil. He wrote,

[It] means that the virtue of humility and not competing is the highest goodness, which is like [that of] water. Therefore, it says, “The highest goodness is like water.” The goodness of water is excellent in benefiting myriad thing yet not competing. Not competing means to follow the shape of a square or a circle without like or dislike, and to dwell only below. However, worldly people all like the high and dislike the low, while only the sages dwell in the low.

In addition, Hanshan adopted the Buddhist practice of compassion (ci) to interpret the concept of not competing. In Buddhism, compassion refers to a good will that wishes all sentient beings to reside in a happy condition. Hanshan argued that compassion was identical to the virtue of not competing. In commenting on Chapter 69, Hanshan provided his unique reasoning regarding this argument. He wrote,

If one treats the enemy slightly, he will slaughter excessively. However, excessive slaughter damages compassion. Therefore, [it says], “That almost loses my treasures.” “Rival troop (kangbing) means two troops with

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766 LHZ, 150.
767 LHZ, 132.
768 LHZ, 60.
similar power so that it is difficult to determine [who will] win. However, one that employs compassion to pity them will overcome naturally. Why? Since the Dao of heaven likes generating, it helps one that has compassion to overcome. Viewing from this perspective, when troops confront the enemy, they must compete and slaughter for victory. Now the reason it overcomes by not competing and not slaughtering is because it employs compassion as the foundation. Thus, it is sufficient to prove that compassion is identical to the virtue of not competing. While it is employed in the place of competition, it can still overcome by not competing; isn’t it powerful? It is so when it is employed with an enemy.  

All in all, Hanshan’s interpretation of the *Daodejing* reflects both his syncretic character and Buddhist understanding. The foregoing shows that Hanshan adopted Chinese concepts and Buddhist concepts in his interpretation. In addition to Chinese concepts, we can see that Hanshan adopted Buddhist concepts such as no-self, the Eighth Consciousness, provisional name, emptiness, unspeakable, non-duality, contemplation to interpret this text. In addition, Hanshan emphasized the role of enlightened Mind and the dimension of practice in his commentary.

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*LDHZ*, 136.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

The central argument of this study is that Hanshan’s Commentary on the Daodejing reflects his syncretic character and his unique Buddhist understanding. In addition, I propose that Hanshan’s discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings was one of his responses to the challenge of adaptation of Chinese Buddhism, which also reveals Hanshan’s Buddhist position and syncretic view. In order to support my argument, this study has shown that Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude to all the teachings and interpreted all the teachings based on his Buddhist understanding. To serve as the background for understanding Hanshan’s interpretation, Chapter 2 demonstrates that both Hanshan’s life and thought reflected his syncretic character and his status as a Buddhist monk; Chapter 3 discusses the intellectual context of late Ming Buddhism and the responses of the Four Great Masters. In order to show how Hanshan’s syncretic view and his Buddhist understanding impacted on his interpretation, the last two chapters demonstrate that Hanshan’s syncretic view of the Three Teachings and his interpretation of the Daodejing all reflect his syncretic view and Buddhist understanding.

Hanshan’s Commentary on the Daodejing can be regarded as one of his reports of his intellectual adventures. Since the Daodejing was difficult to understand, he was eager to find its real meaning. According to the preface to his Commentary on the Daodejing, he tried to penetrate through the language of this text to find its intent. Although he tried to find out the real purport of this text, his understanding of the Daodejing is mostly Buddhist. Hanshan’s case accords with a theory of hermeneutics that interpretation is
always an understanding derived from the interpreter’s standpoint; meaning is always connected with context and our lived experience.\textsuperscript{770}

I agree with Richard Palmer’s argument that there is no interpretation that is “‘once and for all’ the ‘right interpretation.’”\textsuperscript{771} Thus, the purpose of this study is not to show that Hanshan’s interpretation of the *Daodejing* is the “right interpretation” of the *Daodejing*. On the contrary, I try to show that Hanshan’s *Commentary on the Daodejing* is just a reflection of his Buddhist interoperation of this text. Through the investigation of this study, it is clearly shown that Hanshan proposed many new understandings of the *Daodejing* from a Buddhist perspective. Thus, his interpretation of the *Daodejing* provides a new perspective to the field of the hermeneutics of the *Daodejing*. In addition, he proposed a detailed discourse of syncretism of the Three Teachings based on his Buddhist position. There is no doubt that his discourse of syncretism also contributes a valuable case study to understand the controversy of syncretism of the late Ming as well as the transition of Chinese intellectual history.

I also agree with the viewpoint of Lafargue and Pas that each translation and interpretation is somewhat influenced by the author’s intuitive feelings about the deeper meaning of the text.\textsuperscript{772} Thus, I treat Hanshan’s interpretation as a new creation and new understanding of the *Daodejing* from Hanshan’s intuitive feelings, especially his enlightenment experiences. Therefore, while Hanshan pointed out that “Those commentaries are each commentator’s *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, not the *Laozi* and the

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\textsuperscript{770} Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, 106-121.

\textsuperscript{771} Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, 252.

Zhuangzi that belong to Laozi and Zhuangzi," his Commentary on the Daodejing is also not that which belongs to Laozi; it is Hanshan’s Daodejing.

As proposed by Chappell, in the development of Chinese Buddhism, at least three hermeneutic orientations recurred. There were either “(1) to find a subjectively satisfying and crisis-resolving interpretation, or (2) to integrate with the established tradition, or (3) to systematically propagate the new religion.” And there are a variety of approaches and hermeneutic methods that were used at different times in history, since Buddhism had a variety of concerns and has asked different questions at different times. This study demonstrates that Hanshan tried to find a satisfying interpretation as well as harmonizing with the established tradition while promoting the excellence of Buddhism. He also employed a new approach and hermeneutic method to respond to the challenge of Buddhism of the late Ming. In order to harmonize with the established tradition, Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude to other traditions. Although he was a Buddhist monk, he valued Chinese traditions such as Confucianism, Daoism, and worldly learning. He treated all the teachings and techniques as expedient means to fit the needs of various people. He valued the functions of all the Three Teachings and tried to reconcile elements of these traditions by his Buddhist interpretation. Thus, he proposed his inventive argument “all the teachings are but shadows and echoes of the Mind” to interpret all the teachings.

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773 ZDX, in AZJ 127, 488a.
775 Chappell, “Hermeneutic Phases,” 176-177.
In order to find a satisfying interpretation, Hanshan treated all the teachings as the manifestation of the Mind in terms of “shadows and echoes of the Mind.” Based on this inventive term, Hanshan adopted an inclusive attitude to the Three Teachings. However, he also realized the limitation of language, as he proposed, “Subtlety is not what language can reach.” In addition, Hanshan followed the concept of expedient means of Mahāyāna Buddhism and admitted the instrumental functions of language as expedient means for liberating sentient beings. Thus, Hanshan also treated the Three Teachings as expedient means.

Since Hanshan had many enlightenment experiences, he proposed that one should follow wisdom that comes from an enlightened Mind. Influenced by his enlightenment experience, Hanshan particularly promoted the mystical dimension of the enlightened Mind in understanding all the teachings. In other words, Hanshan followed the Buddhist concept of “following the wisdom not the consciousness (yizhi buyishi 依智不依識)” in his interpretation. In addition, Hanshan presented his viewpoint on the relationship between the ultimate reality and language. He argued that while language cannot reach the ultimate reality, the enlightened Mind can. Thus, he highlighted the role of the enlightened Mind. Hanshan said,

I have always observed that those worldly artistic techniques that were refined and reached marvel could not be conveyed by words, and those who imitated them could not obtain them through language. Could the marvel of the great Dao be transmitted by mouth and received by ears, or be delivered by words and language? It resides in the marvel of the enlightened Mind.

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776 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 817b.
777 GLYL, in XZJ 127, 817b.
While Hanshan highlighted the role of the enlightened Mind, he did not negate the function of language. According to him, language has the function of revealing and clarifying the Dao. Thus, language is inevitable in revealing Dao. In his commentary on the last chapter of the *Daodejing*, Hanshan put it well:

Laozi himself said, "If the Dao is describable, it is not the true Dao." Now, there are more than five thousand characters in this work, are they not words? Once there are words, the Dao is not true. Thus he explains about this in the final chapter in order to expel the doubt for later generations. . . . Laozi means that the Dao is originally wordless, yet it is revealed by words. However, every word of my [Laozi’s] teaching flows from the genuine and real principle. I just borrow them to clarify the marvel of the Dao. Therefore, they are true, yet not beautiful; it is not like worldly people’s boastful and vainglorious rhetoric, which is beautiful, yet not true.\(^{778}\)

While Hanshan accepted the function of language, he still urged people to practice in order to attain an enlightened Mind. Once one has attained an enlightened Mind, according to Hanshan, one is able to stand on a higher ground to view various teachings without contradiction.

If we grant that "the most important thoughts emerge in Hermeneutics,"\(^{779}\) it is, then, better to welcome the emergence of various interpretations than to judge them right or wrong. Thus, in this study I do not judge the correctness of Hanshan’s interpretation since it is not the main concern. Instead, I present how Hanshan interpreted the *Daodejing* and point out the connections between his interpretation and his Buddhist understanding as well as his syncretic view. However, I am also aware that this study is simply my

\(^{778}\) *LDHZ*, 149.

interpretation of Hanshan’s *Commentary on the* Daodejing. It is hoped that I have shown the features and values of Hanshan’s interpretation of the *Daodejing* and my wish is that this study contributes to late Ming studies as well as the field of hermeneutics of the *Daodejing*. 
Clarifying the Purport

The principle that Laozi followed takes nothingness and spontaneity (ziran 自然) as the marvelous Dao. This is what the Lengyan Sutra says “there is no differentiation; neither is it form nor emptiness.”\(^{780}\) It is what Jusheli 拘舍離 and others confused as the dark truth (mingdi 冥諦).\(^{781}\) This is the so-called empty and vague substance (kongmei zhi ti 空昧之體) of the Eighth Consciousness. Because this (Eighth) Consciousness is very dim and deep, and is too subtle to fathom, other than the Buddha none is able to exhaust [the meaning of] it. When it is transformed, it will then become the wisdom of the great perfect mirror (da yuanjing zhi 大圓鏡智).\(^{782}\) The Bodhisattvas have known it, and took [the method of] stillness (zhi 止) and contemplation (guan 観) to extinguish it, but there are still many remainders [for them] to realize. As for the Śrāvakas, they did not understand it, and regarded it as nirvāṇa. The western heresy and Brahman did not understand it, and grasped it as the dark truth. In this text, it is regarded as the subtle Dao of nothingness and spontaneity. Therefore, the [Lengyan] Sutra says, “[The reason] all the practitioners cannot attain the highest bodhi and separately become Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, devas, other philosophers, the King Māra, and followers of Māra is

\(^{780}\) Lengyan Sutra, T 19, no. 945, 111a.

\(^{781}\) Jusheli is a figure in the Lengyan Sutra; see T 19, no. 945, 111a.

\(^{782}\) In Yogācāra theory, the wisdom of great perfect mirror is one of the four undefiled wisdoms, which is the pure wisdom gained at Buddhahood by a qualitative transmutation of the eighth consciousness.
because they do not know the two roots. [They] practice wrongfully, like cooking sand in order to make fine food even through endless time it is impossible for them to obtain it.

What are these two [roots]? The first one is the root of birth and death that is without beginning, which is the mind of grasping that you and the sentient beings regard as self-nature now. The second one is the original pure substance of nirvana that is without beginning, which is your present originally illuminated essence of Consciousness (shijing yuanming 識精元明) that can generate all conditions and does not belong to any condition.  

What is called “the originally illuminated essence of consciousness” is the subtle Dao of Laozi. Therefore, [Laozi] says, “Being obscure and dim, there is essence in it and the essence is quite genuine.” Because this substance is the utmost empty and great, therefore it is not form. Because it can generate all conditions, therefore it is not nothingness. [Because Laozi] was not aware of that heaven, earth, and myriad things are all manifested from it, he called it spontaneity. Because of its unthinkable gradual influence and unthinkable transformation, it is called “marvelous.” Because it is utmost pure and unmixed, it is called “genuine.” [Because] heaven and earth will decay yet this substance will not, and the human body will vanish yet this Nature will exist forever, it is called “constant.” [Because] the transformations of the myriad things all come out from it, it is called “the root of the heaven and earth,” and “the gate of all subtleties.” When you encounter the words “real,” “constant,” “subtle,” “emptiness,” and “the great Dao” etc. in this text, all of them can be tested with this [idea], and then you will automatically

783 Lengyan Sutra, T 19, no. 945, 108c.
784 See Daodejing, ch. 21.
785 See Daodejing, ch. 6.
786 See Daodejing, ch. 1.
have results. If it is not so, it will be so confused as catching the wind or hunting a shadow. Therefore, [I] first show them here, and [I will] not be wearied of pointing them out again in the text.

Clarifying the Tendency

I propose that those who read the Laozi and the Zhuangzi should first be well acquainted with Buddhist teachings and penetrate thoroughly the Lengyan Sutra. When one has understood the Buddha’s argument about how to destroy attachment, then one will not be confused by their (Laozi and Zhuangzi’s) words. After that, by practicing stillness and concentration sincerely till having become well-versed in the practice, as well as by subtly applying the mind, only then can one see this old man’s (Laozi’s) strenuous effort in practice. Yet one should truly realize that the body is the origin of sufferings, and cleverness is the root of that which is troublesome. Accordingly, one is able to neglect his body and discard his cleverness. Thereupon, he will know this old man’s real realization and his utmost happiness. Moreover, one should see through all the worldly affairs and penetrate every human’s feeling. Living in the world with empty mind, he will not confront any obstacle in front of him. Then he can see this old man’s real bliss, happiness, and vast ease, since he is like a follower of Dao who has nothing to do. After that, if he has to respond to the world, he does not need any effort and everything will be properly governed by non-action, which can be understood from the words that he taught Confucius.

The text of the Zhuangzi is the commentary of the Laozi. Thus I propose that the role of Zhuangzi to Laozi is as that of Mencius to Confucius. Therefore, the words of these two masters are all true and not exaggerated words. Therefore, [in chapter 70 of the
Laozi, it] says, "My teaching is very easy to know and very easy to practice, yet under heaven there is no one who is able to know and practice it." Furthermore, all of those who discussed these two masters did not intend to understand them through their own practice, yet they just estimated them by literal language and words, such as zhi, hu, zhe, ye 之乎者也. Therefore, they were far away from reaching them. Moreover, there are people who imitate them with manners rude or wild, and I did not find any people who penetrated them by practicing stillness and concentration. This is what he (Laozi) said, "there are few people who know me." I hope that those who are fond of these two masters should view them like this.

Clarify the Method of Practice

As for the text of the Laozi, early commentators took it for granted that emptiness was its principle. When they inquired of their methods of practice for entering the Dao, [I found that] they were ignorant of how to start. Therefore, in the first part, I take the word "contemplating" of "contemplating being and non-being" as the essential method of entering the Dao in order to let the practitioners practice easily. The effect of contemplation is the greatest, and all the sages of the Three Teachings preached this to others. Confucius said, "By knowing stillness, then one attained concentration," and said, "To illuminate the illuminating virtue." Thus, the words "knowing" and "to illuminate" are identical with the meaning of "realization." As for the concepts of stillness and contemplation of Buddhism, there are differences in depth, such as stillness and contemplation of three Vehicles, of Human and of Heavenly [Vehicles]. Confucius belongs to the stillness and contemplation of the Human Vehicle; Laozi belongs to the stillness and contemplation of the Heavenly Vehicle.
Although the stillness and contemplation of the Three Teachings are different in depth, in summary, in dealing with the defects that they intend to cure, they all regard destroying attachment to self as the first step of practice. This is because all human beings grasp the word “ego” to be the root cause of illness. No matter whether wise or stupid, worthy or unworthy, none are weary of searching for fame and wealth, and exhaust all their cleverness to plan for their descendents of hundreds of generations. To sum up, all of them plot for the sake of themselves. It is the same as Buddha’s saying: “The causes of all sufferings are rooted in greed and craving, since everyone is concerned for self.” Laozi also said, “Honor is as big a trouble as the body.” Because Confucius was the leader of the “School of Name (mingjiao 名教),” he did not dare heedlessly talk to the middle and inferior students about destroying attachment to self. Only to Yan Hui, he said, “Control over oneself.” To others, he only talked about rectifying the mind, being sincere, and cultivating one’s own body. When the mind has been rectified, been sincere, and one’s own body been cultivated, one should apply them between the ruler and the subject, and between the father and son. When everyone exhausts their sincerity, this is the Dao, which is the so-called “establishment for the school of ‘Name.’”

As for the purport of rejecting sages, discarding cleverness, and being non-self, it belongs to the realm of self-realization (zi shouyong di 自受用地). He also did not dare to present it to people easily. He only introduced it, yet did not elucidate it, as he said, “Regarding the sage and the noble man (ren 仁), how dare I?” He also said, “Am I indeed possessed of knowledge? [I am] not possessed of knowledge. A peasant asked for me, and I was entirely empty.” As for the concern of helping others wholeheartedly, then

787 See Daodejing, ch. 13.
he said, “Control over oneself,” and “Do not intend, do not be certain, do not be obstinate, and do not be egocentric.” These four phrases disclose all his true intention (literally, liver and gallbladder). Yet, the word “ji 己” means selfish; the word “yi 意” means the arousal of mind; the word “bi 必” means the anticipating mind (daixin 待心); the word “gu 固” means the attached mind; the word “wo 我” means the egocentric mind; the word “ke 克” means vanishing; the word “wu 毋” is a word for prohibition. He taught people to reject totally the four kinds of defects of “yi,” “bi,” “gu,” and “wo.”

Because the sage travels the world with an empty mind, he is quiet and unmoved. When things come, he responds accordingly; he perceives and then penetrates [them]. He applies his mind like a mirror, neither escorting nor welcoming [things that come]. When [things] come, nothing is stuck; when [things] go, there is no trace left. He forgets both his body and mind, and does not compete with other things; this is the mind of the sage. The reason ordinary people are unable to act like the sage is because they are possessed of the defects of the four words of “yi,” “bi,” “gu,” and “wo.” Therefore they are not at ease, and they suffer whenever they act. Confucius realized that the root of ordinary people’s defects resided here, therefore he urged them to seriously discard them. This kind of teaching is identical with Buddha’s and Laozi’s Principle of no-self. Moreover, the word “wu” is the method of cutting, which is applied most severely. It is like the Legalist’s prohibition word “must not” that cannot be violated a bit. If one violates it, his guilt is not to be forgiven. But the scholars were not aware of this [case].

As for the teachings of our Buddha, though they are vast and great, in summary their purposes are to destroy sentient beings’ two kinds of gross and subtle attachments to self and Dharma (cuxi wofa erzhi 細細我法二執). When these two kinds of attachments have been destroyed, one attains Buddhahood. All the texts in the Canons are the devices
for destroying these two kinds of attachments. As for the attachments that are to be destroyed, the four kinds of defects mentioned by Confucius are still gross attachments. Ordinary people are not aware of this, and they may suppose that there is something mysterious and subtle other than these. As for Laozi, he surpassed ordinary people one step further; therefore he established his teachings by focusing on destroying attachments in particular. He urged people to discard cleverness, to neglect body, to separate from desire, and to become pure and quiet. Yet, the cleverness to be discarded is the selfish cleverness, namely “yi” and “pu”; the body to be neglected is “gu” and “wo”; the desire to be separated from is one’s selfishness. When one is purified, he is vast and without obstacles, like the great empty space, which is Confucius’ “great fairness (dagong 大公).”

From this, we know that Confucius’ principle of Mind had never disagreed with Laozi’s. But for the sake of establishing an institution for his school and protecting the worldly norm, he had no other choice. This is because Confucius focused on active engagement with the world (jingshi 經世), Laozi focused on forgetting the world (wangshi 忘世), and the Buddha focused on transcending the world (chaoshi 超世). Although their ultimate goals are different, the true first step of them all is essentially to destroy the attachment to self. Their methods of practice all begin with stillness and contemplation.

Clarifying the Substance and Function

Someone asked, “The sages of the Three Teachings teach all the people to destroy attachment to self first. Therefore, the substance of no-self is the same. Why are their functions different in active engagement with the world, forgetting the world, and
transcending the world?” I answered, “The substance and the function are all the same, but they are different in depth and extent. If Confucius really had had an ego, he would have planned only for his benefit; how could he actively engage with the world? If the Buddha and Laozi really had rejected the world, they would have aimed at their self-salvation; how could they benefit the sentient beings? Therefore, only by no-self could one actively engage with the world; only through benefiting the sentient beings could one realize no-self; these two are really identical. As for Confucius, he said, “Being quiet and un-moved, [which is the substance], he responded and penetrated through all under heaven,” which is the function. “Being illuminated, then it is sincere,” which is the substance; “being sincere, then it manifests,” which is the function. “Rectifying the heart and making the mind sincere” are the substance; “cultivating oneself, regulating family, ruling state, and pacifying the realm” are the function. Laozi’s nameless is the substance; “being non-active, yet it acts,” is the function. Confucius said, “Only heaven is great, and only Yao followed its greatness; being so vast, people could not name it.” [He] also said, “The person who took non-action to govern was Shun indeed.” Furthermore, [the people who] actively engage with the world treat Yao and Shun as the patriarchs; were they those who had name and action? Only with no-self could one view all under the heaven as oneself, therefore, it is said, “Yao and Shun regarded themselves the same as the people.” Because all the people are possessed of the same substance, what makes them different is that they are obstructed by their selfishness.

Because the people’s minds are the same, once their minds are the same, they will not be obstructed by form. Therefore, [they] were not weary of teaching them and managing them. This is the reason why one could actively engage with the world with no-self. Laozi said, “[I] was constantly skillful in teaching people, therefore there were no
abandoned people." If there are no abandoned people, all the people can become Yao and Shun. This is the reason why one can benefit the sentient beings only by no-self. As for the phrases in this text, such as “Act, yet do not govern,” and “When the merit has been accomplished, do not occupy it,” all take non-action to actively engage with the world as the great function. Has he ever forgotten the world? As for the Buddha, his substance includes all the spaces, his function extends to numberless worlds; he manifests himself according to [the needs of] various kinds of sentient beings. Then he (the Buddha) said, “I attained the Buddhahood (cheng dengzhengjue 成等正覺) in the bodies of all the sentient beings” and “After having delivered all sentient beings, only then would I attain the Buddhahood.” He also said, “If I can cause a sentient being to arouse Bodhicitta, even though it causes me to suffer the pain of hell, I will not be tired of it.” However, did those sentient beings he taught not reside in this world? Once he engaged in this world to deliver sentient beings, if this [action] was not active engagement with the world, what was it? Moreover, he was not weary of suffering in hell for the sake of [liberating even] one person, wasn’t he eager to do it? If he manifested in all kinds of sentient beings, how could he have a certain name? Liezi had ever said, “There was a great sage in the West. Being without word, yet [he] was truthful. Being non-active, [people are] transformed.” In this case, did he have the intention to act?

Therefore, we know that for the three sages, their substance of no-self and the function of benefiting sentient beings are all the same, but they are different in the extent and place they applied. Because Confucius intended to support the worldly Way, tentatively he started from oneself, family, state, and then reached under heaven.

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788 See Daodejing, ch. 27.
Therefore his teachings rested [only] in China. He urged everyone to become Yao and Shun, thus he treated Yao and Shun as patriarch. As for Laozi, he saw the degenerated minds of his time, therefore he thought to return to great antiquity. Thus, he treated the Yellow Emperor as patriarch. Therefore every phrase he spoke was different from ordinary speech. Because he knew that his Way was too great to be tolerated [in China], he went far away to the desert. As for the Buddha, his teaching covers three thousand worlds, is vastly great, and does not make any distinction. As Zisi 諶子 praised the sages, he said, “For all those who are alive, none of them does not respect their parents.” Thus, we know that the substance and function of Confucius had never been little, he was just limited by the tendency of his time. And just because his teaching accorded with the capacity of his time, it was very close to the human situation.

Above is my argument of substance and function. What a pity! The followers of later age were all bound by [their] teachings. Those who study Confucianism are restricted. Those who study Laozi are wild. Those who study Buddhism are narrow. The defects of these scholars are all caused by the evil of attaching to self. If one can try hard to destroy his attachment to self, he will cut open boundaries [among different traditions] and become a great master.

Clarifying the Goal

I have ventured to say, “If Confucius had not understood Laozi, he definitely would have not been happy; if he had not understood the Buddha, he definitely would have not been patient. If Laozi had not understood Confucius, he would not have continuously talked about governing by non-action; if he had not understood the Buddha, he definitely would not have taken compassion as treasure. If the Buddha had not actively engaged
with the world, he definitely would not have stayed in the world to teach sentient beings.”

In my humble opinion, Confucius and Laozi were the transformation bodies of the Buddha. As for the Buddhists of later times, if they do not understand Laozi, they will merely look into the emptiness; in front of them everything is an obstacle, and no thing is free. If they do not understand Confucius and just use Buddhism to engage in the worldly affairs, definitely, they do not understand the worldly way and human affairs. When they meet with people, they immediately talk about darkness and subtlety, which is as useless as selling [them] the head of a dead cat. Therefore a patriarch also said, “If teaching does not accord with the capacity of the audience, it becomes vain speech.” So the Huayan Sutra says, “Sometimes, [he] uses dialects of the frontier to teach the Four Noble Truths.” This shows that in the Buddha’s teaching he never bragged only about darkness and subtlety. However, he delivered sentient beings according to their custom; isn’t it Confucius’ intention of active engagement with the world?

In addition, the [Huayan] Sutra says, “As for the sage of the stage of Fifth Ground (wudi shengren 五地聖人), when he engaged in the world for the purpose of delivering sentient beings he had to be well-versed in worldly texts, techniques, medical recipes, and various kinds of theories concerning books and seals. Then [he] was able to accord with the capability of his audience.” Therefore, [a sutra] says, “Conventional language and the business of benefiting people all accord with the true Dharma.” Therefore, Confucianism takes benevolence (ren 仁) as essential; Buddhism takes the precepts as essential. For example, what [the Analects] says, “Filial piety and brotherly conduct are the essence of benevolence,” and what the Buddha says [in the Fanwang Sutra], “Filial piety is named as a precept,” are in fact the same. Viewed from this perspective, does Buddhism entirely lack means for active engagement with the world?
Because Confucius rejected barbarians, his teachings have only been practiced in China. The Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths with the local dialects of the frontier, therefore, the barbarians all followed his teachings. This is why their functions are different in extent. Therefore, we know that for the sages of the Three Teachings, what is identical is their Mind, and what are different are their traces. Taking the traces to investigate their minds is like using a ladle to measure the sea. Using their minds to include the traces is like a mustard seed containing all space. By forgetting both the mind and the traces, the myriad branches will flow to the sea, and the hundreds of rivers will become one taste.
APPENDIX B

PREFACE TO COMMENTARY ON THE *DAODEJING*

(In XZJ 127, 487b-488b)

In my youth, I was fond of reading the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*. However, I was troubled by not understanding their meanings. But from the points I had grasped, I could imagine their spiritual vein. Therefore, I understood slightly their purports that go beyond their words. When I examined them in various commentaries, most of them were composed according to the authors’ own opinions. The more I wrestled with them, the more obscure their meanings became. When I well studied the words of the *Zhuangzi*, I seemingly understood some ideas about the *Laozi*. Thus, I said, “Those commentaries are the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* of each commentator, not the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* that belong to Laozi and Zhuangzi.

Because the text of the *Laozi* is terse and archaic and its purport is deeply dark, *Zhuangzi* was really the person who commented on it. If one can speculate on its meaning, I think that he has already grasped it more than half. In the empty mountain and the leisure of my meditation, I carefully thought it over and reflected on it. When I comprehended the meanings of some words, I wrote them down. [I asked myself that I] must obtain the meaning then forget the words, as well as seeing the meaning according to the words. In some cases, I comprehended a phrase through tens of days; in other cases, I comprehended a chapter through years. I started it at the Donghai 東海 and I finally completed it while I stayed in Nanyue 南粵,789 from the year of *renchen* 壬辰 (1592)

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789 Donghai was a place in present Shading province; Nanyue was a place in the present Guangdong province.
till the year of bingwu 丙午 (1606), during which fifteen years had passed. From this, I realized the ancient people's difficulty in establishing words.

Because this text is very terse, my commentary does not weary of penetrating and connecting; it is essential and not trivial. I had once said that Confucians treated Yao and Shun as patriarchs, and took “Name” as teachings, therefore their principle is ren and yi; Laozi treated the Yellow Emperor as patriarch; his Dao emphasizes non-action. For example, he said, “When Dao and virtue were lost, then there were ren and yi.” This is the base where he established his words. Therefore, Zhuangzi’s criticism and sharp words are certainly not exaggeration. Because the argument that transcends the conventional concept will astonish ordinary people, his way is letting go [his words] and not bringing [them] back. After Confucius inquired about ceremony [from Laozi], he praised [Laozi] that he was like a dragon. Does not the saying “The sage does not regard himself as a sage” mean anything? Thus, Laozi regarded “useless” as great function. If one takes this to actively engage with the world, then [the matters of] transforming, regulating, governing and pacifying are like directing them on the palm. Particularly, he took non-action as the utmost principle, and took nature (xing 性) and life (ming 命) as the genuine [objects of] cultivation. Even if he was distanced from the world and abandoned honors, he was not false. If one obtains its essence, the paths between true and false will be distinguished, like a cloud is distinguished from mud automatically. It is true that [the Zhuangzi] says “Cultivate your body by the genuine, and [employ] the remainder to the state and the realm.”

Someone said, “Your [school of] Chan values the concept of forgetting words, however, you cry out for the worldly truth; which one of them do you regard as greater?” I answered, “It is not so. All the sound of the crow and the magpie’s caw come from the
creation of heaven; all of the ant’s swarming and bee’s flying are attributed to the mystical principle. Thus, what kinds of languages are not Chan? What kinds of teachings (dharmas) are not Dao?” Moreover, as for the theory of discarding cleverness and forgetting mind, does it not enter the first stage of dhyāna (Chan)? Furthermore, since Chan is overshadowed by one’s ego, Laozi had already gone ahead by destroying ego in order to attain Chan. As for those mayflies that play in this world, they should particularly regard this as paradise. \(^790\) When the commentary was completed, it was first printed in Lingnan 嶺南, and then reprinted in Wuyun, 五雲 Nanyue 南岳, and Jinling 金陵. Now it is reprinted again in Wumen 吳門. Because the people who value it are numerous, the distribution is not wearied by spreading widely.

\(^790\) What Hanshan means here is obscure.
Abbreviations

DZJBB  Dazangjing hubian  大藏經補編.

DJFT  Daodejing jie fati  道德經解發題.

GLYL  Guan laozhuang yingxiang lun  觀老莊影響論.

LDHZ  Laozi daodejing hanshan zhu 老子道德經憨山註.

LFZL  Lingfeng zonglun  靈峰宗論.

MYQJ  Hanshan dashi mengyouquanji  憨山大師夢遊全集.

T  Taishō shinshū daizōkyō.

XZJ  Xuzangjing  續藏經.

YQFH  Yunqi fahui  雲棲法彙.

ZB  Zhuchuang suiibi  竹窗隨筆.

ZBZB  Zibo zunzhe bieji 紫柏尊者別集.

ZBZQ  Zibo zunzhe quanji 紫柏尊者全集.

ZCEB  Zhuchuang erbi  竹窗二筆.

ZCSB  Zhuchuang sanbi  竹窗三筆.

ZDL  Zhidaolu  直道錄.

ZDX  Zhu daodejing xu  註道德經序.

ZEJ  Zheng e ji  正訛集.

ZNHZ  Zhuangzi neipian hanshan zhu  莊子內篇憨山註.
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