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ORTHODOXY AND HETERODOXY
IN THE EXEGESIS OF THE *ZHUANGZI*:
A CASE-STUDY OF LIN XIYI'S 林希逸 (CA. 1210 – CA. 1273)
PREFACE TO HIS COMMENTARY ON THE *ZHUANGZI*,
ZHUANGZI KOUYI FATI 莊子口義發題¹

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“Haec doceo non quasi imperans, nihil enim proficit legis imperium, sed quasi qui officium susceperim reconciliandi vos Deo, ‘obsecro vos, fratres’, et obsecro non per potentiam, sed ‘per misericordiam Dei’.”²

Origenes, *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*, Liber IX

“I teach this not as one who makes prescriptions, since the prescription of a law is never ever of any use, but as one who has accepted the office of your reconciliation with God; ‘I conjure you, brothers’, [says the Apostle], and I [Origenes] conjure you not by the power, but ‘by the charity of God’.”

Exordium

Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139–1193) of the Song 宋 is renowned for one of the most important statements in the history of Chinese exegetical thinking, expressed in the formula “*liu jing zhu wo* 六經註我,” “The six canonical books are commentaries on the ‘I’.” The exact phrase appears at the beginning of his *Yulu* 語錄:

- 1 This paper was read to the audience of the panel “Structures and strategies of the Chinese commentary in historical perspective” of the 11th Bi-annual Conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies, EACS (35th Conference of European Sinologists), “China and the Outer World,” Barcelona, 4–7 September 1996. – I am greatly indebted to Dr. Achim Mittag, “Zentrum für interkulturelle Forschung (ZiF),” University of Bielefeld, to Dr. Alexander L. Mayer, Institute of Chinese Studies, University of Heidelberg, for discussing with me several problems of translation and interpretation, and to Tony Howes, Institute of East Asian Art History, University of Heidelberg, for proof-reading the first draft of my manuscript and turning all my Germanisms into adequate English.
- 2 Origenes, *Commentarii in epistulam ad Romanos*, Liber IX, ed. Theresia Heither OSB, *Fontes Christiani*, vol. 2/1–5 (Freiburg i. Br. [et al.]: Herder, 1996), vol. 5, p. 22.

論語中多有無頭柄的說話，如‘知及之，仁不能守之’³之類。不知所及所守者，何事。如‘學而時習之’⁴。不知‘時習’者，何事。非學有本領，未易讀也。苟學有本領，則知之所及者，及此也。仁之所守者，守此也。時習之，習此也。‘說’者，說此。‘樂’者，樂此。⁵如屋之上建瓴水矣。學苟知本，六經皆我註腳。⁶

In the *Lunyu* there are many expressions controlled by something unidentified. Such [is the case in expressions] like ‘although (through) knowledge (someone) attains *it*, but (through) love of mankind cannot hold *it*, (...);’ [here] it is not known, what thing it is that is ‘attained’ and ‘held.’⁷ Or in ‘learning and exercising *it* time and again;’ here it is not known, what thing it is that is ‘exercised time and again.’ When it is not the case that learning is guided by an apprehension of the origin, then reading [such passages] is not at all easy. But when learning is guided by an apprehension of the origin, then it is just this [namely, the origin] which is attained in ‘attaining by knowledge,’ just this which is held in ‘holding by love of mankind,’ just this which is exercised in ‘exercising time and again,’ just this which is delightful in ‘delighting,’ just this which is joyful in ‘enjoying.’ This is just like installing a tile gutter on top of a high building – when those in learning know the origin, then [they know that] the six canonical books are all [just] footnotes to the ‘I.’

One century earlier, Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033--1107) had said in his *Ruguan yulu* 入關語錄 [*Recorded Sayings: “Entering the barrier”*]:

學本是治心，豈有反爲心害？⁸

Scholarship originally [is just] this: reigning the heart. How could there, instead, be something [in it] hurting the heart?

And:

3 *Lunyu* 15:32.

4 *Lunyu* 1:1.

5 “說” and “樂” are also characters used in *Lunyu* 1:1.

6 Lu Xiangshan, “Yulu shang 語錄上,” *Xiangshan xiansheng quanji* 象山先生全集, *juan* 卷 34, *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, vol. 63, p. 258:a.

7 Most of the commentators and translators have read the “it” to mean “office.”

8 *Er Cheng ji* 二程集, ed. by Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, ²1984), vol. 1, p. 156.

六經之言，在涵畜中獻識心通。⁹

In [a reader's life of] being nourished and fed, the words of the Six Canons are an offering to know the pervasiveness of the heart.

In a recent article presenting a bird's-eye view of the history of Chinese commentarial literature, Chen Shaoming 陳少明 has called Lu Xiangshan's "*liu jing zhu wo*" formula "the scholarly turning-point in the exegesis of the Chinese canon."¹⁰ Although Lu Xiangshan certainly represents the apogee of that kind of thinking, Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 manages to trace it back to the thought of Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249),¹¹ while critics like Luo Qinchun 羅欽順 (1465–1547) of the Ming 明 accuse Lu Xiangshan of actually having committed a crime with it,¹² and Chen Jian 陳建 (1497–1567) of the same epoch slanders the philosopher Chen Bosha 陳白沙 (1428–1500), revered at the time, for his whole-hearted adherence to the "*liu jing zhu wo*" credo.

John B. Henderson claims that Lu Xiangshan's remark is "the most notable challenge to the authority of the canon" and states – I think wrongly – that it was "the moral mind," or "the innate moral consciousness, not the classics or even the teachings of the ancient sages," which were to be identified as "the primary locus of the Confucian Way."¹³ But this strict opposition between, on the one hand, an authoritative canon, and, on the other, an independent moral consciousness cannot be the decisive clue to what Lu had in mind. The question being put here is, instead: what is it that makes the canon in all its authority authoritative? Lu Xiangshan, being

9 Vol. 1, p. 143.

10 Chen Shaoming 陳少明, "Liu jing zhu wo: Jingxue de jieshi xuezhuan xi 六經注我：經學的解釋學轉析," *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究 8 (1993), pp. 48–53, 78.

11 Tang Yongtong, "Yan yi zhi bian 言意之辨," *Tang Yongtong xueshu lunwenji* 湯用彤學術論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 214.

12 For a longer polemic of Luo Qinchun against Lu Xiangshan see *Kun zhi ji* 困知記, part 2, No. 41 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 34–37; tr. by Irene Bloom, *Knowledge Painfully Acquired* (New York: Columbia UP, 1987), pp. 136–143; see also Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Zhongguo chuantong sixiang de xiandai quanshi* 中國傳統思想的現代詮釋 (Jiangsu Renmin chubanshe, 1992), pp. 189–190.

13 John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton UP, 1991), p. 60.

a *xinxue* 心學 philosopher – a philosopher of the “scholarship of the heart” – answers that the text that has to be commented upon is not the canon itself, but the hidden signature of the “heart.” It is the “heart” that has to be fed or emptied by the canon, and the canon is just the tool, or the “tile gutter,” which proves to be most efficacious for this purpose, since the canon has the indispensable therapeutical, even sacrificial benefit of initiating the discovery of the innate, but veiled scripture of the heart. Studying the canonical scriptures is thus the most sensible way to perform one’s “*exercices spirituels*.”¹⁴

Narratio

This “turning-point” in the history of the philosophy of exegesis in China initiated by Lu Xiangshan proves also to be crucial for the work of Lin Xiyi 林希逸 (ca. 1210 – ca. 1273).¹⁵ The remarks which follow in this paper are intended as a very limited case-study of the preface to his commentary on the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, the *Zhuangzi kouyi fati* 莊子口義發題.¹⁶

- 14 This term, referring to exegesis and philosophy as a practice of life in late antiquity and early Christianity, is Pierre Hadot’s. See his book *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981, ²1987).
- 15 For a debate on Lu Xiangshan by Lin Xiyi see the first section of the last of his “Xueji 學記,” “Scholarly Notes,” in *Zhuxi Juanzhai xuji* 竹溪齋續集, *Siku quanshu zhenben* 四庫全書珍本, second part (*er ji* 二集), 3 vols. [No. 314–316], vol. 3 [=316], *juan* 卷 30, pp. 1a–3b. The topic of the debate is “governing the public,” *zhu gong* 主公. – According to the *Guangyun* 廣韻, the regular reading of the character 齋 is “Yan.” Liu Ts’un-yan 柳存仁 in all of his entries on Lin Xiyi in *A Sung Bibliography*, initiated by Étienne Balázs, ed. by Yves Hervouet (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 1978), reads it as “Juan,” which is also possible. For convenience, I retain Prof. Liu’s transcription.
- 16 Liu Ts’un-yan 柳存仁, entry “*Nan-hua chen-ching k’ou-i* 南華真經口義,” *A Sung Bibliography*, initiated by Étienne Balázs, ed. by Yves Hervouet (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 1978), pp. 367–368, fails to give any date for the commentary. Christoph Harbsmeier, *An Annotated Anthology of Comments on Zhuangzi: Xiaoyaoyou (Han to Qing)*, Serica Osloensia, vol. 1 (Oslo: Department of East European and Oriental Studies, University of Oslo, 1992), p. 6, dates it to the year 1269, about four years before Lin’s death, unfortunately without giving any reference for that date. In the *Daozang* 道藏 edition, a certain Xu Linjing 徐霖景 refers to Lin Xiyi, in his epilogue (*shuoba* 說跋) to the postface (*houxu* 後

The text of Lin's preface has three sections, the longer middle section of which constitutes the critical, philosophical, and polemical core. The first section begins with a few dry particulars on Zhuangzi the person, somewhat in the style of modern identity cards. This is followed by an outline of the book's three-part structure and a discussion of the unity of meaning in the work as a whole, which Lin thinks was written in its entirety by one and the same author. The last section begins with a biographical note concerning Lin's literary studies in general and his *Zhuangzi* studies in particular, and then shows his reverence for his teacher, Chen Lexuan 陳樂軒 of the *Aixuan* 艾軒 school of learning.¹⁷ The preface concludes with a short "tradition formula," or dedicational address.

The middle section is constructed around a core complex in which "five difficulties" of interpreting the *Zhuangzi* are discussed. This core is bracketed before and after by considerations of problems of orthodoxy and heterodoxy according to the standards of "we *Ru*" (吾儒). The front bracketing section makes a statement on the indispensability of the *Zhuangzi* in the Chinese scholarly tradition together with the offensive fact

序) of the *Zhuangzi kouyi* by Lin Jingde 林經德, as "Juan [Yan] weng 虞翁," "old man Juan [Yan]," and states that Lin's *Zhuangzi* commentary had already been written by the time of his own epilogue. He finishes with the following words: "景定辛酉十一月己巳三衢徐霖景說跋," "Epilogue by Xu Linjing of Sanqu, on the *yisi* day of the eleventh month of the *xinyou* year, era Jingding," that is, 1261. At that time Lin Xiyi was in office as a *sinong shaoqing* 司農少卿, a "Lesser Lord of Agricultural Supervision." Under the new emperor, Duzong 度宗 (1264–1274), he became a *zhongshu sheren* 中書舍人, "Drafts Official of the Secretariat." In the above mentioned postface Lin Jingde has Lin Xiyi say that "after encountering troubles and being removed from office I have used this to give relief to my worries and to enliven my old age," tr. Harbsmeier, *ibid.*, p. 6. If all of this information is true, then Lin must be referring to the last of his official appointments after his *jinshi* examination in 1235 and before about 1260, when he started his second official career. In that case, the *Zhuangzi kouyi* must have been written shortly before 1260, when Lin was out of office and an "old man" of about 50 years of age. – In the following, for "*Daozang*" the abbreviation "DZ" will be used throughout.

- 17 *Aixuan* 艾軒 was one of the style names (*hao* 號) of Lin Xiyi's great-grandfather, Lin Guangchao 林光朝 (1114–1178). He passed his *jinshi* 進士 examination in 1163. For his biography see *Songshi* 宋史 433, 3b–4a. For preliminary information on the *Aixuan* school see Shen Shanhong 沈善洪, ed., *Huang Zongxi quanji* 黃宗羲全集, vol. 4, *Song Yuan xue'an* 宋元學安, part 2 (Shanghai: Zhejiang Guji chubanshe, 1992), pp. 787–808.

that the *Zhuangzi* was, nevertheless, neither canonized by “we *Ru*” nor even given the status of a work of orthodoxy.¹⁸ The closing bracketing phrase takes up that topic again. It reveals Lin’s own way of interpreting the *Zhuangzi* from the point of view of Chan practice, and denies the heterodoxy of the text as measured against the *Ru* notion of sagehood.

Propositio

From this general overview of the text and its form, one can see that the main thesis of the preface is that the “five difficulties” of understanding the *Zhuangzi* are embedded in considerations of just what it is that makes a canonical or orthodox scripture canonical or orthodox. My own thesis is twofold. On the one hand, Lin Xiyi’s preface pays duty to what could be called “the guiding phrase on heterodoxy” in the *Lunyu*. That phrase says:

攻乎異端，斯害也已 [矣] 。¹⁹

Those who specialize professionally on a heterodox standpoint have just by doing so already damaged it.

On the other hand, Lin Xiyi fervently defends certain guiding principles of the *Zhuangzi* and of Buddha taken together that his *Ru* colleagues had, according to the above mentioned *Lunyu* phrase, termed “heterodox.”

Let me therefore first present the core of the preface, the contents of the “five difficulties.” It begins with an introductory remark in which Lin takes Cheng Yi as his measure:

伊川曰：‘佛書如淫聲美色，易以惑人。’蓋以其語震動而見易搖也。況此書。

18 The *Zhuangzi* was entitled *Nanhua zhenjing* 南華真經 by imperial edict in 742. By the time of Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086) it was still part of the curriculum of the state examinations. Lin, however, wrote his commentary not to a “*Nanhua zhenjing*,” but to a “*Zhuangzi*.” The *DZ* title *Zhuangzi kouyi* accords with the title taken over by Zhang Siwei 張四維 in his *Zhuangzi Juanzhai kouyi buzhu* 莊子騰齋口義補注. A collated edition (*jiaokan* 校刊) of that work made by He Rucheng 何汝成, dated 1577, is kept in the National Central Library in Taipei and reproduced in Yan Lingfeng’s *Zhuangzi jicheng chubian* edition, vol. 9.

19 Cheng Shude 程樹德, *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 104.

所言仁義性命之類，字義皆與吾書不同，一難也。
 其意欲與吾夫子爭衡，故其言多過當，二難也。
 鄙略中下之人，如佛書所謂‘爲最上乘者說’，故其言每每過高，
 三難也。
 又其筆端鼓舞變化，皆不可以尋常文字蹊徑求之，四難也。
 況語脈機鋒多如禪家頓宗所謂劍刃上事，吾儒書中未嘗有此，五難也。

Yichuan [i.e. Cheng Yi] says, ‘Buddhist scriptures are like ‘the excessive sounds [of the Zhanguo states Zheng 鄭 and Wei 衛] and the enticing beauty [of young girls or boys]’ – people can be easily misled by them.’ That’s because with their words they shake and move [the people] and with their opinions make them liable to waver. How much more so does this book [the *Zhuangzi*] do that. Concerning that which he [Zhuangzi] tells about love of mankind, righteousness, and the innate specific decree of life, the meaning of the characters used (仁, 義, 性命) does not coincide with [the meaning of the same characters in] our [the *Ru*-ist] scriptures. This is the first difficulty.²⁰

What he [Zhuangzi] has on his mind is to contend for authority with our master [Kongzi]. Therefore his words will often miss the proper mark. This is the second difficulty.

Because he disparages mediocre and mean people – as is also the case in what the Buddhist scriptures call ‘teachings for practitioners of the Highest Vehicle’ – his words time and again rise up to soaring heights. This is the third difficulty. Furthermore, the tip of his brush drums and dances and alters and changes [so much that] you can never catch him by searching for the paths and ways of ordinary characters. This is the fourth difficulty.

And, finally: The pulse of his rhetoric and his hooked shrewdness often comes close to what the Chan school of the sudden [awakening] calls ‘bringing something forth with a double-edged sword.’ Nothing of the kind has ever occurred in the scriptures of we *Ru*. This is the fifth difficulty.

Just as each single phrase of the whole preface is enciphered and coded, so are these six sentences, i.e. the introductory remark and the “five difficulties.” Although they *can* be read simply as they stand, their full

20 Similarly, Lin says in the preface to the *Laozi kouyi* 老子口義, DZ, No. 701, fasc. 389, 3/2:a-b: “The meaning of the words *jen* (kindness), *i* (righteousness) and *li* (propriety) as understood by Lao-tzu is different from that offered by Confucius or Mencius. We can understand them only in the given context. If we adhere to the proper etymology of these words, we would be at a loss.” And, commenting on the first two lines of *Laozi* 48, “The meaning of these lines cannot be discussed in terms of Confucian books.” (1/21:a) Tr. by Liu Ts’un-yan 柳存仁, entry “*Tao-te chen-ching k’ou-i* 道德真經口義,” *A Sung Bibliography*, p. 361.

flavour and bouquet only issue once the reader has deciphered their clues. Deciphering their clues will also be part of the confirmation of my thesis. In the following I shall only devote special attention to those phrases of this text, that bear on the validity of the thesis presented at the beginning of this section.

Confutatio

1. “The guiding phrase on heterodoxy” in the *Lunyu*

As will be shown in the following lines, the Cheng Yi sentence quoted by Lin originates from Cheng’s *Lunyu* commentary. But the phrase is absent in the surviving text of his *Lunyu jie* 論語解.²¹ The only source I can find for it is the *jizhu* 集注 commentary on the *Lunyu* by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). But Zhu Xi quotes the phrase as saying:

學者當如淫聲美色以遠之。²²

Scholars should handle [the Buddhist scriptures] like ‘the excessive sounds [of the Zhanguo states Zheng 鄭 and Wei 衛] and the enticing beauty [of young girls or boys]’ – they [should] keep people at a distance from them.

The wording here is obviously not quite the same as that used by Lin Xiyi. There are good reasons for assuming that Lin is quoting the sentence from memory. His teacher, Chen Lexuan, was highly celebrated for his *Lunyu* commentary – now lost, of which Lin must have had a thorough knowledge. There certainly was a subtle aura of reading the *Lunyu* between the two masters, so the both of them must have had “all the characters in their veins,” as Lin himself puts it later in the preface.²³ It is also highly probable that it was through Zhu Xi’s text that Lin knew the phrase of Cheng Yi. Since the appearance of Zhu Xi’s *Lunyu jizhu* edition that sentence must have been an indispensable marker for everybody later commenting on this pericope of the *Lunyu*.

21 See *Er Cheng ji* 二程集, ed. Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, ²1984), vol. 4, p. 1135.

22 *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, ²1986), p. 57.

23 For the master–teacher relationship see *Zhuangzi kouyi*, DZ 10/14:b–15:a.

But so far we have no concrete idea how such a maxim might have resounded in a discussion that is mainly a struggle for, or against, orthodoxy and heterodoxy. That subsoil only becomes active once we take into account the specific *Lunyu* phrase that Cheng Yi is commenting upon here, and for which Zhu Xi has singled out a particular historical line of exegesis. The phrase, already quoted above, is to be found in the second chapter, “Wei zheng 爲政:”

子曰：攻乎異端，斯害也已 [矣]。²⁴

It is by following Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) interpretation, that this line can be translated as:

The master said: ‘Those who specialize professionally on a heterodox standpoint have just by doing so already damaged it.’

Since the time of Fan Ning 范甯 (*fl.* during the Jin 晉 [265–315])²⁵ and his *Lunyu zhu* 論語注, with an excerpt from which Zhu Xi opens his selection of commentaries on the *Lunyu* passage quoted above, this sentence had become one of the major weapons to be used against heterodoxy, no matter which orthopractical confession one adhered to. Since that time the “*yiduan*” of the *Lunyu* could be read, aggressively, as meaning not simply “different,” but “heterodox standpoints.”

Two more elements in the history of exegesis of the *Lunyu* passage are important to Lin's discussion of *Zhuangzi* interpretation. The first is the introduction by, once again, Fan Ning of an anachronistic solution to the question of who or what could be identified as “heterodox” in the *Lunyu*. He decided on Yang Zhu and Mo Di, neither of whom had yet been born in the time of Confucius.²⁶ This decision can be seen to already be the product of a particular orthopractice, one in which the *Lunyu* is read

24 Cheng Shude 程樹德, *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), pp. 104–110. For textual criticism of the phrase, see pp. 104–106.

25 For his biography see *Jinshu* 晉書, *juan* 卷 75, “Liezhuàn 列傳,” *juan* 45 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), vol. 7, pp. 1984–1989; Bona 百衲 edition (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930–37), vol. 7, pp. 5478:b–5480:a; and *Lianshe gaoxian zhuan* 蓮社高賢傳, in *Han Wei congshu* 漢魏叢書, *Baibu congshu* 百部叢書 edition, *han* 函 1, *fasc.* 9, pp. 37:b–38:a.

26 The argument against this anachronism comes from Cheng Shude, p. 105.

through the *Mengzi*, because it is in the *Mengzi* that Yang Zhu and Mo Di are most severely criticized. It is because of this identification of the “*yiduan*” of the *Lunyu* with Yang and Mo that Zhu Xi quotes the Fan Ning commentary here.

The second element is the superimposition by the Tang scholar Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) of his own proscription, one all the more anachronistic, on that of Fan Ning. Han Yu decides that Laozi and the Buddha also belong to the realm of heterodoxy.²⁷ The Han Yu commentary on the *Lunyu* is in fact one of the main sources from which Cheng Yi has inherited his anti-Buddhist impetus. Charles Hartman argues that Cheng Yi had access to at least one of Han Yu’s two *Lunyu* commentaries, namely the *Lunyu bijie* 論語筆解, through an edition of the text edited by Xu Bo 許勃 (978–1047), now held in the Library of the Palace Museum in Taipei.²⁸

With this background, let us now read the complete Cheng Yi quotation as given by Zhu Xi. Here we shall see that Lin Xiyi’s own quotation is very much to the point:

佛氏之言，比之楊墨，尤爲近理，所以其害爲尤甚。學者當如淫聲美色以遠之，不爾，則駸駸然入於其中矣。

Since the words of the Buddha, compared with those of Yang Zhu and Mo Di, come closer to the inner and hidden structure of the order of the world, the damage they do is all the greater. Scholars should handle [the Buddhist scriptures] like ‘the excessive sounds [of the Zhanguo states Zheng 鄭 and Wei 衛] and the enticing beauty [of young girls or boys]’ – they [should] keep people at a distance from them. If they fail, in no time they will find themselves in their very midst.

Now compare Lin Xiyi’s remark:

Cheng Yi says, ‘Buddhist scriptures are like ‘the excessive sounds [of the Zhanguo states Zheng 鄭 and Wei 衛] and the enticing beauty [of young girls or boys]’ – people can be easily misled by them.’

There is an ascription of heterodoxy which had been pursued along the orthopractical lines of *Lunyu* interpretation from the 4th through the 12th centuries, by Fan Ning, Han Yu, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi. They are plaintiffs

27 See Cheng Shude, p. 105.

28 Charles Hartman, *Han Yu and the T’ang Search for Unity* (Princeton UP, 1986), p. 340.

for “*jiang ming* 講明,” “clear, straight-forward talk,” as Lin Xiyi himself puts it.²⁹ But what they feel to be a secure means of canon building is precisely what *a priori* prevents them from understanding the *Zhuangzi*. Further on in the preface, and still with Cheng Yi on his mind, Lin says:

眼未明，強生意見。非以異端邪說鄙之，必為其所恐動。或資以誕放，或流而空虛，則伊川‘淫聲美色’之喻誠不可不懼。

As long as the [exegetes'] eyes are not yet clear, [they] produce forced opinions. They cannot but denigrate [the *Zhuangzi*] as ‘a heterodox standpoint and an erroneous teaching,’ because otherwise they will inevitably feel terrified and tormented by it. As some make use of it for bragging and boasting, and others for drifting away into empty talk, Yichuan’s comparison with ‘the excessive sounds and the enticing beauty’ is truly to be taken most seriously.

2. Lin Xiyi’s *Ru*-ist defence of the heterodoxies of *Zhuangzi* and Buddha

Having concluded from his statements of the “five difficulties” that exegetes of the *Zhuangzi* should possess – as *gradus ad Parnassum* – “a refined knowledge of the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi*, the *Zhongyong*, and the *Daxue*,” i.e. those books “declared to be orthodox” only one generation before,³⁰ Lin plays a marvellous rhetorical game with three characters all meaning something like “streaks and grains;” namely *li* 理, which I just translated by “the inner and hidden structure of the order of the world,” *wen* 文, the “lines” of scripture, and *mai* 脈, “the pulse.” He writes:

是必（...）見理素，定識文字血脈，知禪宗解數。具此眼目，而後知其言意一一有所歸著。

So exegetes must (...) by watching the streaks and grains of the raw and uncarved *li* (the simplicity of the hidden mystery of the world) determine the [touchable] marks of the pulse beat of [the *Zhuangzi*’s] characters, and com-

29 See *Zhuangzi kouyi*, DZ 7/2:b².

30 Zhu Xis commentaries on the *Mengzi* and the *Lunyu* “were declared to be orthodox,” as Guy Alitto puts it, in 1212, and those on the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* in 1227; see his “Orthodoxie in der chinesischen Kultur,” *Kulturen der Achsenzeit II, Ihre institutionelle Dynamik, Teil 1, China, Japan*, ed. by S. N. Eisenstadt (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 930, 1992), p. 173, n. 29.

prehend the tricks and arts of the Chan school. Only if they have a good eye for this can they also understand what the words and the mind [of the *Zhuangzi*] one at a time bring home and unveil.

A scripture like the *Zhuangzi* is thus no mere analytical object of interpretational desire for Lin. This is despite the fact that the first and the second “difficulties” can, as Prof Liu Ts’un-yan has put it,³¹ also be read as a sort of historical “textual criticism.”³² Instead, the text of scriptures such as the *Zhuangzi*, which carry in them “a great guiding thread” (*da gangling* 大綱領) and “a great pointer back to the source” (*da zong zhi* 大宗旨), is nothing but the touchable pulse beat and the solid body for diagnosis of the heart, which is the origin itself. The task of books like the *Zhuangzi* would be to make that “source” in the heart of the reader accessible. This is not only the core of Lin’s idea of scholarship but in the last resort also that of Cheng Yi’s, although it is plain that Lin is not going to follow Cheng’s harsh condemnation of Buddhism.

In his preface, Lin Xiyi expresses great admiration not only for “the Chan eye” of exegesis – it comes last and is ranked highest in the order of

31 Reflecting on Lin’s third Daoist commentary, the *Liezi kouyi* 列子口義, Prof Liu says, “occasionally in the [*Lieh-tzu*] commentary, he [Lin] deals with the problem of verification or textual criticism. (...) ‘For since the time of the Ch’in dynasty, many books have been lost and become obsolete, and appeared only after they were sought. They might be obtained at various times, and the number of books extant also varied, it was only after they were compared and collated that (the contents) could be fixed. Even during the time of collation confusion and errors would be made. By the period of the disaster in the central provinces during the reign of the Ssu-ma 司馬 family (i.e. the invasion of the Wu-hu 五胡 in the Chin dynasty), the books were scattered and dispersed again. Not until (the centre of activity) moved to Chiang-nan 江南 (i.e. south of the Yang-tzu River) did some of the books make their re-appearance, so there are many forged editions among them. Just as with *Kuan Yin-tzu*, (passages) where they are good they are indeed excellent, where there [*sic*: they] are disorderly there [*sic*: they] are extremely confused. The first few paragraphs in the first chapter of this book (i.e. *Lieh-tzu*) are very good, and there should be no doubt about its authenticity, whereas the middle part may be subjected to some additions and interpolations by other hands, yet the discrepancy between the refinement and coarseness in the style should easily be detected.’ (12b-13a). Such verification adds to the value of the commentary.” Liu Ts’un-yan 柳存仁, entry “*Ch’ung-hsü chih-te chen-ching Chüan-chai k’ou-i* 沖虛至德真經虞齋口義,” *A Sung Bibliography*, p. 364.

32 Reminding us perhaps of one of the great turning-points in the history of Western exegesis, initiated by Richard Simon and Baruch Spinoza.

three preliminaries to the interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* –, but, more broadly, for all “those who practice the *zui shang cheng* 最上乘,” “the Highest Vehicle.” Since it is not an exegetical and pedagogical measure of Lin’s *Ru* colleagues to turn up their noses rhetorically at those who are mean and mediocre, they have their troubles with the *Zhuangzi* and practitioners of “the Highest Vehicle.” Being himself a *Ru*, Lin cannot but point to that problem. But at the same time he makes himself a champion for non-*Ru*-ist scriptures such as the *Zhuangzi* and the Buddhist canon. Among all of Lin’s commentaries, only those on the *Laozi*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Liezi* have survived to enter the tradition and become in some degree authoritative themselves. By the time the *Siku quanshu* edition was prepared (1773–1782) all the rest of his commentaries had already perished.

In general, Lin credits the Buddhists with having made it obvious that the *Zhuangzi* had always had the potential of equalling “our *Ru* teachings.” Not that the Buddhists were logically or pedagogically necessary for realizing that task – their teachings are even, as Buddha says himself in the *Lotos Sûtra*, “false”³³ and a “lie” – but they were the ones to have unveiled the superiority of that book. In one case Lin quotes his “former master,” i.e. Chen Zao 陳藻, as having said:

佛書最好證吾書證，則易曉也。³⁴

It will be most advantageous to let the Buddhist books prove our own [i.e. the *Ru*-ist] books’ proofs; then they are easy to understand.

One of the Chan roots of that kind of exegesis can be found in a scripture purportedly written by Hongren 弘忍 (601–674), the “fifth patriarch” of Chan, the *Zui shang cheng lun* 最上乘論,³⁵ a copy of which was found among the Dunhuang manuscripts.³⁶ Zongmi 宗密 (780–841), the “fifth patriarch” of Huayan 華嚴, distinguished five forms of Chan. One of

33 For the “falseness” of the Buddhist books see *Zhuangzi kouyi*, *DZ* 7/2:b⁵.

34 *DZ* 11/11:a.

35 *T.* 2011, vol. 48.

36 Unfortunately, this scripture is now split up into eight portions (London, Stein-No. 2669, 3558, 4064; Paris, Pelliot-No. 3434, 3559; Beijing 宇 4; two fragments in Japan, Ryûko daigaku 龍古大學). For basic information see *Foguang da cidian* 佛光大辭典 (Taipei: Shumu wenxian, ⁵1989), vol. 6, p. 5042:a–c.

these, which Zongmi traces back to Bodhidharma, was entitled by him “*zui shang cheng chan* 最上乘禪,” “the Chan of the ‘Highest Vehicle.’” Zongmi’s description comes very close to what Hongren writes as a student of master Daoxin 道信 (580–651).³⁷ In this form of Chan, all practice is devoted to the fulfillment of the originally pure heart that wakes to the innate state of birth, to the effortlessness and untroubledness of the beginning of all things, to the all-embracing modesty of the Self, and to the non-difference of the “Buddha” and the “heart.” As long as the interpretation of scriptures does not do service to the depth and acuteness of these roots, it will be fruitless and of no use.

But not only Chan practised its kind of “Highest Vehicle.” It is in the “Yaocao yu 藥草喻 chapter of the *Lotos Sûtra* where Buddha says in a *gâtha*:

若諸菩薩 | 智慧堅固 | 了達三界 | 求最上乘 | 是名小樹 | 而得增長。³⁸

If all those Bodhisattvas / Who are firm in their wisdom / Understand thoroughly the threefold world / And strive for the ‘Highest Vehicle,’ / They are called ‘Small Trees’ / That would still have to grow.³⁹

37 Liu Ts’un-yan 柳存仁, entry “*Nan-hua chen-ching k’ou-i* 南華真經口義,” *A Sung Bibliography*, p. 367, notes, that Lin throughout the commentary explicitly cites the Chan masters Huineng 慧能 (638–713) (DZ 14/23:a), Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從諗 (778–897) (DZ 8/4:b, 9/3:b, 13/15:a, 25/28:b, 31/11:a), Pang Yun jushi 龐蘊居士 (fl. ca 810) (DZ 13/21:a, 24/16:b) and Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) (DZ 18/20:b, 31/23:a), and that he quotes the Buddhists sūtras *Vimalakîrti-nirdesa sūtra* (DZ 10/1:a–b, 23/2:b), *Śūrangama sūtra* (DZ 14/11:a, 16/8:b), *Yuanjue jing* 圓覺經 (DZ 23/8:b, 23/10:a, 23/20:b, 31/23:a), and the *Vajracchedikâ-prajñâpâramitâ sūtra* (DZ 7/14:b, 9/14:a, 24/12:a).

38 T. 262, vol. 9, p. 20:b. – Compare Daosheng’s 道生 (ca. 360–434) *Commentary on the Lotos Sûtra*, where he explains “the Great Vehicle” to mean “covering like trees,” with “Small Trees” those residing on the seventh *bhûmi*, while from the eighth stage onward they are called “Great Trees.” See Kim Young-he, *A Study and Translation: Tao-sheng’s Commentary on the Lotus Sûtra* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 245.

39 This phrase is part of the overall allegoresis, using *yaocao* 藥草 (“medicinal herbs”) parables, of this chapter.

Confirmatio

Analysis of the scholastic and literary encodings of the preface shows that Lin Xiyi is indeed bound by orthopractical constraints that had taken shape in the tradition of “we *Ru*.” They are, in this case, centred around a particular tradition of exegesis of that notorious *Lunyu* phrase, which had on its way from Fan Ning to Zhu Xi become one of the foremost *Ru*-ist “guiding phrases on heterodoxy.” Lin Xiyi was therefore impelled to show in how far Zhuangzi and Buddha, even though they “specialized professionally on a heterodox standpoint,” had in no way thereby “already damaged” their own teachings. It even proved possible in this paper to demonstrate that the gist of Zhuangzi’s and the Buddha’s teachings, the heterodoxy of which Lin Xiyi conclusively denies, was indeed capable of “proving the proofs” of the *Ru*-ist’s books.

Peroratio

In concluding at this point, let me stress that Lin Xiyi’s *Zhuangzi* commentary is a piece that endeavours to reveal the “scripture of the heart,” and not the scripture of the surface text. In sounding out the scriptures like a physician or a medical therapist, Lin is indeed a protagonist of “the scholarly turning-point in the exegesis of the Chinese canon.” However, being himself a *Ru*, he finds his sources not so much in *xinxue* philosophies like that of Lu Xiangshan, but in the “pure heart” speculations of Chan and Huayan exegetic exercises.

Extending Lu Xiangshan’s “*liu jing zhu wo*” formula, “The six canonical books are commentaries on the ‘I,’” not only to the *Zhuangzi*, but even to Lin’s commentary itself, Lin Jingde 林經德, writing not long after Lin Xiyi’s death, states in a postface to the *Zhuangzi kouyi*:

必以竹溪爲知我者也。⁴⁰

[We] must necessarily take Zhuxi [Lin Xiyi] as the one who understood the ‘I’.

40 DZ, fasc. 494, *Nanhua zhenjing houxu* 南華真經後序, p. 2:b⁵.

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