

Ching Keng

A Re-examination of the Relationship between
the *Awakening of Faith* and Dilun School Thought,
Focusing on the Works of Huiyuan
pp. 183–215

in:

Chen-kuo Lin / Michael Radich (eds.)

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in memoriam

John R. McRae (1947-2011)

A Re-examination of the Relationship between the *Awakening of Faith* and Dilun School Thought, Focusing on the Works of Huiyuan¹

Ching Keng

Introduction

The *Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論, T1666) is widely recognized to have been a seminal text for the development of East Asian Buddhism from the Tang dynasty onwards. In at least one sense, the *Awakening of Faith* initiated a completely new direction in Buddhist thought, namely, the idea that defiled phenomena are modes of the Truth or Thusness (*tathatā*). In my 2009 PhD dissertation, I argued that it is unlikely that the *Awakening of Faith* originated with Paramârtha (Zhen-di 真諦, 499-569) and his group, and that the distinctive doctrinal difference between Paramârtha and the *Awakening of Faith* lies in the question of whether a strict distinction is made between unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) and conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) *dharma*s. Paramârtha makes a strict distinction between the Dharma-body (*dharmakāya*) and the Enjoyment-body (*saṃbhogakāya*), and between innate Buddha-nature (*prakṛtistha[-buddha]-gotra*) and cultivated Buddha-nature (*samudānīta[-buddha]-gotra*);

¹ Note: I am very grateful to Professor Lin Chen-kuo for doing me the honour of allowing me to contribute to his project “Indian Buddhist Thought in 6th-7th Century China”. I am indebted to Dr. Elizabeth Kenney and Dr. Michael Radich for their generous help with correcting and polishing my English. I also want to acknowledge the very useful corrections and suggestions made by the anonymous reviewer, especially in drawing my attention to the Dunhuang fragment Taishō No. 2770.

whereas the *Awakening of Faith* does not maintain these distinctions (Keng, 2009: 129ff. and 307ff.).

For example, the *Awakening of Faith* claims that defiled *dharmas* arise because ignorance permeates Thusness. As the text says:

(Quotation 1)

How is it that the permeation [of ignorance] gives rise to defiled *dharmas* without interruption? This means that because it is based upon the *dharma* of Thusness, ignorance exists. Because ignorance exists as the cause of defiled *dharmas*, it [ignorance] then permeates Thusness. Due to [this] permeation, deluded mind exists. Because deluded mind exists, it [deluded mind] then permeates ignorance. Because [the deluded mind] does not understand the *dharma* of Thusness, unenlightened thoughts arise and make manifest objects of delusion.

云何熏習起染法不斷？所謂以依真如法故，有於無明；以有無明染法因故，即熏習真如；以熏習故，則有妄心；以有妄心，即熏習無明；不了真如法故，不覺念起，現妄境界 (T32:1666.578a21-25).²

Here, the *Awakening of Faith* claims that ignorance can permeate Thusness; but the problem is that Thusness cannot be permeated, because it is unconditioned. This *Awakening of Faith* notion that Thusness can be permeated is a clear deviation from Indian Abhidharma-Yogâcâra Buddhist schools, all of which subscribe to the basic distinction between unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) and conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) *dharmas*.

Now, if the *Awakening of Faith* was not in fact translated or transmitted by Paramârtha, then what was the origin of its most distinctive doctrines? Scholars such as Mochizuki Shinkō (望月信亨),³ Takemura Makio (竹村牧男) (Takemura, 1990), and Lü Cheng (呂澂)⁴ – all strong

² For variant English and French translations, see Hakeda, 1967: 56-57 and Girard, 2004: 65.

³ For a brief review of Mochizuki's points, see Kashiwagi's summary, in particular point (10) (Kashiwagi, 1981: 152-153).

⁴ Lü Cheng emphasizes the close connection between the *Awakening of Faith* and Bodhiruci's translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. Although Lü did not talk about the connection between the *Awakening of Faith* and the Dilun School, based on the fact that Bodhiruci was regarded as the founder of the Dilun School, we can fairly assume that Lü

supporters of the Chinese provenance of the *Awakening of Faith* – trace the *Awakening of Faith* back to the Dilun School (地論宗).⁵ According to them, the *Awakening of Faith* was composed under the influence of Dilun School doctrines, which were greatly influenced by the Chinese translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*.

However, even if we agree with these scholars, we still need to answer the question of why the *Awakening of Faith* could hold this view that Thusness, an unconditioned *dharma*, is itself the basis of conditioned and defiled phenomena. This view is an apparent deviation from the basic distinction between conditioned and unconditioned *dharma*s. Now, if it is true that the *Awakening of Faith* was based on the Dilun School reading of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, then unless we could somehow show that the Dilun School misinterpreted this *sūtra*, we would be forced to adopt the interpretation that the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* itself, an authentic Indian Buddhist text, also blurs the distinction between conditioned and unconditioned *dharma*s. On the other hand, if we hesitate to accept such an interpretation of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, then we should probably also consider the possibility that this interpretation is actually a result of reading the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* through the lens of the *Awakening of Faith*.⁶

This paper argues that Huiyuan (慧遠, 523-592 CE) has a very different understanding of the origin of defiled phenomena from that described in the *Awakening of Faith*. In short, according to the *Awakening of Faith*, defiled phenomena are modes of Thusness; but for Huiyuan, they are constructed by false discrimination (*wangqing* 妄情), with Thusness as the basis. Only to the extent that Thusness serves as the ultimate basis

would agree that the *Awakening of Faith* originated from the Dilun School (Lü, 1978: 301-307).

⁵ Here the term “school” is used loosely as a “translation” of the Chinese term *zong* (宗). I do not mean to refer to an established institutional body of scholars. Thanks to the anonymous reviewer for suggesting I should make this clarification.

⁶ For an excellent and up-to-date collection of essays reflecting the current state of the field in the study of the Dilun School, see Geumgang Center for Buddhist Studies, 2010. Especially relevant to my paper here is the article by Seok Gil-am (石吉岩), in which he argues that it is very unlikely that the *Awakening of Faith* was composed by *anyone* in the lineage of the Dilun School, including *Bodhiruci* (菩提流支を含む地論宗系統) (Seok, 2010: 262).

for false discrimination can Thusness be said to be related to defiled phenomena. This doctrinal difference between the *Awakening of Faith* and Huiyuan as the best-known master of the Dilun School entitles us to conclude that the *Awakening of Faith* is not a direct outgrowth of Dilun School thought.

The difficult issue at hand is to clarify how, according to Huiyuan, Thusness as an unconditioned *dharmā* could serve as the ultimate basis for defiled phenomena, without itself being relegated to the status of a conditioned state. In what follows, I shall first show that, like Paramârtha, Huiyuan also draws a strict distinction between conditioned and unconditioned *dharmas*, as reflected in his distinction between two aspects of Thusness: the aspect of “natural purity” (*xingjing* 性淨) and the aspect of “expedient means” (*fangbian* 方便). Second, regarding the former aspect, Huiyuan employs the term “true consciousness” (*zhenshi* 真識) to refer to the perfect wisdom of the Buddha or the “cognition” of Thusness; and in this connection, Huiyuan cites the scriptures to insist that the true consciousness is unconditioned and unchanging. Third, I shall give an interpretation of Huiyuan’s notion of the true consciousness “adjusting to falsity” (*suiwang* 隨妄), and, based on this, an interpretation of how the true consciousness serves as the substance (*ti* 體), i.e., the basis, of defiled phenomena. Fourth, at the end of this paper, I shall draw a few possible larger ramifications from my thesis.

Methodological remarks

Through an examination of Huiyuan’s works, this paper aims to investigate whether the key doctrinal feature of the *Awakening of Faith* discussed above is already present in the Dilun School. A major difficulty is that we do not know much about the precise dates of Huiyuan’s works, nor when he became familiar with the *Awakening of Faith*. Some of the works traditionally attributed to him apparently cite the *Awakening of Faith*, using the title *Qixin lun* (起信論, “The Awakening of Faith”), *Maming lun*

(馬鳴論, “The Treatise of Aśvaghōṣa”), or simply the name Maming (馬鳴, Aśvaghōṣa), as shown in the Table below:⁷

Table 1: The Occurrence of Citations of the *Awakening of Faith* in Works Attributed to Huiyuan

	Maming lun (“The Treatise of Aśvaghōṣa”)	Maming (“Aśvaghōṣa”) but not Maming lun	Dasheng qixin lun (“The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna”)	Qixin lun (“The Awakening of Faith”) but not Dasheng qixin lun
T1745	0	0	0	0
T1749	0	0	0	0
T1764	1	3	0	0
T1776	0	0	0	1
T1793	0	0	0	0
T1843	0	3	2	1
T1851 ex “Bashi”	5	11	0	8
“Bashi yi”	4	6	2	17
X351	2	6	0	0

⁷ In a recent article, Okamoto Ippei (岡本一平) tries to establish a chronology of Huiyuan’s works (Okamoto, 2010). Interestingly, he observes that when he refers to the *Awakening of Faith*, Huiyuan uses the title *Maming lun* in his earlier works, but the title *Qixin lun* in his later works. On this basis, Okamoto further suggests that among the chapters of the *Dasheng yi zhang*, those using *Maming lun* were composed before those using *Qixin lun*. The co-existence of both titles in three chapters (i.e., “Bashi yi” 八識義, “Wu zhudi yi” 五住地義, and “Niepan yi” 涅槃義) shows that these chapters underwent revision afterwards (Ibid., 176ff.).

X704	0	0	0	0
X753	0	1	0	0

Legend: texts

T1745: *Wuliangshou jing yishu* 無量壽經義疏

T1749: *Guan Wuliangshou jing yishu* 觀無量壽經義疏

T1764: *Da banniepan jing yiji* 大般涅槃經義記

T1776: *Weimo yiji* 維摩義記

T1793: *Wenshi jing yiji* 溫室經義記

T1843: *Dasheng qixin lun yishu* 大乘起信論義疏

T1851 ex “Bashi”: *Dasheng yi zhang* 大乘義章, excluding “Bashi yi” 八識義

“Bashi yi”: 八識義 in *Dasheng yi zhang* 大乘義章 T1851

X351 *Shengman jing yiji* 勝鬘經義記

X704 *Dichi lun yiji* 地持論義記

X753 *Shidi jing lun yiji* 十地經論義記

Despite the evidence of these citations, we also have a few good reasons to believe that Huiyuan composed some of his texts before he learned about the *Awakening of Faith*. (1) Some of his works do not cite the *Awakening of Faith*. (2) Despite the troubling statement in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (續高僧傳, T2060) that Tanqian (曇遷, 542-607) had studied the *Awakening of Faith* before he fled to the South, all other historical evidence points to the likelihood that the *Awakening of Faith* came to light in the North only after Tanqian came back to Chang’an (長安) in 587.⁸ Given this date, and given that Huiyuan died in 592, it is virtually certain that some of Huiyuan’s works must have been composed before he knew about the *Awakening of Faith*. (3) Some of Huiyuan’s works, notably his encyclopedic *Dasheng yi zhang* (大乘義章, T1851) and his commentary on the **Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (*Da banniepan jing yiji* 大般涅槃經義記, T1764), appear to have undergone ongoing revision, either by Huiyuan himself or by his disciples.⁹ So despite the fact that the *Dasheng yi zhang* quotes quite a few times from the *Awakening of Faith*, this does not mean that this whole large work (20 fascicles in total) was written under the influence of the *Awakening of Faith*.

⁸ For the early circulation of the *Awakening of Faith*, see Kashiwagi, 1981: 183ff.

⁹ See, for example, the report in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* that a disciple named Shanzhou 善冑 (d.u.) began revising Huiyuan’s commentary on the **Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* even before Huiyuan died; T50:2060.519b11-20.

In light of this difficulty, my working hypothesis is that if I find in Huiyuan's works any passages that show no doctrinal similarity with the *Awakening of Faith*, then I have good reason to believe that these passages could have been written before Huiyuan learned about the *Awakening of Faith*, and hence could be authentic samples of Dilun School thought before the appearance of the *Awakening of Faith*. In other words, the fact that there are elements in Huiyuan's works that go against the fundamental tenet of the *Awakening of Faith* should be strong evidence for my thesis that the *Awakening of Faith* was not a direct outgrowth from the Dilun School.

On the basis of this hypothesis, I shall avoid citing any passages from works by Huiyuan in which the influence of the *Awakening of Faith* is most obvious. These include: the "Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses" ("Ba-shi yi" 八識義) in Fascicle Three of the *Dasheng yi zhang*, and *An Exegesis of the Meaning of the Awakening of Faith* (*Dasheng qixin lun yishu* 大乘起信論義疏, T1843). In addition, I shall also avoid citing passages where direct or indirect reference to the *Awakening of Faith* appears in neighboring passages.

A brief review of recent scholarship

Under my working hypothesis mentioned above, most recent scholarship turns out not to be so illuminating, because it proceeds on the assumption that it is legitimate to read Huiyuan in light of the *Awakening of Faith*. Here I briefly review the work of three scholars who have studied Huiyuan extensively: Yoshizu Yoshihide (吉津宜英), Aoki Takashi (青木隆), and Ibuki Atsushi (伊吹敦).

Yoshizu (1975) investigates Huiyuan's notion of "dependent origination [based on] Buddha-nature" (*foxing yuanqi* 佛性緣起). Yoshizu remains completely silent about the tension between Buddha-nature as an unconditioned *dharma* and Buddha-nature as the basis of dependent origination. He explains that the reason Huiyuan came up with the notion of "dependent origination [based on] Buddha-nature" was because Huiyuan was influenced by the Yogâcâra doctrine that identifies Buddha-na-

ture or *tathāgatagarbha* (*Rulaizang* 如來藏; literally, “Tathāgata-containing [sentient beings]”¹⁰) with the storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), and hence regards Buddha-nature as the substance (*ti* 體) of dependent origination (Yoshizu, 1975: 175).

The best explanation I can think of for Yoshizu’s silence about the tension mentioned above is that he uncritically thinks that it is legitimate to interpret Huiyuan in terms of the doctrine of the *Awakening of Faith*. The identification between Buddha-nature and the storehouse consciousness referred to by Yoshizu can be fairly regarded as a distinctive doctrine of the *Awakening of Faith*.

Yoshizu’s uncritical attitude is also reflected in the fact that he frequently cites from the “Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses” while discussing the notion of “dependent origination [based on] Buddha-nature”. For example, when Yoshizu discusses Huiyuan’s interpretation of a passage from the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra*, viz. the passage stating that “both birth and death are *tathāgatagarbha*” (T12:353.222b8-9), he links Huiyuan’s interpretation to the “Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses”. According to Yoshizu, Huiyuan coins the notion of “the mixture of Truth and falsity” (*zhenwang hehe* 真妄和合), and uses it to establish that, occasioned by causes and conditions, Buddha-nature (i.e., the Truth) is transformed into the storehouse consciousness (i.e., falsity), which projects the illusion of birth and death (Yoshizu, 1975: 180-181).

As mentioned above, Huiyuan’s “Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses” – whether it was written by Huiyuan himself or not – is heavily influenced by the *Awakening of Faith*, and hence must not be taken as representative of Huiyuan’s earlier thought, nor of Dilun School thought in general. Yoshizu’s frequent or even exclusive reliance on the “Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses” betrays his unawareness of the danger of

¹⁰ I agree with Michael Zimmermann (Zimmermann, 2002: 39-46) that *tathāgatagarbha* does not mean a womb or a matrix from which a Tathāgata develops. The term *-garbha* at the end of the compound should be interpreted as a marker of a *bahuvrihi* compound, meaning “to contain”.

reading Huiyuan exclusively from the perspective of the *Awakening of Faith*.¹¹

Similarly, Ibuki (1998) overtly claims that Huiyuan introduces into his system the doctrines of the *Awakening of Faith* (Ibuki, 1998: 87). Moreover, Ibuki also relies almost exclusively on the “Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses” in his interpretation of Huiyuan (Ibid.: 88ff.).

In a somewhat different manner, Aoki Takashi is careful to limit himself to Dilun School sources when interpreting Huiyuan. Aoki (1997) claims that there are three kinds of dependent origination according to Huiyuan: *youwei yuanqi* (有為緣起); *wuwei yuanqi* (無為緣起) and *ziti yuanqi* (自體緣起). The last, according to Aoki, contains both of the others, and is identified with “dependent origination based on *tathāgatagarbha*” (*Rulaizang yuanqi* 如來藏緣起) (Aoki, 1997: 9). When it functions wrongly, the third type of dependent origination becomes the first, i.e., “birth and death [i.e., *saṃsāra*]”; but when it functions correctly, the third becomes the second, i.e., *nirvāṇa* (Ibid.).

Thus, Aoki concludes by claiming that, for Huiyuan, “*Tathāgatagarbha* is the basis of all *dharmas*, and all kinds of defilements and false discrimination are born from Thusness, *tathāgatagarbha*. But at the same time, the storehouse consciousness is born together [with defilements and false discrimination] and becomes the foundation (*konpon* 根本) of all defilements, namely, becomes the basis that holds [others] (*aji* 依持)” (Ibid.: 10).

Aoki is cautious not to link the *Awakening of Faith* too quickly with Dilun School thought. Nevertheless, his interpretation is still not far from the idea of “dependent origination [based on] Buddha-nature” as characterized by Yoshizu. He also fails to pay sufficient attention to the question of how defilements could be born from Thusness. More importantly, he fails to doubt whether our current reading of Dilun School thought has been heavily biased by later doctrinal schemes such as that of the *Awakening of Faith*.

¹¹ In Yoshizu 1974a and Yoshizu 1974b, he also exclusively relies upon the “Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses” while discussing Huiyuan’s notions of “true consciousness” (*zhenshi* 真識) and “false consciousness” (*wangshi* 妄識).

To conclude, recent scholarship on Huiyuan has not taken seriously enough the issue of how unconditioned Buddha-nature or *tathāgatagarbha* could serve as the basis for dependent origination, which by definition is conditioned. Scholars have also not worked hard enough to dissociate Huiyuan from later doctrinal schemes such as that of the *Awakening of Faith*. In what follows, I shall venture to provide a fresh interpretation of Huiyuan's notion of "dependent origination [based on] *tathāgatagarbha*".

The distinction between the aspect of "natural purity" (*xingjing* 性淨) and the aspect of "expedient means" (*fangbian* 方便)

That Huiyuan subscribes to a dualistic scheme, instead of a monistic scheme like that seen in the *Awakening of Faith*, is evident from his repeated employment of the contrast between the aspect of "natural purity" and the aspect of "expedient means". For example, when discussing *bodhi* ("wisdom") in Fascicle 18 of his *Dasheng yi zhang*, Huiyuan distinguishes these two aspects [of *bodhi*]:

(Quotation 2)

Next, the third aspect, under which two [further] aspects are differentiated, i.e., the aspect of natural purity (*xingjing* 性淨) and the aspect of expedient means (*fangbian* 方便)...Regarding *bodhi* from the aspect of expedient means, its arising is initiated by conditions, and its realization is made out of its substance (*ti* 體) [i.e., Buddha-nature]. If we apprehend the merits [of *bodhi*] from [the aspect of] conditions, then [all its merits] are born from conditions, just as an ornament is made by a craftsman; if we apprehend the merits [of *bodhi*] from [the aspect of] its substance, then [all the merits] are made out of Buddha-nature (*foxing* 佛性), the True Mind (*zhenxin* 真心), just as the ornament is made of gold. Conditions can indeed make [merits], but such making must base itself on the substance; the substance can indeed make [merits], but such making must be accomplished through conditions.

Regarding *bodhi* from the aspect of natural purity, the nature [of *bodhi*] proceeds from the remote past, but it only becomes manifest through conditions.¹²

次第三門，性淨、方便二門分別...方便菩提，集從緣發、成由體起。攝德從緣，皆從緣生，如莊嚴具工匠所為；攝德從體，皆是佛性真心所作，如莊嚴具真金所作。緣雖能作，作必依體；體雖能為，為必藉緣...性淨菩提，性出自古，從緣始現¹³ (T44:1851.830a1-18).

Following this, Huiyuan further divides his discussion of “*bodhi* [from the aspect of] natural purity” into two dimensions: (1) investigation of reality with reference to conditions (*yue yuan lun shi* 約緣論實); and (2) [investigation] in terms of reality [alone] without reference to conditions (*ju shi wang yuan* 據實亡緣). Under (1), Huiyuan repeats what he has already pointed out above: the manifestation of this *bodhi* must be based on the substance, and conversely, its manifestation must also be accomplished with the help of conditions. In this latter aspect, *bodhi* is likened to seven jewels lined up in a dark room, which cannot become manifest without a light (T44:1851.830a18-24). Under (2) Huiyuan says something even more illuminating:

(Quotation 3)

[Secondly,] if we [investigate] in terms of reality [alone] without reference to conditions, then [*bodhi* from the aspect of natural purity] is neither hidden nor disclosed. Under this head, two senses can be differentiated. First, if we set aside the [perspective of] person and simply investigate *dharma*s, then the nature of *dharma*s is originally calm and without conditions from beginningless time, namely, there are no conditions outside reality. With reference to what then should it be known that we talk about [its being] “hidden or disclosed”, [or about] “cause and effect”? This is *bodhi* [that exists due to] the nature of *dharma*s (**dharmatā*), which should be included under the aspect of

¹² All English translations of Chinese passages are mine.

¹³ The *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* has “從緣始起” instead. Here I follow the variant edition marked by 【甲】 , which, according to T44:1851.465, n. 1, refers to 延寶二年刊，村上專精氏藏， which means “published in the second year of Enbō (1674), included in the collection of Murakami Senshō (1851-1929)”.

principle (*limen* 理門) and has nothing to do with the merits of practice (*xingde* 行德). Second, if we apprehend *dharmas* from the [perspective of the] person, then the nature of *dharmas* mentioned above is realized when one attains Buddhahood. When one has realized it [i.e., the nature of *dharmas*], one looks back and realizes that, from beginningless time, there never were any conditions [for its being hidden or for its being disclosed]. Since there were no conditions from the very beginning, the state in original time without beginning was not defiled, and [the state of Buddhahood] at this time is not newly purified, and is the same nature of *dharmas* as before. [This state is] neither hidden nor disclosed; neither cause nor effect.

據實亡緣無隱顯中，義別亦二。一、廢人論法，法性本寂，從來無緣，實外無緣。知復約何說隱說顯、說因說果？此則是其法性菩提，理門可收，不關行德。二、攝法從人，則前法性至佛乃證，證已返望從來無緣。本無緣故，本則非染，今非新淨，同前法性，非隱非顯，非因非果 (T44:1851.830b3-9, my emphasis).

Here, Huiyuan emphasizes again and again that *bodhi* from the aspect of natural purity is not changed even if it is hidden or covered by defilements.¹⁴ This is because *bodhi* that exists due to the nature of *dharmas* is unconditioned. On the side of expedient means, in contrast, *bodhi* that exists through cultivation is subject to conditions and hence is conditioned.¹⁵ In other words, to investigate a certain *dharma* from the side of natural purity means to focus on its aspect of being unconditioned; and to investigate it from the side of expedient means boils down to focusing on its aspect wherein it somehow gets involved in a chain of conditioned causality. The crucial point here is that underlying Huiyuan's differentiation into the two aspects of natural purity and expedient means is

¹⁴ Cf. also T44:1851.476b24-28.

¹⁵ This means that according to Huiyuan, for example, wisdom in a specific verbal or conceptual form (e.g. calculus in the Newtonian formulation instead of the Leibnizian formulation) results from specific conditions (e.g. different teachers, different methods, etc.). It would be interesting to explore whether these two aspects of *bodhi* correspond to the two kinds of wisdom prominent in several Yogācāra texts, namely the non-discriminating wisdom (*nirvikalpa-jñāna*) vs. the subsequently-acquired wisdom (*prṣṭhalabdha-jñāna*).

his subscription to the strict distinction between unconditioned and conditioned realms.

Furthermore, we can also detect that Huiyuan makes a clear distinction between the conditioned and unconditioned realms through the contrast he makes between the Enjoyment-body (*saṃbhoga-kāya*) and the Dharma-body (*dharmakāya*). We can easily tell that the former is conditioned for Huiyuan from his claim that the Enjoyment-body is the fruit of *bodhi* from the aspect of expedient means.

(Quotation 4)

Some people say that *bodhi* [from the aspect of] expedient means exists even when one is still a worldling [i.e., has not attained buddhahood]. This interpretation is not correct...Moreover, the fruit of *bodhi* [from the aspect of] expedient means is the Enjoyment[-body of the] Buddha. It is termed “enjoyment” (*bao 報*) because it is a reward following upon certain causes. If [*bodhi* from the aspect of expedient means] existed eternally from beginningless time, then there would be no cause prior to its existence. Of what, then, could enjoyment be the reward?

有人說言：方便菩提凡時亦有。是義不然...又復、方便菩提之果即是報佛。酬因名報，本來恒有，有前無因，酬誰名報？ (T44:1851.832 a28-b22).¹⁶

Along the same lines, Huiyuan also differentiates between two kinds of *nirvāṇa*: *nirvāṇa* [from the aspect of] natural purity and *nirvāṇa* [from the aspect of] expedient means. Under this distinction, again, we find that Huiyuan maps the Dharma-body onto the former, in contrast with the Enjoyment-body, which maps onto the latter:

(Quotation 5)

Third, if we discuss reality in general terms, then [we claim that] the aspect of natural purity and the aspect of expedient means are equal-

¹⁶ Cf. also T44:1851.832a16-20.

ly shared by three things.¹⁷ What does this mean? [It means] the Dharma-body¹⁸ has these two aspects: first, the *dharmatā*-body (*faxing shen* 法性身; *svābhāvika-kāya*?), which was originally hidden but now becomes disclosed...second, the Real-enjoyment-body (*shibao shen* 實報身), which is born from cultivation as an expedient means. Here, the *dharmatā*-body is included under [*nirvāṇa* from the aspect of natural purity and the Real-enjoyment-body is subsumed under [*nirvāṇa* from the aspect of] expedient means.

三、就實通論，性淨、方便齊具三事。是義云何？法身有二：一、法性身，本隱今顯...二、實報身，方便修生。其法性身性淨所收；實報身者方便所攝 (T44:1851.822b24-29).

Huiyuan's view in these two passages may be summarized as follows:

Table 2: The contrast between the aspect of natural purity and the aspect of expedient means

	Worldlings	After attaining Buddhahood
The aspect of natural purity (i.e., aspect of being unconditioned)	<i>bodhi</i> from the aspect of natural purity = <i>bodhi</i> that exists due to the nature of <i>dharmas</i>	<i>nirvāṇa</i> from the aspect of natural purity = the <i>dharmatā</i> -body
The aspect of expedient means (i.e., aspect involved in conditioned causal chain)	<i>bodhi</i> from the aspect of expedient means = <i>bodhi</i> that exists through cultivation	<i>nirvāṇa</i> from the aspect of expedient means = the Real-enjoyment-body

As mentioned earlier, the fundamental difference between Paramârtha's thought and the *Awakening of Faith* lies in whether a strict distinction is maintained between conditioned and unconditioned *dharmas* (see my Introduction above). To the extent that both Paramârtha and Huiyuan

¹⁷ See T44:1851.822b24-c18. "Three things" refers to the *dharma*-body, *bodhi* and liberation (*jietuo* 解脫). These three things are discussed here in Quotation 5, and below in Quotations 6-7.

¹⁸ Apparently, the term "Dharma-body" here is used in its broader sense, including both its aspect of natural purity (i.e., the *dharmatā*-body) and its aspect of expedient means (i.e., the Real-enjoyment-body).

maintain this distinction, it is likely that, doctrinally speaking, Huiyuan is actually closer to Paramârtha than to the *Awakening of Faith*!

An objection may be voiced here that Huiyuan's contrast between the aspect of natural purity and the aspect of expedient means corresponds quite nicely to the contrast between the "aspect of Thusness" (*zhenru men* 真如門) and the "aspect of birth and death" (*shengmie men* 生滅門) in the *Awakening of Faith*. This can be refuted by pointing out that Huiyuan never suggests that the aspect of expedient means derives directly from the aspect of natural purity. This point will become even clearer in the following sections.

The notion of the "true consciousness" (*zhenshi* 真識)

Now let us concentrate on how Huiyuan characterizes an investigation from the side of natural purity, or from the side of the investigated *dharma*, wherein it is unconditioned. Immediately following the above Quotation (5), Huiyuan goes on to discuss how wisdom (Ch. *banruo* 般若; Skt. *prajñā*) can also be differentiated into two types based on the contrast between the aspect of natural purity and that of expedient means. Under "the aspect of natural purity", further, he introduces the intriguing notion of the "true consciousness" (*zhenshi* 真識). Also glossed by Huiyuan as *tathāgatagarbha*¹⁹ or the "nature that cognizes [Reality]" (*nengzhi* [zhi] *xing* 能知[之]性)²⁰, the "true consciousness" refers to the inherently pure mind whose nature is to shed light on the Dharma-realm (*dharma-dhātu*). He says:

(Quotation 6)

Wisdom also has these two [aspects, i.e., the aspect of natural purity and the aspect of expedient means]. The first is the wisdom that illuminates by its own nature (*xingzhao banruo* 性照般若), also termed

¹⁹ Cf. also T37:1764.691b7-9; T37:1764.692c7-11; X19:351.885c15-18.

²⁰ Cf. also T37:1764.828b29-c3; T37:1764.884c5-12; T44:1851.472c12-22. Note that the term "nature", as I employ it in my English translation, is intended simply to reflect the Chinese term "*xing* 性" but does not suggest in any way substantiation or reification of the function in question.

the “realized wisdom”. What does this mean? [It means] that the mind, viz. the true consciousness, is pure by its own nature, but it looks as if it is impure in appearance (*xiangsi* 相似) because it is covered and veiled by false defilements (*wangran* 妄染). Only after false defilements cease is this mind disclosed for the first time. The now disclosed true mind, corresponding to its own nature, inwardly sheds light on the Dharma-realm (*dharmadhātu*), and is [therefore] named “the wisdom that illuminates due to its own nature”. It is [also] named “realized wisdom” because this [illumination] matches its own nature. The second [type of wisdom is] the wisdom that illuminates by means of contemplation (*guan Zhao banruo* 觀照般若)...The wisdom that illuminates due to its own nature is included under [the aspect of] natural purity; the wisdom of illuminating by means of contemplation is subsumed under [the aspect of] expedient means.

般若亦二。一、性照般若，亦名「證智」。是義云何？真識之心本性清淨，而為妄染之所覆蔽，相似不淨。後息妄染，彼心始顯。始顯真心，如其本性，內明法界，說之以為「性照般若」。由稱本性，故名「證智」。二、觀照般若...性照般若，性淨所收；觀照般若，方便所攝 (T44:1851.822b29-c10).

Note that Huiyuan does not claim here that the true consciousness itself becomes impure. Rather, he says that the true consciousness only *looks as if it is impure in appearance*, and the reason is that it is covered and veiled by false defilements. Again, we confirm that there is a clear difference between Huiyuan and the *Awakening of Faith*.

Following the above Quotation (6), Huiyuan goes on to emphasize that the true consciousness is covered but not defiled, and hence “does not only now first begin to be pure” (*jin fei shi jing* 今非始淨) when one becomes liberated, i.e., when defilements are removed:

(Quotation 7)

Liberation also has these two [aspects, i.e., the aspect of natural purity and the aspect of expedient means]: First, liberation [from the aspect of] its own nature, which can also be termed “liberation [from the aspect of] natural purity”. The mind – in its literal sense (*zhishuo* 直說) – is pure by its own nature, but because it is hidden by falsity it is also said to be in bondage (*xifu* 繫縛). Later, when it eliminates the false

defilements, its nature emerges from [beneath] the layers [of defilements]. This is what is termed “liberation [from the aspect of] its own nature”. Moreover, when it has attained liberation, it looks back [and realizes that] the afflictions and impurities never existed from beginningless time, and it did not only now first begin to be pure (*jin fei shi jing* 今非始淨). For this reason, it is termed also as “liberation [from the aspect of] its own nature”. Second, liberation [from the aspect of] expedient means...Liberation [from the aspect of] its own nature is included under [the aspect of] natural purity; and liberation [from the aspect of] expedient means is subsumed under [the aspect of] expedient means.

解脫亦二。一、自性解脫，亦得名為「性淨解脫」。直說之心，本性雖淨而妄隱²¹，說為繫縛。後除妄染，彼性出累，名「性解脫」。又得脫已，返望惑染，從來不有，今非始淨，故亦名為「自性解脫」。二、方便解脫...自性解脫，性淨所收；方便解脫，方便所攝 (T44:1851.822c10-17).²²

Again, what is emphasized here is that the mind, the true consciousness, is never defiled nor impure. It is simply covered or hidden by defilements. With respect to the disclosure of the true consciousness, there is a beginning.²³ But with respect to its original natural purity, there is no beginning, nor is there an end. This is very different from the *Awakening of Faith*, which argues that it is the pure mind itself that is agitated by ignorance and projects deluded phenomena.

My point here is that, unlike Thusness as it is understood in the *Awakening of Faith*, the true consciousness as Huiyuan understands it never shares in the nature of conditioned *dharmas*. If Huiyuan had ever subscribed to the conceptual scheme of the *Awakening of Faith*, he would not have put so much emphasis on the idea that, even if a sentient being in *samsāra* is tainted by defilements, the true consciousness does not become tainted and, when that sentient being becomes liberated, the true

²¹ A character seems to be missing here. The variant edition marked by 【甲】 reads: 而為妄隱, see T44:1851.822, n. 8. For 【甲】, see above, n. 13.

²² Cf. also T37:1764.816b18-20.

²³ Cf. also T44:1851.822, c21-29; T37:1764.850c14-20.

consciousness does not only then begin to be pure. According to the *Awakening of Faith*, by contrast, Thusness can be agitated by ignorance, and then it becomes defiled; and when the defilements are eliminated, Thusness does begin to become pure again.

Various formulations of the dubious idea of “adjusting to falsity” (*suiwang* 隨妄)

So far, I have shown that Huiyuan carefully distinguishes two aspects, and that the true consciousness as he understands it is unmistakably unconditioned. Now I must tackle the further issue of whether the true consciousness can be modified by ignorance, in the same way as Thusness can be agitated by ignorance according to the *Awakening of Faith*.

In order to investigate this issue, let me first note that in Huiyuan’s works, there are at least five notions that seem to point to the involvement of the true consciousness in the conditioned realm: (1) [the notion that the true consciousness] adjusts to falsity (*suiwang* 隨妄); (2) [the notion that the true consciousness] adjusts to conditions (*suiyuan* 隨緣 or *yuanqi* 緣起); (3) the notion of “dependent origination [based on the] substance of *tathāgatagarbha*” (*Rulaizang ti yuanqi* 如來藏體緣起); (4) the notion that defiled consciousness is based on (*yi* 依) the true consciousness; and (5) the function (*yong* 用) of the true consciousness. For each notion, I will cite one passage from Huiyuan.

1 [That the true consciousness] adjusts to defilements:

(Quotation 8)

With regard to their ultimate nature, the twelve links of dependent origination arise from the true mind, just as that [illusion] which occurs in a dream arises from the mind [that is conditioned by] karmic payback (*baoxin* 報心). Therefore, the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*²⁴ says that the twelve links of dependent origination are all made by the true

²⁴ Huiyuan seems to be alluding to the following passage: 經曰：是菩薩作是念：三界虛妄但是一心作...經曰：如來所說十二因緣分皆依一心 (T26:1522.169a15-21).

mind. [This] true mind itself is the nature, i.e., *tathāgatagarbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性) which is clear at all times, pure and unchangeable. How could there be arising and function [of it] due to causes and conditions? Hence it is not existent. [But on the other hand,] it evolves by adjusting to defilements, and hence birth and death [i.e., *samsāra*] arise. For this reason it is said to be not non-existent. It is neither existent nor non-existent, and therefore, we speak of [it as] the “middle path”.

十二因緣，窮其本性，真心所起，如夢所作皆報心起。故《地經》說：十二因緣皆真心作。真心即是如來藏性，古今常湛，清淨不變，何有因緣起作可得？所以非有。隨妄流轉，集起生死，說為非無。非有非無，故名中道 (T37:1764.825b11-16, my emphasis).

2 [That the true consciousness] adjusts to causes and conditions:

(Quotation 9)

Despite the fact that [things] such as wisdom and ignorance are distinguished and different, their real nature (*shixing* 實性) is not different. [This is because:] the same substance of the true mind (*yi zhenxin ti* 一真心體) is transformed into various *dharma*s by adjusting to conditions...First, the same substance of the true consciousness (*yi zhenshi ti* 一真識體) is transformed into wisdom and ignorance by adjusting to conditions, and hence there is no other [i.e., different] nature [in the true consciousness]. In just the same manner, water of the same nature can become clear or turbid by adjusting to conditions, and yet there is no other [i.e., different] nature of the water.

明、無明等雖復別異，實性不二。一真心體隨緣轉變為諸法故...一真識體隨緣轉變為明、無明，故性無二。如一水性，隨緣清濁，水性無二 (T37:1764.702c2-19, my emphasis).²⁵

²⁵ Cf. also T38:1776.497a7-9.

- 3 *The notion of “dependent origination [based on the] substance of tathāgatagarbha”:*

(Quotation 10)

Now if we explain these two [i.e., the conventional and the ultimate truth] by recourse to dependent origination, then [we note that] it is the dependent origination [based on] the substance of the pure Dharma-realm, i.e., the tathāgatagarbha, that constructs “birth and death [i.e., saṃsāra]” and nirvāna. [Here] the substance of the true nature itself (*zhenxing ziti* 真性自體) is said to be the ultimate truth; its function, i.e., dependent origination, is said to be the conventional truth.

若就緣起以明二者：清淨法界如來藏體，緣起造作生死涅槃。真性自體說為真諦；緣起之用判為世諦 (T44:1851.483c19-21, my emphasis).²⁶

- 4 *That the defiled consciousness is based on (yi 依) the true consciousness*

(Quotation 11)

Fourth, the permanent gives birth to the impermanent. This means that based on the true consciousness, false consciousness is produced, and that based on the permanent body [i.e., the Dharma-body], birth and death [i.e., saṃsāra] are transformed [by false consciousness].

四、常生無常，調依真識，發生妄識，依於常身，起化生滅 (T44:1851.480c24-25, my emphasis).

²⁶ Cf. also T44:1851.486b19-24.

5 *The function of the true consciousness:*

(Quotation 12)²⁷

Regarding the aforementioned dependent origination [based on] the true consciousness, we can differentiate two senses: first, dependent origination [which is] the function of the true [consciousness] (*zhenyong yinyuan* 真用因緣). [This means that] the nature, i.e., *tathāgata-garbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性), becomes defiled even while [remaining all the while] undefiled (*bu ran er ran* 不染而染), and [together with it] arise the twelve links of dependent origination. Therefore the Scripture [i.e., the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*²⁸] says, “The nature, i.e., *tathāgata-garbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性), is the cause of all good and bad. It can pervasively create [re]births in all destinies, just as an actor (*ji'er* 伎兒) can manifest himself in [the forms of] various destinies.” And another Scripture [*Foshuo wushangyi jing*?²⁹] also says, “Just these five destinies [arising from] spinning through the Dharma-

²⁷ I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewer, who pointed out to me that the Dunhuang fragment Taishō No. 2770 in Volume 85 (Aurel Stein Collection No. 2688, henceforth abbreviated as T2770) could be a variant edition of the same text by Huiyuan. In the following, I correct T1776 by consulting T2770.

²⁸ For the Chinese translation of the passage from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, see T16:670.510 b4-5. The Sanskrit text reads, *tathāgata-garbho mahāmate kuśalākuśalahetukaḥ sarvajana-magatikartā | pravartate naṭavād gatisaṃkṣāta ātmātmīyavarjitas tadanavabodhāt trisaṅgati-pratyayakriyāyogaḥ pravartate* (Nanjio, 1923: 220). Note that instead of the term *tathāgata-garbha* in the Sanskrit text and *Rulai zhi zang* 如來之藏 in Guṇabhadra's translation, Huiyuan has *Rulai zang xing* 如來藏性.

²⁹ Note that Huiyuan also quotes the same passage at least twice in his *Dasheng yi zhang* “Chapter on the Eight Consciousnesses”. See T44:1851.527a6, T44:1851.530a28-29. The source behind this quote is not clear. Thus far, the closest I have found is the following passage from the *Foshuo wushangyi jing* (佛說無上依經, T669), translated by Paramārtha, which reads, 阿難！是如來界無量無邊，諸煩惱殼之所隱蔽，隨生死流漂沒六道，無始輪轉，我說名眾生界 (T669:16.469c17-19). In addition, the *Foxing lun* (佛性論, T1610) attributed to Paramārtha also cites the same passage from the *Foshuo wushangyi jing*: 故《無上依經》說：阿難！是如來法界，無量無邊諸煩惱殼之所隱蔽，隨生死流。漂沒六道，無始輪轉，我說名眾生界 (T1610:31.806b2-5). If Huiyuan here is indeed citing from Paramārtha's *Foshuo wushangyi jing*, then this would imply that Huiyuan was quite familiar with the works of Paramārtha, an issue which requires further exploration.

realm are termed ‘sentient beings’.” [The above two passages, etc.] all refer to dependent origination [which is] the function of the true [consciousness]. [Second, regarding] dependent origination [which is] the substance of the true [consciousness, I claim], the nature, i.e., *tathāgatagarbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性), is the substance of dependent origination. This is why [*tathāgatagarbha*] is named “dependent origination”. But in this substance the marks (*xiang* 相) of dependent origination are absent. Just because this real nature of *tathāgatagarbha* (*zhenshi Rulaizang xing* 真實如來藏性) is the substance of dependent origination, the Scripture (i.e., the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*³⁰) proclaims, “The twelve links of dependent origination are regarded as the Buddha-nature,” and hence seeing the twelve links of dependent origination is termed seeing the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

於前真識因緣之中，義別亦二。一、真用因緣。如來藏性不染而染，起十二緣。故經說言：「如來藏性是其一切善、不善因，能遍興造一切趣生，猶如伎兒³¹變現眾趣。」又經亦言：「即此法界輪轉五道，名曰眾生。」此等皆是真用因緣。[二、]真體因緣。如來藏性是因緣體，名曰因緣。而此體中，無因緣相。³²良以真實如來藏性是緣體故，經中宣說：「十二因緣以為佛性」，見十二因緣名為見佛、見法、見僧。(T38:1776.429c17-26, my emphasis).³³

Despite slight differences in formulation, what is common to all of the above passages is the idea that the inherently pure true consciousness or the nature, i.e., *tathāgatagarbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性) can somehow follow dependent origination or adjust to conditions, and that from this adjustment, false phenomena arise. In what follows, I shall try to show that, despite its seeming similarity with the *Awakening of Faith*, this idea of “adjusting to falsity” actually says quite the opposite.

³⁰ T12:374.524a1-3.

³¹ I follow *ji'er* 伎兒 in T1776 instead of *bijian* 彼見 in T2770.

³² Here I follow T2770 instead of T1776, which reads: 如來藏性是因緣體，名因緣，而此因緣相 (T38:1776.429c23). I agree with the anonymous reviewer that T2770 makes much better sense.

³³ Cf. also X19:351.893b21-c2.

A clear separation of Huiyuan from the *Awakening of Faith*?

Now the issue is: How could we reconcile the idea that the true consciousness is unchanging with the idea that it could also become related to dependent origination, which always implies change? From the above passages, it might appear that Huiyuan does side with the *Awakening of Faith*, and tries to downplay the strict distinction between the true consciousness, which is unconditioned, and false phenomena, which are conditioned. I argue that we must firmly reject this interpretation, because I believe that Huiyuan has come up with a subtle way to deal with this difficulty without compromising the strict distinction between conditioned and unconditioned *dharmas*. But before I show how Huiyuan deals with this problem, I should note that this is not a new challenge faced by Huiyuan alone. This difficulty had already been posed in a famous passage from the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra*:

(Quotation 13)

O World Honored One! *Tathāgatagarbha* is “that which contains the Dharma-realm”, “that which contains the Dharma-body”, “that which contains the supreme supramundane [*dharmas*]”, and “that which contains inherent purity”. [That] this *tathāgatagarbha*, whose nature is pure, is nonetheless affected by adventitious defilements and tainted by defilements, is something inconceivable, that can be known only by the Tathāgata. Why? The mind [associated with] good mental *dharmas* is momentary, [and is therefore] not tainted by defilements; [so too,] the mind [associated with] bad mental *dharmas* is momentary, [and] is also not tainted by defilements. Defilements do not touch the mind, nor does the mind touch defilements. How could a *dharma* that it does not touch be able to defile the mind? O World Honored One! Nonetheless, there are [indeed] defilements, and there is indeed a mind tainted by defilements. [That] the mind is inherently pure and there are nonetheless taints is [something] very difficult to understand; only the Buddha, the World Honored One – who has the eye of truth and true wisdom, who is the foundation of all *dharmas*, who

knows perfectly the *dharmas*, who is the basis of all correct *dharmas* – knows and sees this as it really is.³⁴

世尊！如來藏者，是法界藏、法身藏、出世間上上藏、自性清淨藏。此性清淨如來藏而客塵煩惱上，煩惱所染，不思議如來境界。何以故？剎那善心非煩惱所染；剎那不善心亦非煩惱所染。煩惱不觸心，心不觸煩惱。云何不觸法而能得染心？世尊！然有煩惱、有煩惱染心。自性清淨心而有染者，難可了知。唯佛世尊，實眼實智、為法根本、為通達法、為正法依、如實知見 (T353:12.222b22-c1, my emphasis).

Given this total heterogeneity between pure mind, i.e., the true consciousness, and defilements, how then might Huiyuan try to resolve the problem of how these two could be combined without compromising their heterogeneity?

The key here is the notion of “false discrimination” (*wangqing* 妄情), as stated in the following passages:

(Quotation 14)

Question: Dependent origination is a false *dharma*.³⁵ How could it [then] serve as the cause of *bodhi*? [Answer:] Those twelve links of dependent origination [within the realm of] birth-and-death [= *saṃsāra*] arise due to false discrimination and are established in dependence upon Thusness. Therefore the Scripture³⁶ says, “All the twelve links

³⁴ Part of the first underlined portion is quoted in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, which reads: *yo 'yaṃ bhagavaṃs tathāgatagarbho lokottaragarbhaḥ prakṛtipariśuddhagarbha iti* (Johnston, 1950: 72.16-73.1). The second underlined portion is also attested in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, which reads: *kṣaṇikāṃ bhagavan kuśalāṃ cittam | na kleśaiḥ saṃkliṣyate | kṣaṇikāṃ akuśalāṃ cittam | na saṃkliṣṭam eva tac cittam kleśaiḥ | na bhagavan kleśās tac cittam sprśanti | katham atra bhagavann asparśanadharmi cittam tamaḥkliṣṭam bhavati | asti ca bhagavann upakleśaḥ | asty upakliṣṭam cittam | atha ca punar bhagavan prakṛtipariśuddhasya cit-tasyōpakleśārtho duṣprativedhyaḥ ||* (Johnston, 1950: 15.3-7). For Takasaki’s English translation, see Takasaki, 1966: 174-175.

³⁵ I think that Huiyuan does not mean here that dependent origination is false, but that dependent origination as it is understood by ordinary sentient beings – e.g., in terms of the twelve links of dependent origination – is not ultimately true. This is because each of the twelve links is not ultimately real.

³⁶ Huiyuan seems again to refer here to the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*; cf. Quotation 8 above.

of dependent origination are based on true mind, i.e., mind at the level of the ultimate truth.” If we speak about their false aspect [i.e., of the twelve links of dependent origination], it is true that they are unreal constructions. But if we speak about their true aspect, then because they are governed by conditions, none of them is unreal. If one exhaustively explores conditions and comes to know reality, then he will attain great awakening; for this reason, it is possible for dependent origination to be the cause of buddhahood.

問曰：因緣是虛妄法，云何能與菩提作因？然彼生死十二因緣，起由妄情，託真如立。故經說言：「十二因緣皆依真實第一義心。」就妄論之，雖是虛構，據真緣攝，斯無不實。窮緣悟實，便成大覺，是故因緣能為佛因 (T44:1851.473c6-11, my emphasis).

(Quotation 15)

If we analyze reality according to the “Mahāyāna teaching of the disclosure of Reality” (*dasheng xianshi jiao* 大乘顯實教), then there are two [kinds of reality]: one, empty [reality]; the other, existent [reality]. To further distinguish each of these two, [in each] we can briefly differentiate [the following] two aspects [i.e., of the basis and of dependent origination]. First, the aspect of the basis (*yichi men* 依持門): Suffering, the arising of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering, which are grasped by false imagination (*wangxiang* 妄想), and hence appear to be existent for [those with false] discrimination, but are non-existent for [those who know] the Principle (*li* 理), are what is called “empty reality”. The nature, i.e., *tathāgatagarbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性), that is taken as the basis of false discrimination, which, although its mark (*xiang* 相) cannot be seen, nevertheless exists in reality, is what is called “existent reality”. Therefore the Scripture³⁷ calls this “non-empty [*tathāgata-]garbha”* (*bukong zang* 不空藏). Second, the aspect of

³⁷ Cf. the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra*: 世尊！有二種如來藏空智。世尊！空如來藏，若離、若脫、若異一切煩惱藏。世尊！不空如來藏，過於恒沙不離不脫不異不思議佛法 (T12:353.221c16-18). The Sanskrit as quoted in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* reads, *śūnyas tathāgatagarbho vinirbhāgair muktajñaiḥ sarvakleśakośaiḥ | aśūnyo gaṅgānadivālikāvvyati- vṛttair avinirbhāgair amuktajñair acintyair buddhadharmair* (Johnston, 1950: 76, 7-9).

dependent origination (*yuanqi men* 緣起門): The nature, i.e., *tathāgatagarbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性), whose substance (*ti* 體) is Thusness (*ru* 如) and hence is uniform in flavor, is what is called “empty reality”. The functioning (*yong* 用) of dependent origination [in terms of] suffering, the arising of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering, is what is called the “existent reality”. Hence the Scripture says, “Natural purity is defiled even while [remaining all the while] undefiled;” “The twelve links of dependent origination are all made of the one mind;” “The two *dharmas* – birth and death – are spinning through the Dharma-realm, i.e., *tathāgatagarbha*, and are [respectively] called the Dharma-body and sentient beings.” These and other similar passages refer to suffering and the arising of suffering [due to] dependent origination [based on] true reality [i.e., *tathāgatagarbha*]. The disclosure of the nature, i.e., *tathāgatagarbha* (*Rulaizang xing* 如來藏性), to become the Dharma-body, *bodhi*, *nirvāṇa*, and the merits of practice through the stages (*bhūmi*), is the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering [due to] dependent origination [based on] true reality [i.e., *tathāgatagarbha*].

若就大乘顯實教中辨實亦二：一、空；二、有。於中分別，略有二門。一、依持門。妄想所取苦、集、滅、道，於情為有，於理實無，名為「空實」。妄情所依如來藏性，相雖叵見，而實是有，名為「有實」。故經說為「不空藏」矣。二、緣起門。如來藏性，體如一味，名為「空實」。緣起苦、集、滅、道之用，名為「有實」。如經中說：「自性清淨，不染而染」、「十二因緣，皆一心作」、「生死二法，是如來藏法界輪轉，名曰法身、眾生。」如是等言，是其真實緣起苦、集。如來藏性顯成法身、菩提、涅槃、諸地行德，即是真實緣起滅、道 (T1851:44.512a5-16).³⁸

What is impressive about Huiyuan’s resolution of this difficult issue is that false discrimination works in exactly the same sense as “adventitious defilements” (*āgantuka-kleśa*): discrimination covers the true consciousness and out of the “combination” of the two all defiled phenomena – birth and death [i.e., *saṃsāra*] – arise.

³⁸ Cf. also T1764:37.704c3-6; X753:45.43b22-c8; T1776:38.474b17-23.

To explain further, I construe what Huiyuan says as follows: the ultimate substance (*ti* 體) is Thusness or *tathāgatagarbha*, which refers to nothing other than Reality as governed by the principle of dependent origination. Originally, we are endowed with the correct “cognition” of Thusness, namely, the true consciousness. But due to ignorance, false discrimination is superimposed upon the true consciousness, and hence Reality is falsely grasped and designated in terms of concepts (such as “a pot”). But even when false concepts are applied to Reality, it merely *appears* to be defiled, but in fact is not changed whatsoever, inasmuch as it arises and ceases according to dependent origination. In the same way, even when false discrimination is superimposed upon the true consciousness, the true consciousness itself is never tainted. It is simply hidden or covered. That is to say, there is *no* real mixture between the true consciousness and false discrimination, because when these two come together, the latter does not change the nature of the former at all. In fact, Huiyuan follows the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra* to claim that these two do not touch each other even while being combined with one another:

(Quotation 16)

The sentence, “Defilements do not touch the mind; the mind does not touch defilements”³⁹ is meant to explain what was mentioned earlier, [namely, the idea of “the mind being] untainted”. Defilements originate from false discrimination, and do not impinge upon the true consciousness, and hence they do not touch the mind. Since [the mind] stays in its truth without falsity, it does not touch any defilements. This is as when a worldling mistakenly sees a rope and takes it for a snake. The [cognition of the] snake arises from false discrimination, and hence it does not touch the rope; the substance of the rope is forever pure, and also does not touch the snake.

³⁹ Quoted from the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra*. See above Quotation 13.

「惚⁴⁰不觸⁴¹心，心不觸惚」，釋前不染。惚出妄情，不及真識，故不觸心。據真无妄，故不觸惚。其猶世人見繩為虵⁴²，虵出妄情，故不觸繩。繩躡常淨，亦不觸虵 (X19:351.894b2-5).

The idea that false discrimination does not taint the true consciousness is strong evidence that for Huiyuan, false discrimination is *not* a mode of the true consciousness. False discrimination is of a totally different nature from the true consciousness, and hence cannot taint it. False discrimination remains nothing more than adventitious defilements. Conversely, the true consciousness does not touch false discrimination, either. This does not imply anything like the idea that the true consciousness is somehow agitated or transformed into false consciousness, as suggested by the *Awakening of Faith*. Rather, Huiyuan simply means that false discrimination is superimposed upon the true consciousness, and hence Reality is falsely conceptualized and reified. In this sense, Huiyuan can make the claim that the true consciousness adjusts to falsity without subscribing to the doctrinal scheme of the *Awakening of Faith*.

We should certainly investigate further the problem of whether Huiyuan successfully resolves this difficulty, or whether he should be subject to a further request to provide an explanation of how and why false discrimination comes into existence in the first place, if it is not a direct derivative of the true consciousness.⁴³ But my point here is that Huiyuan does not come anywhere near to suggesting that false discrimination is a

⁴⁰ Given that there are 49 occurrences of 煩惱 in this text, which I assume would correspond to the more common term *fannaο* (煩惱), we can conclude that 惚 in X351 is an ancient variant character for *naο* (惱). According to the *Zokuzōkyō*, this manuscript was rediscovered in Dunhuang, and is catalogued as Pelliot Chinois No. 3308.

⁴¹ Due to shortcomings in my computer font, I can only show the modern character here. In the manuscript, according to CBETA, this same word is written [舉-與+角], meaning that we should remove 與 from 舉, and then put 角 to the right.

⁴² This is an ancient variant character for 虵 (snake).

⁴³ Huiyuan faces potential difficulties here. For example: What precisely does it mean to say that false discrimination can be superimposed upon true consciousness, without compromising the unconditioned status of true consciousness? Perhaps we might answer by saying that this is similar to the case of putting on a blindfold: when one puts on a blindfold, one cannot see anything at all, but one's natural capacity to see is not therefore harmed.

mode or an aspect of the true consciousness, which is the idea that characterizes the *Awakening of Faith*. Instead, Huiyuan emphasizes that the true consciousness remains untainted despite the superimposition of false discrimination upon it.

The simile of snake and rope: The indispensability of the substance

Another reason for arguing that, according to Huiyuan, false discrimination is not a mode or an aspect of the true consciousness is that Huiyuan also claims that defiled phenomena never really exist. Their seeming existence is in reality non-existence; their seeming cessation is also non-cessation. Huiyuan puts it thus:

(Quotation 17)

The substance of [all] *dharmas*, which [alone] is true, remains the same and is named “Thusness”. As Thusness adjusts to false discrimination, birth and death [i.e., *saṃsāra*] arise. That defilements arise by [Thusness] adjusting to falsity is named “birth”, and that purity [i.e., of Thusness] is hidden is named “death”. Further, that purity manifests by adjusting to the antidotes is named “birth”, and that defilements stop is named “death”. Birth [in accordance with] dependent origination is [in reality] a non-birth [falsely taken as] birth, but [in reality] this [falsely taken] birth is a non-birth. Death [in accordance with] dependent origination is [in reality] a non-death [falsely taken as] death, but [in reality] this [falsely taken] death is a non-death. It is just as someone in the dark of night might see a rope and think it a snake. The arising of the [false idea of a] snake is named “birth” [of the snake], but [in reality] this [falsely taken] birth is a non-birth; when the dawn comes, the [false idea of a] snake dies, but [in reality] this [falsely taken] death is a non-death.

真法體同，名之為如。如隨妄情，集起生滅。隨妄起染，名之為生，淨隱稱滅。又隨對治，淨起名生，染息云滅。緣起之生，非生為生，生則無生；緣起之滅，非滅為滅，滅則無滅。如人夜闇見繩為蛇。蛇起名生，生則無生；至明蛇滅，滅則無滅 (T38:1776.462a1-6).

Thus, according to Huiyuan, the generating cause (*shengyin* 生因) for the arising of defiled phenomena is false discrimination. Since false discrimination never really touches the true consciousness, the latter cannot be regarded as the direct generating cause for defiled phenomena. Again, this reveals that for Huiyuan, defiled phenomena are neither modes of Thusness, nor its direct derivatives. This is a clear difference from the *Awakening of Faith*.

In the passage above, Huiyuan refers to the simile of the snake-rope, a commonly cited simile in classical Indian Yogâcâra texts. Based on Huiyuan's citation of this simile, we can better understand Huiyuan's famous claim of "joining together of truth and falsity" (*zhenwang hehe* 真妄和合), which means that neither truth nor falsity alone can produce defiled phenomena; defiled phenomena arise only by means of the "joining together" of the two.⁴⁴ In the simile, the misconstructured image of a snake cannot arise unless there is a basis, namely, the rope. Similarly, without truth, falsity would have no basis or *locus* to reside in or attach to.⁴⁵

Further ramifications

A few significant ramifications follow from my thesis that the *Awakening of Faith* has a very different conceptual scheme from that of Huiyuan.

First, we should try separating two kinds of works traditionally attributed to Huiyuan: those evincing little or no influence from the *Awakening of Faith*, and those showing its strong influence. The former come closer to authentic Dilun School thought, but the latter, whether they

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g., T44:1851.473b14-20; T44:1851.551a4-6; T38:1776.429b28-29; T37:1764.900b11-12; X19:351.892c12-20.

⁴⁵ An intriguing question remains to be further explored: When Huiyuan says falsity must have truth as its substance, by "truth" does he mean the ontological aspect of truth (i.e., Thusness) or the epistemological aspect of truth (i.e., true consciousness)? Here, "truth" refers to that upon which falsity or conceptualization is superimposed, and so the question becomes: Is conceptualization superimposed upon reality, or upon the correct cognition of reality? I do not yet have a ready answer to this question, but I hope to tackle this issue in future work.

were written by Huiyuan or not, should not be regarded as characteristic of Dilun School thought.

Second, we need to consider the extent to which scholars have tended to misinterpret Dilun School works by viewing them through the lens of the *Awakening of Faith*. In particular, we need to question the prevalent reading of the *Lañkâvatāra-sūtra*. For example, when we read in the *Lañkâvatāra-sūtra* that “*Tathāgatagarbha* is the cause of both good and bad”⁴⁶ or that “*Tathāgatagarbha* is permeated by badness due to beginningless conceptual proliferation of various kinds, and is named ‘storehouse consciousness’,”⁴⁷ we must not quickly jump to the conclusion that these passages claim that *tathāgatagarbha* and the storehouse consciousness are two sides of the same coin, and hence, that these passages are necessarily genuine precursors of the kind of thinking seen in the *Awakening of Faith*. We need to ask whether our overall understanding of the *Lañkâvatāra-sūtra* is informed and biased by our habit of associating the *Awakening of Faith* with Dilun School doctrines.

Conclusion

This paper argues that, contrary to most scholarly opinion, there are major doctrinal differences between Huiyuan, as the best known Dilun School master, and the *Awakening of Faith*. For this reason, we must not treat the most distinctive doctrinal feature of the *Awakening of Faith* – i.e., its blurring of the strict distinction between the conditioned and unconditioned realms – as a direct outgrowth of the Dilun School.

More broadly, we should maintain a cautious and keen awareness of the influence of the *Awakening of Faith* on our fundamental understanding of such key notions in Buddhist thought as *foxing* 佛性 (*buddha-gotra*), *Rulaizang* 如來藏 (*tathāgatagarbha*), etc. Much more effort is re-

⁴⁶ The Sanskrit text reads: *tathāgatagarbho mahāmate kuśalākuśalahetukaḥ sarvajanmagatikartā* (Nanjio, 1923: 220, lines 9-10). For the Chinese translation of the passage, see T16:670.510b4-5.

⁴⁷ The Sanskrit text reads: *anādikālavividhaprapañcadauṣṭhulyavāsanaṅvāsītā ālayavijñāna-saṃśabdito* (Nanjio, 1923: 220, lines 13-14). For the Chinese translation of the passage, see T16:670.510b7-8.

quired to separate later interpretations from the earlier tradition, in order for us better to understand the development of Buddhist thought in sixth century China.

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