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ABSTRACT

Buddhism brought to China from India not only its conception of its own identity as a religious message superior to all others but also a conception of the place of other forms of religion in relation to that message. This type of analysis had not existed in China before, though there were Chinese ways of relating different traditions of thought to each other that Buddhists did adapt to their own purposes. Whatever language was used, however, the development of Buddhist conceptions of religion within the Chinese context was chiefly determined by the polemical context within which Buddhists operated.

Keywords: concepts of religion, Buddhist views of Daoism, religious terminology

Introduction

Although the study of Chinese religion as a distinct specialist field of research is not much more than a generation old in Western universities, pioneers in the field have already voiced their dissatisfaction with the original presuppositions concerning the nature of religion that were either brought from outside to frame their studies or inherited from earlier times in the understanding of China, on the grounds that those presuppositions have turned out to be too Eurocentric to describe accurately Chinese religious life, either now or in the past.[1] Even a cursory glance at the history of Western conceptions of Chinese religion reveals, too, that these have been based on hypotheses determined by a sixteenth century European religious environment much more than on detached and systematic study of the facts.[2] This unease has already resulted in the publication of a classic essay by Robert F. Campany, reviewing both the way that non-Chinese have written about religion and the way that Chinese themselves wrote about it, taking his examples in this case primarily from an age particularly rich in religious writings that extended from the end of the Han dynasty in 220 CE to the start of the Tang dynasty in 618. Though his is a very significant contribution to the field that illuminates a number of different perspectives, the aspect of his analysis that is particularly developed in the following remarks concerns the way in which different 'metaphors of interrelationship' were deployed at this time to mark off one religious tradition from another.[3]

This was arguably a very important feature of the period concerned. If we go

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back earlier, into the Han dynasty, we certainly find an already very ancient conception of the unseen spirit world as a place populated by a hierarchy of powers, much as our own world is, wherein the Chinese population sought objects of worship that would protect them in the visible world, notably by means of a variety of cults devoted to a range of different figures. It is also apparent that in the late Han the stresses of the age caused a multiplication of such cults, and at the same time a search for contact with higher levels of power that could overcome the mounting chaos that was visible in reality and also projected onto the world unseen. Given, however, prevailing Chinese assumptions about the hierarchical nature of society—and hence of the world unseen—only those with perceived superior power could claim contact with superior powers unseen. The result was, on this understanding, an upsurge of movements that we might call religious—even 'religions'—that were from the Chinese point of view equally political, and that certainly asserted religious authority in a political fashion, since the distinction that we make is based on a presumed disjunction between the worlds seen and unseen that was not held to have existed by Chinese of the second century—or indeed later.[4]

The very idea of a religion, as delineated by Campany, was therefore something of a novelty in the period he covers, and indeed one of the paired terms he treats as indicating relationship, namely *fangwai* and *fangnei,* was of key importance in establishing for Buddhism a cultural space independent of the political ways of thinking that dominated concerns about the invisible world in normal discourse, as earlier scholars have noted.[5] Given the importance of achieving some sort of rapprochement with political power in China as a means of securing the safety of the Buddhist community within a culture that could (and did) see that community as culturally intrusive, it is no wonder that this narrative tends to dominate the materials preserved by the Chinese Buddhist clergy concerning their early history. The narrative of their dealing with the existing religious environment at a less politically significant level is not immediately so obvious. Yet we can be sure that Buddhists arrived in China with a strong sense that the teacher they looked to was superior to any other, both human and divine: "I am the only one worthy of honour in heaven or on earth" *tianshang tianxia wei wo du zun*, to use the common formula said to be the Buddha's first pronouncement at birth.[6] Buddhist thinkers in India had already by this point refined their sense of the Buddha's superiority by developing more and more elaborate ways of stating what a Buddha was, and even in early translations from before the end of the Han it is clear that they saw their teacher's nature as "beyond the empirical world, supramundane, and transcendent (*lokottara*)."[7] This formulation moreover implies that they perceived other forms of religious

[1] For an eloquent statement of the problem, see Paper, 1995: 1-22.

[2] Barrett 2005.

[3] Campany 2003: 307-310.

[4] This analysis is based on Barrett, 2008; for the state attitude to cults, now see also Tsai 2007.

[5] For example, Zürcher, 1959: 258.

[6] *Hongming ji* 6, 37b15; cf. 1, 1c8.

[7] Guang Xing, 2005: 113.

activity and their associated objects of worship as not possessed of this quality, but how ideas on this topic developed is less clear. At any rate Robert DeCaroli, writing of the material evidence for Buddhist engagement in India with spirit cults, places the latter in the complementary category of *laukika*, meaning 'of this world,' or 'secular.'[8] Buddhism plainly from the start saw itself as something different from secular culture as a whole in India, as standing outside the Indian cultural tradition and addressing the universal human condition, to put their viewpoint into a contemporary form.

This Buddhist viewpoint naturally applied to the Chinese tradition and its higher unseen powers, too. But granted that Buddhists in China acted under political constraints, and also did not wish to inflame cultural sensitivities unnecessarily, how was their sense of superiority conveyed? And what model of religions and their relationships came across to their Chinese audience as a result? The terms examined in this category by Campany are, as stated above, important, but since they have been highlighted already by his work, the following remarks turn instead to other paired expressions, and also look beyond these expressions to the way in which the Buddhist model was deployed in practice in apologetic writing. Since the Buddhist model of religion has been discussed in Western scholarship in a contemporary context in relation to other possible models, some attention is also devoted to how the data from China may reflect on the comparisons made, so as with Campany's essay the scope of this piece is not exclusively sinological. It constitutes, however, no more than an introductory survey, and it is to be hoped that future scholarship will be able to improve substantially on the research presented here.

The Buddhist Adoption of a Chinese Metaphor for Intellectual Difference

Although the outline given above would suggest that before the advent of Buddhism there were no distinct religions in China, but only a variety of different cults, there were certainly different traditions of knowledge in pre-imperial times, and these were frequently compared and contrasted. One classic way of doing this, exemplified in the final chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, was to see different thinkers as partial inheritors of the lost, unified vision of high antiquity.[9] The same work, however, also exemplifies a binary approach, contrasting one representative of an intellectual tradition with another so as to argue a case. This Campany has termed in the later religious environment "Founder or Paragon Synecdoche": in the development of another of his key metaphors of interrelationship based on the notion of "traces" and "that by which" they are produced, for example, Rudolph Wagner has pointed to the seminal influence of passages in the *Zhuangzi* in which Confucius and Laozi speak for different viewpoints.[10] But a more abstract contrastive terminology was also available from early times in the form of the duality of "Inner and Outer," *nei-wai*.[11] This was a far more flexible way of relating different bodies of knowledge, in that it could be

8 DeCaroli, 2007: 13-14.

9 Graham, 1981: 274-285.

10 Campany, 2003: 299-300; 309. Wagner, 2003: 10-12.

11 Schwartz, 1959.

used not simply to contrast the personal with the public, but also by privileging the former term as implying a restricted tradition it could assert the superiority of a special 'insiders' knowledge over what was generally known in society. In principle Buddhists brought to China a universal truth open to all to discover, but it is no surprise to find that the implications of inferiority accruing to the term *wai* seem to have very quickly attracted the attention of Buddhist translators.

For even in the work of Lokakṣema, the second translator known to have been active in the second century CE, right at the start of the long enterprise of rendering Indian ideas into Chinese modes of expression, we find those teachers other than the Buddha who constituted his ancient competitors characterized already as *waidao*, adherents of an 'outer way.'[12] Lexicographers see this as a characteristically Buddhist usage, though it may have some lost colloquial antecedent rather than represent the coinage of the translator. At any rate it subsequently became standard in translations of Indic materials.[13] It also was picked up occasionally by non-Buddhists, for example in the mid-fourth century Shangqing revelations that mark an important stage in the formation of Daoism and that also show at many points other signs of familiarity with the Buddhism of South China during this period.[14] In 467 we further find it being used by one Buddhist polemicist, Huitong, to refer not to Indians but to Chinese Daoists.[15] But such usages are not common, nor are contrasts between *waidao* and those characterised as *neidao*, "Inner Way" adherents, at all common either.[16] So perhaps despite its prevalence in translations from the start this word played less of a part in settling the *nei-wai* polarity within Chinese Buddhist discourse on religion than we might assume.

A somewhat clearer Buddhist adoption of Chinese usage of the polarity may be found already, however, in the writing of Kang Senghui, who seems to have flourished in the second half of the third century CE.[17] In a preface to a lost commentary on an earlier translation Kang decries the lack of those proficient in "inner learning," *neixue*, evidently with a Buddhist reference in mind.[18] But even here it is quite difficult to tell what connotations such a phrase might have had at this point. One source which does use the same collocation at what was presumably a somewhat earlier date is the *Taiping jing*, the early scripture partially preserved in the Daoist tradition that is seen as largely composed of materials dating back to Han times.[19] Here, in the hundred and sixth section of the work, both *neixue* and its opposite, *waixue*, 'outer learning,' are seen as equally capable of tending towards bad outcomes

[12] For a summary of what is known of Lokakṣema, see Nattier 2008: 73-89. For examples of his use of the term in question, see the *Weiyue moni bao jing*: 189b13, 15.

[13] For some relevant references, see Karashima 1998: 452.

[14] *Zhen gao*: 7.1b.

[15] *Hongming ji*: 46a27. For this polemic, see Kohn 1995: 167.

[16] For one example, however, see *Foshuo da pannihuan jing*: 891c.

[17] Nattier 2008: 149-155.

[18] *Chu sanzang ji ji*: 46c7.

[19] Though she does not translate the passage in question, Hendrischke: 2006: 1-66, should be consulted on this very difficult source.

[20] Wang Ming 1960: 276.

for the student.[20] Again the context does not make the meaning immediately clear, but from subsequent discussion the latter term would seem to cover conventional, generally available learning, while the former indicates what students of Han China refer to as 'apocrypha,' a form of extra-canonical writing claiming to give the inner meaning of the traditional texts.[21]

Even after Kang's time the nature of the *nei-wai* distinction in discussing intellectual traditions still requires careful interpretation in context. In the first half of the fourth century Ge Hong (283-343) divides his polemical writings into two halves labelled *nei* and *wai*, and it is possible to take the former as indicating purely personal matters, though of course in Ge's view, as in earlier Chinese thought, the regulation of self and society are interrelated.[22] Within the body of his polemical work, *neishu*, 'inner writings,' appear to contrast with the conventional curriculum of everyday scholarship and are associated with specialists in 'techniques,' *shu*, while *waixue* - the term already in the *Taiping jing* – is a phrase attributed to his teacher as indicating a factor potentially distracting from his instruction in more esoteric matters.[23] Once again it is only a few years later that we find in the Shangqing scriptures usages of this type that presuppose a completely self-conscious distinction between adherence to a distinct tradition and participation in a wider culture. Thus a range of specifically Shangqing sources is delineated as constituting 'inner writings,' *neishu*.[24] And a quotation from the *Book of Odes*, by contrast, is bluntly attributed to a *waishu* – what we might translate as a 'secular work.'[25] Again one suspects the influence of Buddhism – indeed, although a full discussion of the point would take us away from the particular focus of this essay, a case can surely be made for seeing the Buddhist example as crucial in eventually allowing the different strands we now know as Daoism to achieve an unprecedented level of coherence and self-awareness.[26]

Be that as it may, it is worth observing that even though Buddhism saw itself as concerned as much with practice in the shape of morality and meditation as it was with verbally expressed traditions of knowledge, the predominant values of Chinese civilisation meant that the sense of distinctiveness of Buddhism emerges in our sources much more in a textual environment than in any other context. By this I mean that as in the Shangqing examples just given, in Buddhism two distinct bodies of literature are contrasted using the *nei-wai* dichotomy much more readily than anything else. This was, of course, nothing new to Buddhists, in that Buddhist literature in South Asia was distinguished clearly from non-Buddhist writing, even

21 Hendrischke 2006: 154, notes a portion of the text that seems to show some links with the apocrypha. Cf. also the glosses of Yang, 2002: 649, on the passage on *neixue* and *waixue*.

22 Ge's own account of the division of his writings is translated in Sailey 1978: 264-265. For passages where the division is invoked within his writings in such a fashion as to suggest interrelationship, see Wang 1985: 148 (where both terms refer to the individual), 185 (where both individual and society are to follow the Way).

23 Wang 1985: 255 and 332.

24 *Zhen gao* 2.6a

25 *Zhen gao* 7.7b.

26 Cf, Kohn 2000: xvii-xviii.

if the appearance of a strictly delimited Buddhist canon was the product there of particular circumstances.[27] When this distinction was translated into Chinese from Indian languages, it was the *nei-wai* terminology that came to be used most conspicuously—the *Lotus Sutra*, for example, speaks of *waishu* in the early fifth century Kumārajīva version when secular Indian texts are concerned.[28] This of course encouraged the transfer of the relevant terminology to the Chinese context, so that soon thereafter we find Chinese Buddhist polemicists making the same sorts of distinction with regard to texts in Chinese, for example in connection with discussion of the *Baihei lun*, "Essay on Black and White" a little later in the fifth century (where the term used is *waidian*, 'outer documents'), and other controversies prompted by their opponent He Chengtian (370-447)—evidently by this point a non-Buddhist scholar was familiar enough with such phrases that he uses them in addressing Buddhists himself.[29] It is, however, not until towards the end of the century, in the writings of the imperial prince Xiao Ziliang (460-494), that broader expressions, such as *neijiao*, 'inner teachings,' as a synonym for Buddhist doctrine as a whole, come to be used.[30]

It may be that this innovation was assisted by developments within the emerging religious tradition of Daoism, which by Kumārajīva's time was coalescing into a much more coherent form, largely thanks to the stimulus received from Buddhism. It has been noted that in the Lingbao scriptures after this period 'inner' and 'outer' are used in contrastive ways to distinguish not simply between the tradition and conventional learning but also between different elements within the Daoist tradition as a whole. Though this area of research remains preliminary in its findings, apparently from the late sixth century 'inner teaching' became a key term in legitimating new doctrinal formulations.[31] But whatever the significance of these Daoist developments, Xiao's friend and contemporary, Shen Yue (441-513), like him employs the concept of *neisheng waisheng*, 'inner and outer sages,' as well as the broad term *waijiao*, 'outer teaching,' in his discussion of Buddhism and the Chinese cultural tradition, *Junsheng lun*, "Essay on Equalizing the Sages."[32] This work dates to early in the next century; another piece written at the request of Xiao in 490 employs the term *neidian* for the Buddhist canon in Chinese—a usage that later became standard.[33] During the sixth century, moreover, the *nei-wai* dichotomy becomes an important part of Buddhist apologetics: it is, for example, a prominent organizing principle in the *Erjiao lun*, "Essay on the Two Teachings," of Daoan in 573, in his denunciations of Daoism, to which we return below.[34] By this time, though, the Indian Buddhist analysis of the superior status of their religion had

[27] Collins 1990.

[28] Karashima 2001: 275.

[29] *Hongming ji*: 20c17, 24a26. For He, see Yao 2003: 253.

[30] *Hongming ji*: 72b11. On this letter, see Jansen 2000: 75-76.

[31] Wang Chengwen 2002: 124-125, 451; Liu 2005: 64.

[32] *Guang Hongming ji*: 122a4, 6.

[33] Mather 1988: 138-139.

[34] Despeux 2002.

also become familiar to the Chinese, so we should now turn back and trace this parallel development before discussing how both these models were used polemically.

Buddhism and the Chinese Terminology of Secularity

Though pre-Buddhist China did not possess anything similar to the Indian Buddhist dichotomy of *lokottara* versus *laukika*, it did have a concept of 'the secular' in its original etymological sense, and this sense did show some signs of evolution in the same direction as the English word towards the meaning not simply 'of this age' but also 'of this world.' Already in the *Han shu*, compiled in the second half of the first century CE, we find *shijiao*, 'the teachings of the age' represented by Confucius and the Duke of Zhou, contrasted with the 'Great Way' of Laozi and Zhuangzi.[35] This type of usage of the term persisted after the fall of the Han: one third century example, again associated with the conventional learning associated with Confucius and the like, is even somewhat incautiously translated "the religion of the times" by one well-known scholar of Chinese literature.[36] Such contexts presumably explain why already by 286 we find the translation term *shidian* in the sense of '[Indian] secular text' in one Buddhist source, alongside the epithet *shijian*, 'of this world,' a term very frequently found in Buddhist texts but also attested earlier.[37]

In view of what has already been said above concerning the increased sense of distinctiveness within the Shangqing scriptures, we should no doubt note that the vocabulary of secularity using the marker *shijian* appears in these materials, as with the *nei-wai* distinction, to highlight the separateness of the Shangqing revelation from ordinary texts, even ordinary talismans.[38] But what is not immediately apparent at this stage in these materials or indeed in any Buddhist materials up to the fourth century is any matching term, in opposition to 'worldly' or 'secular,' characterising what is not 'of this world.' This is not to say that the distinction is not made in Buddhist sources: as noted above, the basic idea was already conveyed to China in Han times. But it was as far as I have been able to discover not initially presented in the form of paired concepts, which may be why in Buddhist circles the *nei-wai* distinction was at first pressed into service to mark off Buddhism from its rivals. The emergence of a regular counterpart to *shijian*, marking what is not 'of this world' as 'beyond this world,' *chu shijian*, once again would seem to be due to the influence of the translations of Kumārajīva.

The *locus classicus* in his translations for the pairing of these two terms is probably in his version of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, where in the translation of Burton Watson they appear among the many dualisms to rejected as 'the worldly' and 'the unworldly'; the hero of this scripture is also described as conversant with 'secular writings,' where once again the term *shidian* is used.[39] The popularity of this work

35 *Han shu* 100A, 4206. This usage may, of course, be earlier: it is attributed to a cousin of the compiler's father.

36 Birch 1965: 165. The translator in question here is James Hightower.

37 Karashima 1998: 406, 407.

38 *Zhen gao* 1.9b, 19.9a, 9.14a.

39 The translations are those of Burton Watson 1997: 106 and 35 respectively.

may indeed explain why the new term in an abbreviated form, *chushi*, soon appears not simply in translations but also in writings composed in China, for example in a preface from the early fifth century by the monk Huiguan.[40] But as will have been noted from the preceding remarks, this innovation by no means displaced the use of the *nei-wai* distinction: the same Huiguan in the same piece of writing also refers to rival contemporaries of the Buddha as 'outer learning masters,' *waixue xianren*, where the last element, usually translated in a Chinese context as an 'immortal' or 'transcendent,' tends in Buddhist sources to indicate a ṛṣi.[41] That laypeople too had by the end of the sixth century also become familiar with the new terminology of *shijian* and *chu shijian* is demonstrated by a piece – again on the Buddha's superiority to his rivals – by Xiao Ziliang in which a scriptural passage using this contrast is quoted.[42]

Where, then, Buddhists before the era of Kumārajīva's translations had been constrained by their use of Chinese vocabulary to use terms that privileged Buddhism without describing it clearly as dealing with a higher plane, the sixth century saw apologists for the religion armed with a conceptually much clearer sense of the radical superiority of the teachings to which they adhered. At the same time it is evident that in South China at least their rivals amongst the Daoists, notably Lu Xiujing (406-477), had brought a degree of coherence to the presentation of a Daoist alternative to Buddhism that had not been there before.[43] The Buddhist discourse of 'worldly' religion offered apologists in China a flexible model for describing religious activity that could be deployed against these opponents in such a fashion as to isolate them from potential sources of support by granting a level of validity to some elements within Chinese culture upon which the Daoists drew, while denying any legitimacy to precisely those forms of Daoism most threatening to the Buddhists. The best way to appreciate what was involved here is through an account of some of the Buddhist polemicists of this age and later, up to the early Tang period. Their writings have been described before, but it has perhaps not been sufficiently appreciated in the past that at the heart of the Buddhist analysis of Daoism lies a conception of religion that is far from neutral. Instead, Chinese Buddhists were drawing on a polemical tradition that had its roots in early India and adapting it skilfully to their own situation. The flexibility of the scheme used lies in its being suitable for irenic purposes up to a point, just so long as the ultimate superiority of Buddhism is still affirmed.

The Chinese Buddhist Analysis of Daoism

Although polemics between Buddhists and Daoists started quite early in the fifth century, the first point at which it becomes possible to identify the model of religion just described is in the writing of Ming Sengshao, who died in 483.[44] Here in discussing the obvious point that the pursuit of immortality appears not to be

[40] *Chu sanzang ji ji* 66b13.

[41] *Chu sanzang ji ji* 66c9.

[42] *Guang hongming ji* 306c9-10. On the source in question, and on Xiao, see Jansen 2000: 98-100.

[43] Bokenkamp 2001.

[44] Kohn 1995: 167.

supported by the writings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, Ming turns to the fate of those adherents of Daoism who do not manage to achieve the goal of becoming immortal. They are promised posts after death in the celestial bureaucracy of the spirit world, and though this too is a perversion of Laozi and Zhuangzi, it is not against *shijiao*, here justifiably translatable as 'worldly religion.'[45] We should recall that at about the same time that Ming was writing in the south, in north China a Buddhist scripture was being formulated that was precisely aimed at finding a place within popular Buddhist practice for the pursuit of limited levels of advancement confined to the higher levels of our world system, rather than the ultimate Buddhist goal of transcendence, the doctrine later known as the 'Teaching of Men and Gods.'[46] Ming's target, then, is not the notion of spiritual betterment at this comparatively low level—even in early Indian Buddhism the possibility of rebirth of a man as a god or of a god as a man was completely accepted.[47] He reserves his criticisms instead for those leaders of mass movements who have falsely claimed the authority of Laozi and also plagiarised Buddhist sources.[48] Such rivals could not be tolerated at all.

This approach to Daoism is even more clearly exemplified a generation later, about 500 CE, in the work of Liu Xie (c.465-c.521). Liu is best known as the author of China's most outstanding work of literary criticism, the *Wenxin diaolong*, but in his youth he was raised by the monk who was compiler of the *Hongming ji*, our main source on early Chinese Buddhist polemics, including his own.[49] Debate over whether the *Wenxin diaolong* is in fact a crypto-Buddhist work or true to the Chinese tradition has raged quite intemperately even in recent times.[50] But enough will have been said about the Buddhist view of secular culture in India and in China to suggest that to someone in Liu's position the conflict central to this controversy did not exist: both Buddhism and Chinese tradition were no doubt in his view completely valid, though at different levels of reality. Such at any rate is the assumption that seems to be made in his critique of Daoism, which once again, as with Ming Sengshao, attacks not the Chineseness of Daoism but its falseness to authentic Chinese tradition. It is, moreover, explicitly described as not internally coherent—another and more determined attempt perhaps to reverse the integrative work of Lu Xiujing.

In Liu's polemics three separate elements are now clearly identified. First, Laozi: his book is commended for its good influence, but is described as 'not a marvellous scripture that goes beyond this world (*chushi*).' Secondly, the pursuit of immortality: here, if some measure of success is achieved, one must look to the workings of good karma rather than to the effectiveness of the potions ingested. Thirdly, there are the mass movements founded by religious leaders—Liu gives more examples than Ming, but once again the evaluation of these cults is entirely negative.[51]

45 *Hongming ji* 38a25.

46 Gregory 1983.

47 Norman 1991: 162-171.

48 For the leaders named, see Barrett 2006: 45.

49 Kohn 1995: 173.

50 Mair 2001.

51 *Hongming ji* 51b-c.

This may not be the only source in which Liu accords the Daoism of Laozi a this-worldly role, since in a work named the *Liuzi* that is sometimes attributed to him and that is in any case unlikely to be later than the sixth century, this element in early Chinese thought is described as 'transforming the world,' along with the teachings of 'the scholars,' *rujiao*.[52] This work, however, deals solely with Chinese learning, like the *Wenxin diaolong*, and if any notion of Buddhism as a yet higher learning was in the mind of the author, it is not explicit.

The emperor under whose rule Liu ended his life, Wu of the Liang, was however quite open about the inferior relationship of Chinese culture to Buddhism, describing both Laozi and the Duke of Zhou and Confucius as merely 'of this world' *shijian*, in their goodness.[53] His reign came to be marked therefore not simply by hostility to organized Daoism—the usage just cited is from a decree condemning it a heterodox—but also by simultaneous efforts, public and private, to consolidate both Buddhist and Chinese learning. Thus as well as one Buddhist encyclopaedia that does survive, we know that later secular encyclopaedias derive much of their material from a massive work compiled under direct imperial auspices that is now lost. A full examination of this point would unfortunately take us rather far afield, whereas for the immediate purpose of pursuing the Buddhist analysis of religion as revealed in Buddhist critiques of Daoism, we should turn instead to the late sixth century, and now to north China.

Here the arrival of Daoism in the form that it had assumed in south China from Lu Xiujing onwards offered activist rulers there a chance to adapt this relatively new religion to their ideological needs in opposition to Buddhism, which had a powerful hold over local society in their jurisdictions. In an attempt, ultimately unsuccessful, to head off this development the monk Dao'an, mentioned above, wrote his own polemic against Daoism in 569. As already noted, his first tactic is to use the *nei-wai* distinction, but he does so in a new way, subsuming the entire Chinese heritage under the rubric of an 'outer teaching' to which he gives the general name of *rujiao*, already used in the *Liuzi*; this includes the writings of ancient sages like Laozi, along with all other early intellectual currents. Against this is contrasted Buddhism, the 'inner teaching', which puts one on the track to the 'other worldly.'[54] As in the case of Liu Xie, Daoism is deconstructed into three separate entities that are denied any overall integrity: the philosophy of Laozi, the cult of immortality, and the use of talismans. Dao'an has to be careful with the last category, for the emperor was keen on talismanic palladia as demonstrations of his legitimacy, but with great aplomb he distinguishes in this category the refined type of talisman associated with imperial rule from the useless objects touted by ordinary Taoist priests.[55]

In the course of his polemics Dao'an introduces another distinction, not used in earlier writings. based upon the term *jiaozhu*, 'master of teaching,' which occurs without further development in a quotation with reference to the Buddha as a former

[52] *Liuzi jijiao,* 303.

[53] *Guang Hongming ji* 112a28.

[54] Despeux 2002: 169, 172; *Guang Hongming ji* 136c15, 137a22.

[55] Despeux 2002: 205-206; *Guang Hongming ji* 141a.

prince from an opponent in Liu Xie's contribution to the *Hongming ji*.[56] Dao'an now makes the point that neither Laozi nor Confucius are worthy of the term, since they were not founders of teachings, something that only rulers are in a position to be.[57] This line of argument was taken further in the following century in a reunified China under the Tang dynasty by Falin (572-640), one of the stoutest defenders of the Liang model of 'two cultures', Buddhist and secular, against the Tang dynasty trend towards an official imperial Daoist ideology of the sort that Dao'an had been trying to ward off earlier in the north.[58] That the term *jiaozhu* had assumed a certain importance in Daoism of this type by Falin's time is clear, even if its exact evolution remains to be traced, since it was used in Daoist circles of his day to refer to the celestial originators of the different bodies of revealed literature first assembled by Lu Xiujing into an overall canon.[59] This no doubt explains why in dealing with the question of the status of Daoism, Falin's remarks incline to the bibliographic even more than is already the case with Liu Xie and Dao'an, and feature prominently the Buddha's role as the source of written scriptures.[60]

Yet here, too, the contrast of *shijian* and *chu shijian* is the key: the Buddha is a *chushi* person, and his scriptures are *chushi* scriptures, whereas the Chinese tradition goes back to ancient rulers who were 'of this world', and who bequeathed a textual legacy of worldly teachings, *shijiao*.[61] And here, too, the Chinese heritage as a whole, including Laozi, constitutes *rujiao*; there is no room for a separate Daoism. Admittedly in another, later passage the texts of the Daoists are explicitly called *shijian*, 'worldly', but in a context that makes clear the false, derivative nature of their plagiarisms from Buddhist sources and denies their place in the Chinese tradition.[62] Falin does not appear to foreground the deconstruction of Daoism into separate elements in the same fashion as his predecessors, but this polemical tactic did see at least one further development under the Tang. The renegade Daoist priest turned monk, Xuanyi, takes up several of the arguments considered so far towards the end of the seventh century, some time between 690 and 694.[63]

He denies, for example, the very existence of any Daoist gods who could serve as *jiaozhu*: there are simply no such deities who could have functioned as patrons of revealed scriptures.[64] He subsumes the teachings of Dao within the ru tradition, and further divides them into three, but somewhat differently from his predecessors: the immortality pursuits of the Yellow Emperor; the philosophy of Laozi; and the disengagement of the famous hermits of old.[65] The mass movements

56 *Hongming ji* 49c24.

57 Despeux 2002: 180; *Guang Hongming ji* 26.

58 For Falin in this role, see Barrett 2000: 22.

59 Fukui 1952: 154—the citations here date to slightly after Falin's time, but draw on earlier materials, some of which may antedate the introduction of the term by Liu Xie's opponent.

60 This aspect of Falin's model of 'religion' is summarised on the basis of the research of Kobayashi Masayoshi in Levering, 1989: 64.

61 *Bianzheng lun* 499a21-23. Kohn 1995: 185-186, gives an overview of the full work.

62 *Bianzheng lun* 534b23.

63 Palumbo 1997.

64 *Zhenzheng lun* 561a1.

of the late Han onwards he rejects, of course, but he does, somewhat unusually, allow that the religious practices they pursue are drawn from the Chinese tradition.[66] Perhaps the continued Daoist practices of the ostensibly Buddhist ruler of his day explain this choice.[67] In doing so, however, Xuanyi does not use the vocabulary we have been exploring; rather, these practices are labelled with another Buddhist term, *sudi*, 'conventional truth.'[68] This innovation perhaps reflects the attention that had been paid to the two levels of truth by an older contemporary of Falin, Jizang (549-623).[69]

This introduction of a new pair of terms by no means entailed the eclipse of the vocabulary we have been considering so far, but it does mark the end of a phase in the production of Buddhist apologetic literature, as China itself changed from the eighth century on. It is time, therefore, to curtail our brief and far from comprehensive review of the terminology of religion used by Buddhists in China up to the late seventh century and to turn to an evaluation of the Buddhist model of religion that this terminology implies, from the point of view of contemporary anthropological observations of Buddhism and of the specific polemical situation in mediaeval China.

Conclusion: the Buddhist Model of Secular Religion Reconsidered

One good reason to take seriously the self-image of Buddhists in their relations with worshippers of other spiritual powers in China is the remarkable fact that the attitudes discerned already by DeCaroli in early India are still observable in South Asia to this day, where even Catholic saints have been brought within this conceptual scheme. R. L. Stirrat's comments on the *laukika* versus *lokottara* distinction as observable in current Buddhist practice naturally take no account of the sources discussed so far, but rather stem from his fieldwork in Sri Lanka.[70] This experience, however, did prompt him to publish an important contribution to the discussion of the conception of religion from a Buddhist perspective.[71] This draws upon some earlier work in the same vein in outlining the 'sacred' versus 'profane' levels postulated by Buddhism.[72] Whether the language of Durkheim and Eliade actually suits the phenomena observable in Sri Lanka and the rhetoric employed in China reflecting the *laukika-lokottara* distinction does, however, seem slightly problematic: 'profane religion' seems even more paradoxical a term than 'worldly religion,' which is at least an approximation of the meaning of the Chinese term. But as hinted at the start of this piece, perhaps the problem is more with our expectations of the word 'religion', which is not to be found in either the Sanskrit or the Chinese terminology, even if in the latter *jiao*, 'teaching,' does function as a very rough equivalent.

65 *Zhenzheng lun* 570b27-c1.

66 *Zhenzheng lun* 571b9-23; cf. Palumbo 1997: 313.

67 On the non-Buddhist state rituals of this time, now see the summary in Lei 2009: 153-166.

68 *Zhenzheng lun* 571b15.

69 For some references on Jizang and the Two Truths, see Williams 2009: 82-83, 300-301.

70 Stirrat 1992 29-30, 180-181.

71 Stirrat 1984.

72 Southwold 1978.

Yet though no doubt further reflection on the ways in which the Buddhist approach might throw light on the issues addressed in Campany's work is in order, it is perhaps worth considering in the Chinese case not simply possible implications for a general understanding of the definition of religion but rather in particular the cultural context here in which the Buddhist terminology was used. The rapid resort to the *nei-wai* distinction in Chinese Buddhist circles suggests a strong desire to keep Buddhism distinct, perhaps reflecting an acute awareness of the syncretizing tendencies of the popular mind, in China as elsewhere. But turning to the discourse of 'worldly' and 'otherworldly' did achieve an important goal with regard not only to the forms of earlier cultic worship but also to emergent opposition from the Daoists. This discourse was first adopted in South China, where there was a strong sense of loyalty to the Chinese heritage. By affirming the value of that heritage at a secular or worldly level the Buddhists were able both to avoid some conflicts over cultural difference—though not all, as the polemical literature attests—and at the same time maintain their own distinctiveness. By suggesting that Buddhism operated on a higher plane, 'sinification' maybe became less of an issue. By insisting on a binary approach to the question, their new rivals could be denied any cultural space in which to establish themselves.

The chief danger to this tactic however lay in the vigorous capacity for growth and innovation within the developing Daoist tradition, which embraced hybrid forms in a way that threatened to undercut the separateness of Buddhism. As recent scholarship on Daoism during this period attests, the vigorously growing religion was then quite clearly still flexible enough to effect a reconciliation of Buddhist and Chinese elements and to create a meaningful synthesis that could have made Buddhism unnecessary.[73] In the south the rhetoric of cultural purity and separateness was just the argument for Buddhists to make, whilst demonstrating a commitment to the secular cultural tradition through writings like the *Wenxin diaolong*. In the north matters were more difficult: there, especially in the northwest, a hybrid culture already existed that was not purely Chinese, and Daoism consequently had a strong appeal to rulers there from the late sixth century into the Tang. The argument was still no doubt well worth making. But one wonders what the consequences were, for one corollary of the Buddhist tactic was the promotion of the ru tradition in a way that perhaps made it much more clearly conceptualised than it had been before. And perhaps, then, the new forms of Chinese Buddhism that developed from the late sixth century on represent a move beyond the rhetoric that we have considered, which was in part an attempt at resolving some of the problems of the binary approach.

This is not the place to explore such questions. No doubt future research on a broader scale than that attempted here will clarify some of the issues I have just raised. For the moment, however, the foregoing remarks may serve to show that the definitions of religions and their interrelations that we find in texts of this period must surely be read against the cultural and polemical context in which they are used before their meanings can be fully evaluated. Models of religion of the type examined

[73] Bokenkamp 2007.

above may have had a remarkably long life, and broad application. But those who believed in them did not contemplate them as mere abstractions, hypotheses for making sense of the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. These schemes also served to make sense of quite concrete problems of conflict with (if I may use the phrase) this-worldly, very real opponents.

At the same time the materials bequeathed to us by Six Dynasties and early Sui-Tang China are also texts that that talk most readily to us about other texts. From beginning to end, in fact, our discussion has noted a tendency towards the bibliographic. We should recall that Mark Edward Lewis in his investigation of writing and authority in early China concludes that for Chinese civilization the key legacy of the past was the creation of a textual world that could be used thereafter to recreate a Chinese reality, whatever the course of history.[74] As Buddhists in China strove to create an alternative reality, their strategies were of necessity based on the higher authority of their own texts and the falsity of those manufactured by their opponents, so that for example the oral origins of the Buddha's teachings were completely effaced. But I hope that at least enough has been said to suggest that whether we choose to view the vocabulary outlined above as metaphysical, polemical or bibliographic, all the sources used by all the parties involved arguably deserve, despite the frequent impenetrability of the writing style of the period, much more attention than they have attracted hitherto, in that there are themes to be explored here of significance beyond the tumultuous history of the period itself, and indeed perhaps even beyond the history of China alone.

[74] Lewis 1999: 363-365.

GLOSSARY

Baihei lun	白黑論
chu shijian	出世間
Daoan	道安
Erjiao lun	二教論
Falin	法琳
fangnei	方內
fangwai	方外
Ge Hong	葛洪
He Chengtian	何承天
Huiguan	慧觀
Huitong	慧通
jiaozhu	教主
Jizang	吉藏
Junsheng lun	均聖論
Kang Senghui	康僧會
Kobayashi Masayoshi	小林正美
Lingbao	靈寶
Liu Xie	劉勰
Lu Xiujing	陸修靜
Ming Sengshao	明僧紹
nei	內
neidian	內典
neijiao	內教
neishu	內書
neixue	內學
rujiao	儒教
Shangqing	上淸
Shen Yue	沈約

shidian	世典
shijian	世間
shijiao	世教
shu	術
sudi	俗諦
tianshang tianxia wei wo du zun	天上天下唯我獨尊
Zhuangzi	莊子
wai	外
waidao	外道
waidian	外典
waishu	外書
waixue	外學
Wenxin diaolong	文心雕龍
Xiao Ziliang	蕭子良
xianren	仙人
Xuanyi	玄嶷

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