

## Article

# The Essential Content, Integrative Characteristics, and Theoretical Origins of Wencai's "One Mind" Theory in *A New Commentary on the Zhao Lun*

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**Abstract:** The *Zhao Lun*, authored by Seng Zhao, elaborates on the Madhyamaka thought. This work has had a significant impact on Chinese Buddhist philosophy, as well as on Confucianism and Taoism. During the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), the esteemed monk Wencai from the Huayan school of Buddhism composed a book titled *A New Commentary on the Zhao Lun* (hereafter *New Commentary*), which offers annotations and explanations for the text of the *Zhao Lun* and employs the "One Mind" theory to interpret the *Zhao Lun*. Text analysis methods are utilized in this article to conduct an in-depth study of the "One Mind" theoretical system constructed by Wencai within the *New Commentary*. It explores the essential content, integrative characteristics, and theoretical origins of the "One Mind" theory, thereby revealing the theoretical style of the Huayan school during the Yuan dynasty from a novel and unique perspective. Additionally, we analyze how Wencai integrates Tathāgatagarbha thought and Madhyamaka thought into his theory of "One Mind". This analysis constitutes, to a certain extent, an indirect refutation of the harsh criticisms of Tathāgatagarbha thought of "Critical Buddhism" in Japan and provides new perspectives and reflections for a deeper understanding of Tathāgatagarbha thought.

**Keywords:** Wencai; Seng Zhao; *A New Commentary on the Zhao Lun*; Huayan school; Madhyamaka; Tathāgatagarbha; Yuan dynasty Buddhism; Chinese Buddhist philosophy



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## 1. Introduction

Seng Zhao (僧肇; 384–414), the author of the *Zhao Lun* 肇論, was initially drawn to the philosophies of Laozi 老子 and Zhuangzi 莊子. A turning point came after he read the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經), which led him to discover his true spiritual path. Then, he became a monk and studied under the renowned Kumārajīva (Ch. *Jiumoluooshi* 鳩摩羅什), assisting in the translation of Buddhist scriptures. Through this, he delved deeply into the teachings of the Madhyamaka (*zhongguan* 中觀) tradition. Notably, he produced a series of works, with the *Zhao Lun* being one of his most celebrated contributions.<sup>1</sup> The *Zhao Lun* consists of four treatises: (1) *Immutability of Things* (*Wu buqian lun* 物不遷論), (2) *Non-complete Emptiness* (*Bu zhenkong lun* 不真空論), (3) *Ignorance of Prajñā* (*Bore wuzhi lun* 般若無知論), and (4) *Namelessness of Nirvāna* (*Niepan wuming lun* 涅槃無名論). This seminal work thoroughly explores the Madhyamaka philosophy of Mahāyāna (*da cheng* 大乘) Buddhism, thereby exerting a profound influence on the development of Chinese Buddhist philosophy.

Throughout the long course of China's ancient history, numerous eminent monks have regarded the *Zhao Lun* as an extremely important classic and provided thorough annotations and interpretations. Table 1 below presents the nine extant ancient commentary works on this classic text.

**Table 1.** The nine extant ancient commentary works on the *Zhao Lun*.

Number	Book Title	Author and Dynasty	Literature Inclusion Status
1	<i>A Commentary on the Zhao Lun (Zhao lun shu 肇論疏)</i>	Hui Da 惠達; Chen dynasty (557–589)	Available online: <a href="http://cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0866">cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0866</a>
2	<i>A Commentary on the Zhao Lun (Zhao lun shu 肇論疏)</i>	Yuan Kang 元康; Tang dynasty (618–907)	Available online: <a href="http://cbetaonline.cn/zh/T1859">cbetaonline.cn/zh/T1859</a>
3	<i>The Collected Commentary on the Zhao Lun by Zhongwu Misi (Zhao lun zhongwu jijie 肇論中吳集解)</i>	Jinshui Jingyuan 晉水淨源; Song dynasty (960–1279)	Yiteng and Lin (2008)
4	<i>Interpretation of “The Collected Commentary on the Zhao Lun” (Zhao lun jijie lingmo chao 肇論集解令模鈔)</i>	Jinshui Jingyuan 晉水淨源; Song dynasty (960–1279)	Yiteng and Lin (2008)
5	<i>A Commentary on the Zhao Lun (Zhu zhao lun shu 注肇論疏)</i>	Yuanyi Zunshi 圓義遵式; Song dynasty (960–1279)	Available online: <a href="http://cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0870">cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0870</a>
6	<i>The Commentary on the Zhao Lun by Monk Meng’an (Meng’an heshang jieshi zhao lun 夢庵和尚節釋肇論)</i>	Meng’an Puxin 夢庵普信; Song dynasty (960–1279)	Zhang (2010)
7	<i>A New Commentary on the Zhao Lun (Zhao lun xinshu 肇論新疏)</i>	Zhenjue Wencai 真覺文才; Yuan dynasty (1271–1368)	Wen (2020)
8	<i>Interpretation of “A New Commentary on the Zhao Lun” (Zhao lun xinshu youren 肇論新疏遊刃)</i>	Zhenjue Wencai 真覺文才; Yuan dynasty (1271–1368)	Available online: <a href="http://cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0872">cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0872</a>
9	<i>A Brief Commentary on the Zhao Lun (Zhao lun lüezhu 肇論略注)</i>	Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清; Ming dynasty (1368–1644)	Available online: <a href="http://cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0873">cbetaonline.cn/zh/X0873</a>

Modern scholars, such as Cao Shuming, Wang Song, Yiteng Longshou, and Zhang Chunbo, have conducted research on these ancient books.<sup>2</sup> Although they have made significant progress in studying these extant ancient commentary works on the *Zhao Lun*, few have shown interest in the “One Mind” (*yixin* 一心) theory of Zhenjue Wencai (真覺文才; 1241–1302; hereafter Wencai) presented in *A New Commentary on the Zhao Lun (Zhao lun xinshu 肇論新疏; hereafter New Commentary)*. The *New Commentary* is a representative work of Wencai, a renowned monk of the Huayan school 華嚴宗 of Buddhism<sup>3</sup> who lived in the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). In this work, Wencai employs his own “One Mind” theory to interpret the *Zhao Lun*.

Wencai devoted his life to propagating the doctrines of the Huayan school. Following his complete ordination, he exhibited diligence in his studies and immersed himself in the profound teachings of the Huayan school. He once built a room surrounded by pine trees where he resided and was known as the “Old Man of the Pine Hall” (*songtang laoren* 松堂老人). Wencai is also known to the world as the “Master of Buddhist Origins” (*shiyuan zongzhu* 釋源宗主) and the “True Enlightened National Master” (*zhenjue guoshi* 真覺國師).<sup>4</sup> Lai Yonghai believes that Wencai was the most influential representative monk of the Huayan school at Wutai Mountain 五臺山 during the Yuan dynasty (Lai 2010, p. 148).

Wencai interpreted the *Zhao Lun* primarily to showcase the superiority of his own school, the “Perfect Mahāyāna” (*yuan jiao* 圓教), by emphasizing its unique theory of “One Mind”. In the *New Commentary*, Wencai employs the “One Mind” theory to interpret and reconstruct the *Zhao Lun*. He summarizes the main theme of the *Zhao Lun* as “The True Essence is the One Mind” (*shixiang zhi yixin* 實相之一心)<sup>5</sup> and argues that this One Mind not only integrates “Chan 禪 Buddhism” and “Other Buddhist Schools”, but also integrates Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, thereby showcasing the inherent integrative tradition of the Huayan school. Moreover, Wencai incorporates Tathāgatagarbha (*rulaizang* 如來藏) thought and Madhyamaka (*zhongguan* 中觀) thought into his “One Mind” theory and advocates the non-duality of “emptiness” (*Śūnyatā, kong* 空) and “existence” (*you* 有). It is evident that Wencai’s “One Mind” theory is simultaneously influenced by both Madhyamaka and Tathāgatagarbha thought. This theoretical orientation gives us a glimpse of the theoretical style of the Huayan school in the Yuan dynasty.

The core purpose of this paper is to discuss how Wencai integrates Tathāgatagarbha thought and Madhyamaka thought into his “One Mind” theoretical system. In the academic realm, the relationship between Madhyamaka thought and Tathāgatagarbha thought has always been the focus of scholars’ attention, triggering exchanges of views and in-depth research. Many scholars believe that these two philosophical systems are not isolated, but are compatible with each other. For example, the article *Grounds of Buddha-Nature in Tibet* discusses syntheses forged in Tibet among the doctrines of Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Buddha-nature (*Tathāgatagarbha*) (Duckworth 2017, p. 111). Similarly, Kim Jong Wook suggests that human nature is Buddha-nature, and more specifically, “Buddha-nature as the emptiness” in Buddhism (Wook 2008, pp. 29–53). In addition, Yao Weiqun points out that the doctrines of the Huayan school have not only had a profound impact on numerous thinkers throughout Chinese history, but are also still highly valued by the academic community in China and around the world. This evaluation stems from the profound theories of the Avatamsaka Sūtra itself, which the Huayan school honors, and from the fact that scholars of the Huayan school have assimilated and fused Madhyamaka thought, enriching and developing their own theoretical system (Yao 1996, pp. 77–78). Our paper offers a unique perspective of Wencai’s “One Mind” theory and analyzes, in depth, the integration of Tathāgatagarbha thought and Madhyamaka thought. At the same time, this study also constitutes, to a certain extent, an indirect refutation of the harsh criticisms of Tathāgatagarbha thought of “Critical Buddhism”<sup>6</sup> in Japan and provides new perspectives and reflections for a deeper understanding of Tathāgatagarbha thought.

## 2. The Essential Content of the “One Mind” Theory

Wencai held the *Zhao Lun* in high esteem, perceiving it as “the giant key to unlocking all the Mahāyāna sutras and teachings, the vast boat for sailing in the sea of nature, the vehicle equally suitable for practitioners of the ‘Three Vehicles’ (*sancheng* 三乘), the accurate expression that dispels misconceptions, and the excellent work of the true One Vehicle lion’s roar”.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Wencai believed that the annotations on the *Zhao Lun* he encountered at that time “contained numerous errors and failed to fully elucidate the main theme of the *Zhao Lun*”.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, he deemed it necessary to reannotate the *Zhao Lun*.

In fact, in the *New Commentary*, Wencai deliberately misinterprets the main theme of the *Zhao Lun*. He reinterprets the *Zhao Lun* not merely to explain its literal meaning, but to situate himself within the perspective of the Huayan school.<sup>9</sup> He maintains that “The True Essence is the One Mind” constitutes the core theme of the *Zhao Lun*, and further suggests that the *Zhao Lun* elucidates the “One Mind” theory of the Huayan school. The *New Commentary* mentions the following:

“The four treatises all adhere to the concept of the One Mind”. Although the four treatises differ, they all expound the meaning of this One Mind. “Diverse” signifies that each of the four treatises presents a distinct theory. Therefore, there is no way to encompass the four theories without the One Mind, and there is no

way to illustrate the One Mind without the four theories. In other words, one is four, and four is one.

“然茲四論，宗其一心。”然四論雖殊，亦各述此一心之義也。別者，即四論所宗各殊。所以爾者，非一心無以攝四法，非四法無以示一心，即一是四，即四是一。(Wen 2020, p. 3)

Clearly, Wencai posits that the four treatises written by Seng Zhao, titled *Immutability of Things*, *Non-complete Emptiness*, *Ignorance of Prajñā*, and *Namelessness of Nirvāṇa*, all expound the theory of “One Mind”, despite their differing titles. The “One Mind” theory serves as a prominent feature of his work, the *New Commentary*. In this context, “one” signifies the unique and absolute meaning, while “mind” refers to the “Self-nature Pure Mind of the Tathāgatagarbha” (*rulaizang zixing qingjingxin* 如來藏自性清淨心), known as “True Suchness” (*Tathatā, zhenru* 真如), “True Essence” (*tathatā, shixiang* 實相), and “Dharma-nature” (*faxing* 法性) in the Huayan school. Wencai strongly advocates the theory of the “dependent origination of Tathāgatagarbha” (*Tathāgatagarbha-pratītyasamutpāda, rulaizang yuanqi* 如來藏緣起) from *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Da cheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論). In the *New Commentary*, Wencai argues that the “One Mind” is the essence and root of all phenomena and the foundation from which all phenomena arise:

All phenomena arise from the “One Mind”, and there is no phenomenon that does not come from the “One Mind”. Through the “One Mind” that is inseparable from the phenomena, one knows the phenomena that are inseparable from the “One Mind”.

法依心現，無法非心，以即法之心，知即心之法。(Wen 2020, p. 52)

Based on the One True Dharma-realm, the Twelve Divisions of the Teachings<sup>10</sup> are formed.

依一真法界，流十二分教。(Wen 2020, p. 23)

If one can employ the wondrous “One Mind”, then within the midst of things that arise and change due to conditions, one can understand the principle of non-movement. Since things are near at hand, the principle is not far away either.

苟能以神妙心智，即於緣生遷化物中，而了不遷之理。物既在近，理亦非遠。

(Wen 2020, p. 28)

The above leads to a conclusion: Wencai’s theoretical interest lies in connecting the “principle” (*li* 理) with the “wondrous ‘One Mind’ of sentient beings”, unifying them within the concept of the “One True Dharma-realm” (*yizhen fajie* 一真法界). He explicitly equates the “One True Dharma-realm” with the “One Mind” and advocates for the unique theory of the Huayan school known as the “Theory of One Mind”. In the Huayan school, the concept of the “One True Dharma-realm” carries a distinctive and profound significance. The “One True Dharma-realm”, as understood within the Huayan tradition, refers to the “Self-nature Pure Mind of the Tathāgatagarbha”. Fazang (法藏; 643–712), the actual founder of the Huayan school, characterized the “Self-nature Pure Mind of the Tathāgatagarbha” as the “Pure, Perfect, and Luminous Body of Self-nature”:

The “One Body” is also known as the “Pure, Perfect, and Luminous Body of Self-nature”. This is precisely the body of the Dharma-nature within the Tathāgatagarbha, which has been inherently complete since the beginning, not stained by impurities, and not purified by cultivation. Therefore, it is said to be of “Self-nature Pure”. The nature of the body is pervasive and illuminating, leaving no darkness unlit, hence it is called “Perfect and Luminous”.

顯一體者，謂自性清淨圓明體。然此即是如來藏中法性之體，從本已來，性自滿足，處染不垢，修治不淨，故雲自性清淨；性體遍照，無幽不燭，故曰圓明。<sup>11</sup>

The Fourth Patriarch of the Huayan school, Qingliang Chengguan (清涼澄觀; 738–839; hereafter Chengguan), regarded the “One True Dharma-realm” as the “Occult body” (*xuanmiao ti* 玄妙體)<sup>12</sup> and asserted that the polluted Dharma-realm, the pure Dharma-realm,

and all phenomena are inseparable from the One Mind.<sup>13</sup> The Fifth Patriarch of the Huayan school, Zongmi (宗密; 780–841), thoroughly expounded on the viewpoint that “One Mind” gives rise to various phenomena. He explicitly declared that the true essence of the world is the “One True Dharma-realm”, also known as the “One Mind”. Quoting Chengguan, Zongmi said that “The ‘One True Dharma-realm’, which encompasses all phenomena, is called ‘One Mind’. The ‘One Mind’ that encompasses all phenomena then gives rise to the ‘Four Dharma-realms’”.<sup>14</sup>

It should be pointed out, that during the era of Fazang, Huineng (慧能; 638–713) had already established the “Southern School of Chan Buddhism” (*nanzong chan* 南宗禪). However, at that time, the influence of Chan 禪 Buddhism was not yet prominent. As a result, Fazang’s theories were less affected by Chan Buddhism. By contrast, during the era of Chengguan and Zongmi, Chan Buddhism had become widely spread, and there was a trend of integration among various schools of Chinese Buddhism. Therefore, the “Mind and Nature” (*xin-xing* 心性) theory of these two patriarchs was deeply influenced by Chan Buddhism, and they both equated the “One True Dharma-realm” with the “One Mind”. Clearly, Wencai inherited the teachings of Chengguan and Zongmi more closely.

It is worth noting that, in the *New Commentary*, Wencai interprets the term “True Essence” as “One Mind”, which can be considered as his “intentional misreading”. Seng Zhao’s work, the *Zhao Lun*, provides an accurate interpretation of the Madhyamaka teachings, where the term “True Essence” actually refers to the “Emptiness of Nature” (*Śūnyatā*, *xingkong* 性空). As stated in the *Zhao Lun*, “The true essence of all phenomena is emptiness”.<sup>15</sup> In this context, Seng Zhao equates “True Essence” with the “Emptiness of Nature”, which is fundamentally different from Wencai’s interpretation of the “One Mind” as “True Essence”.

In the *New Commentary*, according to Fazang’s theory of classifying religions into “five sects”, Wencai asserts that the *Zhao Lun* contains the doctrines of the “Ultimate Mahāyāna” (*da cheng zhong jiao* 大乘終教). It is also evident that Wencai regards “The True Essence is the One Mind” as the main theme of the *Zhao Lun*. Following the rise of Buddhist sects in the Sui and Tang dynasties (581–907), each sect developed its own theory of “doctrinal classification”, with the aim of differentiating and establishing the status and significance of various scriptures taught by the Buddha and the doctrines of different Buddhist sects. Fazang advocated the “five sects” doctrinal classification theory, in which he believed that, although the teachings and instructions of the Buddha and bodhisattvas varied greatly, they could be broadly categorized into only five types, as shown in the following table (Table 2):<sup>16</sup>

**Table 2.** Fazang’s theory of classifying religions into “five sects”.

Five Sects	Annotations	Representative Buddhist Sutras
Hīnayāna ( <i>xiao cheng jiao</i> 小乘教)	Hīnayāna usually refers to the general term for the Śrāvakayāna ( <i>shengwen cheng</i> 聲聞乘) and Pratyekabuddhayāna ( <i>yuanjue cheng</i> 緣覺乘).	<i>Dirgha Āgama</i> ( <i>Chang ahan jing</i> 長阿含經)
Initial Mahāyāna ( <i>da cheng shi jiao</i> 大乘始教)	It asserts that all phenomena are essentially empty in nature. From the perspective of Fazang, it does not explicitly mention that all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature ( <i>Buddha-dhātu</i> , <i>foxing</i> 佛性).	<i>Madhyamaka Kārikā</i> ( <i>Zhong lun</i> 中論)

Table 2. Cont.

Five Sects	Annotations	Representative Buddhist Sutras
Ultimate Mahāyāna ( <i>da cheng zhong jiao</i> 大乘終教)	It asserts that all phenomena arise from the “Self-nature Pure Mind of the Tathāgatagarbha”.	<i>Śrīmālādevī Simḥanāda Sūtra</i> ( <i>Shengman jing</i> 勝鬘經)
Sudden Enlightenment Mahāyāna ( <i>dun jiao</i> 頓教)	It proclaims that “to have not a single thought arise is to be a Buddha”.	<i>Vimalakīrti Sūtra</i> ( <i>Weimojie jing</i> 維摩詰經)
Perfect Mahāyāna ( <i>quan jiao</i> 圓教)	Fazang states that “In Perfect Mahāyāna, it is taught that the Dharma-realm is infinite, the principle and phenomena are integrated, all phenomena arise from the aggregation of causal conditions, there are no obstructions between all phenomena, and they are mutual identity and mutual penetration... All things are both hosts and companions to each other, and all things are endless”. <sup>17</sup>	<i>Avatamsaka Sūtra</i> ( <i>Huayan jing</i> 華嚴經)

According to the doctrinal classification theory of Patriarch Fazang of the Huayan school, the *Zhao Lun*, which propagates Madhyamaka thought, is classified as belonging to the Initial Mahāyāna. However, in the *New Commentary*, Wencai believes that the *Immutability of Things* contains the teachings of the Ultimate Mahāyāna. In Fazang’s theory of classifying religions into “five sects”, sutras such as the *Śrīmālādevī Simḥanāda Sūtra*, which belong to the Tathāgatagarbha category, are regarded as being part of the Ultimate Mahāyāna. Given that Wencai summarizes the main theme of the *Zhao Lun* as “The True Essence is the One Mind” of the Huayan school, with the “One Mind” referring to the “Self-nature Pure Mind of the Tathāgatagarbha”, it is natural to conclude that he believes that the *Zhao Lun* contains the doctrines of the Ultimate Mahāyāna. The *New Commentary* states the following:

The Ultimate Mahāyāna doctrine states that the principle gives rise to all phenomena in dependence on causes and conditions. Realizing the phenomena is equivalent to realizing the principle; hence, “movement” signifies “non-movement”... The nature is complete and perfect, neither arising nor ceasing. It also belongs to the doctrine of the Ultimate Mahāyāna... as stated below, “not departing from movement to seek stillness”.

初終教者，謂隨緣之理起成諸事，即事同真，故遷即不遷。……性同圓成，不生不滅。亦終教意也。……如下雲“不釋動以求靜”。(Wen 2020, p. 11)

It is worth noting that, in this context, Wencai employs the ideas of Du Shun (杜順; 557–640), the First Patriarch of the Huayan school, to interpret the *Zhao Lun*. Wencai’s proposition that “the principle gives rise to phenomena through causes and conditions, and to recognize phenomena is to recognize the principle” corresponds closely with the content of Du Shun’s “Second, the View of the Non-obstruction of Principle and Phenomena” (*dier li-shi wuai guan* 第二，理事無礙觀) in the *Gate of Observing the Dharma-realm according to the Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*huayan fajie guanmen* 華嚴法界觀門),<sup>18</sup> specifically the “Third, the Gate of phenomena depending on the principle to arise” (*san yili chengshi men* 三、依理成事門) and the “Eighth, the Gate of Recognizing phenomena is equivalent to recognizing the principle” (*ba shifa ji li men* 八、事法即理門). It is also important to note that

Wencai asserts that Seng Zhao's statement, "not departing from movement to seek stillness", confirms that the *Immutability of Things* incorporates the teachings of the Ultimate Mahāyāna. Given Wencai's view that "The True Essence is the One Mind" is the central theme of the *Zhao Lun*, he interprets this proposition through the Huayan school's One Mind theory. Wencai further elucidates this statement as follows:

The stillness of ultimate truth cannot be proved without the movement of phenomena. The "genuine wisdom" of the "One Mind" represents the wisdom of the True Suchness, hence stillness. The "expedient wisdom" of the "One Mind" observes phenomena, hence movement. The two wisdoms are unobstructed, so the movement of phenomena cannot be ignored either.

要證真諦之靜，不離俗動。心者，實智向真故靜，權智應俗故動。二智無礙，故亦不舍權動也。(Wen 2020, p. 13)

In the *New Commentary*, Wencai interprets the "One Mind" as the Suchness, and asserts that "principle and phenomena are non-dual" (*li-shi buer* 理事不二), thereby resulting in his interpretations of numerous concepts and propositions significantly exceeding the scope of Seng Zhao's thoughts.

For instance, when explaining the phrase "All phenomena arise from dependent origination" in the *Zhao Lun*,<sup>19</sup> Wencai posits that "The 'One Mind' is the essence of all phenomena, and only after the convergence of causes and conditions can all phenomena arise".<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that the idea of the "One Mind" giving rise to all phenomena through causes and conditions is a thought from the Huayan school, not the original intention of Seng Zhao. The "Dependent Origination" (*pratītya-samutpāda*, *yuanyi* 緣起) proposed by Seng Zhao is not exactly the same as the "Dependent Origination" understood by Wencai.

In another instance, when interpreting Seng Zhao's statement "Original Non-Existence, True Essence, Dharma-nature, Emptiness of Nature, and Dependent Origination, all of which convey the same meaning",<sup>21</sup> Wencai states that these five terms are frequently mentioned in many Buddhist scriptures, and each term's meaning is closely related to the principle and phenomena of the Huayan school.<sup>22</sup> Wencai further explains that "The term 'Dependent Origination' refers to 'phenomena', while the four terms 'Original Non-Existence', 'True Essence', 'Dharma-nature', and 'Emptiness of Nature' refer to 'principle'".<sup>23</sup> Here, Wencai interprets these five terms using "principle" and "phenomena", which contrasts with the perspective of Seng Zhao. Seng Zhao believes that these five terms essentially carry the same meaning, all indicating that the nature of the phenomena arising from causes and conditions is emptiness. From this, it can be inferred that the meaning of "True Essence" as mentioned by Seng Zhao of the Madhyamaka school is synonymous with the "Emptiness of Nature". In contrast, Wencai's interpretation of "True Essence" is the "One Mind", which is identified as the "Self-nature Pure Mind of the Tathāgatagarbha" or the "One True Dharma-realm" in the Huayan school.

### 3. The Integrative Characteristics of the "One Mind" Theory

Wencai is dedicated to integrating the teachings of various religious sects through his "One Mind" theory. Based on the "Dependent Origination of the Dharma-realm" (*fajie yuanyi* 法界緣起) theory of the Huayan school, he believes that all differences between sects can be merged, and everything can be harmoniously integrated without obstruction. In the *New Commentary*, Wencai proposes that the One Mind can integrate "Chan Buddhism" and "Other Buddhist Schools",<sup>24</sup> as well as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, demonstrating the integrated tradition inherent in the Huayan school itself.

#### 3.1. Chan Buddhism and Other Buddhist Schools Converge into "One Mind"

In the *New Commentary*, Wencai inherits the theory of the "Unity of Chan Buddhism and Other Buddhist Schools" (*chan-jiao yizhi* 禪教一致) explicitly proposed by Zongmi, the Fifth Patriarch of the Huayan school in the Tang dynasty. He firmly positions himself within the Huayan school and skillfully integrates the relevant doctrines of the Yogācāra

school, Chan school, Tiantai school 天臺宗, Sanlun school 三論宗, and others. By relying on the Huayan school's theory of the "One Mind", he unifies all Buddhist sects.

Wencai's inspiration comes from the *Lotus Sutra* (*Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*, *fahua jing* 法華經), which advocates the idea that "the Buddha employs diverse expedient means to guide beings towards ultimate truth, with the teachings of the Three Vehicles ultimately converging into one". This principle serves as a logical foundation for integrating various Buddhist schools with the Huayan school's "One Mind" theory. However, Wencai is well aware that the theory of the "One Mind" is not universally accepted by other sects. Therefore, he suppresses the teachings of other sects and elevates his own by using the theories of "the teachings of the Three Vehicles ultimately converging into one" and "the classification of religions into the 'Five Sects' as proposed by Fazang". In the *New Commentary*, Wencai states the following:

The teachings of the "One Vehicle" represent the ultimate truth, while the teachings of the "Three Vehicles" are expedient means.<sup>25</sup> Abandoning the small to enter the great, guiding the expedient to the ultimate, as the *Lotus Sutra* says, "Open the door of expediency and reveal the ultimate truth".

以一乘之實，開三是權，令舍小入大，引權歸實，正同《法華》“開方便門，示真實相”。<sup>26</sup>

Wencai further adds,

The sentient beings are mired in the cycle of birth and death, their capacities, behaviors, desires being myriad. Hence, Tathāgata, perceiving the varying capacities, preaches the teachings according to the true and proper dharma to dispel the delusions of the ordinary beings. Based on the One True Dharma-realm, the Twelve Divisions of the Teachings are formed... Although the teachings of Buddhism may seem diverse, their ultimate goal remains the same. The original intention of the Buddha is also singular. Consequently, discrepancies in the phrasing of teachings should not lead to divergences in the ultimate purpose.

眾生流滯於生死，根行樂欲種種差殊，故如來觀機演教，依准正理之言以解凡惑。依一真法界，流十二分教，.....雖乃差殊，其旨無異。原佛本意，亦唯一事。故不可文殊令旨亦差。<sup>27</sup>

Wencai claims that Tathāgata (*rulai* 如來), relying on the sole truth, adopts various expedient means according to the differences in the levels of enlightenment of sentient beings to guide everyone and expounds different teachings accordingly. The "One Vehicle" (*yicheng* 一乘) is considered to be the "ultimate truth" (*shi* 實), while the "Three Vehicles" (*sancheng* 三乘) are seen as "expedient means" (*quan* 權). The teachings on the Buddha-nature in the Hīnayāna, the Initial Mahāyāna, the Ultimate Mahāyāna, and the Sudden Enlightenment Mahāyāna are all expedient. Only the Huayan school, as the "Perfect Mahāyāna", reveals the true meaning of Buddha-nature as "perfect" (*yuan* 圓). From this, it can be understood that the so-called "True Essence" by Wencai refers to the "One Mind" theory of the Huayan school. He regards this "One Mind" theory as the "True Dharma" (*zhengli* 正理), the "original intent of the Buddha" (*fo benyi* 佛本意), encompassing the teachings of various other Buddhist schools, which constitutes the fundamental tenet of Buddhism.

From Wencai's perspective, the "Three Vehicles" (*sancheng* 三乘) of Buddhism, including the Śrāvaka Vehicle (*shengwen cheng* 聲聞乘), the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle (*yuanjue cheng* 緣覺乘), and the Bodhisattva Vehicle (*pusa cheng* 菩薩乘), differ only according to the level of enlightenment of individuals. In reality, the "Dharma-nature" they perceive shares no differences. As recorded in the *New Commentary*, "An elephant, a horse, and a rabbit cross the river together; the river itself does not differ, only the depth varies. This metaphor illustrates that the Three Vehicles all enter the Dharma-nature, with differences in depth".<sup>28</sup> The essence of this statement encapsulates the idea that "The Three Vehicles travel together; though they differ, the ultimate path is one".<sup>29</sup> Wencai holds that followers of the Three Vehicles can all attain Buddhahood by grasping the principle of the One Mind in the Huayan

school. Therefore, he advocates “understanding the meaning” (*huiyi* 會意), opposes attachment to language and writing, and emphasizes that only by grasping the profound meaning of the Huayan school’s “One Mind” theory can one merge with the right path. Wencai regards Buddhist teachings as a raft and considers the nature of words as emptiness, which he sees as the path to liberation. The twelve divisions of Buddhist teachings are all manifestations of True Suchness. The main theme of the *Zhao Lun* lies in this subtlety itself, but its underlying essence is so subtle and hidden that it necessitates a detailed exposition.<sup>30</sup> The term “True Suchness” mentioned here refers to what Wencai calls the “One Mind”, “True Essence”, “One True Dharma-realm”, and so on.

Wencai’s “One Mind” theory not only embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Huayan school, but also displays a significant degree of inclusiveness. In the *New Commentary*, he synthesizes the teachings of various Buddhist sects and transforms their doctrines through the theory of the One Mind.

In his integration of Yogācāra concepts, Wencai integrates the “One Mind” theory with the “Three Natures” (*sanxing* 三性)<sup>31</sup> theory of Yogācāra and advocates Fazang’s doctrine “Three Natures, Same and Different” (*sanxing tong yi* 三性同異).<sup>32</sup> He directly inherits the theory of the “dependent origination of Tathāgatagarbha” (*rulaizang yuanqi* 如來藏緣起) of *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, adopts the thinking mode of the “One Mind and Two Gates” (*yixin ermen* 一心二門)<sup>33</sup> from *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, and advocates the “One Mind” theory. The “Three Natures” are originally important concepts in the Yogācāra school. However, as Wencai is a monk of the Huayan school, his interpretation of the “Three Natures” differs significantly from that of the Yogācāra school. The Yogācāra school believes that the *Parinishpanna* (*yuanchengshi xing* 圓成實性) only carries the meaning of “unchanging” (*bubian* 不變) and does not include the meaning of “arising from causes and conditions” (*suiyuan* 隨緣). However, Wencai modifies this theory of the Yogācāra school. He asserts that the *Parinishpanna* refers to the “One Mind” that encompasses both the meanings of “unchanging” and “arising from causes and conditions”. This “One Mind” is characterized as immutable, pure, and capable of generating all phenomena. Just as it is said in the *New Commentary*, “The perceiving One Mind follows phenomena to assign names, establishing names based on phenomena, such as green, yellow, and so on. The names belong to the *Parikalpita*, while the phenomena themselves are the *Paratantra*... The nature of both names and phenomena is empty; hence, the *Parinishpanna* is manifested”.<sup>34</sup>

In the integration of Wencai’s “One Mind” theory with the Chan school, Wencai’s “One Mind” theory incorporates the Chan school’s theory of “Delusion and Enlightenment” (*mi wu* 迷悟). The Chan school’s theory of “Delusion and Enlightenment” is an important concept in its teachings. According to the Chan school, everyone has the potential for enlightenment, but the key lies in the ability to break through delusion and achieve enlightenment. This “Delusion and Enlightenment” theory emphasizes that, through one’s own efforts and spiritual awakening, an individual can make the transition from delusion to enlightenment and, thus, reach the state of liberation and transcendence. Wencai holds the belief that “the nature of sentient beings and the Buddha-nature are neither different nor the same”,<sup>35</sup> and the key difference between them lies in whether an individual is in a state of delusion or enlightenment. In the *New Commentary*, he emphasizes that “If one clings to names and forms, delusions will arise; how can one realize the ultimate truth? If one realizes that names and forms are fundamentally empty, the wisdom of True Suchness will manifest without departing from names and forms”.<sup>36</sup> Here, Wencai regards those who indulge in delusions as ordinary people, while those who have attained enlightenment are seen as Buddhas. This indicates that Wencai embraces the “Delusion and Enlightenment” doctrine of the Chan school, which posits that delusion makes one an ordinary person, while enlightenment elevates a person to the status of a Buddha.

In addition, Wencai believes in the principle that “enlightenment can be instantaneously realized” (*li ke dun zheng* 理可頓證).<sup>37</sup> He declares that “The wisdom of the Three Vehicles is no different; it is merely a matter of realization. Once realized, enlightenment is immediate. How can there be a distinction between the Hīnayāna (*xiao cheng* 小乘) and the

Mahāyāna (*da cheng* 大乘), or a discussion of gradual enlightenment (*jian wu* 漸悟)?<sup>38</sup> It is evident that Wencai's "One Mind" theory integrates the practice theories of "enlightening the mind and realizing one's nature" (*mingxin jianxing* 明心見性) and "Sudden Enlightenment to Buddhahood" (*dun wu chengfo* 頓悟成佛) from the Chan school.

In the *New Commentary*, Wencai elucidates the essence of the One Mind through the notions of "non-attachment" (*wu zhu* 無住) and "non-delusion" (*wu nian* 無念). He asserts that Nirvāṇa is free from attachment to phenomena, and its traces cannot be grasped.<sup>39</sup> He further states that, "In the Sudden Enlightenment Mahāyāna, no delusion arises".<sup>40</sup> Here, Wencai evidently incorporates the theory proposed by the eminent Chan master Huineng, which emphasizes "taking non-delusion as the purpose and non-attachment as the foundation".<sup>41</sup> Additionally, Wencai integrates the teachings of the Heze Chan school 荷澤禪 through his theory of the "One Mind".<sup>42</sup> The *New Commentary* writes that "Heze Shenhui (荷澤神會; 668–760) claims that the word 'knowing' (*zhi* 知) is the gateway to infinite wonders... Chengguan insists that 'knowing' is the essence of the One Mind, and 'wisdom' (*zhi* 智) is the function of the One Mind. The 'knowing' and 'wisdom' in this treatise, which is the 'essence' and 'function', are both encompassed".<sup>43</sup> It can be observed that Wencai skillfully integrates and transforms the teachings of the Heze Chan school, showcasing the integrative characteristics of Wencai's Buddhist philosophical thought.

Obviously, Wencai's "One Mind" theory is different from that of his predecessors such as Fazang and Chengguan. He possesses a broader perspective, and his "One Mind" theory demonstrates a stronger sense of integration. It is noteworthy that, in the *New Commentary*, Wencai attempts to integrate the doctrines of various Buddhist sects while adhering to the "One Mind" theory of the Huayan school. In order to achieve this goal, Wencai modifies the doctrines of other Buddhist sects to some extent.

### 3.2. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism Converge into "One Mind"

Wencai extends this unity within the various schools of Buddhism to the "unity of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism" (*rushidao sanjiao heyi* 儒釋道三教合一) and advocates for "attaining the essence without getting caught up in words" (*deyi wangyan* 得意忘言). He posits that the theory of the "One Mind" unifies all schools of thought. In the *New Commentary*, Wencai repeatedly emphasizes that the diverse teachings do not stray from the main theme of the *Zhao Lun*<sup>44</sup> and that the main theme of the *Zhao Lun* is deeply hidden and should not be interpreted literally.<sup>45</sup> He is convinced that all sentient beings can attain Buddhahood by grasping the theory of the "One Mind".

In the *New Commentary*, Wencai points out that "In the scriptures, it is said that the Four Delusions, such as suffering, are presented to highlight expedient means while concealing the ultimate truth. Alternatively, it is said that the Four Truths, such as permanence, reveal the ultimate truth while concealing expedient means. If integrated, different gates lead to the same path. Moreover, though there are a thousand types of medicine, they all aim to cure diseases without distinction; and in the vast ocean of teachings, what difference is there in the realization of the One Mind? If one only sees the surface words of Buddhist scriptures and ignores their main themes, then every word may be like a scar on the skin; yet, when one attains the essence without getting caught up in words, all things align with the Way".<sup>46</sup> Wencai further elaborates that "Confucius is the sage of the realm, while Zhuangzi is the wise one of broad views. What the wise and sage individuals see and obtain is difficult for ordinary people to fully grasp. It cannot be simply interpreted based on the text".<sup>47</sup> It is evident that Wencai opposes being confined by the words of the classics. He believes that, although the texts of various classics are different and the teachings of various schools of thought are diverse, if one can attain the essence and forget the words, they will not be confused by the differences in the wording and teachings. Therefore, the description of his works in the *Biography of Wencai* 文才傳 is as follows: "All are internally based on Buddhist scriptures, and externally they draw on Confucian and Taoist classics, using analogies and comparisons. Their language is simple and unadorned, straightforward and to the point, aiming to convey the essence effectively".<sup>48</sup>

Wencai adheres to the theoretical method proposed by Seng Zhao, which involves “interpreting Confucianism and Taoism with Buddhist teachings” (*yi fo shi rudao* 以佛釋儒道). He uses the theory of the “One Mind” to expound on the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, the Wei-Jin Xuanxue 魏晉玄學,<sup>49</sup> as well as Confucian topics, advocating for the unity of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. For example, the Wei-Jin Xuanxue discusses and analyzes philosophical issues such as “existence versus non-existence” (*you wu* 有無) and “root versus branches” (*ben mo* 本末) within the realm of pure speculation. Wencai further develops these metaphysical issues and explains them through the doctrine of the “One Mind”, thereby transforming metaphysical questions into Buddhist topics. As stated in the *New Commentary*, “The ‘Two Truths’ (*Dvaya-satya*, *erdi* 二諦) clarify ‘emptiness’ and ‘existence’. According to the ‘conventional truth’ (*Samvṛti-satya*, *sudi* 俗諦), it is not non-existent. According to the ‘ultimate truth’ (*Paramārtha-satya*, *zhendi* 真諦), it is not existent. This is the first truth”.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, the *New Commentary* argues that the root and the branches are integrated, neither before nor after, neither one nor different.<sup>51</sup>

For instance, in the *Zhao Lun*, it is stated that “The thousand-mile journey of Buddhist practice begins with the first step”.<sup>52</sup> Wencai explains this by saying that “A thousand miles symbolizes the effect, while the first step symbolizes the cause. From the beginning to the thousand miles, the thousand miles are reached but the first step remains unchanged; from practice to realization, the path of the effect is complete while the original cause remains ever luminous”.<sup>53</sup> Here, both Seng Zhao and Wencai borrow the phrase “A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step” (*qianli zhixing, shiyu zuxia* 千里之行，始於足下) from Chapter 64 of the *Laozi* to expound the teachings of Buddhism. However, unlike Wencai, Seng Zhao uses this phrase to express the Buddhist concept of “the eternal existence of the Buddha’s merits” (*gongye yongcun* 功業永存). As stated in the *Zhao Lun*, “To pile up a high mountain, it relies on the first basket of soil; to walk a thousand miles, it relies on the first step. These are all due to the eternal existence of the Buddha’s merits”.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, in the *New Commentary*, Wencai uses this phrase metaphorically to express the proposition of “the cause remaining unchanged” (*yin buhua* 因不化) (Wen 2020, p. 26), in order to convey his theory of the “One Mind remaining constant” (*yixin bubian* 一心不變).

In summary, it can be observed that Wencai’s theory of the “One Mind” is characterized by its integration, which blends the thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. This is a significant feature of his work, the *New Commentary*.

#### 4. The Theoretical Origins of the “One Mind” Theory

Wencai’s “One Mind” theory has its theoretical origins. Chinese scholar Yang Weizhong pointed out that “The theory of ‘Mind and Nature’ within Chinese Buddhism, regardless of the degree of sinicization, fundamentally aligns with Buddhism, especially the fundamental spirit of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The theory of ‘Mind and Nature’ within Chinese Buddhism, no matter how distinctive its characteristics may be, represents a rational and legitimate interpretation of the Indian thoughts of Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and Tathāgata-garbha, which serve as the source”.<sup>55</sup>

##### 4.1. Viewing “Emptiness” and “Existence” with the “One Mind”

In the *New Commentary*, Wencai integrates Tathāgata-garbha thought and Madhyamaka thought into his theory of the “One Mind” and advocates observing “emptiness” (*Śūnyatā*, *kong* 空) and “existence” (*you* 有) with “One Mind”. The *New Commentary* emphasizes that “One should use the ‘One Mind’ that has integrated the ‘two wisdoms’ to view the ultimate truth of the non-duality of ‘emptiness’ and ‘existence’. Just as one observes that all phenomena are ‘existence’ and that the nature of all phenomena is ‘emptiness’, how can one instantly be lost in the understanding of ‘emptiness’? Because one is not lost in ‘emptiness’, one is not affected by worldly worries and pollution, even though one is often in the realm of ‘existence’”.<sup>56</sup> Wencai advocates that the practitioner should use the “One Mind” that combines “genuine wisdom” (*shizhi* 實智) and “expedient wisdom” (*quanzhi* 權智) to view the ultimate truth of the non-duality of “emptiness” and “ex-

istence". According to Wencai, the "One Mind" gives rise to phenomena through "causes and conditions" (*hetu-pratyaya*, *yinyuan* 因緣). He emphasizes that the arising of all phenomena is dependent on causes and conditions, and, therefore, there is no independent, fixed essence of phenomena. By "self-nature" (*svabhāva*, *zixing* 自性), Wencai means the unchanging nature inherent in the phenomena themselves. Therefore, all phenomena have no self-nature and are, therefore, empty. Here, it is important to note that "emptiness" is not "nothing"; "emptiness" does not mean that things do not exist or are nothing. On the contrary, it means that things do not have a fixed and unchanging essence, but they do exist under causes and conditions. In other words, from the point of view of the "ultimate truth" (*Paramārtha-satya*, *zhendi* 真諦), the nature of phenomena is empty. From the perspective of "conventional truth" (*Samvṛti-satya*, *sudi* 俗諦), phenomena exist. The wisdom of not clinging to "emptiness" and not clinging to "existence" is what Wencai calls the wisdom of the "Middle Way" (*zhongdao* 中道).

In Buddhism, the ultimate truth refers to the eternal and unchanging truth that transcends worldly phenomena. It reveals the true essence of the universe and life, and is the absolute truth that leads to the path of liberation. It should be noted that the exact meaning and understanding of ultimate truth may vary according to different Buddhist sects and scholars. Wencai has a unique understanding of ultimate truth. He believes that the "One Mind" is pure and free from delusion. This "One Mind" is the source of all phenomena, and it illuminates both the principle and phenomena, functioning continuously. Wencai also believes that phenomena arise from the One Mind through causes and conditions and lack a fixed nature; in other words, they have no self-nature and are, therefore, empty in nature. All of the above constitutes what Wencai refers to as the "ultimate truth". It can be seen that there are both similarities and differences between the ultimate truth as understood by Wencai and the ultimate truth as understood by Seng Zhao of the Madhyamaka school. The similarity lies in Wencai's understanding that "all phenomena are empty in nature" (*wanfa xingkong* 萬法性空), which is the core idea of the Madhyamaka school. As for the conventional truth, both Wencai and Seng Zhao assert that the conventional truth refers to the truths of the mundane world, that is, the phenomenal world that ordinary people recognize on the basis of common sense and experience. All of the above indicates that Wencai's "Two Truths" (*Dvaya-satya*, *erdi* 二諦) theory is influenced by both Madhyamaka and Tathāgatagarbha thought.

Wencai's "Two Truths" theory is closely related to his "One Mind" theory. It shares both similarities and differences with the Madhyamaka school's "Two Truths" theory. It can be seen that Wencai's "One Mind" theory absorbs both Madhyamaka and Tathāgatagarbha thought. This also shows that Wencai's "One Mind" theory has the quality of theoretical integration.

#### 4.2. The Madhyamaka Thought Embodied in the "One Mind" Theory

Wencai's "One Mind" theory not only inherits the core idea of the Huayan school's "Dependent Origination of the Dharma-realm" (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起), but also integrates the Madhyamaka school's doctrine of "the nature of all phenomena is emptiness", the "Middle Way" thinking mode, and the doctrine of "Nirvāṇa of the True Essence" (*shixiang niepan* 實相涅槃).

The "Middle Way" thinking mode of the Madhyamaka school is mainly reflected in its "Two Truths" theory. Regarding the "Two Truths" theory of the Madhyamaka school, the *Madhyamaka Kārikā* (*zhong lun* 中論) states that "All Buddhas expound the Dharma for sentient beings based on the Two Truths: the first is the conventional truth, and the second is the ultimate truth. If a person cannot understand and distinguish the Two Truths, then they will not know the true meaning of the profound Buddhist teachings. The conventional truth is that although all phenomena are empty in nature, the secular world is upside down, leading to the appearance of illusory phenomena that appear real in the secular world. All sages and virtuous ones truly know the upside-down nature; thus, they know that all phenomena are empty in nature and without self-generation, which the sages

call the ultimate truth and consider to be real... If one does not rely on the conventional truth, one cannot obtain the ultimate truth, and without obtaining the ultimate truth, one cannot attain Nirvāṇa".<sup>57</sup> The "Two Truths" theory of the Madhyamaka school posits that the ultimate truth reveals the true nature of phenomena. That is to say, all phenomena are dependent on causes and conditions and do not possess the nature of self-generation. Therefore, the nature of all phenomena is emptiness. The conventional truth refers to the truths of the mundane world. At the level of the conventional truth, we acknowledge the existence of phenomena. Neither clinging to existence nor clinging to non-existence is the core idea of the "Middle Way" doctrine advocated by the Madhyamaka school.

Wencai's "One Mind" theory absorbed the "Middle Way" thinking mode advocated by the Madhyamaka school. In the *New Commentary*, with respect to the "Middle Way" (*zhongdao* 中道), Wencai states that "The 'One Mind' illuminates principle and phenomena simultaneously, which is the wisdom of the Middle Way".<sup>58</sup> He further elaborates his views: "Knowing and not knowing are neither the same nor different, hence it is named the One Mind of the Middle Way".<sup>59</sup> In addition, Wencai believes that the statement "The 'One Mind' is neither existent nor non-existent" (*yixin feiyou feiwu* 一心非有非無) embodies the wisdom of the Middle Way. He explains that the concept "The 'One Mind' is neither existent nor non-existent" as follows: "The Sacred Mind is free from perceptions and the making of causal conditions, so it is not existent. Behind the 'function', the Sacred Mind is subtle and wonderful. The Sacred Mind illuminates the principle and the phenomena, and its function never ceases. It is not non-existent".<sup>60</sup> Here, Wencai explains the connotation of "Middle Way" as the "One Mind is neither existent nor non-existent". In Wencai's view, this "One Mind" cannot be categorized as either existent or non-existent; instead, it must be comprehended through the Middle Way theory of "neither existence nor non-existence".

Wencai also assimilates the truth of "all phenomena are empty in nature" (*wanfa xingkong* 萬法性空) as espoused by the Madhyamaka school. The *New Commentary* emphasizes that "The nature of phenomena is empty, and their nature is originally such. Therefore, 'Dependent Origination' (*pratītyasamutpāda*, *yuansheng* 緣生) and 'Emptiness of Nature' (*Śūnyatā*, *xingkong* 性空) are the same thing".<sup>61</sup> In this context, it is important to note that the Madhyamaka and Tathāgatagarbha thought are compatible and, together, form the core of Buddhist philosophy. The concepts of emptiness and Tathāgatagarbha, rather than being contradictory, elucidate the true essence of phenomena from distinct viewpoints without being in conflict with each other. Madhyamaka thought posits that "emptiness" is the essence of all phenomena. Emptiness does not signify nothingness; rather, it refers to the absence of an independent, self-sufficient essence in things. This notion of emptiness is not at odds with the Tathāgatagarbha, as the Tathāgatagarbha is regarded as the inherent Buddha-nature within all sentient beings, serving as the foundation for their attainment of Buddhahood. The Tathāgatagarbha resides in the mind of all sentient beings, yet it is not the essence that allows phenomena to exist independently; instead, it is the potential for sentient beings to achieve enlightenment. In Buddhist philosophy, Madhyamaka thought and Tathāgatagarbha thought are not in opposition, but rather, they complement each other. In actual Buddhist practice, these two thoughts aid practitioners in understanding the true essence of phenomena and practicing accordingly to achieve the realm of Buddhahood.

In addition, Wencai's "One Mind" theory incorporates the doctrine of "Nirvāṇa of the True Essence" (*shixiang niepan* 實相涅槃) of the Madhyamaka school. The doctrine of "Nirvāṇa of the True Essence" of the Madhyamaka school is based on the realization of the "True Essence" (*tathatā*, *shixiang* 實相) of all phenomena. In other words, once one has attained the realization of the true essence of all phenomena, one has entered the realm of Nirvāṇa (*niepan* 涅槃). The *Madhyamaka Kārikā* says that "The true essence of all phenomena is beyond the reach of mental activity and speech. It neither arises nor ceases, and its tranquility is like that of Nirvāṇa".<sup>62</sup> Here, the "true essence of all phenomena" mentioned by the Madhyamaka school refers to "Emptiness". Seng Zhao, in the *Zhao Lun*, adopts the core proposition of the Madhyamaka school, "Dependent Origination and Emptiness"

(*yuanqi xingkong* 緣起性空), to explain the true essence of all phenomena. The *Zhao Lun* states that “The true essence of all phenomena is emptiness”.<sup>63</sup> It also says that “The true essence of all phenomena is called Prajñā”.<sup>64</sup> Seng Zhao believes that the true essence of all phenomena is emptiness, and to realize that “the true essence of all phenomena is emptiness” is to enter the state of Nirvāṇa.

It is worth noting that, although the core concept of the Madhyamaka school is “emptiness”, it also acknowledges the existence of Buddha-nature. The Madhyamaka school Master Nāgārjuna stated in the *Madhyamaka Kārikā* that “If one does not possess Buddha-nature beforehand, one cannot attain Buddhahood”.<sup>65</sup> Here, Nāgārjuna’s statement emphasizes that possessing Buddha-nature is a prerequisite for attaining Buddhahood. This viewpoint is crucial, yet it is often overlooked by scholars involved in the Critical Buddhism movement in Japan. Nāgārjuna holds that, by realizing that the true essence of phenomena is emptiness, practitioners can transcend attachment to the self, thereby attaining enlightenment regarding Buddha-nature and achieving Buddhahood. This is exactly the doctrine of “Nirvāṇa of the True Essence” advocated by the Madhyamaka school.

The true essence of all phenomena cannot be obtained through language or thought, but can only be realized through intuitive realization, which also determines the special significance of prajñā (*bore* 般若) wisdom. “Prajñā” is not the knowledge derived from secular empirical cognition, but a transcendent and mysterious special wisdom which is acquired through Buddhist faith and long-term spiritual training. The fundamental purpose of Buddhist faith is to become a Buddha, which can be achieved through the direct perception of the “true essence of all phenomena”. Therefore, it can be said that the basic thought of the Madhyamaka school is actually built on the basis of the prajñā spirit; it must exclude language, thought, conceptual analysis, and logical reasoning. The doctrine of “Nirvāṇa of the True Essence” in the Madhyamaka school is essentially a theory of wisdom liberation.

Wencai, in constructing his “One Mind” theoretical system, integrated the perspectives of the Madhyamaka school. Wencai argues that the realization of the true essence of all phenomena must be achieved through prajñā wisdom. The *New Commentary* states that “It is called prajñā because it sees the true essence of all phenomena”.<sup>66</sup> It also says that “The path to liberation and Nirvāṇa is all obtained from prajñā”.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4.3. The Tathāgatagarbha Thought Embodied in the “One Mind” Theory

It is currently widely recognized within academic circles that Tathāgatagarbha thought is the most important source for the doctrinal system of Sinicized Buddhist sects. Chinese Buddhism is heavily influenced by Tathāgatagarbha thought, and the Huayan school, to which Wencai belongs, is no exception. As mentioned earlier, Wencai’s “One Mind” theory holds that all phenomena are manifestations of the “One Mind”, and it advocates the theory of the “dependent origination of Tathāgatagarbha”. This theory also claims that all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature and that all sentient beings can become Buddhas, and it emphasizes that “The ‘One Mind’ is neither existent nor non-existent”.

As a Tathāgatagarbha classic, *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* has had a profound influence on Chinese Buddhism. As mentioned earlier, the basic theoretical framework of *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* is “One Mind and Two Gates” (*yixin ermen* 一心二門). Here, “One Mind” refers to “True Suchness”, “Dharma-nature”, “Self-nature Pure Mind of the Tathāgatagarbha”, etc. The “Gate of True Suchness” (*zhenru men* 真如門) among the “Two Gates” is from the aspect of the essence of all things in the universe—the “One Mind”; the “Gate of Birth and Extinction” (*shengmie men* 生滅門) among the “Two Gates” is from the aspect of phenomena. *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* also holds that True Suchness has two meanings: “unchanging” (*bubian* 不變) and “dependent origination”. The so-called “unchanging” means that True Suchness is originally pure and neither born nor extinguished; the so-called “dependent origination” means that True Suchness manifests different phenomena through causes and conditions. *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* establishes this unified theoretical framework of the “One Mind and Two

Gates”, indicating that it consciously integrates the essential world and the phenomenal world to the greatest extent. In addition, the “Gate of True Suchness” and the “Gate of Birth and Extinction” are inherent in the “One Mind”, and these “Two Gates” are “neither the same nor different” (*buyi buyi* 不一不異), which means that the essence and the phenomena are inseparable. It can be seen that *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* adopts a monistic mode of thinking, in which “essence and phenomena are not dual” (*ti-yong buer* 體用不二).

The “One True Dharma-realm” mentioned by Wencai is roughly equivalent to the category of the “One Mind” described in *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. The “Realm of Principle” (*li fajie* 理法界) and the “Realm of Phenomena” (*shi fajie* 事法界) among the “Four Dharma-realms” (*si fajie* 四法界)<sup>68</sup> he mentioned are equivalent to the “Two Gates” derived from the “One Mind”—the “Gate of True Suchness” and the “Gate of Birth and Extinction”. Under the influence of the thought of the “One Mind and Two Gates” in *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, Wencai’s interpretation of the *New Commentary* highlights the harmonious concept of the “Non-duality of Essence and Function”, which is reflected in the aspects of “non-obstruction between principle and phenomena” (*li-shi wuai* 理事無礙) and “non-obstruction among phenomena” (*shi-shi wuai* 事事無礙).

The *New Commentary* absorbs Tathāgatagarbha thought from *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, and Wencai explicitly expresses, from the standpoint of the “dependent origination of Tathāgatagarbha”, the propositions that “phenomena arise from the One Mind”<sup>69</sup> and “unity of principle and phenomena”.<sup>70</sup> Centering on the theory of the “Four Dharma-realms” of the Huayan school and starting from the basic viewpoints that the “One Mind integrates all phenomena” (*xinrong wanyou* 心融萬有) and “principle and phenomena are non-dual” (*li-shi buer* 理事不二), Wencai focuses mainly on the relationship between “essence” (*benzhi* 本質) and “phenomena” (*xianxiang* 現象). He employs categories such as “principle” (*li* 理), “phenomena” (*shi* 事), “essence” (*ti* 體), “function” (*yong* 用), “root” (*ben* 本), and “branches” (*mo* 末) to interpret the *Zhao Lun*. According to Wencai, the principle and the phenomena should be regarded as an abstract unity of “dual but not dual, not dual but dual” (二而不二, 不二而二). For example, when interpreting the phrase “Exploring the root and the branches, they are non-dual”<sup>71</sup> in the *Zhao Lun*, Wencai declares that “The root and branches refer to principle and phenomena, just like the sea and waves share the same wet nature”.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, in the *New Commentary*, it is stated that “The Sacred Mind is subtle and wonderful. The Sacred Mind illuminates the principle and the phenomena”.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the *New Commentary* mentions that “The function arises from the essence, and essence and function are non-dual”.<sup>74</sup>

The *Mahāvaiṣṭya Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* (*dafangdeng rulaizang jing* 大方等如來藏經) is the earliest known Chinese translation of a Tathāgatagarbha scripture. The *Mahāvaiṣṭya Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* states that “The Buddha observes all sentient beings and sees that they all possess the Tathāgatagarbha, covered by countless afflictions, like flowers entwined with filth. For the sake of all sentient beings, the Buddha eliminates these afflictions and universally teaches the true Dharma to enable them to swiftly attain the path to Buddhahood”.<sup>75</sup> Wencai’s “One Mind” theory integrates the Tathāgatagarbha thought from the *Mahāvaiṣṭya Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra*. The *New Commentary* states that “All sentient beings possess the wisdom of the Tathāgata”.<sup>76</sup>

The *Śrīmālādevī Simhanāda Sūtra* occupies an important place in the history of the development of Tathāgatagarbha thought. The *Śrīmālādevī Simhanāda Sūtra* provides a comprehensive exposition of the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine. The sutra mentions that “The True Suchness is the Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata, not separated from the kleśa-garbha, hence named the Tathāgatagarbha”.<sup>77</sup> The sutra also states that “The World-Honored One! There are two kinds of Empty Tathāgatagarbha wisdoms. The World-Honored One! The Empty Tathāgatagarbha is separate from, detached from, and different from all kleśa-garbhas. The World-Honored One! The Non-Empty Tathāgatagarbha surpasses the countless Dharmas, like the grains of sand in the Ganges River, closely connected with these Dharmas, neither separated nor detached, without any difference, and is inconceivable”.<sup>78</sup> Yang Weizhong

points out that the *Śrīmālādevī Simḥanāda Sūtra*, which expounds Tathāgatagarbha by unifying emptiness and non-emptiness, entanglement and freedom from entanglement, has had a profound influence on the theories of “Mind and Nature” in later generations.<sup>79</sup> Wencai’s “One Mind” theory was influenced by the ideas in the *Śrīmālādevī Simḥanāda Sūtra*. As the *New Commentary* states, “The pure Dharmakāya is neither existent nor non-existent. It can manifest itself according to the needs of sentient beings”.<sup>80</sup> This means that, since the Dharmakāya (*fashen* 法身) is pure, it is “non-existent” (*feiyou* 非有), and because it can manifest itself according to the needs of sentient beings, it is “not non-existent” (*feiwu* 非無). This sentence is very similar to the ideas of “Empty Tathāgatagarbha” (*kong rulaizang* 空如來藏) and “Non-Empty Tathāgatagarbha” (*bukong rulaizang* 不空如來藏) mentioned in the *Śrīmālādevī Simḥanāda Sūtra*.

## 5. Conclusions

In the *New Commentary*, Wencai encapsulates the main theme of the *Zhao Lun* as “The True Essence is the One Mind”. He maintains that this One Mind can integrate “Chan Buddhism” and “Other Buddhist Schools”, as well as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, demonstrating the integrated tradition inherent in the Huayan school itself.

Wencai integrates Tathāgatagarbha thought and Madhyamaka thought into his theory of the “One Mind” and advocates observing “emptiness” and “existence” with the “One Mind”. Wencai’s “One Mind” theory holds that all phenomena are manifestations of the “One Mind”, and it advocates the theory of the “dependent origination of Tathāgatagarbha”. This theory also claims that all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature and that all sentient beings can become Buddhas, emphasizing that “The ‘One Mind’ is neither existent nor non-existent”. Wencai’s “One Mind” theory not only inherits the core idea of the Huayan school’s “Dependent Origination of the Dharma-realm”, but also integrates the Madhyamaka school’s doctrine of “the nature of all phenomena is emptiness”, the “Middle Way” thinking mode, and the doctrine of “Nirvāṇa of the True Essence”.

It is worth noting that, according to the teachings of Seng Zhao, the “Emptiness of Nature” is synonymous with “True Essence”. Upon realizing this “Emptiness of Nature”, one attains Nirvāṇa. In contrast, Wencai explicitly embraces the core doctrine of the Huayan school, which posits that “The True Essence is the One Mind”. According to Wencai, the realization of “One Mind” is the attainment of Nirvāṇa. If all sentient beings can recognize the theory of the “Middle Way” that the “One Mind is neither existent nor non-existent”, understand the non-duality of principle and phenomena, and realize the “One Mind”, they can attain Nirvāṇa.

To sum up, the core purpose of this article is to explore in depth the essential content and integrative characteristics of Wencai’s “One Mind” theory, as well as how Wencai integrated Tathāgatagarbha thought and Madhyamaka thought into his “One Mind” theoretical system. Through this research, we are able to appreciate the theoretical style of the Huayan school in the Yuan dynasty. At the same time, to a certain extent, this study also constitutes an indirect refutation of the severe criticism of Tathāgatagarbha thought by Japanese “Critical Buddhism” and provides a new perspective and reflection for a more thorough understanding of Tathāgatagarbha thought.

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## Notes

- 1 For more information on the “biography” of Seng Zhao, see (CBETA 2023.Q4, T50, no. 2059, pp. 365a09–366a29).
- 2 See the works of (Cao 2009; Wang 2008; Yiteng and Lin 2008; Zhang 2010).
- 3 Regarding Wencai’s school affiliation, according to the *Xianshou School’s Patriarch Lineage* compiled by the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) scholar Xihuai Liaode (西懷了惠; 1650–1717), Wencai is clearly listed as the 18th patriarch of the Huayan school. This historical document provides robust evidence for the attribution of Wencai to the Huayan school (Xihuai 2017, p. 9). The Japanese scholar Yiteng Longshou, in his work, also states that Wencai, a monk of the Huayan school, devoted himself to the propagation of Chengguan’s thought (Yiteng and Lin 2008, p. 13). Chinese scholar Cao Shuming also points out that Wencai was one of the few famous monks in the Yuan dynasty who specialized in promoting the teachings of the Huayan school (Cao 2009, p. 247).
- 4 For more information on the “hagiography” of Wencai, see (CBETA 2023.Q4, T49, no. 2036, p. 725b6–c12; CBETA 2023.Q4, T50, no. 2062, p. 906a26–b20).
- 5 See Wen (2020, p. 3).
- 6 The Critical Buddhism movement in Japan emerged in the 1980s. Its representatives include Shirō Matsumoto and Hakamaya Noriaki. This trend mainly re-examines and critiques some concepts and doctrines of traditional Buddhism. For example, the Critical Buddhism trend questions the ideas of “Tathāgatagarbha” and “Original Enlightenment” (*benjue* 本覺). However, the Critical Buddhism trend has also sparked many controversies. Some scholars argue that its methods are too radical and may underestimate the complexity and diversity of Buddhist thought. For example, Peter N. Gregory conducted a critical analysis of this movement in his article *Is Critical Buddhism Really Critical?* (Gregory 1997, pp. 286–97). As another example, Wing-cheuk Chan showed in what sense Matsumoto’s theses are unjustified in his article *Two Dogmas of Critical Buddhism* (Chan 2010, pp. 276–94).
- 7 開方等之巨鑰，遊性海之洪舟，運權小之均車，排異見之正說，真一乘師子吼之雅作。Wen (2020, p. 1).
- 8 醇疵紛錯，似有未盡乎《論》旨之妙夥矣。Wen (2020, p. 1).
- 9 The Huayan school (華嚴宗), also known as the Xianshou school (賢首宗), is one of the schools of Chinese Buddhism. This school mainly promotes the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經); hence, it is called the Huayan school. The actual founder of the Huayan school is Fazang, who was honored with the title “National Master Xianshou” (賢首國師), so this school is also known as the Xianshou school.
- 10 The “Twelve Divisions of the Teachings” (*shier fenjiao* 十二分教), also known as the “Twelve Divisions of the Buddhist Canon” (*shier bujing* 十二部經), refer to the classification of Buddhist scriptures (sutras) into twelve distinct types. The Twelve Divisions of the Teachings include *Sūtra* (Xiuduoluo 修多羅), *Gāthā* (Qietuo 伽陀), *Itivṛttaka* (Benshi 本事), *Jātaka* (Bensheng 本生), *Adbhutadharma* (Weicengyou 未曾有), *Nidāna* (Yinyuan 因緣), *Avadāna* (Piyu 譬喻), *Geya* (Qiye 祇夜), *Upadeśa* (Youbotishe 優波提舍), *Udāna* (Zishuo 自說), *Vaipulya* (Fangguang 方廣), and *Vyākaraṇa* (Shouji 授記). For more detailed information, see Shuiye and Li (2018, pp. 7–9).
- 11 CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1876, p. 637b9–12.
- 12 一真法界為玄妙體。CBETA 2023.Q4, T36, no. 1736, p. 2b10.
- 13 法界染淨，萬類萬法，不出一心。CBETA 2023.Q4, T36, no. 1736, p. 323b22–23.
- 14 統唯一真法界，謂總該萬有，即是一心。然心融萬有，便成四種法界。CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1884, p. 684b24–26.
- 15 性空者，謂諸法實相也。CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1858, p. 150c25–26.
- 16 The table is based on CBETA 2023.Q4, T35, no. 1733, p. 115c4–20.
- 17 圓教中，所說唯是無盡法界，性海圓融，緣起無礙，相即相入。……主伴無盡。CBETA 2024.R1, T35, no. 1733, p. 116a6–8.
- 18 Du Shun’s *Gate of Observing the Dharma-realm according to the Avatamsaka Sūtra* is not an independently published book, but is included in commentaries or other works. For instance, books such as *The Mystical Mirror of the Avatamsaka Dharma-realm* (*huayan fajie xuanjing* 華嚴法界玄鏡; T1883) by Chengguan and *A Commentary on “Gate of Observing the Dharma-realm according to the Avatamsaka Sūtra”* (*zhu huayan fajie guanmen* 注華嚴法界觀門; T1884) by Zongmi all include this work.
- 19 一切諸法，緣會而生。CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1858, p. 150c15–16.
- 20 若色若心，因緣會集，而後生起。Wen (2020, p. 4).
- 21 本無、實相、法性、性空、緣會，一義耳。CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1858, p. 150c15.
- 22 此五名，諸經通有，義雖差殊，不越理事。Wen (2020, p. 3).
- 23 緣會，物也；本無等，理也。Wen (2020, p. 4).
- 24 During the Mid-Tang period (766–835), Buddhist scholars referred to sects such as Tiantai, Yogācāra, and Huayan 華嚴宗 as the “schools that accept the teachings of the Buddha”, while they categorized the Niutou Chan 牛頭禪, Heze Chan 荷澤禪, and Hongzhou Chan 洪州禪 as “Chan Buddhism” (*chan* 禪). At that time, various Buddhist sects had already established their own

identities. Due to mutual criticism between “Chan Buddhism” and the “schools that accept the teachings of the Buddha”, a conflict arose between “Chan Buddhism” and “Other Buddhist Schools” (*jiao* 教).

25 The term “One Vehicle” (*yicheng* 一乘) is synonymous with the “One Buddha Vehicle” (*yi fo cheng* 一佛乘), and the “Three Vehicles” (*sancheng* 三乘) consist of the *Śrāvakayāna* (*shengwen cheng* 聲聞乘, or the *Śrāvaka* Vehicle), the *Pratyekabuddhayāna* (*yuanyue cheng* 緣覺乘, or the *Pratyekabuddha* Vehicle), and the *Bodhisattvayāna* (*pusa cheng* 菩薩乘, or the *Bodhisattva* Vehicle). In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Three Vehicles are seen as different stages or paths leading to the Buddha-fruit, while the One Vehicle emphasizes that all sentient beings will ultimately reach the same goal—attaining Buddhahood.

26 See Wen (2020, p. 168).

27 See Wen (2020, p. 23).

28 象、馬、兔同渡一河，河自無殊，得有淺深，以喻三乘同入法性，淺深三異。 Wen (2020, p. 60).

29 三乘一起，三雖差別，至道唯一。 Wen (2020, p. 145).

30 法如筏喻者，文字性空即是解脫，十二分教無非如也。一論大旨，妙在於斯，但血脈沉隱，故具出之。 Wen (2020, p. 34).

31 The “Three Natures” refer to the *Parikalpita* (*bianji suo zhi xing* 遍計所執性), the *Paratantra* (*yitai qi xing* 依他起性), and the *Parinishpanna* (*yuanchengshi xing* 圓成實性). The *Parikalpita* is the belief that all phenomena are truly existent. The *Paratantra* refers to all phenomena that arise based on various causes and conditions. The *Parinishpanna* refers to the True Essence of all phenomena, known as True Suchness.

32 In the theory of “Three Natures, Same and Different” proposed by Fazang, it is demonstrated that the Huayan school’s doctrine of dependent origination is distinct from the Yogācāra school’s “Alaya-vijnana dependent origination” (*alaiyesi yuanyi* 阿賴耶識緣起), but rather belongs to the “Tathāgatagarbha dependent origination” (*rulaizang yuanyi* 如來藏緣起) or “Suchness dependent origination” (*zhenru yuanyi* 真如緣起). For more detailed information, see Lü (1979, pp. 196–97).

33 *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* states that “Based on the One Mind, there are two gates. What are these two gates? The first is the gate of the True Suchness of the Mind, and the second is the gate of the arising and ceasing of the Mind. These two gates encompass all dharmas”. 依一心法有二種門，雲何為二？一者心真如門，二者心生滅門，是二種門皆各總攝一切法。 CBETA 2023.Q4, T32, no. 1666, p. 576a5–7.

34 能見之心隨相而轉，取相立名，名青、黃等。名屬遍計，相即依他。……名相俱空，圓成顯現。 Wen (2020, p. 32).

35 眾生佛性不一不二。 Wen (2020, p. 165).

36 若著名相，妄想是生，何能悟入第一之真？若悟名相本虛，即名相而如智顯現。 Wen (2020, pp. 33–34).

37 See Wen (2020, p. 148).

38 三乘之智無殊，是唯不證，證則頓盡，如何分小大之殊，談漸盡之理？ Wen (2020, p. 149).

39 無住涅槃，跡不可執。 Wen (2020, p. 130).

40 約頓教則一念不生。 Wen (2020, p. 161).

41 無念為宗，無住為本。 CBETA 2023.Q4, T48, no. 2008, p. 353a11–12.

42 Heze Chan school 荷澤禪, an important sect in the history of Chan Buddhism, was founded by Master Heze Shenhui (荷澤神會; 668–760).

43 荷澤雲：“知之一字，眾妙之門。”……清涼釋雲：“知即心體，智即心用。”此論智知，體用雙含爾。 Wen (2020, p. 73).

44 千門異說，不出宗意。 Wen (2020, p. 28).

45 《論》旨深隱，不可隨文作解。 Wen (2020, p. 17).

46 經中或說苦等四妄，彰權隱實；或說常等四真，彰實隱權。如是會通，異門一道。且藥分千品，愈病無殊；教海萬方，悟心何異？苟封文迷旨，字字瘡痍；得意忘言，物物合道。 Wen (2020, p. 24).

47 孔子域中之聖，莊周達觀之賢。賢聖之人所見所得，人難盡之，不可隨文只作無常之解。 Wen (2020, p. 22).

48 皆內據佛經，外援儒老，托譬取類。其辭質而不華，簡而詣，取其達而已。 CBETA 2023.Q4, T49, no. 2036, p. 725b22–23.

49 Wei-Jin Xuanxue refers to the metaphysical thought during the Wei and Jin dynasties (220–420) in Chinese history. It was a fusion of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, emphasizing philosophical reflection on the nature of the universe and life.

50 若約二諦明空有者，俗諦故非無，真諦故非有，為第一真也。 Wen (2020, p. 28).

51 本末鎔融，非前非後，非一非異。 Wen (2020, p. 5).

52 修途託至於初步。 CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1858, p. 151c20.

53 以千里喻果，初步喻因也。由初至千，千里至而初步不化；由行證果，果道圓而初因恒明。 Wen (2020, p. 26).

54 成山假就於始簣，修途託至於初步，果以功業不可朽故也。 CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1858, p. 151c19–21.

55 See Yang (2007, p. 415).

56 以二智雙融之一心，觀空有無二之真諦，如觀色是有，色即空故，豈曾瞥然而迷性空？以不迷空，所以常居有境，塵不能染。 Wen (2020, p. 9).

- 57 诸佛依二谛，为众生说法：一以世俗谛，二第一义谛。若人不能知，分别于二谛，则于深佛法，不知真实义。世俗谛者，一切法性空，而世间颠倒故生虚妄法，于世间是实。诸贤圣真知颠倒性，故知一切法皆空无生，于圣人是第一义谛，名为实。……若不依俗谛，不得第一义。不得第一义，则不得涅槃。CBETA 2024.R1, T30, no. 1564, pp. 32c16–33a3.
- 58 心则理量齐整，中道智也。Wen (2020, p. 30).
- 59 知與無知非一非異，方名中道之心。Wen (2020, p. 63).
- 60 聖心離知見、作緣等相，非有也。“用之”下，聖心靈妙，照理達事，用無息，非無也。Wen (2020, p. 62).
- 61 色即是空，其性本然，故即緣生是性空爾。Wen (2020, p. 5).
- 62 諸法實相者，心行言語斷，無生亦無滅，寂滅如涅槃。CBETA 2024.R1, T30, no. 1564, p. 24a3–4.
- 63 性空者，謂諸法實相也。CBETA 2024.R1, T45, no. 1858, p. 150c25–26.
- 64 諸法實相，謂之般若。CBETA 2024.R1, T45, no. 1858, p. 150c29.
- 65 若先非佛性，不應得成佛。CBETA 2024.R1, T30, no. 1564, p. 34a25.
- 66 由見實相，故名般若。Wen (2020, p. 8).
- 67 解脫涅槃道，皆從般若得。Wen (2020, p. 63).
- 68 The “Four Dharma-realms” theory is the foundation of the Huayan school. The Huayan school often uses the metaphor of “water and waves” (*shui-bo* 水波) to illustrate the relationship between principle and phenomena. The universe is like a vast ocean, with waves fluctuating and diverse, representing the “realm of phenomena” (*shi fajie* 事法界). Although there are many waves, they all ultimately consist of the same water, representing the “realm of principle” (*li fajie* 理法界). When water and waves merge seamlessly without obstruction, this is the “realm of non-obstruction between principle and phenomena” (*li-shi wuai fajie* 理事無礙法界). When waves mutually contain each other, this denotes the “realm of non-obstruction among phenomena” (*shi-shi wuai fajie* 事事無礙法界). These concepts are all aimed at addressing the issue of the relationship between the principle and the phenomena.
- 69 由心現境。Wen (2020, p. 94).
- 70 理事一源。Wen (2020, p. 4).
- 71 窮本極末，莫之與二。CBETA 2023.Q4, T45, no. 1858, p. 161a14–15.
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