

Wang Wei and Buddhism 王維與佛教

Tero Tähtinen (孫空山)

Tampere University, Finland

tero.tahtinen@tuni.fi



“Deer Park” 鹿柴

Empty mountain, no-one is seen,
only distant human voices are heard.
Returning sunlight enters the deep grove,
and shines again on green moss.

空山不見人
但聞人語響
返景入深林
復照青苔上



19 Ways of Looking at Wang Wei

Eliot Weinberger



The Structure of My Presentation

1. Chinese Buddhism

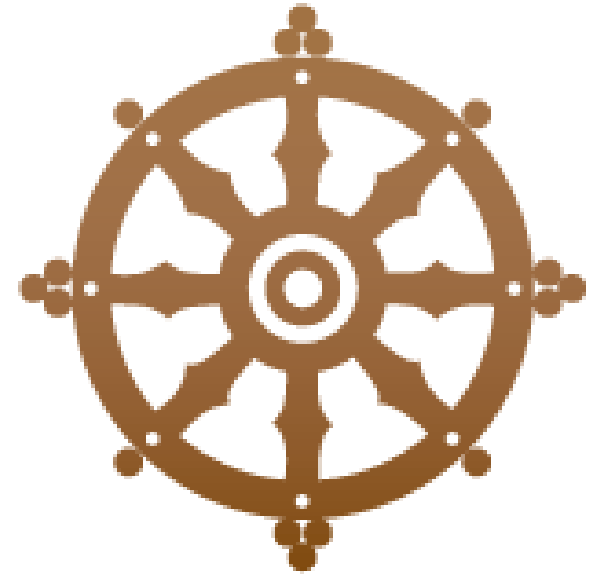
- historical background
- basic Mahāyāna doctrines and concepts

2. Wang Wei and Buddhism

- the first part of the 8th century

3. Buddhist reading of Wang Wei's poems

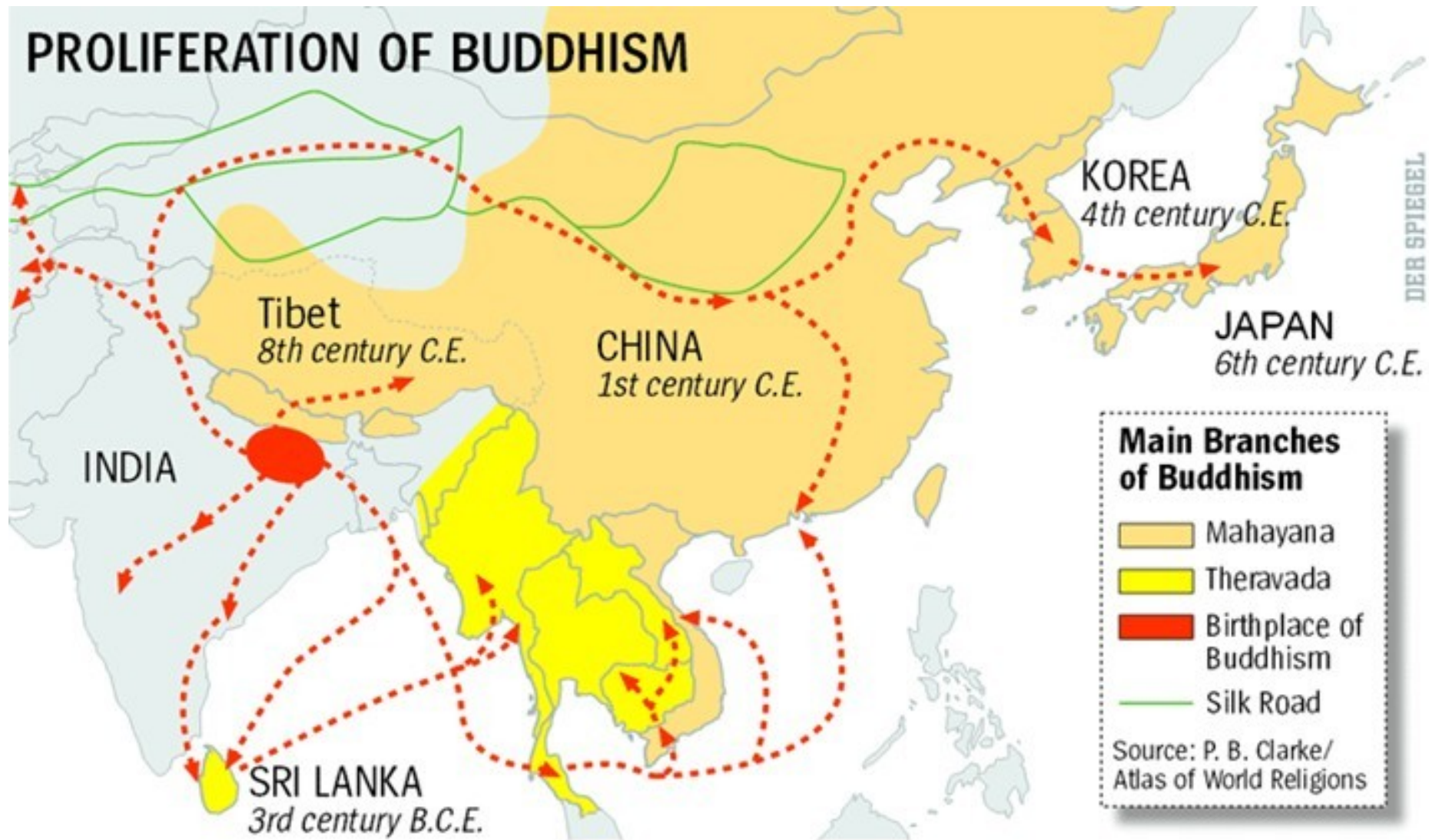
- emphasis on *Wangchuan ji*



Part 1: Chinese Buddhism



PROLIFERATION OF BUDDHISM



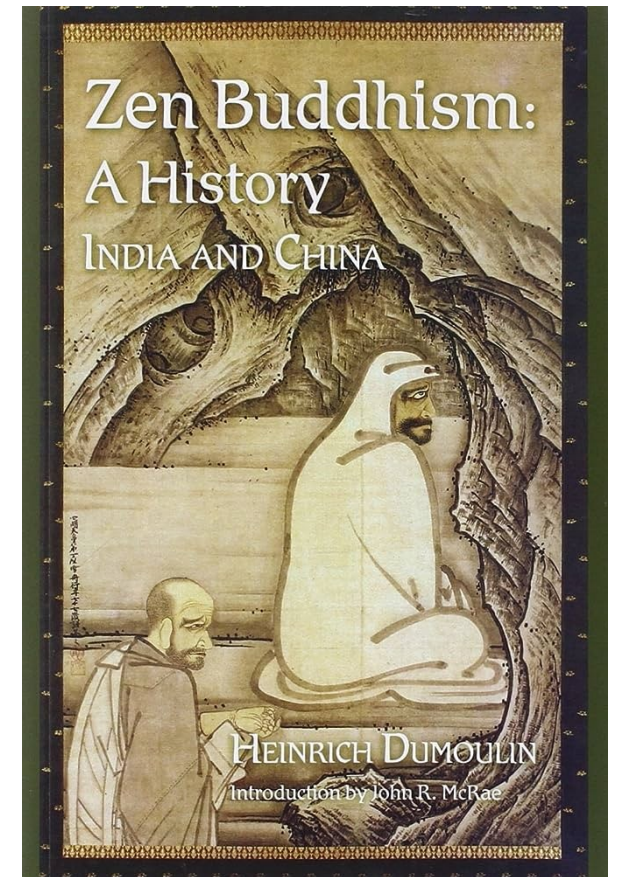
白馬寺



The Transplanting of Buddhism

“The transplanting of Buddhism from its native soil in India into the culture and life of China may be counted among the most significant events in the history of religions. It meant the introduction of a higher religion – complete with scriptural canon, doctrines, morality, and cult – into a land with an ancient culture of its own.”

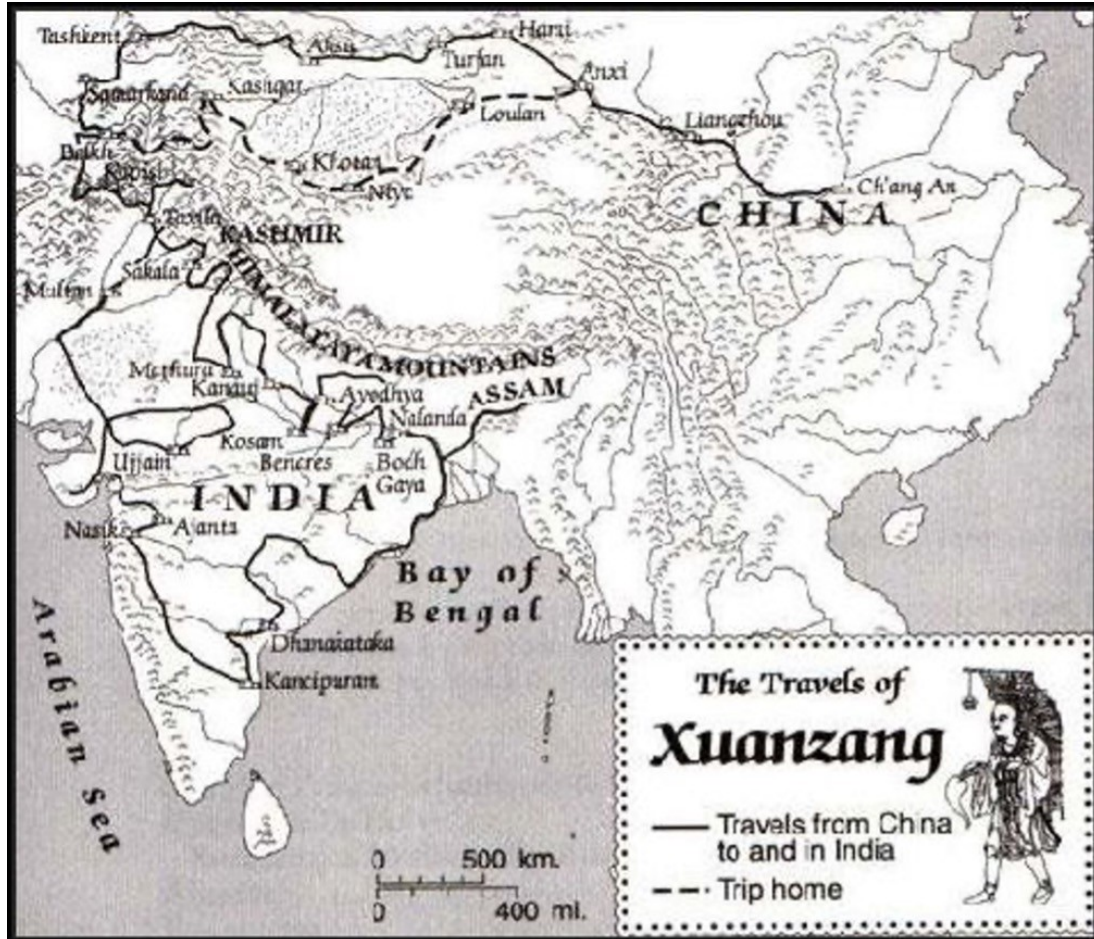
– Henrich Dumoulin: *Zen Buddhism: A History, Vol. I*



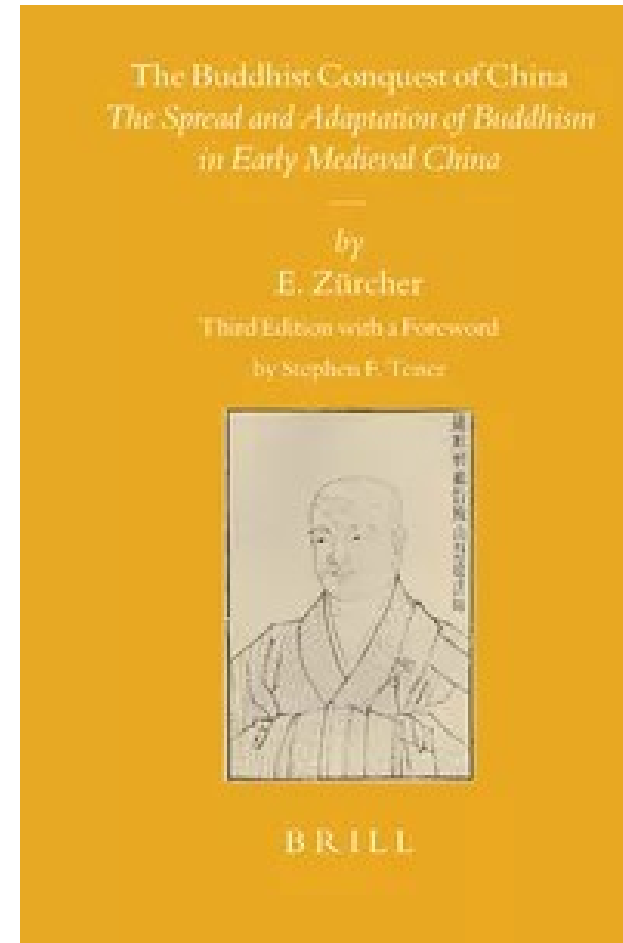
Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413)



Xuanzang 玄奘 (602/603–664)



Erik Zürcher 許理和 (1928–2008)



Mahāyāna Buddhism

- "Great Vehicle"
 - Tiantai school 天台宗
 - Chan school 禪宗
- Bodhisattva ideal (practicing for all sentient beings)
- "Emptiness", "no-self"



Buddhist Notion of Reality

The two extremes:

1. eternalism: everything exists as it is perceived
2. nihilism: the world is just an illusion

Buddhist Notion of Reality

The two extremes:

1. eternalism: everything exists as it is perceived



2. nihilism: the world is just an illusion

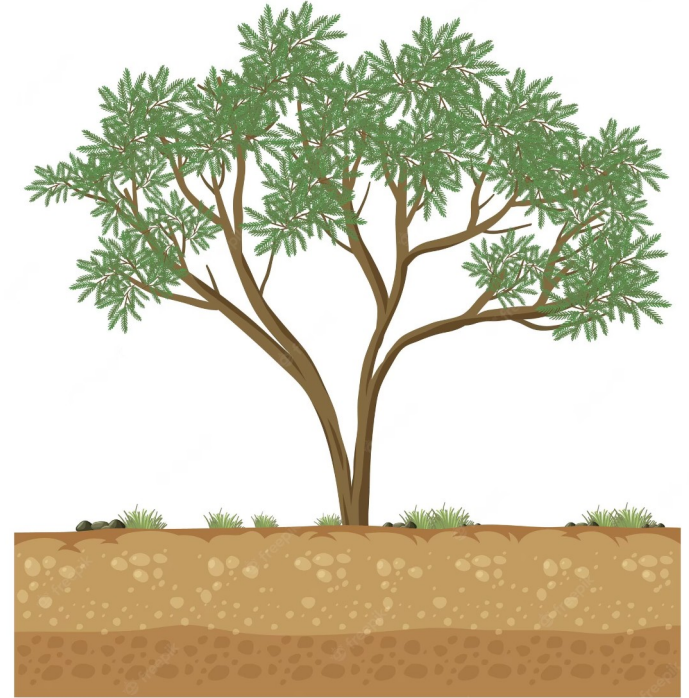


Buddhism: both are wrong, in reality all phenomena are empty

→ the doctrine of the Middle Way (中道)

Emptiness

- all existing phenomena are conditioned, i.e. brought into existence by causes and conditions
- a “tree” is combination of a seed, soil, water, sunlight etc.
- everything is mutually interdependent, nothing exists of and by itself
- Sanskrit *Śūnyatā* → 空 (*kong*)
- everything lacks self-identity → “no-self”



The Heart Sutra explains...

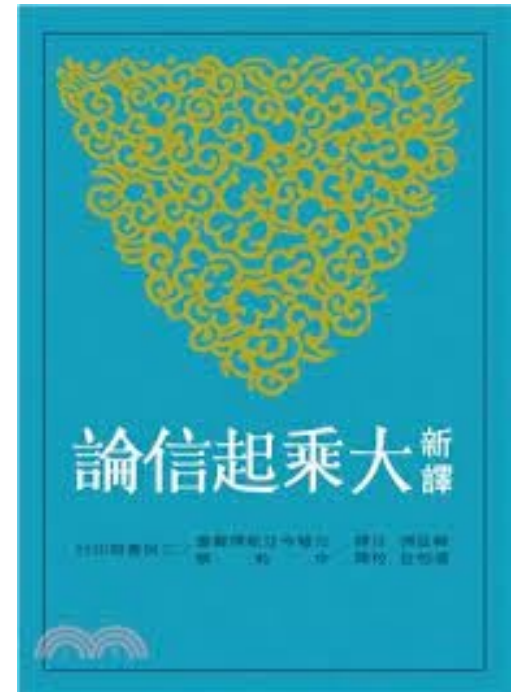
“Form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. Form is nothing but emptiness, emptiness is nothing but form.”

色不異空。空不異色。色即是空。空即是色。

觀自在菩薩行深般若波羅蜜多時照見五蘊皆空度一切苦厄舍利子
色不異空空不異色色即是空空即是色受想行識亦復如是舍利子是
諸法空相不生不滅不垢不淨不增不減是故空中無色無受想行識無
眼耳鼻舌身意無色聲香味觸法無眼界乃至無意識界無明亦無無
明盡乃至無老死亦無老死盡無苦集滅道無智亦無得以無所得故菩
提薩埵依般若波羅蜜多故心無罣礙無罣礙故無有恐怖遠離顛倒夢
想究竟涅槃三世諸佛依般若波羅蜜多故得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提故
知般若波羅蜜多是大神咒是大明咒是無上咒是無等等咒能除一切
苦真實不虛故說般若波羅蜜多咒即說咒曰揭諦揭諦波羅揭諦波羅
僧揭諦菩提薩婆訶
般若波羅蜜多心經潘君尚沐手敬書

《大乘起信論》

- *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith to Mahāyāna*
- “one of the most influential texts in the history of East Asian Buddhism” (Franceska Tarocco)
- originally attributed to Aśvaghōṣa (c. 80–150) but probably written in China during the mid-fifth century
- “true suchness”, *zhenru* 真如 (Skt. *bhūtatathatā*)
- “two emptinesses”, *erkong* 二空



Two Emptinesses 二空

- “The first one is emptiness in accordance to the real. This is because it is able to reveal the real in its entirety. The other one is non-empty in accordance to the real. This is because it has its own self-essence which is full of uncontaminated, virtuous merit.”

一者如實空。以能究竟顯實故。二者如實不空。以有自體具足無漏性功德。

- W. Stevens: “The Snow Man”:
For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.



No-self

- also human beings lack independent self-nature
- five skandhas (“aggregates”), 五蘊：
 - form (or material image) (*rupa*)
 - sensations (or feelings, received from form) (*vedana*)
 - perceptions (*samjna*)
 - mental activity or formations (*sankhara*)
 - consciousness (*vijnana*)
- all skandhas are in constant flux → no fixed self → “no-self” (無我)
- no “subject” and “object” → non-dualism (不二)

Vimalakirti Expounds

“The five skandhas are totally empty and without any arising — this is the meaning of suffering. The dharmas ultimately do not exist — this is the meaning of emptiness. There is no self in the self, yet no duality — this is the meaning of no-self.”

五受陰，洞達空無所起。是苦義，諸法究竟無所有，是空義。於我無我而不二，是無我義。



Part 2: Wang Wei and Buddhism



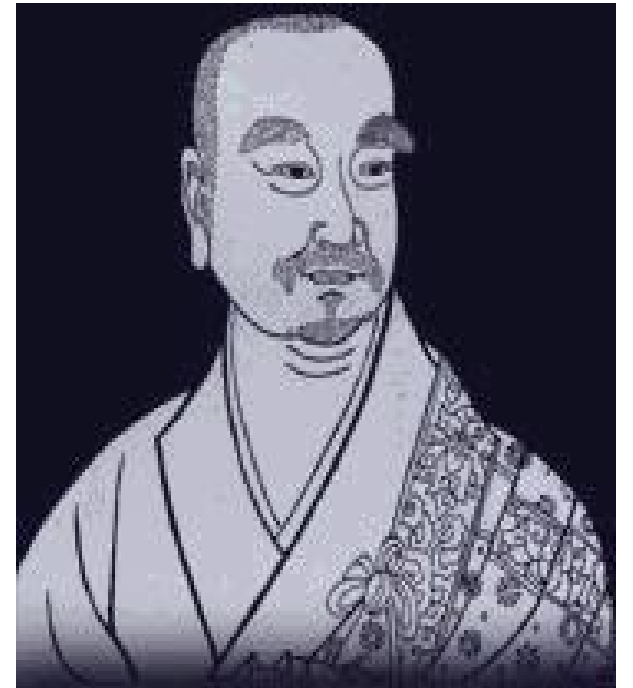
Background

- Wang Wei's lifetime (the first half of the 8th century) was tumultuous time for Chinese Buddhism
- disputes on doctrines, practices, lineages etc.
- Wu Zetian 武則天 ascended to the throne in 690
- lavish patron of Buddhism, built temples and invited Buddhist dignitaries to the court



Shenxiu 神秀 (606–706)

- at his time considered the legitimate sixth patriarch of Chinese Chan (Zen)
(Bodhidharma, Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin, Hongren)
- had many influential students:
 - Yifu 義福 (658–736)
 - Puji 普寂 (651–739), named himself as the seventh patriarch and also served as WW's mother's teacher



Wang Wei and Yifu

Visiting the Hermitage of Dhyana Master Fu 過福禪師蘭若

Through crags and ravines there turns a faint path,
And cloudy trees that conceal a Dharma hall.

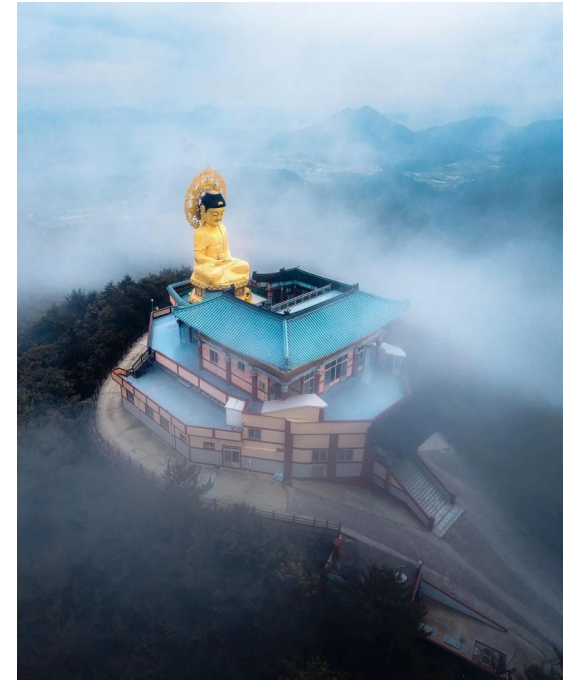
Feathered beings fly by, playing music;
Apsaras kneel, burning incense.

Beyond the bamboo, daybreak on one side of the peak;
In the wisteria shade the water is even more cool.

If you want to know if he's been long sitting in meditation:
The fragrant spring plants have grown tall by the roadside.

巖壑轉微逕，雲林隱法堂。羽人飛奏樂，天女跪焚香。

竹外峰偏曙，藤陰水更涼。欲知禪坐久，行路長春芳。 (Tr. Paul Rouzer)



Shenhui 神會 (670–762)

- held public debates in 730's in which he attacked teaching and Shenxiu's lineage
- coined the terms “Northern School” 北宗 and “Southern School” 南宗
 - NS: “gradual teaching” 漸教 (misguided)
 - SS: “sudden teaching” 頓教 (correct)
- introduced “the real sixth patriarch” Huineng 惠能 (慧能)
- *The Platform Sutra* 《祖壇經》, quickly becomes popular all over East Asia



Shenhui's Criticism

Dharma master [Chong]yuan asked: “Two virtuous Dhyana masters, Puji of Mt. Song and Xiangmo Zang of the eastern mountain, both taught people that in seated meditation one should congeal the mind in order to enter concentration, dwell in the mind and observe the purity, stir the mind to illuminate the external realm, and gather the mind to realize the internal. According to them, this exactly is the teaching. How come you now say that Chan does not teach people to do seated meditation nor congeal the mind in order to enter concentration, dwell in the mind and observe the purity, stir the mind to illuminate the external nor gather the mind to realize the internal? What does ‘seated meditation’ really mean?”

遠法師問：「嵩岳普寂禪師，東岳降魔藏禪師，此二大德皆教人坐禪，『凝心入定，住心看淨，起心外照，攝心內證』，指此以為教門。禪師今日何故說禪不教人坐，不教人『凝心入定，住心看淨，起心外照，攝心內證』？何名坐禪？」

Shenhui's Criticism (2)

Senior monk [Shenhui] replied: “If you teach people that in seated meditation one should ‘congeal the mind in order to enter concentration, dwell in the mind and observe the purity, stir the mind to illuminate the external realm, and gather the mind to realize the internal,’ it will only obstruct the bodhi wisdom. Today I tell that ‘sitting’ means that you do not give rise to any thoughts and ‘meditation’ means that you see your original nature. Hence, I do not teach people to use their bodies for sitting and dwell in mind to enter concentration.”

和上答：「若教人坐，『凝心入定，住心看淨，起心外照，攝心內證』者，此障菩提。今言坐者，念不起為坐；今言禪者，見本性為禪。所以不教人坐身住心入定。」

Shenhui's Criticism (3)

Dharma master [Chong]yuan asked: "Is this kind of teaching not Buddhadharma? Why you do not approve it?" Senior monk [Shenhui] replied: "These doctrines of 'sudden' and 'gradual' are not identical, and for this reason I cannot approve it. My master of the sixth generation [Huineng] without exception taught about straightforwardly and directly understanding and seeing one's own nature' and never spoke a word about gradual progress."

遠法師問，「如此教門，豈非是佛法？何故不許？」和上答，「皆為頓漸不同，所以許。我六代大師，一一皆言『單刀直入，直了見性』，不言階漸。」《菩提達摩南宗定是非論》

Wang Wei and Shenhui

That time censor Wang [Wei] asked the senior monk [Shenhui]: “How to practice in order to attain liberation?” Shenhui replied: “The original mind of the sentient beings is already pure. If you raise a thought of practice, this is just a delusion and can never lead to liberation.” Censor Wang was greatly surprised and said: “How marvelous! I have heard many venerable monks speak, but none of them has ever said anything like this.”

於時王侍御問和上言：「若爲修道的解脫？」答曰：「衆生本自心清淨，若更欲起心有修，既是忘心，不可得解脫。」王侍御驚愕云：「大奇！曾聞諸大德言說，皆未有作如此說。」

Wang Wei and Huineng

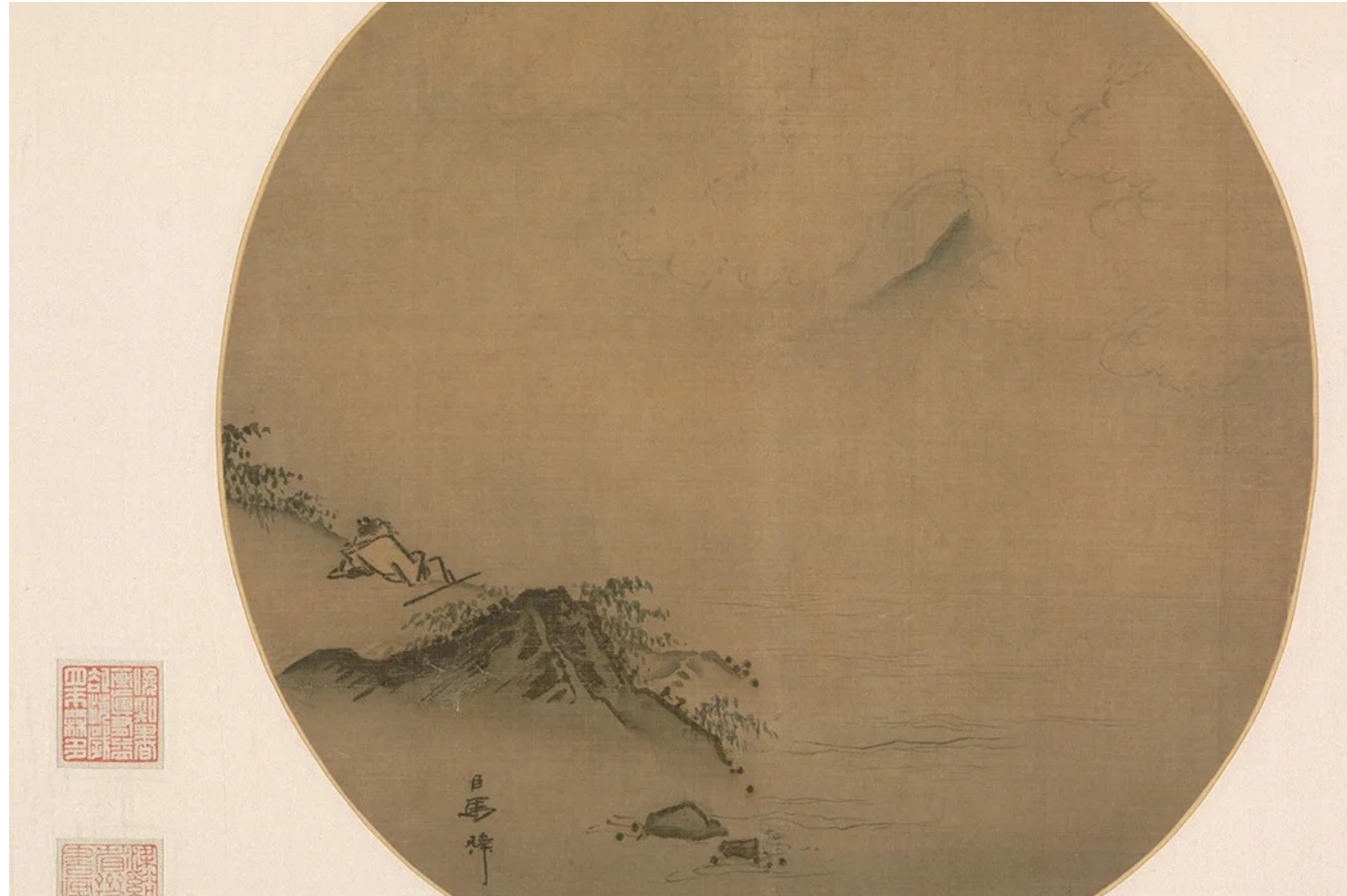
- Wang Wei wrote a stele for Huineng called “A Stele Inscription for Dhyana Master [Hui]neng” 能禪師碑
- a weirdly disconnected text
- Alan Cole: a piece of “literary Frankensteinism”



Summary of This Part

- Wang Wei was personally connected with important figures both from the “Northern” and the “Southern” school
- but their distinction was not clear in his lifetime
- he didn’t openly take sides in any sectarian disputes
- in his texts he utilizes mainstream Mahāyāna concepts and tenets but uses them in a distinctly personal and poetical way

Part 3: Buddhism in Wang Wei's Poetry



The Question

Should Wang's poetry be read as
a manifestation of Buddhist worldview and beliefs?

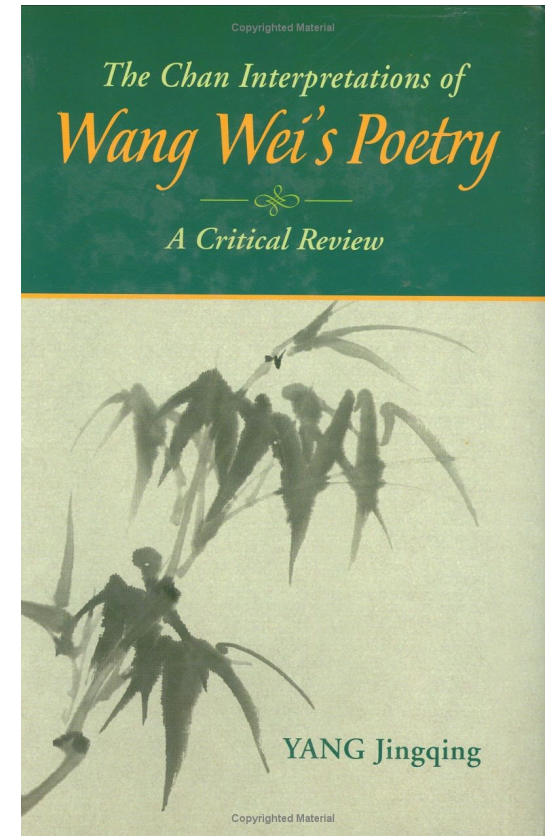


The Yes School

- Li Mengyang 李夢陽 (1473–1530): “The best of Wang Wei’s poems are like Chan, while the lesser ones are like [the trivial products] of a monk.”
王維詩高者似禪，卑者似僧。
- Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634–1711): “When reading Wang Wei’s and Pei Di’s ‘Wang Stream Collection’ and Zu Yong’s ‘Lingering Snow on Mt. Zhongnan,’ even a dull-minded beginner may reach sudden enlightenment.” 觀王裴《輞川集》及祖詠《終南殘雪》詩，雖鈍根初機，亦能頓悟。
- Yan Yu 嚴羽 (1191–1241): “Generally, the way of Chan is only about sudden enlightenment and the way of poetry is also about sudden enlightenment.” 大抵禪道惟在妙悟，詩道亦在妙悟。

The No School

- John Jorgensen: “One of the major problems in understanding a given poet, particularly if he is famous, is the stereotype created by later critics. A classic case is Wang Wei (699-759), who was known for his associations with Ch'an. Such an over-reading of Ch' an into his landscape poems by literary critics is egregious.” (1989)
- Yang Jingqing: *The Chan Interpretations of Wang Wei's Poetry: A Critical Review* (2007)



Why I Think Wang's Poetry Should Be Read in Close Relation to Buddhism

1. He and his family were devoted Buddhist practitioners and patrons, and well connected to several eminent teachers of their time.
2. He wrote extensively about visiting Buddhist temples and masters.
3. He utilized Buddhist themes in his poetry even on occasions when they were not invited by the social situation.
4. His Buddhistic poems are not mere descriptions of casual temple visits or superficial and arbitrary inclusions of Buddhist terminology but often contain serious and in-depth doctrinal issues.

2. Buddhist Elements

- Wang's writings are so full of references to Buddhist teachers, monks, temples, practices, ceremonies, ideas, concepts, texts, and so forth, that some scholars even talk about his influence on the historical development of the religion.
- "Secondary literature, especially that in Chinese, is replete with references to his meditational and devotional practices, his extended associations with monks of various Buddhist schools, his intimate acquaintance with Buddhist texts, and even his own influence upon the historical development of the religion!"
 - Rafal Stepień: "The Imagery of Emptiness in the Poetry of Wang Wei (王維 699–761)" (2014)

3. Genuine Conviction?

“A poet like Wang Wei 王維 (701-761) returns to Buddhism with frequency and on occasions when it was not invited by the social situation. This suggests conviction that was genuinely religious.”

– Stephen Owen, “How Did Buddhism Matter in Tang Poetry?” (2017)

“There can be no doubting Wang Wei’s devotion to Buddhist thought and practice.”

– Stepien (2014)



4. Serious Buddhism

- his visits to Buddhist temples are not casual picnics or sightseeing tours

Visiting Qinglong Monastery on a Summer Day to Meet Dhyana Master Cao **夏日過青龍寺謁操禪師**

Decrepit, a single old man

With slow steps comes to visit this hall of meditation.

I wish to inquire about the principle of the mind caught in principles,
And gain far-ranging understanding of the emptiness of empty illness.

(...)

龍鍾一老翁，徐步謁禪宮。欲問義心義，遙知空病空。

From 《舊唐書》

“He usually had vegetarian food instead of meat. In his later years, he became a strict vegetarian, and did not dress in a splendid fashion. [...] During his stay in the capital, he offered meals for more than ten famous Buddhist monks on a daily basis, and enjoyed discussions on profound philosophical issues with the monks. He had nothing in his reading room but a text set, a mortar of Chinese medicine, a sūtra-reading desk, and a bed made of hemp rope. After returning home from the court, what he truly savored was the joy of meditation.”

Wang's Own View on Buddhism

“The remaining problem, though, is to identify the precise Buddhist doctrines that would have comprised the intellectual horizon of expectations for Wang Wei. Those who acknowledge an important Buddhist dimension in Wang Wei's poetry have tended to assimilate it to the Chan teachings that have been so influential in subsequent Chinese literary culture. It turns out that certain detailed and explicit sources of information have been neglected: Wang Wei's own writings on Buddhist doctrine.”

– Nicholas Morrow Willians: “Quasi-Phantasmal Flowers: An Aspect of Wang Wei's Mahāyāna Poetics” (2017)

“Preface to a Poem ‘Flowering Herbs at the Lodging of Master [Dao]guang at Jianfu Monastery’”

The mind is lodged in the midst of existence and non-existence, and the eye is bounded by both form and emptiness. All these are illusory but detachment from them is also illusory. The perfected person does not cast aside illusion, but he does go beyond the limits of existence and non-existence, of form and emptiness. For that reason his eye may reside in the dust while his mind never shares that condition. His mind is not in the world, and his body never becomes an object. Because identifying oneself as an object causes the self to be attached through limitless realms, and this is dangerous indeed.

心舍于有無，眼界于色空，皆幻也，離亦幻也，至人者不捨幻，而過于色空有無之際。故目可塵也，而心未始同；心不世也，而身未嘗物。物者方酌我于無垠之域，亦已殆矣！

“In the Mountains, to Be Shown to My Brothers” 山中示弟

(...)

Karmic conditions give rise to false forms,

緣合妄相有

but due to their empty nature, they cannot be approached

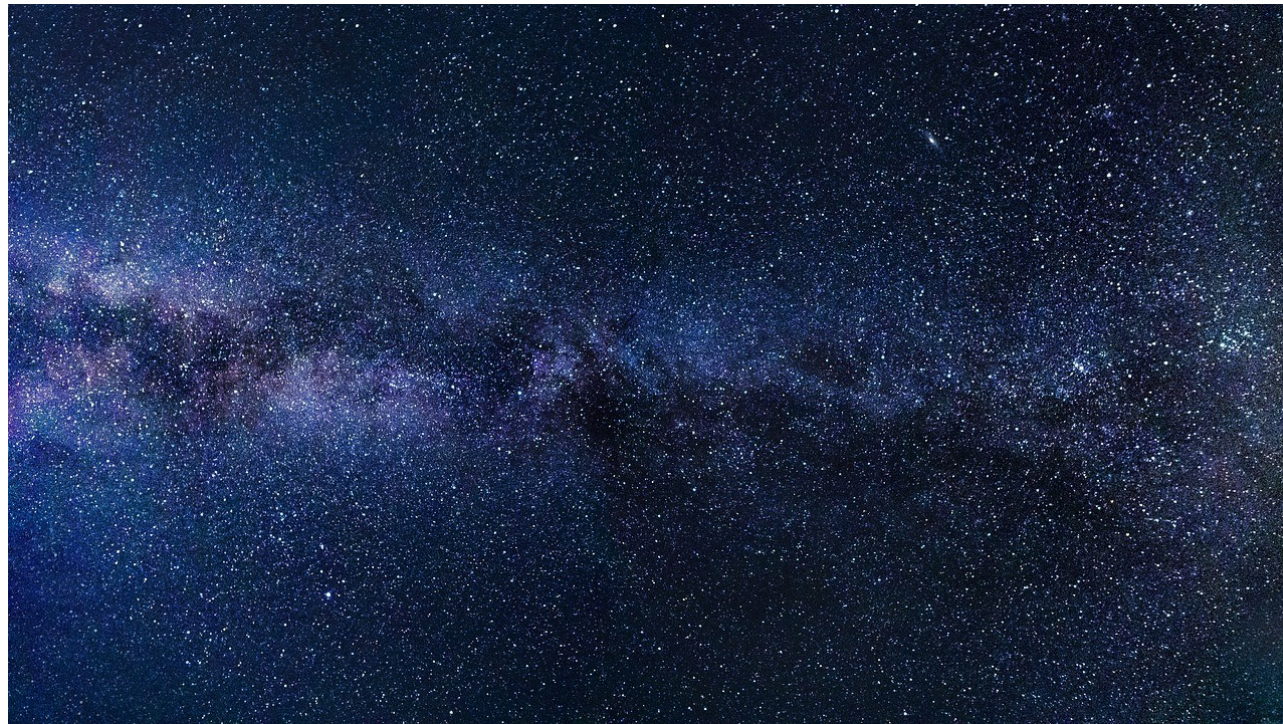
性空無所親

(...)

“In Praise of the Buddha” 讚佛文

I assert that the subtle master of *bhutatahata* spreads to all ten directions but has accomplished nothing.

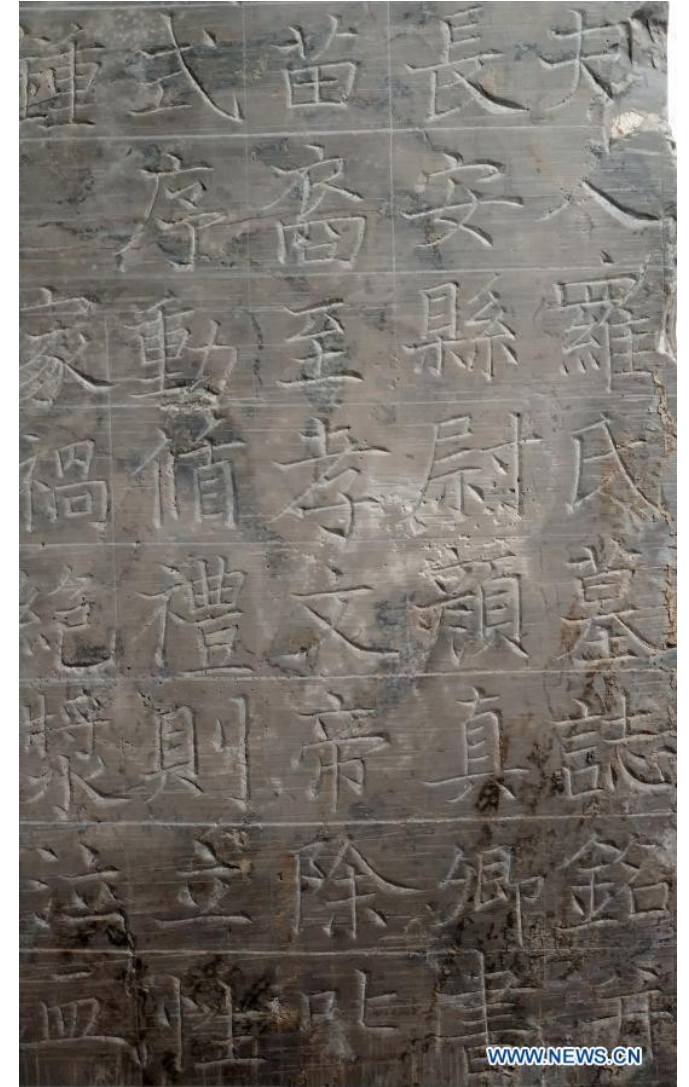
竊以真如妙宰，具十方而無成。



In an Epitaph for Monk Jingjue

Where can we seek the two kinds of emptiness that reside outside the Dharma?

二空法外，何處進求？



Buddhism is Not Just a Philosophy

- Zürcher: Buddhism is not just a “history of ideas” but a “way to salvation, a way of life”
 - “the other side of Buddhism”: the practice
 - Zongmi 宗密 (780–841): that the Chan writings “speak mostly of the principle of Chan, while saying little of the practice of Chan”
- what about the poems on meditation?



“Sitting Alone in Autumn Night” 秋夜獨坐

Sitting alone and mourning my gray temples
in an empty room at the second watch.

Forest fruits fall in the rain,
weed crickets cry beneath a lamp

Hoary hair is difficult to change back
like yellow gold cannot be created.

If you want to know how to avoid aging and sickness,
only study the unborn.

獨坐悲雙鬢

空堂欲二更

雨中山果落

燈下草蟲鳴

白髮終難變

黃金不可成

欲知除老病

惟有學無生

《傳法寶紀》 (P.3664)

天平中遊鄴衛多所化度僧有深忌者又黜鵬之惠可初便
毒不能害時有向居士化公廉公禪師咸因得本心皆任道因
門人濠廣開悟甚多臨終謂弟子僧璠曰吾身法不受傳為
汝當廣勸化焉名標伽經與人手傳因歎曰此經四世後
名相悲哉 釋信璠不知何處人事可禪師撒悟因
為入宮後遭周武破法流遁山谷經十餘年至開皇初與同學
師隱居皖公山在舒州一名思堂山此山先多猛獸每損居人自璠之來
境山西麓有寶月禪師居之已久時謂神僧開璠至心感
願相見欣如時普月公即嚴禪師之也璠定惠齊泐深學日至
已顧謂弟子道信曰自達摩祖傳法至我破南蓮留汝弘護
明旨極遂與定公南隱後竟不知其所終矣 釋道信河
姓司馬氏七歲出家其所居姓信密齊六年師竟不知開皇中
山歸璠禪師精勤備滿照無不至經八九年璠往羅浮信求
深日汝住當大弘益遂往方施化而在者實至大業度人配
州寺屬隨季空亂羣賊圍城七十餘日井深皆竭信從外求
澹刺史叩頭請退時但念般若不須為憂時賊徒見地
有大力士曰即奔駭城遂獲全武德七年至鄴州州刺史
覺林整遂為終焉之地君州年宣明大法解者師荆州法顯
善仗皆北面受法信曰善仗辟支根機竟未堪聞大道每勸
日努力勤坐為根本能任三五年待一口食塞飢瘡即開門

《傳法寶紀》 (P.3664)

(Dayi Daoxin 大鑿道信 [580–651] instructs:)

Strive hard and make an effort in your sitting, for sitting is the fundament. If you are able practise this way for three or five years and only take a mouthful of food to chase away hunger and sickness, then close your door and just sit. Do not read sutras or speak to other people.

努力勤坐，坐為根本。能坐三五年，得一口食塞饑瘡，即閉門坐。莫讀經，莫共人語。

白居易：《在家出家》

Satisfied with clothing and food, children married away,
from now on I am not concerned with family matters.
Sleeping at night, I am like a bird cast to a forest,
at breakfast, I share the mind with the begging monks.
Cranes crying with clear voices under the pines,
a spot of light within the cold – a lamp amidst the bamboos.
At midnight I sit with crossed legs and enter tranquility,
my daughter and wife call for me but I do not respond.

衣食支吾婚嫁畢 從今家事不相仍 夜眠身是投林鳥 朝飯心同乞食僧
清唳數聲松下鶴 寒光一點竹間燈 中宵入定跏趺坐 女喚妻呼多不應

賈島：《夜坐》

Countless crickets make the autumn buzz,
moon already gone, the night grows deeper.
At the third watch, temples like frosty boughs,
one thought, twin peaks, the mind of four patriarchs.

蟋蟀漸多秋不淺
蟾蜍已沒夜應深
三更兩鬢幾枝雪
一念雙峯四祖心



“In the Mountains, to Be Shown to My Brothers” 山中示弟

In the mountain forest I lose my self,
a sash and a hat create a [true] person.

Do not imitate Xi Kang's laziness,
but find peace in Yuan Xian's poverty.

The northern slope is filled with huts,
stream runs by my eastern neighbors.

Karmic conditions give rise to false forms,
but due to their empty nature, they cannot be approached.

(...)

山林吾喪我
冠帶爾成人
莫學嵇康懶
且安原憲貧
山陰多北戶
泉水在東鄰
緣合妄相有
性空無所親

“I Lose My Self” 吾喪我

Nanguo Ziqi was reclining on his armrest, looking toward the sky and breathing slowly. He was staring blankly into space, seemingly dispirited. Yancheng Ziyou was standing beside him and asked: “What is this? Can you really make your body resemble a withered tree and your mind resemble cold ashes? The man who is currently reclining on an armrest is not the same who was reclining there before.” Ziqi replied: “Well, this is an excellent question! Right now, I have lost my self, do you understand?”

南郭子綦隱机而坐，仰天而噓，荅焉似喪其耦。顏成子游立侍乎前，曰：「何居乎？形固可使如槁木，而心固可使如死灰乎？今之隱机者，非昔之隱机者也。」子綦曰：「偃，不亦善乎，而問之也。今者吾喪我，女知之乎？」《莊子，齊物論》

“Playfully Sent to the Fifth Brother Zhang Yin” 戲贈張五弟諲

(...)

I reside at the foot of Mount Zhongnan,
and ceasing activities, I abandon my self,
Approaching birds, they are not startled,
meeting animals, they are all my kin.

(...)

我家南山下
動息自遺身
入鳥不相亂
見獸皆相親

“In the hills: a letter sent to Flourishing Talent Pei”

If we can wait until spring, then the plants and trees will have spread out, and the vernal hills will be a sight worth seeking. The carefree minnows will dart from the water and white gulls will extend their wings; dew will soak the green riverbanks, and pheasants will call at dawn in the barley fields. It won't be long now – perhaps you'll be able to go out with me? Whomever could I invite to such a trifling matter save you, possessed as you are of such a lofty and subtle disposition? Nevertheless, there is a profound appeal to all of this, so don't dismiss it.

(...)

-- Wang Wei, from the mountains

(Tr. PR)

“The One Who Knows the Tone” 知音



“Deer Park” 鹿柴

Empty mountain, no-one is seen,
only distant human voices are heard.
Returning sunlight enters the deep grove,
and shines again on green moss.

空山不見人
但聞人語響
返景入深林
復照青苔上



Comment by Burton Watson

The first line begins with the word *kong*, “empty” or “deserted,” a word which, while indicating the stillness and remoteness of the mountain, at the same time, because of its Buddhist connotations, suggests the illusory nature of the entire phenomenal world. The verb “see,” though obviously meant to be taken in the active mood, lacks any expressed subject; presumably the subject is the poet, who does not see anyone else in the hills, but since he has already characterized them as “empty,” one wonders what he is doing there. In English such a degree of vagueness is all but impossible to suggest and, distasteful as it may be, one ends by resorting to a lame passive—“no one is seen”—or some other circumlocution to render the phrase.

(*Chinese Lyricism*, 1971)

Two Types of Buddhist Poetry (by BW)

- first type: overtly doctrinal, often in a gatha (*ji*) form, deals directly with philosophical or religious concepts, images used mainly on a symbolic level etc.
- second type: the philosophical meaning lies much further below the surface, imagery functions both on the descriptive and the symbolic level at once, the reader might not even think them as Buddhist poems (BW: from Buddhist point of view the highest type)
- Cf. Lomová: “in the process of describing the scenery the poet invited us to this kind of realistic/metaphorical double reading by careful choice of images and vocabulary”

“Bamboo Lodge” 竹里館

I sit alone in a secluded bamboo grove, 獨坐幽篁裏
playing *qin* and droning for a long time. 彈琴復長嘯
Deep in the woods unknown to others, 深林人不知
bright moon appears and shines on me. 明月來相照



A Poem by Shiwu Qinggong 石屋清珙 (1272-1352)

More than twenty years west of Mount Yen
I've never been cheated by a hoe
a garden in spring of new tea and bamboo
a few trees in fall of ripe chestnuts and pears
I drone on the summit when the moon is bright
and walk along the stream when the clouds turn warm
with so many friends in examination halls
why do I leave my door open

(Tr. Red Pine)

From *The Vimalakirti Sutra* (Ch. 7)

“Shariputra, this room constantly manifests eight rare and unprecedented phenomena. What are these eight? This room is constantly flooded with rays of golden light that never change, day or night. It is not lit by the shining of the sun or moon. This is the first rare and unprecedented phenomenon.”

舍利弗。此室常現八未曾有難得之法。何等為八。此室常以金色光照晝夜無異。不以日月所照為明。是為一未曾有難得之法

“Magnolia Bank” 辛夷塢

Lotus-like blossoms at the tip of the branches
open their red calyxes in the mountains.

The hut in the valley is quiet without humans,
one by one the flowers open and then fall.

木末芙蓉花
山中發紅萼
澗戶寂無人
紛紛開且落



Conclusions

- Wang Wei's works are deeply linked with Buddhist ideas, concepts, practices etc.
- any attempt to read his landscape poetry outside the Buddhist context seems to lead nowhere
- the idea/experience of "no-self" unveils the ontological dimensions of the poems of *Wangchuan ji*
- a lot still remains unstudied: where did Wang take his Buddhist metaphors, how does he utilize them in his poetry, what kind of modalities of meditation they seek to express etc.?



**Thank You
So Much**