The Role of Change in XIONG Shili's Understanding of *Ti* and *Yong*

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Abstract

During the 1950s XIONG Shili's 熊十力 (1885–1968) *ti-yong* metaphysics underwent some profound changes. Focussing on his 1958 publication, *Tiyong lun* 體用論 (Treatise on reality and function), this paper seeks to explain the role that the concept of change played in the articulation of his core metaphysical tenet, “the non-duality of *ti* and *yong*” (體用不二). It will further propose that this understanding of the role of change also served as his mature solution to the Buddhist problematic of avoiding the two extremes (二見、二邊) of reification and nihilism, which XIONG characterizes in terms of believing either that things endure over time (continua) or that things cease to exist.

Keywords XIONG Shili · “the non-duality of *ti* 體 and *yong* 用,” Madhyamaka · Yogācāra · Eternalism · Nihilism · “*xi* 翕 (contraction) and *pi* 闢 (expansion),” Hegel · *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論

1 The Premise

In XIONG's metaphysics, *ti* 體 (which he also refers to as *shiti* 實體 and *benti* 本體) represents the ontological absolute. He also treats it as synonymous with such Buddhist notions of *tathatā* (suchness; 真如), *dharmatā* (Reality/the true nature of things; 實相; 實性; 法性), and *nirvāṇa* (涅槃). In turn, function (*yong* 用) refers to the phenomenal world. In the pre-1950 period, XIONG had maintained that, ontologically, *yong* depends on *ti*, just as an image depends on the brightness of the mirror. That dependence relationship is unilateral. By 1958, however, XIONG not only insisted on the ontological parity between *ti* and *yong*, but also on their ontological identity:

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Reality is function itself...If you were to understand completely that Reality and function are non-dual then you would certainly believe that apart from function there is no Reality that can be spoken of.

實體是功用的自身。... 若徹悟體用不二，當信離用無體可說。(XIONG (1958) 2001: vol. 7, 6)

In this treatise I follow the *Book of Change* in taking “the non-duality of *ti* and *yong*” as my main tenet, maintaining that Reality transforms into function.

本論上宗《大易》以體用不二為主旨，以為實體變成功用。(Ibid. 120)

Take the example of the myriad waves—each takes the ocean as its self. (The self of wave A is the ocean, the self of wave B is the ocean, and this is the case right through to all of the countless waves. From this we can realize the principle of “it is precisely function that is Reality.” “It is precisely function that is Reality” means that function is Reality, just as it is the myriad waves themselves that are the ocean.)¹

譬如眾漚，各各以大海水為其自身。(甲漚的自身是大海水，乙漚的自身亦是大海水，乃至無量數的漚皆然，由此可悟即用即體之理。即用即體者，謂功用即是實體，如眾漚自身即是大海水也。)(Ibid. 96)

Ti or “Reality” is the locus that ontologically grounds the phenomenal world yet is not different from the phenomenal world (*yong*), just as the sea supports waves yet is not different from them.

2 The Problem

Both the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra traditions of Buddhist thought—which, following Buddhist doxographers in the Tang period, XIONG refers to as the Emptiness School (空宗)² and the Existence School (有宗), respectively—were extremely important in XIONG Shili’s intellectual development. This importance is clearly stated in the opening pages of *Tiyong lun*: “My thought has certainly benefited from the inspiration I have received from both the Emptiness and the Existence schools. If I had not started with these two schools, I would not have come to understand how to think for myself, and so what could I have followed in order to awaken and enter [true cognition of] the *Book of Transformation*?”³ (余之思想確受空有二宗啟發之益。倘不由二宗人手，將不知自用思，何從悟入變經乎？)(Ibid. 7).

XIONG was also highly critical of both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. In *Tiyong lun* he identifies what he regarded as a fundamental flaw in both. The problem is that Madhyamaka and Yogācāra failed to preserve the non-duality of *ti* and *yong*. Let us take the case of Madhyamaka first. XIONG criticised Madhyamaka for treating Reality (*dharmatā*; suchness) as an unconditioned dharma (無為法), pointing out the consequences of what this entails:

¹ Text in round brackets is XIONG’s interlinear autocommentary.

² More precisely, for XIONG the Emptiness School consists of teachings on emptiness (空) as expounded in the *Da boreboluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*; Perfection of wisdom sutras) and texts associated specifically with the Madhyamaka School.

³ The *Book of Transformation* is the *Book of Change* (易經).

Although Nāgārjuna's [ca. 150–250]⁴ intention was to use [the doctrine of] conditioned origination to show that dharma characteristics are ultimately empty, hoping that [people] would thereby awaken and enter [true cognition of] Reality [*dharmatā*] it must also be understood that [according to Buddhist teachings], dependently arisen dharmas are dharmas that arise and cease, whereas Reality is a dharma that neither arises nor ceases. These two aspects being different from one another thus constitutes a two-tier world in which [both aspects] are completely unable to connect with one another....He proposed that a dharma that neither arises nor ceases is the Reality for dharmas that arise and cease—this is a case of name and actuality failing to correspond.... (How could it be said that a dharma that neither arises nor ceases is the Reality for dharmas that arise and cease?)

龍樹之旨，雖欲以緣生明法相畢竟空，庶幾悟入實相... 複須知，因緣法是生滅法，實相是不生不滅法。兩方互相異，為截然不可溝通之兩重世界。... 以不生不滅法，說為生滅法之實相，是乃名實不相應。...(不生不滅法，何可說為生滅法之實相?) (Ibid. 92)

In Buddhist thought, a fundamental distinction is drawn between conditioned and unconditioned dharmas. Unconditioned dharmas are not subject to the laws of cause and effect. An unconditioned dharma neither arises nor ceases and is also unable to be causal; it cannot give rise to unconditioned dharmas. On a Buddhist reckoning, as an unconditioned dharma, Reality (體; 本體; 實體; 實相; 真如; 法性) neither arises nor ceases and is also unable to be causal.⁵ In other words, dharmas that do not arise and cease cannot be the ontological basis of dharmas that do arise and cease—that is, the phenomenal world (*yong* 用).

XIONG had two main criticisms of Yogācāra. The Yogācāra school is best known for its epistemological idealism, according to which all perceptions are deemed to be mediated and interpreted by the mind or consciousness (the two terms being used interchangeably). Yogācāra distinguishes eight types of consciousness. The eighth, or store consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), retains the impressions of past experiences and “perfumes” new experiences on the basis of that previous conditioning. Karmic “seeds” (*bīja*; 種子) or potentials emerge from the eighth, giving rise to the “manifest activity” of the seven other consciousnesses and causing or “perfuming” future seeds. That is, the seeds stored in the eighth consciousness function to generate “manifestly activated” (現行) consciousness—the activity of one or more of the seven consciousnesses. In turn, these manifestly activated consciousnesses immediately perfume seeds in the eighth consciousness, and the cycle is perpetuated. XIONG's first criticism of Yogācāra was that it posited a two-tier ontology:

In treating seeds and suchness are two tiers of Reality, the error was immeasurable.... Asaṅga⁶ clearly takes seeds to be the origin of the myriad dharmas, yet he also taught that suchness is the Reality of the myriad dharmas. Given this, how is he able to avoid the error of two tiers of Reality?

⁴ Author of *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā* (Fundamental verses on the middle way), translated as *Zhong lun* 中論 (Treatise on the middle way), a key text in the Madhyamaka School.

⁵ On the Indian doctrinal context for the idea that unconditioned dharmas are not active in producing an effect, that they lack generative activity, see Cox 2004.

⁶ Fourth century Indian Yogācāra master, traditionally regarded as a founder of the school.

種子、真如是二重本體，有無量過。... 種子明明是萬法本原，而又說真如是萬法實體，如此則何可避免二重本體之嫌? (Ibid. 72)

Xionsg's second and more fundamental criticism of Yogācāra is the same criticism he directed at Madhyamaka. The problem is that both schools deemed *ti* to be unconditioned—and hence neither arising nor ceasing—and *yong* to be conditioned, thus rendering the non-duality of *ti* and *yong* impossible:

Both schools share an unshakable fundamental belief: The Reality of the myriad dharmas (Dharma nature.) is devoid of production and reproduction, devoid of flow and movement, devoid of change and transformation...and this is why this dharma nature is said neither to arise nor to cease.

二宗畢竟共有一個不可變革之根本信念，即以萬法實體（法性。）是無有生生、無有流動、無有變化... 此法性所以有不生不滅之稱也。 (Ibid. 60)

The Prajñā (Perfection of Wisdom) scholars say that Reality is quiescent and extinguished. The Yogācāra masters say that suchness is without arising, without creating, constant and unmoving.

般若家說實相寂滅，大有諸師說真如無生、無造、如如不動而已。 (Ibid. 6)

3 The Solution

XIONG's solution was to appeal to the notion of the “constantly turning over”:

It should be understood that Reality is neither constant nor severed (*Duan* 斷 means severed [斷絕].) hence I also name it “constantly turning over.” “Constant” means not severed. “Turning over” means not constant. Neither constant nor severed, [there is only] instant after instant of arising and ceasing, ceasing and arising, hence I name it “constantly turning over.” This is to make Reality evident in function (即用顯體), and that is why I have established this term. (The term *xian* 顯 here means “making explicit with words.”)

當知實體非常非斷，(斷者，斷絕。) 故又名之以恒轉。恒字，是非斷的意思。轉字，是非常的意思。非常非斷、剎那剎那生滅滅生，故名恒轉。此乃即用顯體，以立斯名。(此中顯者，謂以言說明示之也。) (Ibid. 15)

Reality is neither exclusively constant nor exclusively changing—rather it is constantly transforming.

In fact, already in his 1926 publication, *Weishixue gailun* 唯識學概論 (A general account of Yogācāra learning), XIONG had introduced the concept of constantly turning over (恆轉) to explain the operation of consciousness: “‘Constantly’ means ‘not severed,’ ‘turning over’ conveys the sense of ‘not constant.’ Not severed and not constant—that is, moment by moment shedding the past and ceaselessly creating the new. This what is called “the power of generation, which the sutra compares to a great torrent” (恆言非斷，轉表非常。非斷非常，即剎那剎那捨其故而創新不已。此所謂生力也，經喻之如大瀑流。). (Xiong [1926] 2001: vol. 1, 448) The sutra referred to here is the Xuanzang's 玄奘 (602–664) translation of Yogācāra master Vasubandhu's (fourth century) *Triṃśikā* (*Weishi sanshi lun song* 唯識三十論頌; Thirty verses), in which the

ālaya (storehouse) consciousness is described as “constantly turning over, like a torrent” (恆轉如瀑流) (Vasubandhu: T1586.31, 60b8). In *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 (Demonstration of nothing but consciousness) Xuanzang provides the following description of the operation of the *ālaya* consciousness:

Is the *ālaya* consciousness severed or constant? It is neither severed nor constant because it is constantly transforming....“Turning over” means that since beginningless time, thought-moment by thought-moment this consciousness arises and ceases, transforming from one thought moment to the next.... It is said to be “constant” so as to refute [the view] that it is severed; “turning over” to convey [the sense] that it is not constant. Just like a torrent, [the ceasing of] cause and [the arising of] effect is so-of-itself.

阿賴耶識爲斷爲常?非斷非常, 以恆轉故。…轉謂此識無始時來念念生滅, 前後變異。…恆言遮斷, 轉表非常。猶如瀑流, 因果法爾。(Xuanzang: T1585.31, 12b28-12c5)⁷

Although clearly inspired by this passage’s account of the constantly turning over, XIONG made the concept his own by applying it to his thesis that Reality and function are non-dual (體用不二). I also note that the terms *duan* 斷 and *chang* 常 are irrevocably linked to the doctrine of the “two views” (二見): the view of eternalism (常見) and the view of nihilism (斷見), and which are also known as the “two extremes” (二邊): either things endure over time or that things cease to exist.

Besides introducing the key concept of the constantly turning over, XIONG’s 1926 publication, *Weishixue gailun*, also introduced two other key ideas to explain how transformation is made possible. The first is the pair *xi* 翕 (contraction) and *pi* 闢 (expansion).

The constantly turning over contains two movements, constriction (屈) and extension (申). (Here, “movement” means “impetus”. Constriction and extension are merely two kinds of impetus and not two kinds of real entities. Hence, this is different from dualism.) Their simultaneous induction is called “transformation.” Transformation is not a solitary arising. (“Solitary” means “being without that to which it stands in contrast.” If there is nothing with which to stand in contrast, then it is not transformation.) Therefore, only with one [impetus of] constriction and [one impetus of] extension is this transformation. Precisely because they are opposed yet complementary that this is called “transformation.”) Extension means to expand (闢) and proceeds with vigour. (To expand means to unfold.)... It is on this basis that mental dharmas are nominally posited. Constriction means to contract (翕) and obediently follow. (To contract means to restrain.)... It is on this basis that material dharmas are nominally posited.

恆轉有屈申二行, (此言行者, 動勢義。屈申祇是兩種動勢, 而非兩種實體, 所以異乎二元之論也。)同時相感, 是名爲變。變不孤起。(孤即無待, 無待則非變。)... 故一屈一申方是變也。(…以反而相濟, 故謂之變。)申者, 闢而健往(闢者, 開發義。...)依此假說心法。屈者, 翕而順來, (翕者, 斂縮義。)... 此假說色法。(XIONG (1923) 2001: vol. 1, 448)

⁷ I am grateful to SANG Yu 桑雨 for drawing my attention to this passage.

Here turning over is described as a result of the “simultaneous inducement” of the two impetuses of constriction and extension. In later writings, constriction (屈) and extension (申) are replaced by contraction (翕) and expansion (闢), although both terms make their appearance already in this passage. Contraction and expansion are two terms derived from the *Book of Change*. For XIONG, contraction is the basis for provisionally (假; *prajñapti*) talking about material dharmas (色法), and expansion is the basis for provisionally talking about mental dharmas (心法). In Abhidharma literature (ancient scholastic Buddhism), dharmas are real and do not pass away; the composite things they constitute change from moment to moment, but dharmas remain. Madhyamaka theory construes dharmas as impermanent and dependently arisen. XIONG follows this latter understanding. Dharmas are “momentary property instantiations, in a complex of mutual interdependence that give rise to the deceptive appearance of macroscopic constituents.” (Garfield 2015: 58–59) Contraction and expansion are used to characterize the apparent processual qualities of turning over when viewed from the perspective of conventional truth.

Although the two impetuses of contraction and expansion are in opposition, they are also complementary. This is the other key idea that was also first formulated in *Weishixue gailun*, the idea of “mutually opposing and mutually completing” (相反相成), where it is briefly introduced to describe the relationship between the two impetuses of constriction and extension (contraction and expansion) (動勢一屈一申，相反相成) (XIONG [1926] 2001: vol. 1, 480). In subsequent publications he continued to employ the idea widely.

For example, in the 1944 vernacular redaction of the *Xin weishi lun* 新唯識論 (New treatise on the uniqueness of consciousness), XIONG provides the following account of this principle of “mutually opposing and mutually completing”:

It should be understood that *xi* and *pi* are mutually opposing and mutually completing, but ultimately, they are an integrated whole that cannot be divided.... The cosmos of a myriad transformation contains an internal contradiction that is the basis for its development.... There is nothing that is not embraced by the principle of mutually opposing and mutually completing.

我們應知，翕闢是相反相成，畢竟是渾一而不可分的整體。... 變的宇宙底內容，是涵有內在的矛盾而發展的。... 切事物，均不能逃出相反相成的法則。(XIONG [1944] 2001: vol. 3, 106)

In this same work, he further attempted to explain this principle by drawing on the numbers one, two and three, as formulated in *Laozi* (zhang 42): “One generates two and two generates three” (XIONG [1926] 2001: vol. 3, 10, 124). Fourteen years later in *Tiyong lun* he provided a much clearer explanation of the “mutually opposing and mutually completing” principle, based on that same passage:

The dictum in *Laozi* that “one generates two and two generates three” is elaborating on the import of how three lines constitute a trigram in the *Book of Change*. The *Laozi* uses this to signify the principle of “mutually opposing and mutually completing.” There being one, then there is two. This two is in

opposition to one. At the same time, there is also a three, which is based on the one (three is not identical to one but only based on one). Although in opposition to two, it can transform two such that they [three and two] revert to harmony. This is what is meant by “Great Harmony is preserved through union” in the *Book of Change*. Only by virtue of the two opposites becoming harmonized is the development of the whole thus brought to completion. If there is only singularity, there will certainly be no transforming; if there is only contradiction and no integration then necessarily there will be much harm.

《老子》“一生二，二生三”，這種說法就是申述《大易》三爻成卦之旨，用以表示相反相成的法則。因為有了一，便有二，這二便與一相反。同時又有個三，此三卻是根據一（三本不即是一，祇是根據於一）。而與二反，卻能轉化乎二以歸於和。《易》云：“保合太和”是也。惟有兩相反而成乎和，所以完成其全體之發展。若惟單純固無變化，若惟矛盾而不相融和則摧傷必多。(XIONG [1958] 2001: vol. 7, 15-16)

One is able to generate two because the idea of “one” is inseparable from the idea of “not-one” and the combination of “one” and “not one” is two. This move from one to its opposite, “not-one,” plays a strikingly similar role to Hegel’s notion of sublation or suspension (*Aufheben*): the idea of a finite determination transitioning to its opposite, as described in Part I of his *Encyclopaedia of philosophical sciences*, which is often called the *Encyclopaedia logic*. As described by Julie E. Maybee (2016), for Hegel, every logical concept has three parts or moments. For our immediate purposes, it is the transition of the first to second moment that is relevant:

The first moment—the moment of the understanding—is the moment of fixity, in which concepts or forms have a seemingly stable definition or determination (EL §80).... The second moment—the “*dialectical*” (EL §§79, 81) or “*negatively rational*” (EL §79) moment—is the moment of instability. In this moment, a one-sidedness or restrictedness (EL Remark to §81) in the determination from the moment of understanding comes to the fore, and the determination that was fixed in the first moment passes into its opposite (EL §81). Hegel describes this process as a process of “self-sublation” (EL §81).... The moment of understanding sublates *itself* because its own character or nature—its one-sidedness or restrictedness—destabilizes its definition and leads it to pass into its opposite. The dialectical moment thus involves a process of *self*-sublation, or a process in which the determination from the moment of understanding sublates *itself*, or both cancels and preserves *itself*, as it pushes on to or passes into its opposite.

In turn, three is generated by grasping the unity of the opposites—this is what XIONG means by stating that three is based on one but is not identical to one. It is not identical because two is also integrated with three. Again, the similarity with the third moment in Hegel’s dialectical method is striking: the unity of the opposition between the first two determinations. As for the principle of “mutually opposing and mutually completing,” this can be understood to refer to the opposition of one and two, and the harmonious union or synthesis of one and two in the unity that is three. Despite these similarities, Xiong denied that he had drawn on Hegel (XIONG [1944] 2001: vol. 3, 10).

How, then, does XIONG relate these ideas to the concepts of *xi* and *pi*?

The constantly turning over almost begins to become things that offer material resistance and lose its self-nature. Hence the contraction (*xi* 翕) impetus can be said to be an opposing function. Just as the contraction impetus arises, however, a different impetus arises in opposition to, yet simultaneously with, contraction. (The two impetuses are not different entities; much less do they have temporal sequence. Hence it is said that they arise simultaneously.) This other impetus has always been an expression of the self-nature of the constantly turning over, yet it is not identical to the constantly turning over. For example, ice is made up of water, but ice is not identical to water. This other impetus is robust, vigorous and self-conquering and so is unwilling to become materialized—just the opposite of contraction.... Furthermore, this impetus that is unwilling to become materialized is able to operate within contraction, such that it becomes in charge.... This robust and vigorous impetus that does not become materialized is named “expansion (*pi* 闢).”

恒轉殆將成為質礙之物，失其自性。故翕勢可以說是一種反作用。然而當翕勢方起，卻有別一方面的勢用反乎翕，而與翕同時俱起。（二勢非異體，更無先後次第，故說同時俱起。）惟此種勢用本是恒轉自性顯發，畢竟不即是恒轉。譬如說，冰自水成，而冰卻不即是水。此一方面的勢用是剛健自勝而不肯物化，正與翕相反。（不物化者，不變為質礙的物也。後凡言物化者仿此。）申言之，即此不肯物化的勢用是能運於翕之中而自為主宰。... 種剛健而不物化的勢用，即名之為闢。（XIONG [1958] 2001: vol. 7, 16–17)

XIONG describes *pi* (expansion) as “an expression of the self-nature of the constantly turning over, yet it is not identical to the constantly turning over.” The constantly turning over is another name for Reality (the ontological absolute). The reason that *pi* is not identical to the constantly turning over, to Reality, is because *pi* exercises a controlling role over *xi* (contraction); Reality itself does not play such a role.

The constantly turning over is *ti*, and *xi* and *pi* are *yong*. In terms of XIONG’s one, two, three dialectical method, the constantly turning over corresponds to one, *xi* corresponds to two, and *pi* corresponds to three:

The constantly turning over is one. In being expressed as *xi*, it almost does not preserve its self-nature, and this is two—this is what is meant by “one generates two” [in *Laozi*]. However, the constantly turning over is, after all, constantly just as its nature is, and would never become materialized. Hence, just as the *xi* impetus arises, simultaneously the *pi* impetus arises, and this *pi* is three. This is what is meant by “two generates three.”

恒轉是一，其顯為翕也幾於不守自性，此便是二，所謂一生二是也。然而恒轉畢竟常如其性，決不會物化。故翕勢方起，即有闢勢同時俱起，此闢便是三。所謂二生三是也。（Ibid. 17)

I again note that this characterization of *xi* as the tendency not to preserve its self-nature (the constantly turning over, which is synonymous with Reality, the ontological absolute), has distinct resonances with Hegel’s account of self-sublation. As for *pi* (three), it represents the harmonious merging or synthesis of the constantly turning over (one) and *xi* (two) in a new moment.

XIONG's presentation of *ti* as *yong*, in which *yong* is a particular mode of *ti*, just as ice is a particular mode of water, was his solution to the sundering of the non-duality *ti* and *yong* that he objected to in both Yogācāra and Madhyamaka. That sundering of *ti* and *yong* also rendered *ti* as unchanging and quiescent, as neither arising nor ceasing—and thus amounted to a kind of eternalism.

Eternalism and nihilism are the two extremes (二見、二邊): the views that either things endure over time or things cease to exist:

With regard to things, you people sometimes give rise to the view of eternalism and sometimes give rise to the view of nihilism (斷見). (*Duan* 斷: “to sever.”) Take the example of a tree. Now, just as in the past, one always sees it and so mistakenly assumes that it constantly exists—this to give rise to the view of eternalism. Suddenly you see that it has burned away and so you mistakenly assume that it has ceased to exist—this is to give rise to the view of nihilism. Both views are mistaken.

汝等於諸物，時或起常見，時或起斷見，(斷者，斷絕。)如於一木，今昔恒見，則計為常，是起常見。忽焉睹其燼滅，遂又計為斷絕，是起斷見。維此二見，都有過失。(Ibid. 30)

Instant by instant, all things retreat further and further in the past, ceasing entirely. This explains why there are no things that endure constantly.... Instant by instant, as all things cease and pass away, giving rise to the new. This explains why there are no things that are severed.

一切物剎那剎那故滅盡，說一切物無有恆常。... 剎那剎那皆滅故生新，說一切物無有斷絕。(Ibid. 30)

There are those who presume that because the myriad things cease, Reality should likewise cease. (This is called nihilism.) And there are those who claim that although the myriad things arise and cease, the Reality of the myriad things is absolutely eternal. (This is called eternalism.)

或計萬物有斷滅，實相應隨物斷滅(是名斷見。)，或說萬物有生滅，而萬物實相[=實體]畢竟恒常(是名常見。)(Ibid. 91)

He also underscored how these mutually exclusive views frustrate the thesis that *ti* and *yong* are non-dual:

Reality is manifest as inexhaustible, endless great function, and as such, should be said to be changing. And yet, when all is said and done, because the flow of great function never alters Reality's intrinsic fecundity, vigor, as well as various other defining attributes, then it should be said to be unchanging.

本體顯為無窮無盡的大用，應說是變易的。然大用流行畢竟不曾改易其本體固有生、健動、乃至種種德性，應說是不變易的。(Ibid. 14)

In one of his characterizations of the idea of constantly turning over, XIONG goes so far as to endorse the Buddhist concept of nirvana's being characterised in terms of quiescence (寂) and stillness (靜), albeit characterizing these terms in such a way that any whiff of eternalism is immediately dispelled:

The Buddhists' third Dharma Seal is "*nirvāṇa* is perfectly still." (*Nirvāṇa* is another name for dharma nature.) It is thus clear that all [Mahāyāna] schools describe "nature-as-Reality" (性體) as perfectly still⁸.... Their words are indeed based on a correct view and definitely cannot be criticized in a cavalier manner. It must, however, also be understood that utter stillness is wondrous transformation Transforming but not creating, hence it is said to be still. Stillness cannot be said not to be transforming. (Where there is the conation [意] to create then this is not stillness. Because the Reality of the myriad transformations has no intentions it is devoid of creativity, and so the myriad transformations are all still.) Ultimate stillness is uncanny transformation.... Transforming without being thrown into disarray, hence it is said to be still. Stillness cannot be said not to be transforming. One cannot talk about stillness in terms of not transforming. (Reality, which underdoes myriads of transformations, moves with a natural regularity, and so is not in disarray. Hence, it is precisely in moving that it is still. When ordinary people seeing things move, they deem them not to be still; transformation is different from this.)

其第三印曰涅槃寂靜。(涅槃，即法性之別名。)可見佛家各宗派都是以寂靜言性體。...言亦本於正見，固未容輕議。然復須知，至寂即是神化。...而不造，故說為寂。未可以不化言寂也。(有意造作則不寂。萬化之實體無有意想，故無造作，而萬化皆寂也。)至靜即是譎變。(譎者，奇詭不測。)變而不亂，故說為靜，未可以不變言靜也。(萬變之實體，動而有天然之則，故不亂，乃即動即靜也。世俗見物動則不靜，此變不爾。)(Ibid. 48-49)

These accounts of the two extremes are, however, little more than colorful, rhetorical ploys. What further step did XIONG take in his attempt to justify the claim that Reality is neither exclusively constant nor exclusively transforming but rather is constantly turning over, constantly transforming?

We have seen that he rejected both the Emptiness School and the Existence School owing to the powerful Buddhist preference to distinguish the unconditioned strictly from the conditioned. Indeed, most Buddhist theorists do not countenance the idea that the unconditioned can somehow be conditioned. There is, however, one key text that is a prominent exception. The *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 (Treatise on awakening Mahāyāna faith) has been one of the most important texts of East Asian Buddhism between the late sixth century—soon after it started to circulate—and the present. The *Treatise* is the exception because it *does* countenance the idea that the unconditioned can be conditioned.

The *Treatise* presents the mind or the so-called One Mind, as the ultimate source of reality. The One Mind has two modalities or aspects, which the text calls "gateways":

There are two gateways based on the dharma of the One Mind. What are they? The first is the gateway of the mind as suchness. The second is the gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing. Each of the two gateways contains all dharmas. Why? Because these two gateways are not separate from one another.

依一心法，有二種門。云何為二？一者、心真如門，二者、心生滅門。是二種門皆各總攝一切法。此義云何？以是二門不相離故。(T1666.32, 576a5-7; Jorgensen et al 2019: 68)

⁸ Here XIONG treats *xingti* 性體 as equivalent to *nirvāṇa* and dharma nature

The gateway of the mind as suchness (心真如門) is the true mind—unchanging, eternal, and pure. As suchness, the mind is quiescent, unchanging, unconditioned, and it neither arises nor ceases. It is free of false conceptualizing and distinction making. The gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing (心生滅門) is cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*) in which the mind's propensity to awaken struggles against the mental and physical behaviours that arise from the mind's defilement by ignorance. The *Treatise* explains that the combination or integration (和合) of the non-arising and non-ceasing aspect with the arising and ceasing aspect, constitutes the *ālayavijñāna* (store consciousness)⁹:

The arising-and-ceasing mind exists because it is based on the *tathāgatagarbha*. That is to say, non-arising and non-ceasing combine with arising and ceasing: they are neither the same nor different. This is called the “*ālayavijñāna*.”
心生滅者，依如來藏故有生滅心。所謂不生不滅與生滅和合，非一非異。名為阿梨耶識。 (T1666.32, 576b07-10)

In this text, the *tathāgatagarbha* is synonymous with suchness (*tatātā*). The *Treatise* presents the relationship between the two gateways as a *ti-yong* relationship. This conception of the *ti-yong* polarity is used to convey the relationship of the unconditioned (*tathāgatagarbha* in the gateway of the mind as suchness) to the conditioned (*tathāgatagarbha* in the gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing) as one of immanent transcendence. Immanent transcendence is a realist metaphysical view (i.e., not a nominalism). It describes how, on the one hand, the referent wholly lies within the boundaries of a specifiable domain yet, on the other hand, it simultaneously extends beyond the boundaries of that domain. Suchness/*tathāgatagarbha* exists in the gateway of the mind of arising and ceasing (the adaption of *tathāgatagarbha* to phenomenal conditions, as *ālayavijñāna*) while *simultaneously extending beyond* the gateway of the mind of arising and ceasing (suchness *qua* the unconditioned), just as wetness exists in all ocean waves but simultaneously extends beyond any particular wave (an analogy that Xiong had already begun to use frequently—albeit without referencing the *Treatise* where it is employed as a key metaphor—since at least 1945.¹⁰).

For the *Treatise*, the main import of the relationship between the *tathāgatagarbha* and the *ālayavijñāna* is that the *tathāgatagarbha* provides the ontological grounding for the *ālayavijñāna* and the *ālayavijñāna* represents the adaptation of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the mind of suchness, to phenomenal conditions. Crucially, *tathāgatagarbha*/suchness—the unconditioned—remains constant, unchanged, undiminished and undefiled by these phenomenal conditions, just as XIONG's notion of expansion (*pi*) “does not lose the qualities of the nature of Reality”:

As soon as the flow of Reality becomes contraction, expansion is already present. How is this so? When contraction is able to become a material thing it seems to be hastening towards descent—this can be called “opposing” (反).¹¹ And yet, because Reality does not, after all, change its self-nature, as soon as the

⁹ In the *Treatise* it is identified as the arising and ceasing mind.

¹⁰ See, for example, XIONG (1945) 2001: vol. 3, 572–573.

¹¹ Opposing its true nature.

contraction impetus is formed, the expansion impetus arises together with it. Expansion [alters its own natural course] and returns to contraction in its sinking impetus, embracing it so as to ascend together with it, (*Sheng* 升 means to ascend.) and in doing so is able to manifest Reality's inherent defining attributes such as vigour and purity. This is what makes expansion unique. (I wrote "inherent defining attributes such as" because there is no way to list all of them.) Expansion gives rise to function in accord with Reality. "In accord" means that expansion does not lose the defining attributes of the nature of Reality. (For example, ice appears after water, but ice never loses water's wet nature.) This [is what is meant by] precisely where there is function there is Reality, and so I spoke of "in accord."

本體流行，方成乎翕，已有闢在。所以者何？翕將成物似趨於下墜，可謂之反。然本體畢竟不改易其自性，故翕勢方成，已有闢勢俱起。此闢復反于翕之墜勢而挾以俱升（升者，向上意。），能顯發其本體固有剛健、清淨諸德。闢之殊特在是也。（無從悉舉，故言諸德。）闢是稱體起用。稱者，謂闢不失其本體之德性，（譬如冰從水現，而冰畢竟不失水之濕性。）是即用即體，故言稱也。（XIONG (1958) 2001: vol. 7, 18)

We might thus understand XIONG's presentation of *ti* as *yong*, in which *yong* is a particular mode of *ti*, to be his own middle way (中道) perspective—his alternative to the Madhaymaka middle way. Chen-kuo Lin is no doubt correct to conclude that Xiong's "Confucian identity is constructed through mirrors of language among which Buddhist language plays the most significant role" (Lin 2002, 70). The main qualification I would make to Lin's assessment is that Xiong's Confucian identity is also grounded in problematics deeply informed by the traditions of Sinitic Buddhist philosophy.

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