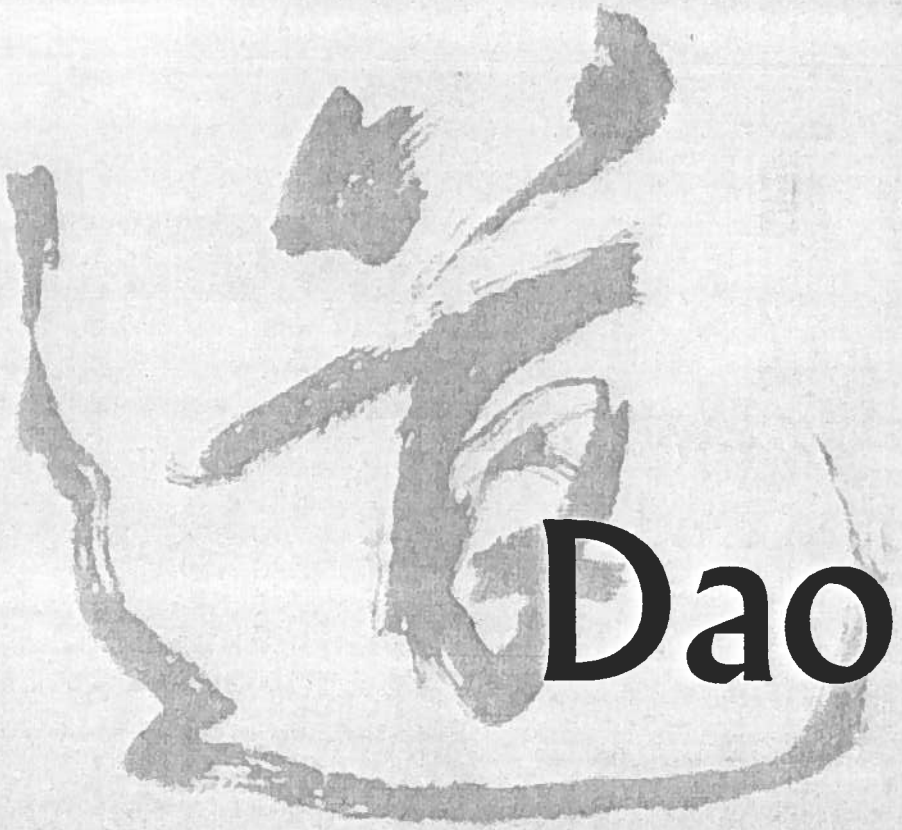

Dao

A Journal of Comparative Philosophy

Vol. IV • No. 1 • Winter 2004

DAO: A JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Volume IV Number 1 Winter 2004 ISSN: 1540-3009

Book Symposium

Dale S. Wright, *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism*

Articles

Emptiness and Experience: Pure and Impure

John W. M. Krummel*

I. Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to examine the history behind the idea of pure experience within the Buddhist tradition, and to look at how this idea becomes explicitly connected with the notions of emptiness and dependent origination. My discussion of dependent origination and emptiness will be based on an interpretation of Dale Wright's reading of *Huangbo* in his *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism*. I will examine the implications Wright's text has shown for our understanding of the "pure experience" of Chan/Zen Buddhism. Wright's book makes us aware of the emptiness or dependent origination of thing-events in general that the Chan/Zen Buddhists have thematized both in thought and in practice. What his book also shows is the very contextuality or conditionality lying behind Chan Buddhist practice. This is despite the claim often made by some modern Chan/Zen apologists that the Buddhist enlightenment experience, the attainment of nirvāna, is "pure." Does the contingency, conditionedness, and contextuality of the enlightenment experience delegitimize this claim to purity?

In the 1970s, Steven Katz emerged as a critic of the position that such "religious" or so-called "mystical" experiences are "pure." His position was both "contextualist" and "constructivist."[1] Katz claimed that all experiences

* Ph.D., Department of Religion, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122. Email: Jwmkrummel @aol.com.

Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy December 2004, Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 57-76.

[1] By "contextualism" I mean the theory that truth and meaning are contingent upon the context (whether linguistic, situational, cultural, religious, or historical, etc.); and by "constructivism" I mean the theory that truth and meaning are constructed by the subject's cognitive processes (which can involve biological, psychological, epistemological, linguistic, as well as contextual, etc., conditions). Steven Katz's position has been called "constructivism" by Robert Forman (see Forman 1990), among others involved in the debate surrounding the topic of religious experience. The position holds that experience, whether "religious" or ordinary, is always "constructed." "Construction" here does not necessarily mean the *conscious* construction of experience. The term may be misleading if it is taken to mean that

are constructed, thus mediated (that is, by the conditions of their construction), and that there are no unconstructed or unmediated (immediate) experiences.[2] Katz was arguing against perennialist philosophers like Walter Stace who believed in a universal core essence discernible in all religious experiences despite their differences in tradition and interpretations. Instead, Katz argued that such experiences differ on the basis of cultural, historical, and religious contexts. From the biological level, up through the psychological and social levels, experiences are constructed and thus mediated. On the basis of such a contextualist-constructivist premise, Katz concludes that any attempt to discover a universal or unmediated core to the religious experience is problematic insofar as our access to this "experience" *after the fact* is through written testimonies and texts having meaning only within a certain context (Katz: 46-7). Furthermore, it is *before the fact* of its occurrence that the horizon of intelligibility—the anticipations, expectations, beliefs, intentions, etc. that the experiencer brings with him/her (Katz 1978: 26)—shapes the experience as well. That is, the experience is over-determined both *in advance* and *after the fact*, both pre-and post-experientially, by the given tradition (Katz: 33 & 46).

Katz's conclusion is that because our experiences are inevitably tainted by their conditions, we have no direct or immediate access to any essential core religious truth.[3] If by "pure," we mean the immediate or direct, then there is no such thing as pure experience, for experience is inevitably implicated by conditions and contexts giving it form. However, Chan/Zen often talks of an experience that transcends such mediation, and this is sometimes described as "pure experience" (*junsui keiken* 純粋經驗). On the other hand, however, in Chan/Zen, there is also the talk of conditionality (dependent origination). In commenting on Wright's book, I would like to examine what "pure experience" might mean in the Chan/Zen Buddhist context that places so much emphasis upon conditionality and dependent origination. The purpose is to appropriate Wright's text for the sake of engendering or extracting some sort of a creative reply—in the form of a thought-experiment—to Katz's thesis concerning experience.[4]

My suggestion, drawing on the Buddhist concept of dependent origination, is that the experience can be understood as impure in the sense im-

experience is consciously constructed. Constructivism of course recognizes the complexity involved in the constitution of experience, which for the most part occurs behind the experiencing subject, that is, below the level of conscious awareness. I am borrowing the term from those who use it in this debate surrounding the topic of religious experience and the controversy started by Katz.

[2] In being caused, conditioned, access to whatever object of experience is mediated by those conditions.

[3] In syllogistic form, Katz's thesis may be summarized as follows: All experiences are constructed and mediated; and religious (or mystical) experiences are experiences; so religious experiences are constructed and mediated.

[4] Thus my intent is not to provide a review of Dale Wright's book as a whole, but rather to explore a particular set of themes, which are either taken up by Wright in his discussion of Chan Buddhism or may be relevant to Katz's thesis.

plied by Katz's thesis (i.e., as constructed or contextualized). However, in the final section I will follow this with a further hypothesis. By using a metaphor from Huayan 華嚴 Buddhism illustrating interdependent origination, together with a further reading of Wright's text, I will suggest that despite its impurity, the experience may *also* be understood as pure. I will then re-connect this with the understanding of purification, already present in early Buddhism, as release from the attachment to things as substantial. The following may also be regarded as a feeble and speculative attempt of an unenlightened mind to discuss what enlightenment in Chan/Zen might entail.

II. "Pure Experience" in Buddhism

In the Chan/Zen Buddhist tradition the word "purity" has sometimes been used to characterize the state of mind attained in the enlightenment experience. The mind attained is a "pure mind" and the experience of this attainment has at times been described as a "pure experience." The debate concerning the possibility of such pure experience is a contemporary one, in part provoked by Katz's thesis discussed above. Within the context of contemporary philosophy and religious studies, the use of the term "pure experience" may be traceable to William James' *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. An example of a Buddhist-influenced philosopher who adopted and made use of this term in the early 1900s is the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) (see Heisig: 45). Allegedly inspired by his own Zen meditative experience, Nishida, today often taken by both his Western fans and his Japanese followers as a "Zen philosopher," wrote his first major philosophical text, *Inquiry into the Good*, in order to discuss what he called "pure experience" (*junsui keiken*). In his case, "purity" (*junsui* 純粋) appears to designate a state prior to the intellectual bifurcation into subject and object. The experience was regarded as "direct" in that it is unmediated by intentional thought processes and not intruded on by any kind of assertion by a conscious self.[5] In formulating his concept of pure experience, Nishida was

[5] Nishida defines experience to mean "to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing one's own fabrications.... [B]y *pure* I am referring to the state of experience just as it is without the least addition of deliberative discrimination"; Nishida continues: "[P]ure experience is identical with direct experience. When one directly experiences one's own state of consciousness, there is not yet a subject or an object.... This is the most refined type of experience" (see Nishida 1990: 3-4). It has been suggested to me by Douglas Berger, through private correspondence, that Nishida's modern understanding of "pure experience" comes quite close to the Yogācāra notion of consciousness purified from defiling karma. In fact David Loy has also compared Yogācāra's *nirvikalpa* perception to the "raw unverbalized experience" of William James himself, who influenced Nishida (see Loy 1998: 43). In the later Nishida, however, when talk of pure experience is replaced by talk of *basho*, I think that the current of a later Chinese school of Buddhism, Huayan, becomes more evident. My attempt in this work, which will become more obvious toward the end, is to read the "purity" of the enlightenment experience of Chan/Zen in light of the Huayan interpretation of interdependence as inter-mirroring or interpenetration of reflections amongst co-reflecting mirrors. In this case purity is not merely an escape or purification from karmic

undoubtedly inspired by the Buddhist tradition. If we examine the history of Buddhist thought, we will find that the "purity" of experience has been a topic of concern for Buddhism from its beginnings. Its earliest formulations as a state free of karmic, samsaric, or worldly defilements, when discussed in terms of awareness, appears comparable to its modern equivalent as experience free of mediation. However, there is also another way of understanding the "purity" of pure experience that may be discerned from the history of Buddhist discourse. This *other* way becomes explicitly manifest in the evolution of Buddhism in China, especially in Huayan Buddhism and the Chan/Zen explicated in Wright's book.

"Purified" experience in Buddhism in general has usually been taken to be the achievement of the eightfold path or various other techniques such as meditation.[6] This concern with purifying the mind from superimpositions, conceptual or emotional, that defile its original state is evident from the earliest historical stages of Buddhism, such as in the *Majjhima Nikāya*.[7] In the Mahāyāna tradition as well, purity is a topic of salvific concern.[8] The Yogācāra school in India, for example, developed the notion of the storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijnana*) containing seeds (*bija*) that perpetuate various levels of consciousness and which themselves become infected by karma.[9] So the purpose of practice was to purify consciousness of these seeds for an enlightened awareness, an experience referred to as of "uncompromised nature" (*parinispanna-svabhāva*, literally meaning "completely unproduced/underived nature").[10] The consciousness realized through this practice was sometimes called "pure self" (*suddhātman*).[11] The *Mahāyāna-*

defilements but rather purity amidst contingency and dependency, purity *qua* (immediately *as* or simultaneous *with*) impurity as inter-reflection.

[6] This and some of the following points regarding the topic of "purity" within Buddhism, especially Yogācāra, have been pointed out to me by Douglas Berger.

[7] The *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (*Majjhima Nikāya*) discusses seven stages of purification (*satta visuddhi*), of which the final stage is *nibbāna* (*nirvana*) (Sutta 24.9-15, in Nānamoli: 242-244; also Nānamoli: 1214, footnote 288). The scheme provided here defines the stages of purification elucidated in later commentaries such as the *Visuddhimagga* (*Path of Purification*) by Buddhaghosa (400s AD), which treats the various paths of "purification," wherein purification is equated with *nirvāna*, as freedom from all defiling tendencies (see Kalupahana 1992: 208-9; 215; Gethin: 188-192). It has even been argued that emptiness (*sunnatā*) in the *Majjhima Nikaya* is definable as such purification of mind (see McCagney: 56). This is interesting in light of Mahāyāna developments.

[8] For example, the *Mahāparinirvāna Sutra*, of which only fragments survive, also regards, like the pre-Mahāyāna texts, *nirvana* as purity, in opposition to the pollution or defilement of human life (see Takakusu: 55).

[9] The Yogācāra (literally meaning "school of the practice of yoga") or "consciousness-only" (*Cittamatra, Vijnaptimatra* in Sanskrit; *Weishi* 唯識 in Chinese; *Yuishiki* in Japanese) school of Buddhism was founded by two brothers, Asanga and Vasubandhu, in the fourth and fifth centuries (see Tortchinov; Kalupahana 1976: 142-3; Kalupahana 1992: 150, 185; and Gethin: 207, 226).

[10] I would like to thank Douglas Berger for providing me with information concerning the etymology of the Sanskrit *parinispanna* and *nispanna*.

[11] The Yogācāra understanding of this sort of "pure experience" was based on the distinction between "perception permeated by concepts" (*savikalpa-pratyaksa*), that is, experience mediated by the concepts we impose upon reality, and "perception devoid of concepts" (*nirvikalpa-pratyaksa*), that is, direct experience without mediation, the immediate apprehen-

samgraha (*Summary/Compendium of the Great Vehicle*),[12] for example, written by Asanga in the 400s, treats purity as the goal of Buddhist practice. Consciousness consists in only the flow of interdependent "ideas" (*vijnapti-matra*), from which we imagine the world of subjects and objects. Through purification, the world of interdependence (*paratantra*) is brought to truth (*parinispanna*),[13] so that the tainting seeds of consciousness disappear, and we reach a state of non-discriminatory knowledge (*nirkalpa-jnana*) that overcomes the subject-object duality (see Takakusu: 82; Gethin: 247). The truth realized in this purified experience of non-conceptual knowledge (*nirvikalpaka-jnana*), that is, *parinispanna*, is supposed to be bereft of any specific character or form by which imagined (*parikalpita*) and dependent (*paratantra*) things are manifest, and thus is empty of subject and object, and even of "substance" (*svabhava*) in general (see Takakusu: 92; Gethin: 247; and Kochumuttom: 92).[14] This "unarisen nature" (*parinispanna-svabhava*) is thus pure or "purified" (*vyavadana*) of "dependent-nature" (*paratantra-svabhava*).[15]

In seeming contrast to Yogācāra's emphasis upon purification as a progressive process, there is the approach taken by the Mādhyamika tradition, influences of which we also find in Chan Buddhism. The prime representative of this school is Nāgārjuna (c. 150-200 CE), who in his *Mula-madhyamakakārikā* equates the emptiness spoken of in the *Prajnaparamita Sutra* with the dependence of beings in general, their lack of ontological independence or substance (*svabhava*) (Garfield: MKK XIV.1.2, XXIV.18). The point then is to extinguish the world of illusory substances, which leads

sion of undifferentiated and non-relational "bare sensation." The former is conceptualized, verbalized, and/or determinate experience, and the latter is experience free from conceptual assimilation, discrimination, analysis, and/or thought-processes, etc. (see Loy: 9-10). The goal here is to get back to the "bare" *nirvikalpa* perception (see Loy: 48). Loy claims that this is the goal of Buddhism in general.

[12] This is sometimes rendered as the *Mahayana-samparigraha* (or *Acceptance of the Great Vehicle*). This work was also translated into Chinese by Paramārtha in 563, who brought Yogācāra thought into China.

[13] "Completely unarisen," or "underived," frequently rendered as consummation, perfection, and realization.

[14] Yogācāra explains reality in terms of three natures: Everything in the world possesses the three natures of imagined nature (*parikalpita-svabhava*), other-dependent nature (*paratantra-svabhava*) and consummated (or non-dependent) nature (*parinispanna-svabhāva*) (see Nagao: 62; and Kochumuttom: 19, 53, 90-92, 111, 231-232).

[15] For Vasubandhu, Asanga's brother, "defiled" (*sankleśa*) refers to *ara-tantra-svbhava* and *parikalpita-svabhava*, while "pure" (*vyavadana*) refers to *parinispanna-svabhava*. The former two (the realms of imagination and of dependence) are characterized by defilement (*sankleśa-laksanam*) while the latter is characterized by purity (*vyavadana-laksanam*). Purity means the absence or emptiness (*sunyata*) of the subject-object duality (*dvaya-abhava-svabhava*). This opposition of defilement and purity corresponds to the opposition of the states of *samsara* and of *nirvana* (see Kochumuttom: 38, 57, 98, 103). Notice how here *sunyata* or "emptiness" seems to have the sense of transcending the realm of dependence, as opposed to its sense in Chinese Chan and Huayan, where the distinction between emptiness and dependency, and thus pure and impure, is dissolved. Another example of a Yogācāra thinker is Paramārtha (499-569 CE), a sixth century thinker who brought Yogācāra to China in the mid-500s. His case is discussed by Robert Forman in his contribution to the mysticism debate surrounding Katz's thesis (see Forman 1989: 396-401, 403, 405).

to misery, through the *realization* of their emptiness, that is, their dependent origination (Garfield: MKK XVIII.5).[16] This amounts to a purification of mental fictions (see McCagney: 42). However, with this co-relation of emptiness and dependence, Nāgārjuna can also state that purity (*subha*) and impurity (*asubha*) cannot exist without each other due to their very interdependence (see McCagney: 196-197 and Nakamura: 61).[17] Although Yogācāra stresses meditative awareness as opposed to Mādhyamika's logical criticism, *both* aim for the awareness of discriminative construction (impurity) for the sake of deconstructive "purification." However, while Yogācāra appears to separate the purity of *nirvāna* from the impurity of *samsara*, for Mādhyamika, *nirvāna* and *samsāra* are in fact the same, equally empty of *own*-being (substance) in their interdependence. However, there is also another reading of Yogācāra that may be more comparable with Mādhyamika's reconciliation of pure and impure: it is also possible to speak of what mediates or is common to both imagined (or "constructed") (*parikalpita*) nature and perfected (purified) (*parinispanna*) nature, as their *dependent* (*paratantra*) nature, their dependent origination.[18] That is to say, imagined nature is how the reality of dependent nature appears to the *unawakened* mind, and perfected nature is how the reality of dependent nature appears to the *awakened* mind. What happens in the course of the Sinicization of Buddhism in China is the further collapsing of such distinctions. We find this tendency in both Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen, including Huangbo 黃檗. In any case, before discussing "purity" and "impurity" in the context of Dale Wright's book on Huangbo, we need to recognize that this topic has its place within the history and tradition of Buddhist discourse, and is not totally irrelevant to Chan/Zen. Now in order to see whether Katz's theory would have any implications upon Chan/Zen claims to "pure experience" or "pure mind," we would have to examine the meaning of "purė" in Chan/Zen. More precisely, we would have to question whether "purity" really means unconstructed or unmediated (thus direct), pure, and simple, as it has often been

[16] McCagney writes that Nāgārjuna, rather than describing pure mind (like some other Buddhists were doing), "purifies mind by *śunyatā* (emptiness, openness)" (McCagney: 8).

[17] However, Garfield and Kalupahana translate *subha* and *asubha* as pleasant and unpleasant (see Garfield: 64-65 and Kalupahana 1986: 317). To be fair, the word *subha* is not related to the words *visuddhi* (purification) or *vyavadāna* (pure, purified). *Subha* also has the meanings of beautiful, proper, splendid, bright, suitable, auspicious, good, virtuous, honest, learned, happy, fortunate, lucky, etc. (see Monier-Williams). In XXIII.6, the pair of *subha-asubha*, however, appears in the context of a discussion of defilements (*kleśāl*).

[18] Kochumuttom explains that *parinispanna-svabhāva* and *paratantra-svabhāva* are not entirely different realities for Vasubandhu. The point seems to be that *parinispanna* is rather *paratantra*'s state of eternal *emptiness* of the imagined forms, *parikalpita* (see Kochumuttom: 155). This may be what allows Vasubandhu in turn to state that emptiness (*śunyata*) is both defiled (*sanklistā*) and purified (*visuddhā*), and both with and without impurities (*Madhyānta-vibhāga-kārikā* I.17; see Kochumuttom: 76-77, 84). Thus *samsara* and *nirvana* can be understood as different ways of experiencing the one and *same* reality. The distinction between pure and impure, in light of universal dependency, collapses into the emptiness of substantial being that is "imagined." This collapse becomes manifest explicitly in Chinese Chan and Huayan, but perhaps was already latent here.

assumed to mean. I would like to suggest that to take "purity" here as nothing more than the unmediated or unconstructed access to an absolute truth may run contrary to the spirit of Chan/Zen.

III. Dependent Origination and Emptiness in *Huangbo*

Much of Wright's book explicates the Buddhist notions of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). The Chan/Zen enlightenment experience usually is taken to mean the attainment of some sort of insight concerning the emptiness or dependent origination of reality. That all things and events dependently originate means that they lack ontological independence and autonomy. Things are what they are not because of any inherent nature (essence or substance) but rather because of *other* things and *other* events conditioning, influencing, shaping, etc., them. This fact of contingency means that thing-events in general are never guaranteed to last. Instead, things and events are in continuous temporal change through their inter-dependence with *other* thing-events, that is, their environment of conditions. Thing-events here include what belongs to the dimension of human culture, like texts, languages, and traditions which themselves, while conditioned, are conditions structuring other thing-events. An accomplishment of Dale Wright's text is in showing how it is not only in the physical dimension of mechanistic causal relationships that thing-events are inter-dependent, but also in the human dimension of understanding and experiencing that we find such contingency.

The focus of Wright's book is the text *Huangbo*, purported to express the ideas of the Chan monk Huangbo (d. 850 CE) and translated into English by John Blofeld in the late 1950s. The *Huangbo* text provides us with a case of co-dependent origination in the dimension of human understanding and culture. First of all, even *prior* to the writing of the text, the purported "deep inner experience" (Blofeld: 8) that served to originate Huangbo's ideas expressed in the text may have depended upon a whole network of other factors: ideas and texts from the Buddhist tradition, the particular lineage within that tradition, his teachers, his parents, the resources available to him, historical, linguistic, and cultural setting, etc. (3; references from this book will be indicated with page numbers only thereafter). Second, the texts did not come from Huangbo himself but through a mediator, Peixiu 裴休 (797-860 CE), an already trained Buddhist philosopher, who wrote what he believed Huangbo thought, and who very likely systematized and rationalized what may have been less so, in order to thus compose a text Huangbo had never written (see Wright 2, 6, 17). Third, *after* the text was written by Peixiu, he gave the manuscript to the monks of Mount Huangbo to have the text verified and edited according to what they remembered (see 7-8, 17; Blofeld: 28). This process of textual revision and editing must have continued for centuries and generations within that monastic community, and from there spreading into the broader world of Chan monasteries with

other editors and writers making contributions (17-8). If the text has been altered with each generation and monastic community to address its concerns, even the whole image projected of Huangbo as the ideal model for Chan practice, must have then undergone alteration (13, 18). Wright makes the point that all texts, in order to speak meaningfully to the concerns of a time and place other than those of its origin, must undergo such alterations (13). This is the case especially with "classics" that manage to survive the hardships of time, such as *Huangbo*. In other words, the continuation of a text is contingent upon its mutability, its ability to yield to the changing network of contingencies: a "successful text must be just as impermanent over time and place as its readers" (13). With an independent and unchanging essence, it would never survive history. As we ourselves are dependently originating along with the mutating nexus of the world, so does our reading of the text. What Wright's analysis shows is that the text of *Huangbo*, its message and the whole image of Huangbo as author and model Chan/Zen master, and even our *own* reading of the text as mediated through Blofeld's translation, have in fact "originated dependent" upon a whole matrix of changing conditions. Put differently, the textuality of *Huangbo* susceptible to revisions, alterations, and interpretations involves not only the literal text itself but the whole array of a mutating matrix of contingencies, the environing world as a text or con-text in flux from out of which Huangbo and *Huangbo*, and our reading of it, emerges. Text, self, and con-text (world) are thus all mutually inter-dependent. If the Mahāyāna concept of emptiness (*śūnyata* in Sanskrit, *kong* 空 in Chinese, *ku* in Japanese) means lack of "*own*-being" (Sanskrit *svabhāva*) or ontological independence (substance, essence) due to the contingency upon *other* factors, we may say that text, self, and world each is thus empty in this sense of dependently originating.

The emptiness of a text allows for its mutability and on-going reappropriations by each generation, its digestion in accordance with different contexts through the ages and across cultures. In this intercultural postmodern world, previously disconnected horizons of meaning are coming into closer contact to the extent of interpenetrating one another. Texts from the Far East, such as *Huangbo*, have crossed cultural boundaries to become accessible to readers in the West (albeit through appropriation within bounds permitted by the given horizon). Wright himself alludes to the possibility of a richer, more comprehensive, and more self-critical reflection through such trans-cultural and trans-epochal encounters (118).

Just as the text dependently originates in the (con)textual world of interdependent origination, so does the self as reader of text (both literal and worldly). The implication is that the self is continuously originating on the basis of both diachronic (temporal) and synchronic (spatial) conditions. This involves a hermeneutic process of ontological self-constitution. Reading and comprehending a text shapes the way we are and constitutes our "identity." Thus reader and text are related in mutual constitution involving many layers (see 38). However, this also simultaneously would have to involve the dialogical relationship of reader with environment, the worldly situation in

which this act of reading is set. Our comprehension of a book is inevitably going to draw upon our own contextual background, a "pre-understanding" that makes sense of the new (see 50-1). Thus, the hermeneutical co-constitution of reader and text is going to involve the world as (con)text that *also* must be read and interpreted. In this way, self, text, and world, each empty of essence, all co-dependently originate through mutual implication.

IV. The Experience of Emptiness: Realization of the Emptiness of Experience

Now what does all this tell us about our experiences? If self, text, and world all co-dependently originate, so does experience in general. This agrees with Steven Katz's premise that our experiences are constructed, mediated, and contextualized.[19] Peel back the layers of experience, Wright asserts, and we will find no final layer of pure experience. Instead, we will find never-ending layers of contingent conditions, each fashioning and fashioned in turn. If all experience is empty of any absolute, so is the meditative experience empty of any final resting point (see 165-6). The background of mechanical-causal factors constitute a physical thing-event; the background of psychological conditions and tendencies, genetic traits, etc., constitute our mental state in encountering that thing-event; and the background of the social, historical, and cultural contexts constitute the meaning we extract from that thing-event. All of these factors inseparable from one another will shape the experience. The experiencing mind is thus never a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) (see 166-7). Wright especially focuses upon how patterns of activity or practice we share with others pre-form our social world, each with its own language and way of understanding the world, setting up a "context of significance," that is, a horizon for our orientation within the world and for our comportment to the thing-events within it (see 72, 79, 169, 211). This idea is just as what Katz asserted about experience. However, what of the enlightenment experience in Chan/Zen? The Chan/Zen tradition at times appears to valorize this experience by asserting its immediacy. The masters supposedly claimed to have transcended the need to read books through their "direct experience" of reality. Such claims would be a historical development of the Buddhist discourse of "purification" we discussed above. Wright reminds us, though, that even such an "enlightened" mind may be dependent upon previous book learning (22-24). If we take the world itself as a (con)text that must be read, the very opposition between the "literary world" (of contextual dependencies) and the world of immediate experience itself would be a "literary" or "textual" construct (see 21). Just as the *Huangbo* text "originated dependent" upon various factors,

[19] We need to remember here that "construction," as used in the debate surrounding Katz, need not be conscious or intentional and that it is rather for the most part un- or pre-conscious.

Huangbo's enlightenment itself may be regarded as contingent upon the matrix of dependent origination.

However, the Mahāyāna concept of emptiness as dependent origination has also allowed for the very *recognition* of this contextuality of world and experience. According to Wright, Huangbo tells us that "all existents, including 'mind' and the practice of 'transmission,' 'originate dependent' upon other mutually dependent existents" (147). So the medium of dependence, language for example, itself becomes thematized as a focal point of contemplation in the *Huangbo* text and Chan/Zen in general (see 81). Now this contemplation of language *as such*, as *medium*, is a contemplation of a form of dependent origination on the basis of which thing-events (in this case our understanding, perception, experience, etc.) originate. It is a contemplation of our own state of mediatedness, our contingency. Could this be the experience of emptiness or *śunyata* that the Chan/Zen experience purports to be? Wright explains that the concept of "emptiness" articulates and, more importantly, "*makes available for experience*" the fact that all beings "co-arise," each origin conditioned by others and in turn conditioning their possibility, that is, the "larger relational complexes within which the human can be situated" (188). If we can become experientially aware of the dependent origination of the text before us, ourselves, and the world around us, that is, the entirety of thing-events, we have experienced the emptiness, the lack of substantiality, the self-lessness of all. Such emptiness for lack of its objecthood cannot be comprehended in the intellectual enterprise of representation. It is rather to be experienced *existentially* through one's own *being*. It is implied that as one comes to experience this emptiness, what previously was taken for granted no longer seems sure or secure, and as a result one feels displaced, dislodged, or dislocated from any stable ground to stand on. The overturning of a foundational set of beliefs by revealing its contingency, dependency, temporality, insecurity, etc. (see 99), showing their abysmal groundlessness, is simultaneously the experience of their very emptiness. This overturning is itself contingent, dependent upon techniques induced for this very purpose. Thus, "[a]lthough language 'lulled us to sleep'...it can also wake us up" (99). That is, the particular usage of language itself can direct us to notice how an event or encounter is situated within the interconnective matrix of time, place, and circumstance.

The very mediatedness of a meaning through its context can be made explicit through extra-ordinary, non-contextual uses of language that appear non-sensical (or absurd) and induce disorientation. The disorientation shows existentially or experientially, rather than merely theoretically, the emptiness of meaning. What this means is that Chan/Zen enlightenment cannot be any secure attainment of an absolute truth. Rather, what is obtained is "nothing." Wright tells us that the *Huangbo* texts picture enlightenment as "a shattering of subjectivity, a de-centering of the self in its exposure to the groundlessness of all beings" (197). May this be akin to awakening to one's placement upon a bottomless sea of layers of shifting grounds (as in a "mudslide"), a dynamic infinity of mediations, the anarchy

of multiple and changing *arhat*? Both within and without "we" find ourselves placed, displaced, and replaced, upon the anarchic matrix. The experience, according to the *Huangbo* texts, is "somewhat like being suspended over an infinite void, groundless, with nothing to hold on to" (97). However, to accept this would be a "release" from the will to grasp or chase after foundations and absolutes. As Wright shows, the lack of security or solid ground, the lack of closure, can also be taken *as* freedom or openness (see 67-8).

Such an experience may suggest for its content the darkest "impurity." In the face of the absence of any absolute truth to be directly apprehended, the experience is rather of "mystery." This is quite contrary to how Western apologists (like Blofeld) have hitherto understood the enlightenment experience. Now if we take "purity" to mean "direct" or "immediate" and by implication take "impurity" to mean "indirect" or "mediated," then this experience would be an experience *of* "impurity." Dependencies, contingencies, and relations, as mediation, would mean impurity. What some have called "pure" experience in Chan/Zen then would really be an experience *of* the "impurity" (of all thing-events) as infinite mediation.[20] Now if the content of the experience (i.e., *what* the experience is *of*) is thus impurity, in what sense is the experience itself pure? If we accept Wright's findings that various contingencies and conditions may constitute the enlightenment experience, the experience cannot then be said to be "pure" in the sense of a direct or immediate apprehension of an absolute principle transcendent to worldly conditions. As mediated, the experience is *impure*, for it does not transcend the contingencies of dependent origination. On the other hand, as an experience of emptiness itself, it involves a *reflective* awareness *of* this mediatedness, including its own. As an experience of emptiness, it would have to reflect its own emptiness, its own contingency. The experience paradoxically is a realization of its own emptiness. For example, as Wright asserts, enlightenment would have to reflect a deep awareness of our historicity (see 156). The experience then is *of impurity*, including its *own*. The ideal of "pure experience" that some interpreters of Chan/Zen, as well as critics like Katz, have upheld—as direct access to an absolute or universal truth—may then be misguided. However, in what other sense may this experience (an impure experience of impurity) be regarded as *pure*?

V. The "Pure" in the Experience of Impurity and the Impurity of Experience

It was suggested above that through the historical transmissions, from master to disciple, of enlightenment, there is implied a sense of freedom from

[20] NISHDA Kitarō, who considered the "purity" of pure experience to mean direct or immediate, in his later writings stopped talking about "pure experience" to focus instead more on the field or *basho* (place) of interdependencies which constitute identities through mutual oppositions and even contradictions. In a sense one might say that the later Nishida was recognizing the field of the impurity of thing-events although Nishida never put it in such terms.

the will to grasp. In connection with such freedom, there is also entailed the appropriation or digestion that realizes the meaning of what has been inherited. The implication is that the meaning of the "doctrine" of emptiness, transmitted through the history of Chan/Zen, is realized only through the overcoming of its dogmatic or doctrinal character through its existential appropriation in one's *own* experience. For the experience of emptiness is to be a *realization* of the emptiness of experience. Rather than simply memorizing or repeating the teachings, they are to be made one's own, appropriated, through experiential practice (see 131-2). However, appropriation here simultaneously entails the "appropriateness" of the way in which the teaching is appropriated for and by each individual practitioner of a time and place. That is, the appropriation must appropriately accord with the environment that conditions both the individual and the transmission. Wright states that with each new historical circumstance, the student must construct a new model out of a variety of chosen models of the past, for the sake of a new form of life and self (see 134). The "source" offered by the tradition must be made "one's own" to fit the new historical and environmental circumstances surrounding each encounter with the tradition. For this, the master must teach one "how to commune with the source *on one's own*" (153).

In a sense then this transmission and reception of tradition from one's teacher is *also* its *transcendence*, overcoming or going beyond it (see 139, 142, 156). The transmission of the doctrine of emptiness would thus imply its own overcoming *as* doctrine, by being lived. The Chan/Zen "mind" transmitted *via* mind-to-mind is thus not an a-temporal, a-historical essence, but in dependent origination with its past and present, a "continually evolving historical realization of successive generations' highest aspirations" (144). Wright thus concludes that, lacking a repeatable sameness, the enlightenment experience throughout Buddhist history cannot be "essentially" the same, if we really take into consideration the Buddhist concepts of impermanence, no self, emptiness, etc. (see 139). Each appropriation, dependent upon its past (the tradition) but also upon its present surrounding conditions, dependently originates as an "event" that itself serves as an inception for new possibilities in the future. Without a repeatable essence, enlightenment is neither the same nor different from previous ones. Rather, what is repeated is the singularity or uniqueness, serving as an inception for further possibilities. The core Chan/Zen ideas of emptiness, impermanence, dependent origination, etc., can be transmitted only as *experienced* or *lived*. Might not "purity" be suggested by the *singularity* of such a realization, "transmitted" or "repeated" but always *as a unique* experience? It is an event uninfected by the invasion of a universal (whether Platonic or Kantian) forcing the need for imitation or categorization. This emphasis upon singularity is not to deny that there *is* a continuity of sorts. As Wright pointed out in a panel discussion of his book, there is danger in an anti-essentialism that "goes too far." If each enlightenment experience is merely different from previous ones, and utterly discontinuous with its past, there would be no identifiable tradition of Chan/Zen to which it could be said to belong.

Identity and difference, continuity and discontinuity, may thus be regarded as two sides of the same coin. For identity arises in dependence upon its past from which it is simultaneously different (on the other hand, the "past"—or our understanding of it—by the same token may be said to arise in dependence upon our present as well). In any case, the sense of "transmission" in Chan/Zen seems to capture both of these aspects or sides.

As may be discerned from what is stated above in regard to appropriation, in order to allow for cross-generational transmission, the Chan/Zen experience must be continuous with its past and yet unique on account of its present conditions. The awareness of universal emptiness and contingency is simultaneously self-reflective, in acknowledging its own emptiness and emplacement into a unique place it occupies within the cosmic web of interdependency. The experience is an *event* that is impermanent and unrepeatable in the order of time, while in the order of space it is unique and singular. Yet, as it is relative and contingent upon its history and its surroundings, its *ownness* is empty rather than substantial. It is discontinuously continuous (to borrow Nishida's term, *hirenzoku no renzoku*. For example, see Nishida 1974a and 1974b) with its spatial-temporal environment, in the web of interdependent origination. Might not this singularity of the event amidst its relativity be regarded as purity amidst impurity? This may be likened to the reflection of a mirror that reflects everything else but from its own unique vantage point. Purity would then be the empty reflection of emptiness.

To existentially reflect upon one's own emptiness co-relative with the emptiness of the rest of the cosmos may be like hovering in a hall of mirrors, each mirror reflecting the infinity of reflections in all the other mirrors, without end. Fazang 法藏 (647-712 CE), the third patriarch and great systematizer of the Huayan-school of Buddhism in China, used a hall entirely covered with mirrors in order to teach Empress Wu about emptiness and interdependent origination. He placed an image of the Buddha in the middle next to a burning torch. The illumined image can be seen not only in all the mirrors but also in the mirrors within each mirror, *ad infinitum* (see Dumoulin: 47). Like the infinite reflections of such a hall of mirrors, the universe of mutually implicating constituents *is* without ground or substance. In other words, there is no absolute principle to be directly experienced in "pure experience." Might "purity" then instead be regarded as signifying this mirror-like reflection of the facticity of our interdependency? Could it refer to this reflection, from its *own* unique vantage point, of the very interdependence of everything including itself? Purity might then refer to both the singularity and the relativity of the experience as event. Mirroring the cosmic web of interdependent thing-events, the experience as "pure" reflector *realizes* selflessness, its discontinuous continuity with the rest of the cosmos. "Purity" might be then taken in this sense of the lack of substance or "own-being" (*svabhāva*) that allows for the reflection of infinite reflections *as reflections*, but *also* as an unrepeatable event of reflection uniquely emplaced within the cosmic web of inter-reflections. As singular

purified of a universal, but also as relative and contingent purified of substance, enlightenment may be a realization that mirrors its own state of being empty.

The most popular metaphor for depicting this cosmic interdependence as interpenetrating reflections is probably the metaphor of Indra's net in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, which influenced the Huayan School in China.[21] The metaphor is of an interlacing net extending infinitely in all directions, with a glittering jewel or gem placed in each "eye" of the infinite net. The polished crystal surface of each jewel reflects all the other infinite jewels, each of which reflects all the others, *ad infinitum*. Through each reflection, the infinity is multiplied and remultiplied endlessly, an infinite repetition of endless multiplication reflected in each jewel (see Chang: 165-166; Cleary: 66-67; Cook: 2, 35; Dumoulin: 47; and Loy 1993: 481). This symbolizes the interdependent origination of the entire *dharmadhatu* (realm of thing-events) and the infinitely repeated interrelationships among its constituents, endlessly referring to and implying one another (see Cleary: 135-136, 141; Cook: 3, 77). Since every thing-event is dependent upon and is depended upon by every other, it is relative to and thus implies everything else, the totality of this co-relativity. This implication of all by each means that the whole universe exists within an individual—just as each jewel in Indra's net reflects the infinity of other jewels. Perhaps the "purity" of the Chan/Zen enlightenment experience may be likened to the "purity" of one of the jewels in Indra's net, that is, as *reflecting* all the other *reflections*, mirroring the conditionality, relativity, contingency, contextuality, dependency, emptiness, i.e., impurity of all thing-events, including itself, from its *own* singular "eye" within the net.[22] That is, the experience due to just the right configuration of conditions, appropriate to that singular situation and moment, reflects, like the jewel in Indra's net, the pervasiveness of interconditionality and universality of emptiness including, its own. The empty experience of emptiness is like the mirror's mirroring of its own mirroring, the mirror's reflecting of its own reflection in the process of reflecting and being reflected by others. However, as event, despite its emptiness, each reflector is its *own*. If co-dependent origination with others is like this co-reflection of mirrors, emptiness as dependence and reflection is then both pure and impure. That is, with this metaphor of inter-reflecting mirrors or jewels, the distinction between pure and impure is dissolved.[23] The purity of the experience of this

[21] The *Buddhāvatamsaka Sūtra* ("Sūtra of the Garland of the Buddhas"), or *Avatamsaka* ("Flowery Splendor"), was the Sanskrit scripture that led to the formation of the Huayan school based upon its Chinese translation in 420 CE into the *Huayan Jing* 《華嚴經》. As a school, Huayan has often been regarded as providing the theoretical background for Chan/Zen practice. In Japan, Huayan became Kegon Buddhism.

[22] That is, to reflect (upon) the general contingency, contextuality, dependency, etc., through one's *own* contingency, contextuality, dependency, etc., may be what is referred to as "purity."

[23] The claim has also been made by ABE Masao that true purity in Mahāyāna Buddhism, as the living realization of emptiness, is in fact beyond the very distinction of pure and impure. This is the purity of *honshō-shōjō* or "original purity" (the "essential purity of everything in

(co-reflection), as thing-event, would be both the purity of reflection and the purity of its singularity in spite of being interrelated and interdependent with others, reflecting and reflected by others, from its own unique emplacement within this web of correlativity and interdependency. Wright shows the mediatedness and contextuality of the Chan/Zen enlightenment experience without implying this as a refutation of Buddhism or Chan/Zen. Rather, the contextuality is shown to confirm the Mahāyāna concepts of dependent origination and *śūnyatā*. Analogously might not the "impurity" of experience point to its "purity" as an event that is both singular and relative and dependent?

There is also a further related sense of purity in Chan/Zen Buddhism in addition to the reading set forth above, but perhaps more easily recognizable when viewed in the context of the history of Buddhism. We ought to remember that one of the primary goals of the path of Buddhism is the overcoming of suffering. Suffering, according to the Buddha, is a result of attachment. One becomes attached to a thing-event with the attitude that it ought to be something everlasting and mine, a substance I can possess. With the inevitable passing of that thing-event, for everything is impermanent due to its dependent nature, one experiences suffering. Suzuki, who was perhaps the Zen thinker most influential in the West, explained enlightenment as *releasement* from attachment (see Suzuki: 143). This freedom from the will to grasp was also touched upon in our discussion of Wright's book. If this is what the purity of the "pure experience" of Chan/Zen refers to, then its meaning is indeed different from what Katz in his polemic against "pure experience" had in mind. Instead of referring to the unmediated experience of an absolute truth, purity in this case then would refer to purification from clinging tendencies. Perhaps this is how "pure experience" in the Buddhist context ought to be taken—more as releasement from the felt need to postulate and cling to absolute truths than an immediate access to such truths. Purity taken as such purification from the disposition of attachment would also be in line with the earlier Buddhist notion of *visuddhi* as purification from defilements discussed above (for example see Nānamoli: 242-244 [Sutta 24.9-15] and 1214, footnote 288; Kalu-

itself"), distinguished from *riku-shōjō*, the "purity of leaving defilement," that is, leaving impurity, or "disdefilement." Abe derives his understanding of these two phases of "purity," "original" and "disdefiling," from the *Mahāyānasamgraha* of the Yogācāra school, which we discussed earlier (see Abe 1966: 183). Because the pure-impure discrimination itself is impure for remaining confined by that very distinction, the attitude of aiming for the attainment of purity, as a state to be achieved *outside* of oneself, is to be regarded as defiled or impure. The attitude is impure because it objectifies the pure (see Abe: 184, 185). Instead the truly pure position or stance is without discrimination, and is the prior basis of such discrimination (see Abe: 185). In spite of its relative purity or impurity, everything, by virtue of standing upon this basis, is already pure in its "original self" (see Abe: 185). The same goes for the distinction between "delusion" and "enlightenment," according to Abe (see Abe: 186). Prior to any conceptual opposition between pure and impure, enlightenment and delusion, "everything is pure in itself" as "original purity." Abe takes the realization of this to be the living realization of "original emptiness," the emptiness prior to the distinction of forms (see Abe: 186, 187, 189).

palana 1992: 208-209, 215; and Gethin: 188-192.). However the point emphasized more explicitly in Chan/Zen (as well as in Huayan) seems to be that with this purification, the very dichotomy of pure and impure becomes obsolete as neither is any longer taken as an object of attachment. Rather than leading to any sort of epistemic certainty, Chan/Zen practice is to lead to an openness, which according to Wright is characterized by "letting go" (135).

On the basis of awakening to the pervasiveness of interdependent origination, to thus reflect the co-relativity and interdependency of thing-events, one is purified in the sense of being de-tached, freed from attachments. The world is there just as before: thing-events are still dependent and conditioned. However, it is this very interdependency that, with the right configurations, may give rise to an experience that reflects this very interdependency, uniquely from its own vantage point in time and space. The awakening to emptiness then is still conditioned and empty. However, while remaining within and contingent to this very web of conditions, the awakening ought to be liberating, for it would free one from the need to attach oneself to anything with the illusion that it is substantial, somehow independent of the web of interdependency, when in fact everything is interdependent and thus empty. Since it is this illusory substantiality that in desperation we chase after, and as a consequence suffer, this awakening would thus be the overcoming of suffering. In any case this would be one sense of purity in the Chan/Zen enlightenment experience, as purification from the tendency of attachment. This may however lead to another set of issues that we do not have the space to deal with here—the question of whether a reversal of the conditioning process that predisposes one to project substantiality and become attached to it is really possible or not. My point is that, if dependent origination is universal, we would still have to rely on another set of conditions to help that de-conditioning (i.e., "purification") process. The way in which Chan masters used language or gestures in certain enigmatic ways to make their students *confront* the very emptiness of what they have been conditioned to believe often due to language itself—as discussed above—may be an example. Due to the right configuration of conditions, one may become enlightened to this fact of conditionality and thus be released from clinging. In this soteriological sense, purity then means purification from attachment, even if we may still regard this purification as impure for belonging to the network of interdependent and co-relative thing-events; that is to say, even if this de-conditioning from the tendency of attachment is still conditioned. It is purity amidst impurity. Put differently, in the empty experience of emptiness, we find nothing to cling to—not even purity or impurity, pure or impure experience.[24] May this not be like the jewel or mirror reflecting the reflections of reflections *ad infinitum* but without reflecting any particular object? I think that this agrees with the general Mahāyāna sense that nirvāna and *samsara* are not different: "When

[24] Huangbo taught that there is "nothing to be grasped," and that one must avoid clinging to any thought succeeding one after the other (Blofeld: 106, 111).

the mind of purity and impurity is ended... although it remains in the world of *samsara*, that mind is free" (Cleary: 79).

VI. Conclusion

One of Katz's contentions is that if experience has been conditioned in some sense, constructed or contextualized, it cannot be pure because it has been mediated by its conditions. This in fact confirms the Mahāyāna doctrines of dependent origination and emptiness. Dale Wright's book *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism* demonstrates this dependent origination and emptiness as thematized by Chan/Zen Buddhism. Drawing on the Buddhist concept of dependent origination and emptiness, that nothing is substantial and everything is empty (of substantiality) due to its dependence upon other factors, any sort of experience must then be admittedly impure in Katz's sense. Wright's book shows the emptiness and dependent origination lying behind Chan/Zen practice itself. If the enlightenment experience in Chan/Zen is the experience of emptiness, that is, the dependent origination of all thing-events, the enlightenment experience is also an experience of its own emptiness. If emptiness means dependent origination, that is, conditionedness, and if conditionality is the meaning of impurity, then the enlightenment experience is also an experience of impurity, including the impurity of itself; it is then an *impure* experience of *impurity*. This is the paradox of so-called "pure experience." My suggestion in this article, however, is that, despite this impurity, there is a sense in which the experience could also be said to be "pure"—not in the sense of being unconstructed or unmediated, but rather in a sense comparable to the purity of each jewel in Indra's net, in its reflection of the infinity of inter-reflecting jewels from its own vantage point within the web of inter-reflections. This is not a denial of Katz's contention that the enlightenment experience is conditioned or caused. However, under the right set of conditions or configurations of dependent origination, a set which must be singularly appropriate to that time and place of occurrence and thus unrepeatable in essence, the experience of the interdependent origination or emptiness of all, including one's own very self and experience, is perhaps made possible. Observing the experience from the outside, we notice the conditions and causes leading up to it, and can regard it as thus impure. This does not disestablish the purity that may be claimed for the experience in the above sense of a "reflection" (a *singular* experience, *reflecting universal* emptiness) attained under the right conditions.[25] Amidst impurity, and even *due* to impurity, might there not be

[25] For example, in observing two polished mirrors facing each other to mutually reflect one another's reflections of reflections *ad infinitum*, but with no object in between, we can have only an imperfect view from an oblique angle of a limited number of those reflections. We cannot know what that infinity of reflections reflected in each mirror, each empty of content except for the infinity of reflections of reflections, etc., must be like. It is impossible for the outsider to discern what form the content of those reflections would take. To experience

the pure spark of a singular reflection? Furthermore, purity can designate releasement from attachment to things posited as substances when in fact they are empty. Paradoxically, this purification is impure, for it arises due to conditions. Yet in spite of this impurity, enlightenment designates the lived *awareness* of this very impurity, that is, emptiness or dependent origination of thing-events. That is to say, in reflecting the *impurity* of all, this awareness is simultaneously a release, that is, a *purification*, from clinging to them. In harmony with the general Mahāyāna dissolution of dualistic distinctions, we may then regard the Chan/Zen experience of enlightenment as pure amidst its impurity, but simultaneously as reducible neither to mere purity nor to mere impurity.[26]

References

Abe, Masao. 1966. "The Idea of Purity in Mahāyāna Buddhism." *Numen. International Review for the History of the Religions* XIII: 183-189.

Blofeld, John. 1958. *The Zen Teaching of Huangbo on the Transmission of Mind.* New York: Grove Press.

Chang, Garma Cheng Chi. 1971. *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality, the Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University.

Cleary, Thomas. 1983. *Entry Into the Inconceivable.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii.

Cook, Francis H. 1977. *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Dumoulin, Heinrich. 1988. *Zen Buddhism: A History; Vol. 1, India and China.* Trans. by James W. Heisig & Paul Knitter. New York: Macmillan.

Faure, Bernard. 1993. *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Forman, Robert K.C. 1989. "Paramartha and Modern Constructivists on Mysticism; Epistemological Monomorphism Versus Duomorphism." *Philosophy East & West* 39: 393-418.

____. 1990. "Introduction: Mysticism, Constructivism, and Forgetting." In *The Problem of Pure Consciousness, Mysticism and Philosophy.* Edited by Robert K.C. Forman. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Garfield, Jay L. trans. & commentary. 1995. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the*

this, one would have to be the mirror itself. In this respect, despite my agreement with much of the contextualist and constructivist arguments, I think that the significance of the standpoint of the practitioner him/herself who has this experience ought not to be ignored—as is emphasized for example in Nagatomo.

[26] I would like to thank the following, who have provided comments, suggestions, and ideas, or provided help in one manner or another, and without whom this paper would not have been possible: Sucharita Adluri, Dr. Douglas Berger, Dr. Nina Gourianova, Dr. Tao Jiang, Dr. Shigenori Nagatomo, Dr. Ellen Zhang, and Dr. Dale Wright. I would also like to thank Dr. Yong Huang, the editor of this journal, as well as the anonymous reviewers of this essay for providing helpful suggestions.

Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
Gethin, Rupert. 1998. *The Foundations of Buddhism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Heisig, James W. 2000. *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Kalupahana, David J. 1976. *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis.* Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.
_____. 1986. *Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way.* Albany: SUNY Press.
_____. 1992. *A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Katz, Steven T. 1978. "Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism." In *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis.* Edited by Steven T. Katz. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Kochumuttom, Thomas A. 1982. *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience: A New Translation and Interpretation of the Works of Vasubandhu the Yogācārin.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
Loy, David. 1993. "Indra's Postmodern Net." *Philosophy East and West* 43: 481-510.
Loy, David. 1998. *Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy.* Amherst: Humanity Books.
McCagney, Nancy. 1997. *Nāgārjuna and the Philosophy of Openness.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
Monier-Williams, M. 1999. *Sanskrit-English Dictionary.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pub. Reprint.
Nagao, Gadjin. 1991. *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies.* New York: SUNY Press.
Nagatomo, Shigenori. 2002. "A Critique of Steven Katz's 'Contextualism': An Asian Perspective." *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* I: 185-207.
Nakamura Hajime. 1964. *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet, Japan.* Honolulu: East-West Center Press.
Nānamoli, Bhikkhu, orig. trans., & Bhikku Bodhi, trans. & ed. 2001 (1995). *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (a Translation of the* Majjhima Nikāya). Boston: Wisdom Publications.
Nishida, Kitarō. 1974a. "Ronri to seimei" ("Logic and Life"). In *Kindai nihon shisho taikei 11: Nishida Kitarōshū* (*A Compendium of Modern Japanese Thought.* Vol. II: *Anthology of NISHIDA Kitarō*). Edited by Takeuchi Yoshitomo. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō.
_____. 1974b. "Watashi to nanji" ("I and Thou"). In *Kindai nihon shisho taikei 11: Nishida Kitarōshū* (A Compendium of Modern Japanese Thought, vol. 11: Anthology of Nishida Kitarō). Edited by Takeuchi Yoshitomo. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō.
_____. 1990. *An Inquiry into the Good.* Trans. by ABE Masao & Christopher Ives. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Paul, Diana Y. 1984. *Philosophy of Mind in Sixth-Century China: Paramartha's*

Evolution of Consciousness.' Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Suzuki, D.T. n.d. *Essays in Zen Buddhism (First Series).* New York: Grove Press.
Takakusu, Junjiro. 1956. *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy.* Westport: Greenwood Press.
Takeuchi, Yoshinori, ed. 1999. *Buddhist Spirituality: Later China, Korea, Japan, and the Modern World.* New York: Crossroad Pub.
Tortchniov, Evgueni A. n.d. "The Yogacara School of the Mahayana Buddhist Philosophy (Trends and Subdivisions)." www.kheper.net/ topics/Buddhism/Yogacara.html.
Wright, Dale S. 1998. *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.