

# The Manifestation of the Absolute in the Phenomenal World

## Nature Origination in Huayan Exegesis

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### Nature origination in Huayan studies

Nature origination is undoubtedly a central feature of Huayan Buddhism; one which cannot be ignored in any discussion of the special Huayan tenets, i.e. *dharma-dhātu* dependent arising (*fajie yuanqi* 法界緣起), phenomena and principle (*shili* 事理), ten profound gates (*shi xuan men* 十玄門), six marks (*liu xiang* 六相), four *dharma-dhātus* (*si fajie* 四法界), and so on. It is widely known that this term derives from the title of the thirty-second chapter of the 60-fascicle *Huayanjing* 華嚴經, *Baowang rulai xingqi pin* 寶王如來性起品. This can be translated as *Nature Origination of the Jewel King Tathāgata* (we will refer to it as *Manifestation of the Tathāgata*) translated by Buddhahadra in 420. However, its meaning is thought to be primarily influenced by the *Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論, T. 1666, 1667), which describes mind in two aspects: mind as suchness (*xin zhenru* 心真如) and mind subject to birth-and-death (*xin shengmie* 心生滅). Fazang identifies the former aspect with the Absolute (*li* 理) and the latter with the phenomenal (*shi* 事), and regards the manifestation of their unobstructed interaction as *ālayavijñāna*. Next, the *ālayavijñāna*, which is identical with *tathāgatagarbha*, is said to give rise to all *dharmas* (Gregory 1991: 157-158.).

In Japanese Huayan studies nature origination is discussed from several points of view. Takasaki Jikidō extensively studied the formation and evolution of *tathāgatagarbha* thought (Takasaki 1966, 1974). He meticulously compared the various versions of the *Sūtra Manifestation of the Tathāgata* in order to find the possible original Sanskrit equivalent of the term 'nature origination' which appears not only in the title of the *sūtra*, but also in the text itself<sup>1</sup> (Takasaki 1960: 282-289). In some versions, the compound

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1. Today we have five versions of this work: four in Chinese, one in Tibetan:

- 1) *Fo shuo rulai xingxian jing* 佛說如來興顯經 (T. 10, 291: 592a1-617b7)
- 2) *Baowang rulai xingqi pin* 寶王如來性起品 (T. 9, 278: 611b1-631b5)
- 3) *Rulai chuxian pin* 如來出現品 (T. 10, 279: 262a15-278c22)
- 4) *Dafangguang rulai xingqi weimizang jing* 大方廣如來性起微密藏經 (Kimura 1999)
- 5) *De-bzhin-gshegs-pa skye-ba 'byung-ba* (Peking 761: 75b2-142b4)

'nature origination' appears only in the name of the bodhisattva-interlocutor called Rulai zuxing chengshou 如來族姓成首 in Dharmarakṣa's version, Rulai xingqi miaode 如來性起妙德 in Buddhabhadra's and Śikṣānanda's versions, and De-bzhin gshegs-pa'i rigs-su byung-ba'i dpal in the Tibetan translation. According to the Tibetan and Śikṣānanda's versions, here this compound means "born into the lineage of Tathāgata." Takasaki reconstructed the original Sanskrit term as *gotra-* (or *kula-*) *saṃbhūta*. On the basis of the Tibetan title, *De-bzhin gshegs-pa skye-ba 'byung ba* and the *Mahāvīyūtpatti*, he reconstructed the original title as *Tathāgata-utpatti-saṃbhava-nirdeśa-sūtra* (Takasaki 1958). He translated the Tibetan version into Japanese (Takasaki 1981). He showed that this *sūtra*, which was translated first by Dharmarakṣa as an independent *sūtra*, is a precursor of *tathāgatagarbha* thinking. The term *tathāgatagarbha* (*rulaizang* 如來藏) appears only once in Buddhabhadra's translation, but the other versions do not confirm the existence of this term in the original text, thus it must be Buddhabhadra's interpolation (Takasaki 1960: 281). However, the text explicitly claims the presence of Buddha's wisdom in all living beings, or at least, as we will see later, in almost all living beings.

Although there are several other studies of this very important early *Mahāyāna sūtra* (Kagawa 1967; Itō 1967; Kaginushi 1972, 1973, 1974; Kawanabe 1976, Kawano 1995; Kimura 1999), we will now turn our attention to the study of the Chinese exegetical tradition of this scripture. Even if nature origination is regarded as one of the most important Huayan innovations, anybody attempting to reconstruct the development of this concept must have recourse to a few passages scattered among the works of Huayan masters. In addition, these passages often seem to be rather terse and cryptic, thus demanding considerable hermeneutical effort on the part of the reader to decipher their meanings. In analysing these passages of Huayan commentaries the context of the *sūtra* is often neglected, so it is hardly surprising that the term "nature origination" and its meaning easily become detached from the *sūtra*.

We find several studies on the theory of nature origination as it was propounded by the second patriarch of the Huayan tradition, Zhiyan 智嚴 (602-668), who first used this term. It has been shown that the southern Dilun 地論 master, Huiyuan 慧遠 (523-592), strongly influenced his formulation of the concept. In Huiyuan's work we find the term 'dependent origination of absolute nature' (*zhenxing yuanqi* 真性緣起)<sup>2</sup> (Kamata 1957, 1965: 566). However, Zhiyan lays more emphasis on the tainted aspect of the mind than Huiyuan did in his philosophy (Ishii 1979). Other scholars study the change in the meaning of nature origination as taught by Fazang 法藏 (643-712), who elaborated Zhiyan's Huayan tenets and is regarded as the founder of the orthodox Huayan philosophy

The first is the earliest Chinese translation, made by Dharmarakṣa between 265 and 289. This early translation clearly shows that it is an early *Mahāyāna sūtra*, and had existed independently before it came to be a chapter in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. The second and third renditions are included in the 60- and 80-fascicle *Huayanjing*, respectively. The fourth version has been lost in China but was found in Japan among the manuscripts discovered recently in the Nanatsudera temple of Nagoya. However, this text seems to be a version of the *Baowang rulai xingqi pin* as it is very similar to it, but contains several errors, probably due to inaccurate copying. This demonstrates the popularity of this *sūtra* because it was taken out of the *Huayanjing* and circulated independently. The fifth version is a chapter from the Tibetan translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. See Hamar 2003: 340-341.

2. 真者所謂如來藏性。恒沙佛法。同體緣集。不離不脫不斷不異。此之真性緣起。集成生死涅槃。真所集故。無不真實。(T. 44, 1851: 483a26-29)



(Nakajō 1988, Liu 1995). As we might expect, Fazang actually discussed in greater detail certain aspects of nature origination that were rather obscure in Zhiyan's works. Even if we cannot find a thorough treatment of this term in the writings of Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635-730), the lay hermit of Wutaishan, Kojima Taizan argues that it played a crucial role in his philosophy; however, his understanding of nature origination was based on the *Book of Change*, and was thus at variance with Fazang's (Kojima 1991a). Kojima argued that actually there were two branches of Huayan tradition connected with two of the sacred mountains of Chinese Buddhism: the Zhongnanshan 終南山, near Chang'an and Wutaishan 五台山, the alleged abode of Mañjuśrī (Kojima 1991b). The special emphasis on nature origination and the nonobstruction of principle and phenomenal was characteristic of the Wutaishan branch, while the nonobstruction of phenomena was the hallmark of the Zhongnan branch represented by Zhiyan and Fazang. Finally, Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839), the fourth patriarch of Huayan tradition, who spent time on both mountains, united the two branches. His theory of four *dharmā-dhātus* included both the nonobstruction of principle and phenomenal and the nonobstruction of phenomena (Hamar 1998). Chengguan definitely represents a new phase in the history of Huayan Buddhism, and his innovations in Huayan philosophy became fully-fledged in the writings of his disciple, Zongmi 宗密 (780-841) (Hamar 1999, 2002). They were influenced by the Tiantai doctrine of nature inclusion (*xingju* 性具) in formulating their doctrines of nature origination (Kamata 1957). We find several studies investigating the interaction between nature origination and nature inclusion. Finally, Zongmi defines very clearly the role of nature origination and its relationship with dependent arising of *dharmā-dhātu* and Buddhist practice (Gregory 1991: 187-192).

As we saw above, studies of nature origination from different points of view have contributed to our modern understanding of this important Huayan concept. However, in most cases these studies either try to take this term out of the context of the *Sūtra Manifestation of the Tathāgata* and the whole *Huayanjing* in order to establish a kind of philosophical system in Huayan Buddhism, or surmise that this kind of system is consciously or unconsciously inherent in it. In the Huayan classification of teachings (*panjiao* 判教), the *Huayanjing* is ranked as the highest teaching of the Buddha, being the scripture which directly reveals the experience of enlightenment, the absolute truth without any mediation as the Buddha recognised it in his complete enlightenment. Huayan masters (Zhiyan, Fazang, Huiyuan, Li Tongxuan, Chengguan) devoted themselves writing extensive commentaries to this scripture, which is one of the most voluminous *Mahāyāna sūtras*. In the process of composing these works they tried to understand *buddhavacana* as faithfully as possible. All the Huayan tenets are in one way or another closely related to the vision of truth which the scripture offers, and the Huayan exegetes endeavour to explore this realm relying on their knowledge of other Buddhist scriptures and praxis. Consequently, nature origination should be understood in the context of the *Huayanjing*, and not as a term for which the scripture serves only as a pretext and which developed outside the framework of the *sūtra*.

### The meaning of nature origination in the *sūtra*

What is the *Sūtra Manifestation of the Tathāgata* about? What is its connection with the whole *Huayanjing*? At the beginning of the *sūtra*, the Buddha appears as emitting

light that illuminates all the worlds and extinguishes the sufferings of all beings. Finally, the light enters the head of the bodhisattva Wondrous Quality of the Origination of *Tathāgata*-nature. Inspired by the light of the Buddha the bodhisattva asks who is able to reveal the Buddha's teaching. Then the Buddha emits light from his mouth, which again arrives at the mouth of bodhisattva Samantabhadra. In reply to the question of bodhisattva Wondrous Quality of the Origination of *Tathāgata*-nature, he relates that the Buddha shows this kind of transformation before declaring the teaching of the manifestation of *Tathāgata*. Next, bodhisattva Wondrous Quality of the Origination of *Tathāgata*-nature poses ten questions, to which Samantabhadra replies in the remaining part of the *sūtra*. The ten topics are as follows: 1. the characteristics of the manifestation of *Tathāgata*; 2. the body of *Tathāgata*; 3. the voice of *Tathāgata*; 4. the mind of *Tathāgata*; 5. the realm of *Tathāgata*; 6. the deeds of *Tathāgata*; 7. the perfect enlightenment of *Tathāgata*; 8. the turning of the *Dharma* wheel by *Tathāgata*; 9. the *parinirvāṇa* of *Tathāgata*; 10. the merits that stem from seeing, hearing and being associated with *Tathāgata*. Each of the first four topics is described from ten aspects, and is discussed for twice as long than the remaining six topics. This might suggest that the first four topics are closely related, and that they might indicate a possible *urtext* of the *sūtra*. Although the term *trikāya* does not appear in the text, this *sūtra* exhibits clear signs of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. According to this scripture the Buddha does not in fact appear in the world and does not enter *parinirvāṇa*, but remains in the pure *dharma-dhātu* (*qīngjīng fājie* 清淨法界) forever. However, he manifests (*shixian* 示現) his *nirvāṇa* and performs other actions for the benefit of all living beings (T. 10, 279: 276b16-19). Nonetheless, his appearance in the world is not real: it is described as illusion or vision. He acts spontaneously without effort or discrimination, responding to the needs of beings. He is present everywhere in the universe where living beings are in need; he is like the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, rain and space. To put it simply, the *sūtra* relates how the Absolute appears in the world of phenomena. This content is very much in accordance with the theme of *Huayanjing*, as the whole *sūtra* describes how the Buddha manifests himself and his teaching after attaining enlightenment.

Explaining the features of the mind of the Buddha, the *sūtra* states that all living beings are endowed with the wisdom of *Tathāgata*. The following is the passage in question translated from the Tibetan version.<sup>3</sup>

Son of Buddha, the wisdom of *Tathāgata* is present everywhere. Why? Son of Buddha, in the class of living beings<sup>4</sup> there is no place where the wisdom of *Tathāgata* is not present. Why is it that? The wisdom of *Tathāgata* is not established due to grasping the discrimination/consciousness (*'du shes*), because the omniscient wisdom, the self-existent<sup>5</sup> wisdom and the nonobstructed wisdom perfectly appear in total disconnection with discrimination.

3. Takasaki's Japanese translation: さらにまた、ジナの子よ、如来の知恵はあらゆるものに浸透している。それは何ゆえであるか。ジナの子よ、衆生の群類のなかで、如来の知恵が浸透していないようなものは一つもない。それはまた何ゆえであるか。如来の知恵は想念にむすぼれたものたちには確立することはないが、全知者(たる如来)の知恵なるものは、なんであれ、汚れの付着していない知恵であって、想念(のむすぼれ)から離れることによって、そのはたらきをあらわすのである。See Takasaki 1981: 223-224.

4. *Sems can gyi ris* is reconstructed as *sattvanikāya* by Takasaki. See Takasaki 1981: 402, n. 60.

5. *Rang 'byung* might be *svayambhū*. See Hopkins 1989: 438.



k ye rgyal ba'i sras gzhan yang de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes ni thams cad du khyab pa ste / de ci'i phyir zhe na / k ye rgyal ba'i sras sems can gyi ris na / de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes kyis thams cad du ma khyab pa de lta bu gang yang med de / de yang ci'i phyir zhe na / de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes ni 'du shes su 'dzin pas rnam par dgod pa ma yin te / thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes rang 'byung gi ye shes chags pa med pa'i ye shes ni 'du shes dang / rnam par bral bas rab tu 'byung ngo // (Derge: Phal chen, volume ga 116b3-116b5)

(Dharmarakṣa) 復次佛子，如來之慧遊入一切，聖智巍巍，靡不周遍一切黎庶，終始之界。所以者何？若有欲想，世尊之慧，欲及達者，未之有也。又如來慧悉離諸相，自在之慧則遊自然，無所罣礙。  
(T. 10, 291: 607c1-4)

(Buddhabhadra) 復次佛子，如來智慧無處不至。何以故？無有眾生無眾生身，如來智慧不具足者，但眾生顛倒不知如來智。遠離顛倒，起一切智，無師智無礙智。  
(T. 9, 278: 623c23-27)

(Śikṣānanda) 復次佛子，如來智慧無處不至。何以故？無一眾生，而不具有如來智慧，但以妄想顛倒執著，而不證得。若離妄想，一切智自然智，無礙智則得現前。  
(T. 10, 279: 272c4-7)

In the text this is the tenth aspect of the mind of Tathāgata, claiming that his wisdom is omnipresent in living beings. As we saw above this statement can be interpreted as an early appearance of *tathāgatagarbha* thought. The wisdom of Tathāgata is inherent in all living beings, but due to false discrimination it cannot manifest. As soon as discrimination is eliminated all living beings can realize that their minds are no different from the enlightened mind of the Tathāgata, and then the non-discriminating mind of Tathāgata will appear in them. Once this mind is created in the course of enlightenment, the awakened person is detached from ordinary mental activities, and his mind comes to be described as wisdom<sup>6</sup> (Griffith 1994: 153-158). This wisdom is depicted in terms of three aspects here: it is omniscient, self-existent and nonobstructed. This passage seems to prove that the *sūtra* teaches the universal potential of Buddhahood as all living beings are said to possess *tathāgatajñāna* and to be able to make it appear.

However, the seventh aspect of the mind of Tathāgata seems to contradict this assumption.

Son of Buddha, the Tathāgata's wisdom, the great king of medicine called non-accomplished root<sup>7</sup> does not come into being in two places. What are those two? It does not come into being in the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* who have fallen in the abyss of non conditioned and in those vessels who have deteriorated faculty and motivation and who are filled with the water of craving. Son of Buddha, the Tathāgata's wisdom, the great king of medicine has the character of not coming into being [in those two places], thus it does not come into being, [but] it does not have the character that it does not come into being completely. In bodhisattvas with highest intention and equal mind it comes into being. In accordance with the devotion and highest intention of living beings, Tathāgata's wisdom, the great

6. In Chengguan's exegesis of this *sūtra* the question of whether Buddha has a mind is extensively discussed from the viewpoint of *faxiangzong* and *faxingzong*. See Hamar 2003.

7. As the *sūtra* explains, it is called nonaccomplished because this root never ceases to grow.

king of medicine has the character of coming into being. Son of Buddha, consider this! Although the wisdom of Tathāgata neither increases nor decreases and its root never becomes accomplished, it always appears incessantly.<sup>8</sup>

k ye rgyal ba'i sras de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes sman gyi rgyal po chen po rtsa ba ma grub pa de ni gnas gnyis nas mi skye ste / gnyis gang zhe na / 'di lta ste / 'dus ma byas kyi g-yang du ltung ba nyan thos dang / rang sangs rgyas rnams dang / dbang po dang bsam pa nyams pa'i snod lta ba dang sred pa'i chus gang ba las mi skye ste / k ye rgyal ba'i sras de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes sman gyi rgyal po chen po de mi skye ba'i chos can la mi skye zhes yongs su mi skye ba'i chos can yang ma yin te / byang chub sems dpa' lhag pa'i bsam pa chen po can / mnyam pa'i sems dang ldan pa rnams la skye ste / ji tsam du sems can rnams kyi mos pa dang / lhag pa'i bsam pa yod pa de tsam du de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes sman gyi rgyal po chen po de rnam par skye ba'i chos can du 'gyur ro // k ye rgyal ba'i sras ltos dang / de bzhin gshegs pa'i ye shes la 'phel zhing 'grib pa med la rtsa ba grub pa med kyang gtan tu rgyun mi chad par snang ba yin te / (Derge: Phal chen, volume ga 115a5-115b2)

(Dharmarakṣa) 以是之故，如來之慧不由二事而有所生也。何等為二？謂無為及與有為之大曠谷，若墮於谿澗，而遊無極無為之事，於諸聲聞緣覺之乘。又其志性，不與俱合，亦無所畏，遊於三愛三流之原。於如來慧，亦無所生，亦不退還。若有所生，已達聖性，修平等心。於諸菩薩，無有彼此，且觀正覺，大道暉赫，巍巍無底，而為真諦，慧不增減。其根堅住，令諸眾生，究竟通達，了無偽信。

(T. 10, 291: 606c25-607a4)

(Buddhabhadra) 佛子，如來智慧大藥王樹唯除二處不得生長，所謂聲聞、緣覺、涅槃、地獄深坑及諸犯戒、邪見、貪著非法器等。而如來樹非不生長，其餘一切應受化者，皆悉生長，而如來智慧大藥王樹不增不減。

(T. 9, 278: 623b25-c1)

(Śikṣānanda) 佛子，如來智慧大藥王樹，唯於二處不能「作生長利益，所謂二乘墮於無「廣大深」及壞善根非器眾生溺大邪見貪愛之水。然亦於彼曾無厭捨。佛子，如來智慧無有增減，以根善安住，生無休息故。

(T. 10, 279: 272b6-11)

The wording of the Tibetan text is quite different from all the Chinese versions, though we can find elements of it in Dharmarakṣa's translation. This quite clearly proves that the Tibetan translation was made from the Sanskrit, and not from the Chinese, in spite of claims to the contrary in the comparative catalogue of Buddhist scriptures compiled under the Yuan dynasty.<sup>9</sup> However, both Dharmarakṣa's and Buddhabhadra's

8. Takasaki's Japanese translation: ジナの子よ、この「根がまだ完成していない」と名づける如來の知恵の大藥王(樹)は、二箇所からは生じない。二箇所とはどこであるか。すなわち、生滅を離れた絶対の世界の楽しみにふける(他の衆生の救済を顧みない)仏弟子の道にあるものたちや、独力でさとりをひらいたものたちと、その能力と志が低劣で、(その)器が、根元的執着の水で満たされたものたちとからは生じない。ジナの子よ、この如來の知恵の大藥王(樹)は、(以上の二箇所においては)生じない性質のものであるから不生というが、(しかし)まったく生じない性質のものではない。偉大なる深い宗教心をもつ菩薩たち、(すべての衆生に対し)平等心をもつ(菩薩たち)に生ずる(のはもちろん)、衆生たちに(如來に対する)信頼と深い宗教心のあるかぎり、(そのすべての衆生において、)この如來の知恵の大藥王(樹)は生ずる性質があるものとなる。ジナの子よ、ごらん、如來の知恵には増減はなく、根が完成することもないけれども、常に不斷にあらわれるのである。See Takasaki 1981: 220-221.

9. Qing Jixiang 慶吉祥 composed the catalogue titled *Zhiyuan fabao kantong zonglu* 至元法寶勘同總錄 in 1285-1287. For this claim, see T. 99, 190b.



texts, like the Tibetan version, state very clearly that the wisdom of the Buddha cannot grow in followers of Hinayāna and in those beings who do not have the requisite capacity. In contrast to these versions, Śikṣānanda adds that the wisdom of Tathāgata does not detest or reject even those beings (然亦於彼曾無厭捨). Śikṣānanda or his Chinese associates might have found the explicit statement that some beings are denied access to the wisdom of Tathāgata untenable in the Tang period, when the tenet of universal Buddhahood was prevalent. Nonetheless, as we do not have the Sanskrit text that Śikṣānanda used, we cannot completely exclude the possibility that the original text included this sentence. As we will see later, Chinese exegetes were to solve this contradiction, proving the universal presence of Buddha-nature.

Finally, let us examine the occurrences of the term "nature origination" in Buddhahadra's translation and its corresponding expressions in the other three versions of the *Sūtra Manifestation of the Tathāgata*:

Buddhabhadra	Dharmarakṣa	Śikṣānanda	Tibetan
1. 如來性起妙德菩薩	如來族姓成首菩薩	如來性起妙德菩薩	byang chub sems dpa' de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs su byung ba'i dpal
2. 如來性起正法	如來興顯經典	如來出現法門	de bzhin gshegs pa 'byung ba bstan pa'i chos kyi nam grangs
3. 如來、應供、等正覺性起正法	如來至、等正覺興顯成	佛如來、應正、等覺出現之法	de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas nam kyi skye ba 'byung ba bstan pa
4. 如來性起正法	如來興顯現身	如來、應正、等覺出現之法	de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas nam kyi skye ba 'byung ba bstan pa
5. 如來、應供、等正覺性起正法	諸如來處	此處	de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas skye ba 'byung ba bstan pa
6. 如來性起正法	興顯示現懷來講法	如來出現	de bzhin gshegs pa skye ba 'byung ba bstan pa
7. 如來性起正法	如來興出現	如來出現之法	de bzhin gshegs pa 'byung ba

8. 如來性起正法	興顯示現懷來講法	如來出現	de bzhin gshegs pa skye ba 'byung ba bstan pa
9. 性起法		如來出現	skye bar 'gyur ba'i
10. 如來性起法		如來出現法	'byung ba
11. 不斷如來性起	不斷「如來種性	不斷如來種	de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs rgyun mi 'chad pa
12. 如來性起法	如來之族姓	如來出現廣大法	de bzhin gshegs pa rnams kyi rigs
13. 如來性起法	如來不斷佛種	如來出現	de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs tha mi dad pa
14. 演說如來性起 法雨		興大法雲，雨大法雨	sangs rgyas rnams 'byung ba'i tshe / chos kyi sprin chen po char mngon par 'bab pa yang
15. 說如來性起甘 露法雨	如來法澤	興大法雲，雨大法雨	de bzhin gshegs pa'i chos kyi sprin gyi char mngon par 'bab pa yang

The first example is the name of the bodhisattva addressed by Samantabhadra, who actually expounds the teaching of the *sūtra*. This is the only example of the compound 'nature origination' in the other three versions. Most often (2-8) we find the expression the "correct *dharma* of nature origination of Tathāgata" (*rulai xingqi zhengfa* 如來性起正法) in Buddhābhadra's text when the first of the ten topics, the characteristics of the manifestation of the Tathāgata, is being described. The corresponding Tibetan phrase is "the teaching of the origination and appearance of the Tathāgata" (*de bzhin gshegs pa skye ba 'byung ba bstan pa*). As we saw earlier these two terms *skye ba* and *'byung ba* can be identified as the Sanskrit *utpatti* and *saṃbhava*, respectively. Śikṣānanda translates it as appearance or manifestation (*chuxian* 出現), while Dharmarakṣa most often uses the term *xingxian* 興顯, but sometimes adds *shixian* 示現 or *xianshen* 現身 reflecting the original presence of two terms. In two cases (9-10) we find only *skye ba* or *'byung ba* in the Tibetan. In other contexts (11-13), we find "nature origination of the Tathāgata" (*rulai xingqi* 如來性起) or "the teaching of nature origination of the Tathāgata" (*rulai xingqi fa* 如來性起法) which are the lineage/family/class of Tathāgata (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs*) in the Tibetan. Here *rigs* is the Sanskrit *gotra* or *kula*, which corresponds to the Chinese term *xing* 性 in Buddhābhadra's text, *zhong* 種 in Śikṣānanda's version and *zhong* 種, *zhongxing* 種性 or *zuxing* 族姓 in Dharmarakṣa's rendition. In the last two examples (14-15) Buddhābhadra's translation seems to be very arbitrary as there is no corresponding expression in the other versions.



### The nature origination in early Huayan exegesis: Zhiyan

Let us now discuss how the term 'nature origination' was explained in Huayan exegesis. We will trace its development by selecting three eminent masters, Zhiyan, Fazang and Chengguan, each of whom represents a different stage in the evolution of Huayan ideas. The *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* is a collection of formerly independently circulated *sūtras*, so establishing its coherence required great hermeneutical efforts by commentators. A narrative framework served as a convenient means for establishing closer links between the isolated chapters, thus commentators emphasised the "seven places and eight or nine assemblies" in and during which this *sūtra* was preached. To prove that the sequence of chapters is definitely not accidental but is arranged with a hidden meaning, Huayan commentators introduced the term *laiyi* 來意, the purport of coming, at the beginning of their commentaries to every chapter where they explain why the chapter they are about to comment on appears at that point in the *sūtra*. The *Sūtra Manifestation of the Tathāgata* is said to be closely connected with the preceding chapter, entitled *The Practice of Samantabhadra*. In this chapter Samantabhadra enumerates the hundred hindrances arising from anger, then introduces the sixty practices that a bodhisattva should always perform. The Huayan exegetes agree that this chapter is the cause and the *Manifestation of Tathāgata* is the result. As Zhiyan says:

The previous [chapter the practice of] Samantabhadra clarifies the cause which can raise, and the next [chapter] discusses that which arose.

前善賢明能起之緣，次辨所起也。  
(T. 35, 1732: 79, c2-3)

At the beginning of his commentary on the chapter *Manifestation of the Tathāgata* in his commentary on the *Huayanjing*, *Dafangguang fo huayanjing shouxuanfenqi tongzhi fanggui* 大方廣佛華嚴經搜玄分齊通智方軌 Zhiyan gives a very terse definition of nature origination.

In the term 'xingqi' 'xing' means substance; 'qi' means the appearance [of substance] on the ground of the mind.<sup>10</sup> (Gimello 1976: 443)

性者體，起者現在心地耳。  
(T. 35, 1732: 79b29-c2)

Zhiyi further elaborated this definition in his last work, *Huayanjing neizhangmen deng za kongmu zhang* 華嚴經內章門等雜孔日章.

Nature-origination clarifies the limit/boundary of the *dharma-dhātu* dependent arising of one vehicle. It is originally the ultimate and detached from cultivation and production. Why? Because it is detached from marks. It originates from the great understanding and great practice. It is in the bodhi mind which is detached from discrimination. Thus it is called origination. As this is the nature of dependent-

10. Kamata suspects that the use of the term 'ground of mind' shows the early impact of Chan Buddhism on Huayan. See Kamata 1957. Ming-Wood Liu (1995) relates this term to Dilun tradition, citing Vasubandhu's commentary to the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* 心地者：隨心所受三界中報。又隨心所行一切境界亦名心地。(T. 26, 1522: 129a6-8.).

origination, this is spoken of as origination. Origination is non-origination, and non-origination is nature origination.<sup>11</sup>

性起者，明一乘法界緣起之際。本來究竟，離於修造。何以故？以離相故。起在大解、大行。離分別菩提心中，名為起也。由是緣起性故，說為起。起即不起，不起者是性起。

(T. 45, 1870: 580c4-8)

Nature origination is depicted as a process of the autonomic manifestation of inherently pure nature, and this spontaneous evolution does not depend on external conditions (Gimello 1976: 444-445). It happens through understanding and practice while realizing the nondiscriminating nature of the mind. As soon as discrimination is eliminated, omniscient, self-existent and nonobstructed wisdom appears, as the *sūtra* says. Even though Zhiyan does not say so explicitly, it is quite evident that he discusses the realization of Buddha-nature or *tathāgatagarbha* or, as the *sūtra* puts it, the wisdom of Tathāgata.

Nature origination is different from the practice conditioned by external factors such as teaching, master, etc. If the conditions are not present it is impossible to carry out in practice, while the absence of conditions cannot exert any influence on nature-origination: the wisdom of Tathāgata remains inherent in living beings. This wisdom or Buddha-nature is not static or isolated, but can manifest itself without any phenomenal feature in accordance with the teaching. It is the way in which causality works on the level of nature origination. The *sūtra* itself also serves as an example for causation of nature origination. As we saw above, the *sūtra* discusses the result or fruit (*guo* 果) aspect of nature origination while describing the Tathāgata in ten topics. However, the causal (*yin* 因) aspect is also treated while relating the wisdom of Tathāgata in all living beings.

Question: If nature-origination transcends speech and is divorced from features, how can it have cause and result? [Answer:] It has two meanings. First, in the *sūtra* nature-origination is discussed as cause, and is clarified as result. Thus it has two [aspects]. Second, as nature does not abide, it originates. When it originates, it divorces features, and is in accordance with Dharma. Therefore, it has [the aspects of] cause and result.

Question: When it originates and divorces from features, what is the difference from cultivation based on conditions? Answer: If cultivation based on conditions is divorced from conditions, then it cannot be established, while nature-origination is not damaged even if there are no conditions. Thus they are different.

問：性起絕言離相，云何有因果？有二意：一為經內因中辨性起，果中明性起故二也。二性由不住故起。起時離相順法故，有因果也。問：起時離與緣修何別？答：緣修離緣，則不成；性起無緣，即不損；故別也。

(T. 35, 1732: 78c19-24)

11. Robert Gimello's translation: "The doctrine of nature-origination illustrates that the limits of the dharma-element dependent origination of the One Vehicle, its origin and its ultimate, are divorced from cultivation. How so? Because they are free of marks. Origination in the 'great understanding' and the 'great practice,' in the bodhi-mind divorced from discrimination, this is called 'ch'i'. Because it is the [very] nature of the dependent origination, it is spoken of as 'origination.' [But this] origination is precisely a non-origination, [and so] it is really a non-origination which is 'nature-origination.'" Gimello 1976: 443.



As we have seen Buddhābhaddra's version, which Zhiyan commented on, was quite clear in stating that *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* and those beings who do not have the right capacity cannot have the roots of the wisdom of Tathāgata. This was definitely unacceptable for Zhiyan, thus he argued that the text means that the sprouts of *bodhicitta* have not grown in these beings, but it does not say that they do not have fruit or leaves of the wisdom of Tathāgata. He points out that for these beings to be excluded would be in contrast with the passage saying that every mote of dust includes a *sūtra*, referring to the wisdom of Tathāgata being inherent in all beings. Zhiyan states that *śrāvakas* and infernal beings both have the essence of the wisdom of Tathāgata, however the infernal beings do not have any fruits or leaves of this wisdom, while *śrāvakas* are endowed with these results.

Question: If the *śrāvakas* and others have nature-origination, why does the text say that there are two places where the roots do not grow?

Answer: when it says 'do not grow' it means that the sprouts of the nature-origination of bodhi mind do not grow, it does not say that there are no fruits and leaves. If there were not, then there would be no *sūtra* in a mote of dust. It can be known on the basis of the simile. If it is explained in details then there are no fruits or leaves in hell but there is essence; the *śrāvakas* have essence and fruit and leaves.

問：若聲聞等有性起者，何故文云於二處不生根？答：言不生者，不生菩提心性起芽，不言無果葉。若無者，微塵中不應有經卷。准喻可知。若細分別，地獄無果葉有體，聲聞有體及果葉也。

(T. 35, 1732: 79c11-15)

He stresses that all living beings can realize the great bodhi tree: there is no difference here between ordinary beings and great bodhisattvas. Only the process of attaining enlightenment is different: those who are more advanced on the path can reach this state sooner than others. The reason is that all beings originally have (*benyou* 本有) the wisdom of Tathāgata. This originally-possessed capacity is depicted as the root and actuality of dependent origination. This is beyond language and verbal concepts, since it reveals the *dharma-dhātu*, the realm of reality through which an awakened person perceives the world. This is the state in which the ordinary concept of time ceases.

The 'originally-possessed' means that it is the root and actuality of dependent origination. It is divorced from verbal expressions and affections, as the *dharma-dhātu* is manifested and the three periods (past, present, future) do not move. The [chapter on] nature origination says that the minds of living beings have a tiny *sūtra* and the great bodhi tree. The [ordinary] living beings and the saints both realize it, some people realize it sooner and some later, [but] the trees are not different. Thus it is known that they originally have it.

言本有者，緣起本實體離謂情，法界顯然三世不動故。性起云眾生心中有微塵經卷，有菩提大樹。眾聖共證，人證前後不同。其樹不分別異，故知本有。

(T. 35, 1732: 62c29-63a3)

### The nature origination in classical Huayan exegesis: Fazang

The work *Questions and Answers about the Huayanjing* 華嚴經問答, attributed to Fazang, very clearly elaborates the two terms 'originally possessed' (*benyou* 本有) and 'produced from cultivation' (*xiusheng* 修生), introduced by Zhiyan. The text states that there is no difference between these two teachings in importance, but Buddha teaches them according to the capacity of the audience. The sequence of the two teachings is not fixed, it depends on the people which teaching is taught first.<sup>12</sup> However the authenticity of this work was called into question both by the Japanese Kegon monk Gyōnen (?-1321) and by modern scholars (Endō 1965). Thus we turn our attention to Fazang's commentary to the *Huayanjing*, *Huayanjing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, which gives a detailed account of the meaning of nature origination.

First he gives a definition of nature origination based on the chapter *Tathāgatagarbha* of the *Buddha-nature Treatise*:

The chapter *Tathāgatagarbha* of the *Buddha-nature Treatise* says that it comes from abiding self-nature. Having come, it arrives. Having arrived, it attains. Thus it is called Thus Came. The changeless is called nature, the manifestation of function is called origination. This is the nature origination of Tathāgata. Moreover, the absolute principle is called suchness and it is also called nature; the manifestation of function is called origination and also called coming. Thus the Thus Came is nature origination.<sup>13</sup>

佛性論如來藏品云：從自性住。來，至。來至，得果，故名如來。不改名性，顯用稱起，即如來之性起。又真理名如名性，顯用名起名來，即如來為性起。

(T. 35, 1733: 405a10-13)

The *Treatise* propounds that *tathāgatagarbha* does not change when it becomes realized. When it comes, it arrives and naturally attains the result. There is no difference between *tathāgatagarbha* as a cause and *tathāgatagarbha* as a result (King 1991: 47-48). Here, Fazang goes one step further than Zhiyan by explicitly identifying the nature of nature-origination with *tathāgatagarbha* (Nakajō 1988). He goes on to explain that the manifestation of function is called origination. This function is the manifested aspect of *tathāgatagarbha* in the phenomenal world. It is similar to Zhiyan's statement that

12. "If it is favourable for living beings that the natural seed is the first and seminal permeation is the second, then [Buddha] teaches that originally existent is the first and production from cultivation is the second. If it is favourable for living beings that production from cultivation is the first and originally existent is the second, then [Buddha] teaches that the natural seed is the second and seminal permeation is the first. However, it is taught in accordance with the capacity of [the audience], and in fact originally there is no ranking in teachings. As there is no ranking in teachings, [Buddha's] excellence lies in [deciding] the sequence of [his teachings]. Therefore the sequence of the doctrines of the sacred teaching is not fixed."

若有機緣，眾生以性種為前，習種為後利益，即說本有前有，修生後有。若有眾生以修生為前，本有為後利益，即說性種為後，習種為前。但隨機處中說耳。勿見法定本有前後。以其法無前後故。即善當於先後耳。是故諸聖教之說前後不定。(T. 45, 1873: 610a17-23)

13. The original text is slightly different: "This Thusness nature comes from the [Buddha] nature that dwells in itself. Having come it arrives, and having arrived it attains. The essence of Thusness never changes; in this sense it is eternal." King 1991: 52.

此如性從住自性。性來，至。至，得。如體不變異故是常義。(T. 31, 1610: 796a22-23)



the essence appears on the ground of the mind, i.e. in mental functions. As the absolute principle can denote both suchness and nature, just as the manifestation of function can be designated both origination and coming, Fazang identifies the two terms, nature-origination and Tathāgata. The appearance of the Absolute in the phenomenal world is what both terms mean, and finally it is what the *sūtra* teaches. This is the appearance of Tathāgata in the world as a teacher for benefit of living beings and the appearance of the wisdom of Tathāgata in living beings.

Next, Fazang explains the purport (*zongqu* 宗趣) of nature origination in ten aspects. First, he distinguishes three kinds of nature and origination on the basis of the *Buddha-nature Treatise* (T. 35, 1733: 405a21-26). The three kinds of nature are principle, practice and fruit (*li xing guo* 理行果).<sup>14</sup> Although he uses different terms, their meanings are identical with those of the *Treatise*. Principle-nature is the Buddha-nature inherent in all beings before they begin to practice Buddhism. Practice-nature is the Buddha-nature in those beings who practice Buddhism. Fruit-nature is the Buddha-nature of those practitioners who have attained enlightenment. These three aspects of nature substantiate the definition given above by saying that Buddha-nature is always present in beings: before cultivation, during cultivation, and after the result of cultivation is attained.

He explains nature origination on three levels of the Buddhist path (T. 35, 1733: 405a27-b3). First, on the level of bodhisattva who has started to practice the Buddhist teaching, principle-nature is the nature and the accomplishment of practice-nature (*xingcheng* 行成) is the origination. This is different from the level of ordinary beings where although nature is present, there is no origination (*youxing er wuqi* 有性而無起). Here, Fazang separates the two elements of the compound 'nature origination', and states that ordinary beings have only nature, while Zhiyan preserved the unity of the compound, as we saw above, and taught that all beings have nature origination. On the level of Buddha principle-nature and practice-nature are nature and fruit-nature is the origination. This is to say that due to the inherent Buddha-nature and practice the fruit of enlightenment is attained. On the third level, the fruit attained through the perfect completion of principle-nature and practice-nature is nature and the function that is Buddha's appearance in accordance with the capacities of beings and his teaching of various *upāyas* are the origination. Fazang stresses that this final level is explained in the *Sūtra Manifestation of Tathāgata*. As we saw above, although the scripture definitely revolves around the manifestation of the Tathāgata in the world as a teacher, the wisdom of Tathāgata inherently existent in beings is also advocated.

However, Fazang emphasizes the priority of principle-nature, as practice-nature can be manifested only relying on principle-nature. In addition the function of fruit-nature is also subordinated to principle-nature, as the function of fruit-nature is the function of

14. "The Treatise says: Within the cause of attainability are three kinds of [Buddha] nature: the nature which dwells in itself, the emergent nature, and the attaining nature. The record says, the nature which dwells in itself is [Buddha nature] in the stage of ordinary person who has not yet begun Buddhist practice; the emergent nature is [Buddha nature] in the stage of Buddhist practitioner from the first awakening of mind up to the completion of the Path; the attaining nature is [Buddha nature] in the stage of the person who has completed the Buddhist path." King 1991: 41.

應得因中具有三性：一住自性性，二引出性，三至得性。記曰：住自性者，謂道前凡夫位。引出性者，從發心以上，窮有學聖位。至得性者，無學聖位。(T. 31, 1610: 794a21-24)

absolute nature. Moreover, practice-nature is identical with principle-nature, as finally principle-nature is what appears (T. 35,1733: 405b4-18).

Nature origination is not designated as dependent origination because in the case of dependent origination that which is originated appears as the [impure] conditions, while in the case of nature origination that which is originated is pure function (*jingyong* 淨用), and is in accordance with the realization of absolute nature (*zheng zhenxing* 證正性). Fazang goes on to discuss whether on the one hand impure *dharmas* are not included in nature origination as they belong to ignorance, or on the other hand nature origination includes all impure *dharmas* as Buddha saves living beings from these impure *dharmas* (T. 35,1733: 405b27-c11). This is a new aspect of the discussion of nature origination, but it is also closely connected with the meaning of *Manifestation of Tathāgata*. It sheds light on an important feature of Buddha's appearance in the world. Even if Buddha's enlightenment is completely pure, the only reason why he manifests himself in the world is to save beings from suffering. Thus the tainted world cannot be separated from his manifestation, as he would not come to the world if there were no suffering and impure *dharmas*.

Fazang provides the special Huayan reading of this *sūtra*. Generally, Mahāyāna Buddhism propounds that beings can have the causal aspect of Buddha-nature, implying that sooner or later they will attain enlightenment as the result of this inherent potential. As Huayan Buddhism teaches the mutual inclusion of beings and Buddha, Vairocana representing the completely enlightened Buddha, the aim of all Buddhist practices contains all living beings, and consequently the result aspect is present in all living beings before they attain enlightenment. Moreover, according to Mahāyāna, absolute nature pervades only animate beings and inanimate beings are excluded, thus only animate beings can attain enlightenment. Huayan Buddhism claims the mutual inclusion of all beings, animate or inanimate, so nature origination is extended to the whole universe including all animate and inanimate beings. Thus nature origination is the way in which the world is perceived by an enlightened person: it depicts the *dharma-dhātu* from the viewpoint of a Buddha. Finally, this is the vision revealed by Buddha immediately after his enlightenment in the *Huayanjing*. Here, nature origination is not only a term related to one chapter of the *Huayanjing*, but also a crucial principle that underlies the whole *Huayanjing*, depicting the experience of enlightenment.

If the teaching of three vehicles is concerned, there is only the causal aspect of [Buddha] nature in the minds of living beings; there is no feature of resulting function. According to the perfect [Huayan] teaching the resulting dharma of Vairocana includes the realm of living beings. Therefore there are also resulting features in the bodies of living beings... If the teaching of three vehicles is concerned, the absolute nature pervades animate beings and does not pervade inanimate beings, since the enlightened Buddha-nature is limited only to animate beings... According to the perfect [Huayan] teaching Buddha-nature and nature origination pervade animate and inanimate beings.

若三乘教，眾生心中但有因性，無果用相。此圓教中盧舍那果法該眾生界。是故眾生身中亦有果相。…若三乘教，真如之性通情、非情，開覺佛性唯局有情故。…若圓教中佛性及性起皆通依正。

(T. 35,1733: 405c26-406a1)



Finally, this insight into the *dharma-dhātu* is described with well-known Huayan terminology. Absolute nature pervades the whole universe, and as one is all and all is one, every *dharma* completely includes this nature. It is like Indra's net, the symbol of Huayan Buddhism.

This absolute nature includes and pervades everything. That which was originated [by this nature] also contains everything. The part and the whole are unlimited, all partial places are complete. There is not one which does not include the infinite *dharma-dhātu*. Therefore [absolute nature] pervades all times, all places, all dharmas, etc. It is like Indra's net: there is nothing which is not included.

既此真性融遍一切故，彼所起亦具一切。分圓無際，是故分處皆悉圓滿。無不皆具無盡法界。是故遍一切時一切處一切法等。如因陀羅網無不具足 (T. 35, 1733: 406a1-5)

Fazang commenced writing his commentary on the 80-fascicle *Huayanjing* translated by Śikṣānanda in 699, but he could not finish it, so his disciple Huiyuan took over this work, entitled *Xu Huayanjing lüeshu kanding ji* 續華嚴經略疏刊定記. In Śikṣānanda's version, the *Manifestation of Tathāgata* is the thirty-seventh chapter, and the title is *Rulai chuxian pin* 如來出現品. The compound 'nature origination' is not found here; it is replaced by the word *chuxian*, which means 'appear', 'manifest'. Huiyuan compares this with the title of this chapter in the 60-fascicle version, *Baowang rulai xingqi pin* 寶王如來性起品 and concludes that the word *rulai* 如來 can be found in the original Sanskrit, the *xing* 性 is missing, and the word *qi* 起 is equivalent with *chuxian* 出現 (XZJ 5: 519b18-520a1).

### The Huayan exegesis of nature origination under Chan influence: Chengguan

In his commentary, entitled *Dafangguang Huayanjing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, Chengguan writes in the introduction to his discussion of this chapter that although the word 'nature' was added, it is not a mistake, as it is reasonable 性字雖是義加未爽通理 (T. 35, 1735: 872a12). He explains the title, *Rulai chuxian* 如來出現 in terms of three bodies of Buddha (T. 35, 1735, 871: c27-872a11). He cites passages from the *sūtra* showing that these three aspects can be found there. By the aspect of *dharmakāya* (*fashen* 法身) Tathāgata means that all *dharmas* are suchness (*zhufa ruyi* 諸法如義), and manifestation means that the principle of suchness eternally appears (*ruli changxian* 如理常現). By the aspect of *saṃbhogakāya*, Tathāgata means to become enlightened on the path of suchness and actuality (*cheng rushi dao* 乘如實道), and manifestation is the sudden appearance of the merit of original nature (*benxing gongde* 本性功德). By the aspect of *nirmāṇakāya* Tathāgata means that the omniscient Buddha comes to teach living beings, and manifestation is the appearance of this great function in accordance with their capacities (*yingji dayong* 應機大用). He stresses that this function is not separated from the essence. Buddha always appears in response to the needs of living beings, thus he always responds in his absolute form (*jizhen er ying* 即真而應); and, on the other hand, his response follows his nature origination, thus he is absolute in his response (*jiying er zhen* 即應而真). The three bodies are completely interfused (*sanfo yuanrong* 三佛圓融), therefore the Buddha's appearance in the phenomenal world to teach living beings is the manifestation of his absolute form.

When the following sentences in the commentary are explained by the subcommentary (*Dafangguang fo huayanjing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔), the relationship between nature origination and dependent origination is discussed.

Although response is dependent on conditions, it does not contradict nature [origination]. There is nothing which is not originated from *dharmadhātu*. As pure [features] transcend the impure [features], nature is identical with origination. Without conditions nature cannot be discussed. Below the [Tathāgata] blesses Nature Origination Bodhisattva, he propounds the teaching. Although the false is identical with the Absolute, it is not in accordance with nature.

以應雖從緣，不違性故。無不從此法界流故。以淨奪染，性即起故。若離於緣，性叵說故。下加性起菩薩，表所說故。妄雖即真不順性故。  
(T. 35, 1735: 872a12-15)

Here is the subcommentary to this passage:

The text from 'Although response is dependent on conditions' explains that the meaning of nature origination is in accordance with the meaning of the responsive appearance. Altogether there are six aspects which establish nature origination.

後以應雖從緣下釋性起義順應現義。於中總有六義，證成性起。  
(T. 36, 1736: 615a7-9)

First is to establish the identity of principle, [dependent origination and nature origination] are not contradictory. Therefore the meaning of manifestation can be both dependent origination and nature origination. If the features are discussed, they manifest relying on conditions, thus it is called dependent origination. Due to the influence of karma of living beings Tathāgata manifests with his great compassion. The eight aspects of Buddha's life<sup>15</sup> are born from dharma-nature, thus it is called nature origination. Now, as it is dependent on conditions, it is dependent origination without [self-]nature, so it is called nature origination. In addition, pure dependent origination is eternally in accordance with nature [origination], thus it is also called nature origination. Therefore the [commentary] says 'Although response is dependent on conditions, it does not contradict nature [origination].'

今初，立理即不相違門。然出現義亦名緣起，亦名性起。若取相說，覽緣出現，故名緣起。謂由眾生業感，如來大悲而出現故。八相成道從法性生故名性起。今以從緣，無性緣起，即名性起。又淨緣起常順於性，亦名性起。故云：應雖從緣不違性故。  
(a9-15)

In the subcommentary, Chengguan brilliantly elaborates all those ideas that were formerly advocated by Zhiyan and Fazang, establishing a theological system of the manifestation of the Absolute in the phenomenal world. He shows this process from two points of view, one being dependent origination, the other being nature origination. Like the *Sūtra Manifestation of Tathāgata* he explains manifestation on two levels: the

15. The eight aspects of Buddha's life: (1) descent into and abode in the Tuṣita heaven; (2) entry into his mother's womb; (3) abode there visibly preaching to the *devas*; (4) birth from his mother's side in Lumbinī; (5) leaving home at 19 (or 25) to be a hermit; (6) attaining enlightenment after six years' suffering; (7) rolling the Law-wheel, or preaching; (8) entering nirvāṇa at the age of 80. See Soothill 1937: 38.



manifestation of Tathāgata in the world as a teacher to save all living beings and the manifestation of the wisdom of Tathāgata in living beings. First, he shows that these two kinds of manifestation are not contradictory, because the dependently originated phenomena lack any kind of self-nature: they are empty. From this point of view dependent origination is nature origination. Just like Buddha's career in the world, all of his deeds are intimately connected with dharma-nature, thus it is also called nature origination.

The commentary says: 'There is nothing which is not originated from *dharmadhātu*.' The second is the citation from the Liang Treatise<sup>16</sup> as evidence. This is the aspect that [dependent origination and nature origination] mutually become completed, and it makes it clear that nature becomes completed by conditions. This nature origination has two meanings: first, as the dependent origination is without [self-]nature, this is nature origination; second, as dharma-nature follows conditions, this is called nature origination. The former statement is the first aspect, and the latter one is the second aspect. It also must be said that 'there is nothing which does not return to and realize the *dharmakāya*.'<sup>17</sup> Therefore conditions and the wisdom [of Tathāgata] mutually become completed. This is to say that conditions establish nature, this is the former aspect. However, above we emphasized that they are not contradictory, now we emphasize that they become mutually completed. Thus this is the aspect of mutual completion.

疏：無不從此法界流故者。第二引梁論證成。即相成門，明性成於緣故。此性起自有二義：一從緣無性而性起，二法性隨緣，故名性起。前段即初義。今段即後義。亦應云無不還證此法身故。此乃緣智相成。即緣成性，即是前義。但前取無違，今取相成。是故此為相成門也。  
(a15-21)

The close relationship between them is shown by the citation from the *Commentary to the Mahāvāna-saṃgraha*, which says that everything was born from *dharmakāya* and returns there. Chengguan changes the term '*dharmadhātu*' to *dharmakāya*. From the aspect of enlightenment all beings are related to the Absolute. We saw above that dependent origination is nature origination; they are not contradictory. Now, he argues that they mutually become completed. According to Huayan Buddhism, the Absolute is not fixed, is not detached from the phenomenal world, as Yogācāra claims, but is very active. This is called the dependent origination of *tathāgatagarbha* (Lai 1977, 1986). To appear in the phenomenal world, the Absolute needs conditions. Buddha's appearance in the world is conditioned by the living beings who need instruction in order to get rid of suffering.

The commentary says: 'As pure [features] transcend the impure [features], nature is identical with origination.' The third [aspect] clarifies that [dependent origination

16. This refers to the *She dasheng lun shi* 攝大乘論釋, *Commentary on the Mahāvāna-saṃgraha* translated by Paramārtha, who first went to the Liang dynasty to offer his services to emperor Wu. Unfortunately Wu soon died, so the Indian master did not get the support that he expected for his activity. (For his biography, see Paul 1984: 11-37.) Here Chengguan refers to the following passage: 無不從此法身生，無不還證此法身。(T. 31: 1595: 254a26)

17. This too is a quotation from the *Liang Treatise*, see footnote above.

and nature origination] mutually transcend.<sup>18</sup> This is also to clear away obstacles. Someone might ask: Nature origination is pure and dependent origination includes impure [dharmas]. How can dependent origination be identical with nature origination? We will clear up this question. There are two kinds of dependent origination: one is impure, the other is pure. The pure one refers to the compassion of Tathāgata and all practices of bodhisattvas, etc. The impure one refers to the karmic influence of living beings, etc. If the impure [dharmas] transcend the pure ones, they belong to the [ordinary] living beings, and this is only dependent origination. Now, pure [dharmas] transcend the impure [ones], and this belongs only to Buddha, thus it is called nature origination.

疏：以淨奪染，性即起者。第三明相奪門。亦是通妨。謂有問言：性起唯淨，緣起通染。云何緣起即是性起？故為此通。謂緣起有二：一染、二淨。淨謂如來大悲、菩薩萬行等。染者謂眾生惑業等。若以染奪淨，則屬眾生，故唯緣起。今以淨奪染，唯屬諸佛，故名性起。  
(a21-27)

Although they are identical, in certain respects they differ. Nature origination is undoubtedly pure, but dependent origination includes also impure *dharmas*, as the negative deeds of living beings are also dependently originated. On the level of ordinary beings who have not attained enlightenment the impure aspect transcends the pure aspect. On the level of Buddha, only pure *dharmas* are found, thus this dependent origination is called nature origination.

The commentary says: 'Without conditions nature cannot be discussed.' This is the fourth aspect, the mutual identity of [dependent origination and nature origination]. This is also to clear away obstacles. Someone might ask: Dependent origination is from the aspect of phenomena, and nature origination is from the aspect of principle. How can they be identical? We will clear up this question. Only if relying on conditions is without [self-] nature, can nature origination appear. Moreover, if conditions are seen, we can conclude that there is nature origination. If there are no conditions, which nature could be discussed? If there were nature without conditions, that would be the nihilism of emptiness.

疏：若離於緣，性叵說故者。即第四是相即門。亦是通妨。謂有問言：緣起約事，性起約理。如何相即？故為此通。從緣無性，方顯性起。又由見緣，推知性起。若離於緣，復論何性？離緣有性，是斷空故。  
(a27-b3)

Dependent origination is related to the world of phenomena which is designated as 'shi' 事 in Huayan Buddhism, while nature origination is the realm of Absolute called 'li' 理. These terms were introduced by the first patriarch of Huayan Buddhism, Dushun, in his famous treatise *Discernment of Dharma-dhātu* (*Fajie guanmen* 法界觀門). Dushun 杜順 (557-640) substituted the words 'form' (*se* 色) and 'emptiness' (*kong* 空) for 'phenomena' and 'principle', respectively. The relation between them is expressed by the well known Huayan phrase, 'unobstruction of principle and phenomena' (*lishi wuai* 理事無礙). If nature could exist alone without conditions that would lead to the extreme of nihilism, the overemphasizing of emptiness.

18. Robert Gimello translates *duo* 奪 as sublata, as it includes the meanings of 'to preserve' and 'to abolish' just as the Chinese *duo* does. See Gimello 1976: 494.



The commentary says: 'Below the [Tathāgata] blesses Nature Origination'. This fifth section cites this sūtra [Manifestation of Tathāgata] as evidence. The teaching is expressed by a person.

疏：下加性起者。即第五段引當經證。即以人表法門。  
(b3-4)

Here, Chengguan refers to the Bodhisattva Wondrous Quality of the Origination of *Tathāgata*-nature, the interlocutor of the *sūtra*, who has the compound 'nature origination' in his name.

The commentary says: 'Although the false is identical with the Absolute'. The sixth aspect is that the false conceals the Absolute. Here, we are also clearing away obstacles. The obstacle could be the following. If dependent [origination] is identical with nature [origination], the false originally is empty of self-[nature], its essence is identical with nature [origination]. Why can the impure [dharma] not transcend the pure [ones]? We will clear up this question. The pure dependent [origination] is in accordance with nature [origination], but the impure dependent [origination] is in contrast with it.

疏：妄雖即「下」，第六以妄隱真門。亦是解妨。妨云：若緣即性，妄本自空，當體即性。何以不得染奪淨耶？故為此通。淨緣順性，染緣違故。  
(b4-7)

Finally, the text stresses that even if the false is identical with the Absolute from one aspect, impure dependent origination is in contrast with nature origination. This final statement is very important in terms of Buddhist praxis. If everything were completely pure, there would be no any need for Buddhist cultivation. For a scholar monk, like Chengguan, it was essential to underline the theoretical grounds for Buddhist practice, especially in an age when Chan iconoclasm appeared. Chengguan's disciple, Zongmi 宗密 (780-841), who was also the patriarch of Chan Buddhism, continued his teacher's work: he further elaborated the relationship between dependent origination and nature origination, and emphasized Buddhist cultivation.

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