

國立政治大學哲學系碩士班碩士論文

指導教授：林鎮國 教授

TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF
TRANQUILITY

Pyrrhonian Skepticism and Zen Buddhism in
Dialogue

皮羅懷疑主義與禪宗的哲學對話

研究生：莊子義

中華民國九十八年七月

Towards a Philosophy of Tranquility:
Pyrrhonian Skepticism and Zen Buddhism in Dialogue

Under the Direction of Dr. Chen-kuo Lin

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a comparative study of the Pyrrhonian Skepticism and Zen Buddhist approaches to “tranquility.” I will argue that the state of *ataraxia* (“unperturbedness”) as interpreted by the Sceptics is essentially identical to the Zen state of “non-dwelling” as articulated by the Sixth Patriarch Huineng. In doing so, I will attempt to show how the philosophical methodologies of both Sextus and Huineng succeed in bringing the individual to a state of tranquility through the skillful use of opposition pairs, be they in the form of opposed arguments (for the Sceptics) or traditional dichotomies (for the Zennists). I will argue also that simple non-dogmatic reliance on non-rational guides to life (e.g. culture, custom, etc.) as advocated by the Sceptics is equivalent to the Zen idea of returning to life in the ordinary world absent attachment to either the ordinary or the transcendent.

TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF TRANQUILITY:
PYRRHONIAN SKEPTICISM AND ZEN BUDDHISM IN DIALOGUE

by

CARLO JAMELLE HARRIS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts

at

National Chengchi University, Taiwan

2009

Committee Chair: Chen-kuo Lin

Committee: Su-Ching Ho

Yao-ming Tsai

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first want to thank Prof. Chen-kuo Lin for his unending support and guidance throughout the writing and development of this thesis. His valuable insights provided in the form of personal consultations and many insightful lectures on Buddhist epistemology and philology were profoundly instrumental to the development of this thesis. I am also greatly indebted to him for the training I received in textual criticism and research methods.

I would also like to thank my committee members Su-Ching and Yao-ming Tsai for their enthusiastic participation as well as their willingness to join the thesis committee on short notice. Their probing questions and insightful recommendations were of incalculable value to the final form of this thesis, and all oversights and errors are strictly my own.

Finally, I would like to thank the Philosophy Department Chair Prof. Wen-sheng Wang and all the staff in the NCCU Philosophy Department for their steadfast support throughout the course of my graduate studies.

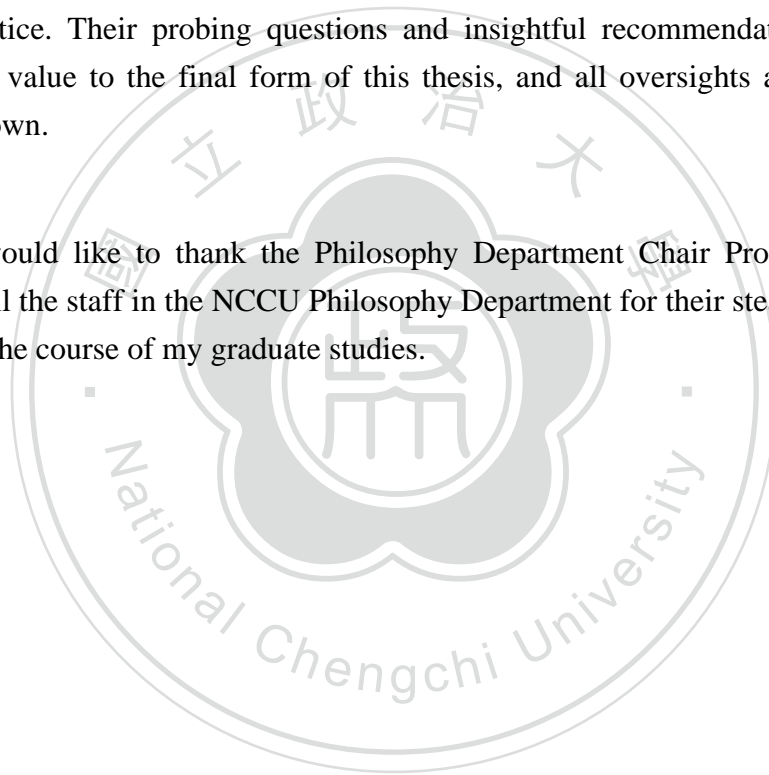


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1 PYRRHONIAN SKEPTICISM.....	13
1.1 The Philosophical Milieu of Sextus Empiricus.....	13
1.2 The Way of Pyrrhonian Skepticism.....	20
1.3 The Text of the <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>	29
CHAPTER 2 ZEN BUDDHISM.....	31
2.1 Huineng and His Zen Inheritance.....	31
2.2 The Fundamentals of Huineng's Southern School of Zen.....	36
2.3 The Text of the <i>Platform Sūtra</i>	45
CHAPTER 3 SKEPTIC AND ZENNIST TERMINOLOGY.....	48
3.1 A Comparison of Key Terms.....	48
3.2 <i>Ataraxia</i> and <i>Wuzhu</i> (無住).....	57
CHAPTER 4 THE USE OF OPPOSITIONS.....	68
4.1 The Skeptical Modes of Argument.....	68
4.2 The Zen Use of Opposition Pairs.....	73
CHAPTER 5 MORALITY AND METAPHYSICS.....	79
5.1 On Good and Evil.....	79
5.2 On the Positing of Metaphysical Objects.....	91
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION.....	94
APPENDIX: A SKEPTIC AND A ZENNIST IN DIALOGUE.....	100
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	107

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Acad.</i>	Cicero, <i>Academica</i>
<i>DL</i>	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Lives of the Philosophers</i>
<i>M</i>	Sextus Empiricus, <i>Against the Mathematicians</i>
<i>PH</i>	Sextus Empiricus, <i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>
<i>Prep. Ev.</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea, <i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>
<i>PS</i>	Huineng, <i>Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch</i>



The Skeptic Way is a disposition to oppose phenomena and noumena to one another in any way whatever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence among the things and statements thus opposed, we are brought first to *epoché* and then to *ataraxia*.

(*Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, BK I, 8)

If someone asks you about the Dharma, answer in dichotomous fashion making constant use of opposition pairs to demonstrate their mutual dependency. Do this and eliminate dualistic dharmas once and for all, leaving them with no place at all to go.

(*Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, Ch. 45)



INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a comparative analysis of Pyrrhonian Skepticism as interpreted by Sextus Empiricus and the Southern School of Zen Buddhism as represented by Huineng, the historically-recognized Sixth Patriarch (*Liuzu* 六祖) of the Zen tradition.¹ Through the comparison of these two schools, I aim to isolate the principle behind the attainment of “tranquility” which is loosely defined as “mental quietude” and the “absence of vexations” in the Skeptic and Zen schools respectively. Sextus is the obvious choice for representative of Pyrrhonian Skepticism because he, quite literally, wrote the book on it. His *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* serves as by the most complete and comprehensive guide to ancient Skeptical thought. The *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu Tanjing* 六祖壇經), on the other hand, purported to be a sermon given by Huineng, is the only Zen Buddhist text (or Chinese Buddhist text for that matter) to be recognized as “canon” (*jing* 經), meaning that it is considered by Buddhists to be equivalent to words the historical Buddha himself. And as the monk Deyi (德異, fl. 1290) famously stated in the preface of his version of the sūtra, “The teachings of the Five Houses [of Zen] all without exception originate from the *Platform Sūtra*.”² But why compare these two particular schools one might ask? Why not compare, say, Nagarjuna or Zhuangzi with Sextus? I chose Huineng because I think the *Platform Sūtra* gives the most precise formulation on the role that oppositions or opposition pairs play in eliminating vexations from the mind. Thus, in this thesis I will attempt to provide support for the hypothesis, held by Skeptics and Zennists alike, that the

¹ In this thesis I use the Japanese word “Zen” and not “Chan” (禪) as it coheres better with my frequent use of “Zennist” and also because it the term most frequently used in the works cited in this thesis.

² T48n2008_p0345c25(01), 原其五家綱要，盡出《壇經》。

practice of opposing of arguments, judgments, and concepts one against the other in various ways leads precisely to such a state of mind. The ancient Greek Skeptic Sextus Empiricus (fl. 200 CE) describes Skepticism, not as a philosophy, but rather as an “ability” (*dunamis*) to “oppose phenomena and noumena to one another in any way whatever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence among the things and statements thus opposed, we are brought first to suspension of judgment and then to unperturbedness.”³ Equipollence, a key term that we will elaborate on in Chapter 3, is the mental balance created when two equally convincing arguments are placed in opposition. It occurs when the intellect, being unable to prefer one opposing argument over another, comes to a standstill thus allowing the individual respond to situations undogmatically. The Skeptics thus find peace, not by establishing the truth of one proposition concerning external reality over its opposite, but rather through not confidently asserting the truth of any claim whenever it appears contrastable with an equally credible counterargument. The Skeptic then proceeds to live in accordance with the “ordinary rules of life” (which we shall elaborate on later also) as the conflicting philosophical theories she has examined are unable to provide guidance.⁴ Huineng for his part directly states that understanding how dichotomies function is the sole key to understanding the entirety of scripture.⁵ The Zenist reaches a state of equilibrium upon realizing not only the interdependence of opposites, but also through the active process of pitting judgments and concepts against one another. In Huineng’s discussion of the 36 pairs of opposites, he, for example, equates “vexations” with “enlightenment” to show I think that we should not attempt to cling to either one as their existences are mutual. Thus, it seems clear that the Skeptics discovered just as

³ *PHI*, 7-9.

⁴ *PH* 23-24.

⁵ *PS* 46, 此三十六對法，解用通一切經。

Huineng did the pivotal role the skillful use of oppositions play in removing mental vexations. And in this thesis I shall attempt also to demonstrate *how* the practice of opposing concepts against one another prepares the way for calm awareness at each passing moment of experience.

One of the most obvious similarities which also provided the primary impetus for this study was the fact that the Skeptics and Zennists both find that achieving the goal of mental quietude, which in both schools is defined negatively—“freedom from disturbances” for the Skeptics and “freedom from thought” for Zennists—involves giving up the struggle to achieve it while realizing that the struggle is at the same part of the process of achieving it. One happens upon skepticism, after first inquiring into the nature of things under the belief that only through uncovering the truth of the matters disputed in philosophy would peace of mind be attainable. And the Zennist, on her part, assumes in the beginning that with attaining a certain insight into the nature of reality one can be freed from vexations. In the end, however, the Skeptic suspends judgment and the Zennist in a similar manner finds no special insight to rest upon. It is rather the active and ongoing process of opposing judgments and concepts against one another that leads followers of both traditions to their unexpected “tranquility.” Another interesting feature that the two systems have in common I think is that neither attempts to do away with words, thoughts, or appearances (the latter are referred to as “marks” in Buddhism), but rather develops a disposition such that language and judgments are rendered incapable of causing mental disturbance. The Skeptic often uses qualifiers such as “I think,” “it appears,” “maybe,” etc., to reflect her non-dogmatic mode of life in the realm of appearances. And Huineng speaks of

“transcending marks (appearances) even while in the midst of them,”⁶ which I take to mean simply that one should be observant of appearances, while neither clinging to nor seeking escape from them.

Additionally, Skepticism, also like Zen is a way of life, not a systematic philosophy in the strict sense. According to Sextus, the Skeptic follows a four-fold regimen of life in which she “lives without beliefs.”⁷ That is to say, the Skeptic doesn’t confidently or self-assuredly affirm what is or isn’t the case about external reality. Likewise, the Zennist never lets her mind “dwell” on the thought-objects that appear in the consciousness. Moreover, the aim of the Skeptics’ arguments, like the utterances of the Zen teachers, is primarily intended as therapy. The Skeptic’s arguments are like medicine designed to induce the state of tranquility by way of suspending judgment (*epoché*) through opposing arguments one against the other.⁸ Though initially this may seem a very counter-intuitive means of reaching tranquility, on closer inspection, we may find that much mental unrest, especially in the case of philosophy, seems to arise from dogmatically affirming a position while knowingly suppressing the existence of facts or arguments anathema to one’s own position. Huineng in fact says that there can only be “truth” when the mind is no longer “false” (*jia* 假), that is, as I interpret it, when the mind ceases to knowingly suppress the unwelcome facts it *already believes to be true*.⁹ Moreover, mental liberation in Zen is interpreted not in terms of a “suspended” intellect, but quite conversely in terms of an uninterrupted

⁶ PS 17, 於相而離相。

⁷ PH I, 3. R.G. Bury renders *adoxastos* (“without belief”) as “undogmatic/ally” in his translations. *Adoxastos* in Sextus’ usage refers specifically to dogmatic beliefs regarding the nature of external reality, not everyday non-critical beliefs.

⁸ PH III, 280.

⁹ PS 48, 若能自有真，離假即心真。“If are able to possess the truth within yourself, [you will know that] being free of falsity itself leaves the mind true.”

“flow” (tong liu 通流)¹⁰ of thoughts, an idea which is encapsulated in the doctrine of “non-dwelling” introduced earlier. As the Zen and Daoist scholar John C.H. Wu states, “The insight that the mind must flow on and never stop is the key to the whole philosophy of Hui-neng.”¹¹ I mostly agree with this though I also see the “suspension” (stopping) of the Skeptics and the “flow” (going) of Zennists as two outwardly opposite, but nonetheless equally compatible ways of conceptualizing the same fundamental experience of tranquility. And lastly, for neither school is this lack of mental disturbance a cause for withdrawal from activity in the world. Zen, especially the Zen teachings of the Huineng the Sixth Patriarch, insists that stillness is indeed found in activity.¹² The Skeptics likewise engage in their various arts (techné) and continue living in accordance with local laws and customs undogmatically.¹³ The Zennist also returns to the same world she previously sought escape from, but now she transcends it, so to speak, by becoming completely engaged in it. Or in the language of the Skeptics, the Zennist no longer dogmatizes the teachings of her tradition or the accidental characteristics of her culture. And we might observe also that just as the Buddhists preach compassion, the Skeptics (or at least they are according to Sextus Empiricus) are driven by their professed feelings of *philanthropos* (“love of mankind”) to cure people of their dogmatic beliefs,¹⁴ or in the language of Zen, to they wish to compassionately free people of the views which have ensnared them.

¹⁰ PS 14. 道須通流，何以卻滯？

¹¹ Wu John C.H., *The Golden Age of Zen: Zen Masters of the Tang Dynasty* (Taipei: National War College, 1967), 80. As Wu also points out, Huineng was inspired by the following passage from the *Diamond Sūtra*: “Let your mind flow freely without abiding anywhere or in anything.” (應無所住，而生其心). Similarly, Charlotte Stough comments that the Skeptic’s experience is one of “simple sequential flow of sense impressions and all impressions are intrinsically of equal authority.” See Stough’s *Greek Skepticism: A Study in Epistemology* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1969), 80.

¹² PS 48, 若見真不動，動上有不動。

¹³ PH III, 245-246.

¹⁴ PH, III, 280. However, I’m not quite sure how literally we should take Sextus’ “philanthropic” motivations.

Lastly, let us examine Garner's observation that, as compared to the Skeptic's method, "the Zen approach is strikingly direct. When the Zen Master is confronted with philosophical speculation or with harmful conceptualization he appeals to no set trope or syllogism, but reacts spontaneously."¹⁵ On the face of it, the Zennist would seem to have an advantage over the Skeptic in that he can also appeal to the spontaneity that comes from moment-to-moment awareness. However, since what the Skeptic is dealing with philosophical opponents and not disciples, obviously she is more limited in her range of tactics. However, since the Skeptic acknowledges that she can use arguments weak in persuasiveness at times,¹⁶ it still seems that he can spontaneously devise arguments (though Sextus does not say this explicitly) as situations demand them, and of course hitting, yelling, or replying with verbal nonsense to her opponents is not likely to get her opponents to believe that she is the more rational one!

Literature Review

Now while the resemblances between Skepticism and Zen have not gone unnoticed by many scholars of comparative philosophy, to my knowledge only Dick Garner's article "Skepticism, ordinary language and Zen Buddhism" makes an attempt at a sustained comparison of the two schools. In his study, Garner does an excellent job I think of highlighting the differences in style and method between the Skeptics and the Zennists. Some of the questions he raises are quite fundamental regarding Skepticism: "what his [the Skeptic's] quietude amounts to, how it is attained, how it is maintained, and, further and most importantly, how it is supposed to lead to a lack of

¹⁵ Garner, "Skepticism, ordinary language and Zen Buddhism," 177.

¹⁶ *PH* III, 280-281.

perturbation.”¹⁷ Thus, in this thesis will I will attempt to show, as precisely as possible, how the Skeptic’s quietude is acquired and maintained. One of the ways highlighted will be to emphasize the “moment-to-momentness” of the Skeptic’s approach. That is to say the Skeptic reports what appears true to her *at the moment*, resisting the tendency to universalize her conclusions, not because it is “wrong” to do so, but simply because she cannot legitimately do so without sufficient proof.¹⁸ The Skeptic thus holds *non-rational* beliefs (i.e., not based on philosophical demonstration) concerning how things appear to her at each particular moment. Thus, she can easily entertain counter arguments because of her light psychological investment in her own preconceptions about the way things “really” are. This frame of mind I thus equate with the “non-dwelling” mind of Zen in which judgments also flow through the mind without creating any marked disturbance as they enter and exit.¹⁹

Another important reference for this thesis is Thomas McEvilley’s chapter entitled “Pyrrhonism and Madhyamika” in his magnum opus *The Shape of Ancient Thought*. In that chapter McEvilley brings Zen into the discussion with the observation that the Zen masters’ “attitudes were essentially based on the Prajnaparamita and

¹⁷ Dick Garner, “Skepticism, ordinary language and Zen Buddhism,” *Philosophy East and West*. 27 no. 2 (1978): 168.

¹⁸ As ironic as it may sound, I think that every Skeptic must *desire* to be dogmatic in order to be truly Skeptical. After all, the only reason that one chooses Skepticism in the first place is due to the fact that the evidence examined does itself not allow anyone any room to dogmatize. But if one desires to remain Skeptical at all costs, then the fear of becoming dogmatic will I think continually disturb one. Thus, the Skeptic must eagerly desire I think to hear out the claims of the dogmatists, not with an eye to deconstructing them, but with a hope that truth can be found within them! And as Sextus points out, the suspension of judgment is only applicable to cases presented “up to now.” Each new investigation brings with it the possibility of finding final truth. If the Skeptic doesn’t possess such an attitude, I don’t see it as possible that she can remain free from disturbance. It’s questionable whether Sextus himself had such an attitude consistently, but *ataraxia* in any case certainly seems possible granted one’s mind does not grow biased toward Skepticism. Sextus does not, to his credit, affirm that the Skeptic’s practice of suspending judgment is necessarily a “good” thing (*PH* I, 233-234) and leaves open too the possibility that something is apprehensible (*PH* I, 226).

¹⁹ *PS* 17.

Madhyamika texts.”²⁰ This is true for the most part I think, but Huineng does not go as far to say that all things are “empty” (as in without self-nature) as he, along with many of other Zen teachers, posits the existence of the Buddha-nature (which seems indeed antithetical to the Madhyamika tradition in many respects). Huineng’s emptiness is *literal* emptiness; the Buddha-nature is not empty because it “dependently arises,” but rather because its nature is to all possess things, just like empty space.²¹ It remains true, however, that the *Diamond Sūtra* (Skt: *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* Ch: *Jin gang jing* 金剛經), perhaps the most famous of the prajñāpāramitā texts aside from the *Heart of Perfection Wisdom Sutra* (Skt: *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya* Ch: *Bo re bo luo mi duo xin jing* 般若波羅蜜多心經) or *Heart Sutra*, to be sure holds decisive influence on the thought of Huineng. Its influence is explicit in the *Platform Sūtra* itself and is no doubt the source of Huineng’s pivotal doctrine of “non-dwelling” (Skt: *apratisthita* Ch: *wuzhu* 無住).²² McEvelley’s survey moreover contains copious quotes from Buddhists and Sceptics which stress many similarities in attitude and orientation, none of which seem to come to the surface in Garner’s treatment of the subject. As it happens, however, neither of these studies quotes from the *Platform Sūtra*. Thus, for this thesis I have focused on the text of the *Platform Sūtra* to further elucidate Zen thought and practice as conceived in this foundational text.

One other notable study is Jay Garfield’s *Epoche and Sunyata: Skepticism East and West*, in which he argues, among other things, for the complementariness of Sextus’

²⁰ Thomas McEvelley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies* (New York: Allworth Press, 2002), 476.

²¹ *PS* 25.

²² *PS* 2, 7, 9, 28.

Wittgenstein's, and Madhyamika's approach to finding the middle way between reification and nihilism.²³ And although it provides a thorough analysis of the Skeptical method, the article itself makes no mention of Zen and has very little to say on the subject of the Skeptic's state of tranquility, which is of course one of the overriding concerns of this thesis. Two other articles published in the University of Hawaii's *East West* journal touch directly upon the subject of Greek and Indian philosophy, the latter of course being the ultimate root of Zen. There is "Skepticism and Indian philosophy" by Dipankar Chatterjee, which is mostly an epistemological comparison of the two said philosophical systems, although Zen is not discussed. There is also "The Ontology of the Prajnaparamita," in which Edward Conze notes, "At every point, a comparison with European philosophers suggests itself Parmenides, Pyrrho, Proclus, Sextus Empiricus, Berkeley, Hegel, etc that must be left to other occasions."²⁴ And although Conze does not engage in comparative analysis, he nevertheless observes that

one may say that the attitude of the perfected sage is one of non-assertion. His individual self is extinct, and so he will not assert himself in any way. And, since he has no belief in separate things, he will not affirm anything about any of them.²⁵

I find this to be, however, a very extreme interpretation of non-assertion (*aphasia*) in comparison to what Sextus actually has to say on the topic. And though Sextus does

²³ Jay Garfield, "Epoche and 'Suunyataa: Skepticism East and West," *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 3 (1990): 290.

²⁴ Edward Conze, "The Ontology of Prajnaparamita," *Philosophy East and West* 3 (1953): 117.

²⁵ Edward Conze, "The Ontology of Prajnaparamita," 126.

use the phrase “we do not affirm or deny anything,”²⁶ he nevertheless adds an important qualifier, so that he may still assert himself in a conventional way: “It is dogmatic statements about the *non-evident* [truths alleged to lie beyond appearances] that we say we neither affirm nor deny; we grant the things that stir our feelings and drive us by force to assent. [emphasis added]”²⁷

In light of the similarities highlighted earlier, we might be also led to ask as to how to best account for these similarities? Did the Greeks import these ideas wholesale from the Indians? Was their mutual influence or did the two systems develop independently of one another? “Hinduism and Buddhism in Greek Philosophy” by A. N. Marlow makes no mention of either Pyrrho (ca. 360 - ca. 270 BCE) or Skepticism, but gives a good overview of the influence of Indian thinking on the Greeks, which no doubt accounts for some of the overall affinities in thought between the two civilizations. Everard Flintoff’s “Pyrrho and India” is also notable for its explorations of the Indian influence in Pyrrho’s thought, though its findings appear in my opinion mostly speculative. And Adrian Kuzminski, in his *Pyrrhonism: How the Ancient Greeks Reinvented Buddhism*, follows up on the work of Flintoff though without coming to any firm conclusions while making the case, unsuccessfully I think, of an unbroken line of thought from Pyrrho to Sextus Empiricus. In any case, the Skeptics never affirm any Buddhist- or Indian-sounding concepts such as reincarnation, other worlds, karma, or even meditation (the absence of meditation in the Greek Skeptical tradition appears to weaken the case for Indian influence, as Kizminski notes albeit somewhat indirectly²⁸). Pyrrhonian Skepticism seems thus rooted more or less in

²⁶ *PH I*, 192-193.

²⁷ *PH I*, 193.

²⁸ Adrian Kuzminski, *Pyrrhonism: How the Ancient Greeks Reinvented Buddhism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 48. Kuzminski says, after first noting Flintoff’s silence on the issue of meditation, that

epistemological concerns important to the Greeks and it never engages in any soteriological discourse (in any other-worldly sense) and seeks no form of escape from the body or world, but from disturbance-causing beliefs, a trait that is also characteristic of the advanced stages of Zen Buddhist practice.²⁹ Thus, according to my research, the overall historical evidence mainly suggests that Greek skepticism developed independently of Indian philosophy, an opinion also shared by comparative philosophy scholar Ben-Ami Sharfstein who opines that “None of the interesting parallels between Sextus’s text and Indian philosophy give decisive proof of Indian influence.”³⁰ I find it true, however, that Pyrrho’s emphasis on *ataraxia* and suspending judgment on all beliefs cannot be attributed to the influence of his immediate Greek predecessors, as Kuzminski points out.³¹ But for Sextus Empiricus, whose works are the focus of this study, the main target of his attacks is Stoicism and other native Greek schools of thought, as well as various other Greek philosophers whom he refers to as “Dogmatists” (those who believe they have found truth) or “Academic Skeptics” (those who believe truth cannot be found) in regards to their positions concerning the nature of the “non-evident.”

Methodology and Structure

“its [meditation] apparent absence in the West in ancient times should seem surprising if we are to take Indian influences seriously.”

²⁹ Huineng for example taught that the “Western Paradise” could be experienced immediately in this life; one did not have to wait to be reborn there. *PS* 35, 心地但無不淨，西方去此不遠。心起不淨之心，念佛往生難到。除惡即行十萬，無八邪即過八千。但行真心，到如禪指。

³⁰ Ben-Ami Sharfstein, *A Comparative History of World Philosophy: From the Upanishads to Kant* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 235.

³¹ Adrian Kuzminski, *Pyrrhonism*, 42-43. Kuzminski points out that the goal of *ataraxia* or liberation from belief makes its appearance in Greek philosophy with Pyrrho. However, we know that *ataraxia* was also the primary concern for Epicurus, Pyrrho’s contemporary. Thus, it’s not clear who established the teaching first. In any case, the suspension of judgment does come from Pyrrho, though as Kuzminski points out, was an established practice in Indian philosophy (Kuzminski, *Pyrrhonism*, 44.).

The methodology used in this thesis is comparative. I will analyze the doctrines of both schools of thought by first contextualizing them historically and then proceeding to explore similarities in terminology, ends, means, as well as ethical and metaphysical implications of their doctrines. The first two chapters provide basic biographical and historical data concerning the main proponents of Pyrrhonian Skepticism and Zen, Sextus Empiricus and Huineng respectively, to highlight the differences and similarities in culture and philosophical influence.³² There follows a general synopsis of the main ideas of each school, and finally a brief overview of the primary texts associated with both thinkers. Details concerning the basic texts are also given in the final sections of Chapters 1 and 2 respectively. The indirect comparisons in these two parts prepares the way for direct comparison in Chapter 3 where I compare side-by-side the themes found in the earlier chapters by exploring similarities and highlighting points of contrast especially as it pertains to the attainment of tranquility in both schools. The two chapters that follow will deal with metaphysical and ethical questions. In the concluding chapter, I will give a brief overall assessment of the major findings of this thesis and suggestions for future research. In the appendix that follows I present an imagined dialogue between a Skeptic and a Zen master. Lastly, the bibliography contains more notes on the primary sources of this study, be Sextus Empiricus's *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*.

³² The order of the presentation of the schools in this thesis chronologically-based.

CHAPTER 1. PYRRHONIAN SKEPTICISM

1.1. The Philosophical Milieu of Sextus Empiricus

We know next to nothing about the life of Sextus Empiricus. In none of his writings does he provide much in the way personal background information or historical settings. He mentions cities such as Athens and Alexandria in passing though without suggesting any connection to the cities, though a Rome residence still remains a possibility. Diogenes Laertius mentions that Sextus was a student of Herodotus of Tarsus and had a pupil by the name of Saturninus, both of whom however are historically obscure.³³ And as far as his dates are concerned, most scholars locate him around the late second or early third century CE. Several pages of Sextus work were copied by Hippolytus (without citation) in his *Refutations of All Heresies* written sometime before 235 CE, which means Sextus must have at least written before that date.³⁴ And also we know that must have lived during or after the reign of Tiberius (d. 37 CE), whom he mentions in passing.³⁵ The appellation “Empiricus” would seem also to imply that he was a member of Empirical Medical School, but as Sextus himself states, the rival “Methodic” school was actually the most compatible with Skepticism.³⁶ In any case, Sextus never claims any originality for arguments he presents, and almost always speaks in third person plural when referring to the Sceptics’ positions. Furthermore, virtually all of his arguments are *ad hominem*, that is, directed against the arguments and assumptions held by Dogmatists themselves

³³ *DL IX*, 12, 116.

³⁴ Julian Annas and Jonathan Barnes, eds., trans. *Sextus Empiricus. Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xi.

³⁵ *PH I*, 84.

³⁶ *PH I*, 236-237.

(not against reason or rationality generally).³⁷

Now in examining the background to Sextus' thought, the most natural question to ask is when and through whom did the Skeptic movement first originate? Diogenes Laertius, whose *Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosopher* provides (oftentimes unreliable) biographical accounts of Greek philosophers from Thales down to the generation of Pyrrho's successor, Timon of Phlius (d. 230 BCE), relates that skepticism was believed by some to date back as early as Homer:

Some say that Homer was the original founder of this school [skepticism]; since he at different times gives different accounts of the same circumstance, as much as any one else ever did; and since he never dogmatizes definitively respecting affirmation.³⁸

Diogenes then goes on to list other philosophers (and poets) whose writings have also been regarded as skeptical for various reasons, including Zeno of Elea, Democritus, and Heraclitus. Moreover, in ancient Greece, there were two main kinds of skepticisms, Academic and Pyrrhonian. According to the Roman philosopher Cicero (106-43 BCE), Academic skepticism actually began with Plato, the founder of the Academy (named after the ancient Greek hero Academus). And although Plato never refers to himself or Socrates as Skeptics, there are clearly skeptical trends in his philosophy, a fact which brings Cicero to firmly conclude that "Plato is a skeptic because he is always arguing pro and contra, states nothing positively, inquires into

³⁷ Stoicism was still a formidable school up until the 3rd century AD. It remains an open as to whether Sextus helped hasten their demise.

³⁸ *DL IX*, 71.

everything, and makes no certain statements.”³⁹ Indeed, it would take less than a century for the skeptical turn to begin in earnest under the scholarship of Arcesilaus (316/5-241/0 BCE), which initiated the phase that became known as the Middle or Second Academy. Arcesilaus left behind no writings and according the historical sources, his main preoccupation was dialectical argument, which he used in his relentless attacks against Stoic epistemology and ethics.

The next major figure was Carneades (214/3-129/8 BCE), who came fourth in succession after Arcesilaus and reinvigorated the Academy. He, like Arcesilaus, wrote nothing, but is said to have argued that there was no criterion by which truth could be found. But because people had to live and act, Carneades posited that there could be degrees of truth and argued for what he called the “persuasive” (*to pithanon*) which was translated into Latin as *probabilis*, and is thus often misleadingly rendered into English as the “probable.”⁴⁰ Carneades distinguishes classes of the “persuasive”: only persuasive, persuasive and tested, and the persuasive, tested, and “thoroughly explored” (*diexodeumene*).⁴¹ Sextus nonetheless, however, classifies Carneades as a “dogmatic skeptic” since the latter positively claimed that truth could not be known, which the Pyrrhonians do not do.⁴² This point is a contentious one, but Sextus in any case does not follow Carneades’ perceived claim the things are *in themselves* persuasive or probable (as such is necessarily non-evident).⁴³ And after another brief interlude, Skepticism recommenced with Anesidemus in the first century BC, though this time not fully in coordination with the Academy, which had by that time had

³⁹ *Acad.* 1.46.

⁴⁰ R.J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 111.

⁴¹ *PH I*, 227.

⁴² *PH I*, 3.

⁴³ *PH I*, 227.

adopted tenets of Stoic epistemology.⁴⁴ Aenesidemus, though his *Pyrrhonian Discourses* is no longer extant, is credited with formulating the Ten Modes or “Tropes” (from the Greek *tropos*)⁴⁵ of argument and also reviving the principle of *epoché* (suspended judgment) originally proposed, it is said, by Pyrrho and Timon. Thus, the teachings of Aenesidemus hark back to the enigmatic Pyrrho, whom we shall now briefly discuss.

Pyrrho was the student of Anaxarchus, whom the young Pyrrho accompanied on Alexander’s military expeditions into India. There Pyrrho encountered the *gymnosophists* (“naked philosophers”), and was, according to Laertius, was influenced by them to the following effect:

He [Pyrrho] would withdraw from the world and live in solitude, rarely showing himself to his relatives; this is because he had heard an Indian reproach Anaxarchus, telling him that he would never be able to teach others what is good while he himself danced attendance on kings in their court. He would maintain the same composure at all times.⁴⁶

After his return to Greece, Pyrrho became a skeptic and attracted to himself a group of devoted followers. And according to Laertius, Pyrrho’s teaching was as follows:

For he [Pyrrho] used to say that nothing was honourable, or disgraceful, or just,

⁴⁴ A.A. Long and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers. 2 Vols.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 456.

⁴⁵ R.J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 55.

⁴⁶ *DL IX*, 63.

or unjust. And on the same principle he asserted that there was no such thing as downright truth; but that men did everything in consequence of custom and law. For that nothing was any more this than that.⁴⁷

Pyrrho is said to have lived his life in accordance with this principle to the extent that,

...he never shunned anything, and never guarded against anything; encountering everything, even waggons [sic] for instance, and precipices, and dogs, and everything of that sort; committing nothing whatever to his senses. So that he used to be saved...by his friends who accompanied him.⁴⁸

This account, possibly from an unsympathetic source, however, contradicts Anesidemus' testimony, also given by Laertius, that although Pyrrho suspended judgment on all matters, he did nothing "without due consideration."⁴⁹ Another piece of evidence concerning the teachings of Pyrrho's is preserved in a fragment from the writings of the Peripatetic philosopher Aristocles:

He [Pyrrho] himself has left nothing in writing, but this pupil Timon says that whoever wants to be happy must consider these three questions: first, how are things by nature? Secondly, what attitude should we adopt towards them? Thirdly, what will be the outcome for those who have such an attitude?⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *DL IX*, 63.

⁴⁸ *DL IX*, 63.

⁴⁹ *DL IX*, 62. This not only contradicts the earlier claim by others that Pyrrho "never guarded against anything," but suggests too that Pyrrho never ceased to inquire.

⁵⁰ *Prep. Ev.* 14.18.

At this juncture we would be led to think that the skeptic Pyrrho would answer the first question with an “I do not know.” But this is not the answer that is given:

According to Timon, Pyrrho declared that things are equally indifferent, unmeasurable and inarbitrable.⁵¹

In the literature, there is much debate on the proper interpretation of this passage. As the Skeptic scholar Richard Bett asks,

Is Pyrrho speaking of a property possessed by ‘things’ intrinsically—their lack of differentiating features—or is he speaking of *our inability*, for whatever reasons, to make differentiations among things?⁵² [emphasis original]

In other words, “should Pyrrho’s pronouncement be read” metaphysically or epistemologically? It would seem that the straightforward metaphysical reading is the most reasonable. And indeed the first question is undeniably metaphysical as it pertains to the “nature of things,” not the limitations of human knowledge. Thus, in Bett’s words, if the metaphysical interpretation is correct, “it is a historical irony that Pyrrho became the most famous spokesperson for a later skepticism which rejects all claims about the true nature of the world.”⁵³ And Aristocles also points out “for if it is our nature to know nothing there is no further need to inquire about other things.”⁵⁴

Thus, this raises crucial questions concerning the implications Skeptic teaching holds

⁵¹ *Prep. Ev.* 14.18.

⁵² Richard Bett, *Pyrrho, His Antecedents and His Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19.

⁵³ In his *Pyrrho, his Antecedents and his Legacy*, Richard Bett argues for just this conclusion. Interestingly enough, Sextus refers to his system as Pyrrhonian not because of Pyrrho’s idea, but rather because of due to the latter’s conviction (*PH* I, 7). Kuzminksi argues against Bett on this point, but does not in my opinion make a convincing case.

⁵⁴ *Prep. Ev.* 14.18.

for the possibility of continued investigations, a question to be explored in the following chapter. But to continue for now with Aristocles' lengthy quote on Pyrrho's philosophy:

For this reason [i.e., the indeterminability of things] neither our sensations nor our opinions tell us truths or falsehoods. Therefore, for this reason we should not put our trust in them one bit, but we should be unopinionated, uncommitted and unwavering, saying concerning each individual thing that it no more is than is not, or it both is and is not, or it neither is nor is not. The outcome for those who actually adopt this attitude, says Timon, will be first speechlessness and then freedom from disturbance...⁵⁵

Also in this passage, aside from Pyrrho's apparent adoption of the Indian *catsukoti* "four-horned dilemma," employed most strenuously by Sextus' likely Indian contemporary Nāgārjuna, we can also observe Pyrrho's apparently self-refuting call for us to become "unopinionated," a point whose irony was not lost on Aristocles, who goes on to conclude:

In admonishing us to have no opinion, they [the skeptics] at the same time bid us to form an opinion, and in saying that men ought to make no statement they make a statement themselves: and though they require you to agree with no one, they command you to believe themselves...⁵⁶

Sextus apparently took such criticisms to heart as his criticism and calibrated his skepticism in an attempt to avoid this form of dogmatizing in his own writings.

⁵⁵*Prep. Ev.* 14.18.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

1.2. The Way of Pyrrhonian Skepticism

The word “skeptic” comes from Greek noun “*skepsis*,” which means “to reflect” or “consider carefully.” Sextus tells us also that the Skeptic Way is “zetetic” or investigative.⁵⁷ The Skeptic originally assumes that *ataraxia* (mental imperturbability) can only be found by separating truth from falsity in the things disputed by philosophy. In the course of his investigations, however, the Skeptic discovers that finding ultimate answers is not necessarily itself a precondition for arriving at *ataraxia* as was previously assumed. However, the Skeptic does not conclude from this discovery that it follows that the search for truth should be abandoned. In fact, reason itself can give us no more reason to search than to not search. The Skeptic *qua* Skeptic continues to search nonetheless though it is not clear as to what his motivation might be in the absence of any intellectual disturbance whatsoever. In any case, the tranquil state of mind arises from suspending judgment on already-held dogmatic beliefs as opposed to the acquisition of new facts about the nature of reality.⁵⁸

The System of Skepticism

Here we begin our survey of Skepticism with the words of Sextus Empiricus himself on what Skepticism is and is not. Sextus tells us very straightforwardly that:

If one defines a system as an *attachment* to a number of dogmas that agree with one another and with appearances, and defines a dogma as an assent to

⁵⁷ *PHI*, 6.

⁵⁸ Actually a more accurate rendering of the term *skeptikoi* would be inquirer, which reflects that the fact the Skeptic’s principle aim is not simply to doubt, but rather to inquire. However, it just so happens that inquiring into a matter naturally leads to doubts concerning the veracity of claims previously made.

something non-evident, we shall say that the Skeptic does not have a system.⁵⁹

[emphasis added]

“But,” he continues,

if one says that a system is a way of life that, in accordance with appearances, follows a certain rationale, where that rationale shows how it is possible to seem to live rightly (“rightly” being taken, not as referring only to virtue, but in a more ordinary sense) and tends to produce the disposition to suspend judgment, then we say that he does have a system.⁶⁰

Skepticism, therefore, is first and foremost a way of life based on the suspension of judgment concerning things “non-evident” (*adelos*, lit. “hidden”). It is, as stated in the outset, an “ability” (not a philosophy in the formal sense) to place arguments in opposition for the sake of ceasing to dogmatize. According to Sextus, the skeptic starts out experiencing puzzlement (*aphoria*) concerning the nature of appearances and believes that by finding the “ultimate” answer peace of mind will follow, but then something else happens:

...the Sceptics were hoping to achieve *ataraxia* by resolving the anomaly of phenomena and noumena, and, being unable to do this, they suspended judgment. But then, by chance as it were, when they were suspending judgment the *ataraxia* followed, as a shadow follows the body.⁶¹

⁵⁹ *PH I*, 16.

⁶⁰ *PH I*, 17.

⁶¹ *PH I*, 29.

Thus, the Skeptic finds peace of mind *accidentally* by not resolving the question, but by suspending judgment on something that was previously rashly believed to be true. And since the Skeptic has acquired the “disposition” (*dunamis*) to suspend judgment for any argument encountered, she will naturally apply the method of placing arguments in opposition:

The Skeptic Way is a disposition to oppose phenomena and noumena to one another in any way whatever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence among the things and statements thus opposed, we are brought first to *epoché* and then to *ataraxia*.⁶²

Ataraxia, the Greek term meaning “imperturbability,” is the ultimate goal of the Skeptics and virtually all Hellenistic schools of thought. It is, says Sextus, that “untroubled and tranquil condition of the soul.”⁶³ Though, we elaborate more fully on the notion of *ataraxia* in Chapter 6, let us first note for the time being that the Skeptic has found that tranquility appears to be incompatible with dogmatic or precipitous assent to views, including I suppose this one too if one so happens to rashly assent to even *it*. Sextus himself even stops short of saying suspending judgment is a “good” thing by nature as he claims Aenesidemus did.⁶⁴ And although the Skeptic has discovered that peace is actually able to follow from suspending judgment on appearances, the Skeptic nonetheless continues investigations. In the opening paragraph of the *Outlines* Sextus writes,

⁶² *PH* I, 7-9.

⁶³ *PH* I, 10.

⁶⁴ *PH* II, 233.

So also in the case of what is sought in philosophy, I think, some people have claimed to have found the truth, others have asserted that it cannot be apprehended, and others are still searching.⁶⁵

The Skeptic of course places herself in the last group, and the description implies that Dogmatism of either the positive or negative variety (“truth has been found” and “truth cannot be found” respectively) is what rules out the possibility of continued searching. And Sextus has also this reply to the charge that Skeptics aren’t interested in seeking truth:

For to continue the investigation of problems is not inconsistent in those who confess their ignorance of their [the problems] real nature, but only in those who believe they have an exact knowledge of them.”⁶⁶

Investigating is thus a way of life for the skeptic and she does not say whether truth can or cannot be found, for that is itself something also non-evident at the moment. And even for arguments the Skeptic *currently* finds convincing, she is able to oppose her present state of conviction to *past instances* of similar conviction. Thus, the Skeptic is able to reply:

Just as before the birth of the person who introduced the system which you follow, the argument supporting that system did not yet appear sound although it really was, so also it is possible that the opposite of the argument you now

⁶⁵ *PH* I, 1-2.

⁶⁶ *PS* II, 11.

advance is really sound despite its not yet appearing so to us, and hence we should not yet assent to this argument that now seems so strong.⁶⁷

The practice of “opposing present things to things past and future” is what Skepticism scholar R. J. Hankinson refers to as the Skeptic’s “McCawber policy.”⁶⁸ However, Hankinson remarks that “far from being a desperate expedient to preserve an authentically skeptical stance in the face of overwhelming evidence (as some think), there is much to be said for it. After all, until 1543 (and in fact considerably thereafter) the vast preponderance of evidence suggested that the earth was stationary.”⁶⁹ If this is true, then of course the modern Skeptic will not strongly assent *now* to the proposition that “The earth revolves around the sun” simply because it is currently the most convincing theory (and perhaps neither would modern scientists who typically prefer to speak in terms of “theories” as opposed to “truths” of science). Thus, the mere possibility that a future discovery could tip the tide of convincingness is enough prevent the Skeptic from assenting to anything which is not necessarily or incorrigibly true.⁷⁰ From the foregoing, it might at first appear that the Skeptic might be disinclined to search in that she can always imagine any theory being falsified upon further research with the implication that finding “truth” is hopeless. And though many a commentator have accused Sextus of “bad faith” in regards to his claim to still be searching for truth,⁷¹ I think such claims are inconclusive. Again, it is only apparent to the Skeptic “right now” that any conceivable theory has the possibility of being overturned. This being the case, perhaps even that conclusion itself might one

⁶⁷ *PHI*, 34.

⁶⁸ The name is inspired by the Wilkin Micawber character in Charles Dicken’s *David Copperfield* who is constantly asserting his faith that “something will show up.”

⁶⁹ Hankinson, *The Sceptics*, 30.

⁷⁰ *PHI*, 193.

⁷¹ Hankinson, *The Sceptics*, 13.

day be overturned as well! Thus, the Skeptic stands poised to continue the search now and has not made any precipitous judgments about what can or cannot be found. And this freedom from rash assumptions is what ushers in the Skeptic's quietude. We will say more on the "present tenseness" of the Skeptic's position in Chapter 3.

The Ten Modes and the Five Modes of Argument⁷²

The Skeptic has observed that beliefs about appearances can be opposed to one another in such a way that doubt arises in regards to the trustworthiness of those beliefs. The "Ten Modes" were introduced by the earlier Skeptic Aenesidemus in order to show that there is no way to properly ground our beliefs about appearances. Appearances can be opposed to other appearances (just judgments about appearances can be opposed to appearances themselves) such that we may be led to suspend judgment on the nature of the "underlying thing" (*hypokeimenon*, see Ch. 3.1) in question. Thus, by way of example, Sextus writes, "we oppose phenomena to phenomena when we say that the same tower appears round from a distance but square from close up."⁷³ Therefore, if someone were to claim that X is Y because it has the appearance of Z, then if the Skeptic can show that X also under certain circumstances has the appearance of not-Z, then X can no longer be affirmed to be Y by nature. This is essentially the reasoning behind the Ten Modes which we now briefly list. Impressions and appearances are opposed to one another in the following

⁷² For considerations of space, "Two Modes" and the "Modes for Causal Explanations" will not be elaborated on. But to briefly quote Sextus on the former entails: "For since everything that is apprehended is either apprehended through itself or through something else, by pointing out that what is apprehended is apprehended neither through itself nor through anything else they produce *aporiai*, as they [the Skeptics who propound the Two Modes] suppose, about everything." (PH I, 178-179). The eight modes for refuting causal explanation were believed by Aenesidemus, who devised them, to be able to "refute and expose as unsound every dogmatic causal explanation." (PH I, 180-186)

⁷³ PH I, 33

ways:

- 1) Impressions differ due to differences in the physical constitution of species (e.g., bats and humans perceive the world differently)
- 2) Impressions differ due to the difference of individuals of the same species (e.g., two different people may perceive the world differently)
- 3) Impressions differ due to the fact that different sense organs detect different sensations (e.g., the eyes and the nose perceive things differently)
- 4) Impressions differ due to the present circumstances of the perceiver (e.g., an intoxicated or sick person perceives the world differently than a person in their natural condition)
- 5) Impressions differ depending on one's spatial position in relation to the object (e.g., a coin looks round from the top, but flat from the side)
- 6) Impressions differ due to objects being mixed with other objects (e.g., a body in water appears different than one seen through the medium of air)
- 7) Impressions differ due to quantities of a thing (e.g., food may not be appealing to a person that is full)
- 8) Impressions differ due to the relativity of things (e.g., a tall person may be considered short in comparison to a skyscraper).
- 9) Impressions differ due to constancy or rarity (e.g., the rare comet seems more awe-inspiring than the sun which is seen everyday)
- 10) Impressions differ due to customs and laws (e.g., people of different cultures approve and disapprove of different practices).⁷⁴

⁷⁴ PH 36-163.

These modes are meant to inducing suspension of judgment concerning the way things really are behind appearances, and not to prove that things are *not* as the Dogmatists claim them to be. Sextus openly admits that “they may well be unsound, and there may be more than the ones I shall mention.”⁷⁵ Furthermore, Sextus says that these ten modes can all be subsumed under the mode of relativity,⁷⁶ which itself listed as the third of the Five Modes attributed to Agrippa (Sextus does not refer to him by name, but just attributes them generally to the “Later Sceptics,” i.e., those following after Aenesidemus).⁷⁷ These are as follows:

- 1) The mode of “disagreement” or “discrepancy” (*diaphonia*) whereby the Skeptic is led to suspend judgment owing to the fact of disagreement among philosophers on the matters in question.
- 2) The mode of “infinite regress” (*ienai eis apeiron*) whereby true of a statement requires a proof to make it credible, but that proof will in term will require yet another proof and so ad infinitum.
- 3) The mode of “relativity” (*pros ti*) as just discussed.
- 4) The mode of “hypothesis” or “assumption” (*hypothetikon*) or the non-allowance of unproved premises in a debate.
- 5) The mode of “circularity” (*diallelon*) whereby an argument assumes the truth of what is already in question.⁷⁸

Sextus goes on to show that all matters of inquiry can be brought under these five

⁷⁵ *PH I*, 35.

⁷⁶ *PH I*, 38.

⁷⁷ *DL IX*, 88.

⁷⁸ *PH I*, 164-169.

modes (or perhaps more properly, that all have been thus far brought under them),⁷⁹ and among these he makes the most extensive use of the second, fourth, and fifth modes in his arguments against his opponents. It should be noted also that Modes 2, 4, 5 are also referred to as the “Münchhausen-Trilemma” or also “Agrippa's Trilemma.”

A few of these modes we will employ in Chapters 4 and 5 to provide a demonstration as to how they are able to bring about *epoché* and *ataraxia*.



⁷⁹ *PHI*, 170.

1.3. The Text of the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*

The *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (*Pyrrhōneioi Hypotypōseis*, thus commonly abbreviated *PH*) is Sextus' most well-known work, though it is still debated whether it is Sextus' first or final work.⁸⁰ The *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, which consists of three books, deals with the nature of Skepticism and also stockpiles a litany of arguments against the claims of the ancient logicians, physicists, ethicists, and sophists as well. The *Outlines* is a lengthy text and out of Sextus' voluminous works, due its tighter structure and clear presentation of ideas as well as the lack of negative dogmatism, I consider it to best the representative text of Sextus' thought. To cite one example one example of Sextus' own seeming transition from negative skepticism, Bett demonstrates how Sextus' use of *anairein* "to do away with" goes from being an expression which describes what the Skeptic does to the Dogmatists' arguments in *Against the Logicians* to precisely the type of thing the Skeptic customarily *does not do* in the *Outlines*.⁸¹ Thus, instead of asserting that the Dogmatist's assertions are false, Sextus simply shows that it is impossible under the present circumstances to either affirm *or* deny the claims of the Dogmatists. And when Sextus does refute the Dogmatist's argument, he typically does so *ad hominem*, such that he overturns their arguments by

⁸⁰ Sextus' other two extant works, which are both traditionally grouped the title *Against the Mathematicians* (*Adversus Mathematicos*, commonly abbreviated *M*), is composed of 11 books. Books I-VI are titled as follows: *Against the Grammarians* (Book I), *Against the Rhetoricians* (Book II), *Against the Geometricians* (Book III), *Against the Arithmeticians* (Book IV), *Against the Astrologers* (Book V), and *Against the Musicians* (Book VI). The other subset of books, referred to collectively as *Against the Dogmatists*, make up books VII-XI. This arrangement is somewhat misleading in that *Against the Dogmatists* was also thought to be part of another larger work entitled *Skeptical Treatises* (*Skeptika Hupomnēmata*), of which up to five books are thought to be missing. In any case, books VII-XI are as named as follows: *Against the Logicians* and *Against the Physicists* (two books each), and *Against Ethicists* (one book). It should be noted, however, that except for the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Against the Mathematicians*, the names of the eleven books listed above are not found in the manuscripts tradition. Sextus also refers in passing to two works no longer extant, *Notes on Medicine* and *On the Soul*.

⁸¹ Bett Richard, *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xxiv.

making use only of the assumptions of his opponents.

As stated above, the text of the *Outlines* is divided into three books. The 34 sections of the first book provides a overview of Skepticism which includes an explication of the skeptical “modes” of argument, including the Ten Modes, the Five Modes, the Two Modes, the modes for causal arguments, a detailed explanation of the Skeptical slogans, and an explanation of how Skepticism differs from the other competing philosophies and skepticisms. The 22 sections of Book II deal mainly with the criteria of truth, proofs, and signs, the syllogism, inductive reference, definitions, mereology, other logical problems. Finally, Book III contains 32 sections which expound on theories of the natural sciences including causality, time, motion, change, apprehension, God, as well as several concluding sections on ethics. This thesis will draw mainly from Books I and III as these contain the most relevant material on the attainment of *ataraxia* and the ethical part of Skeptical philosophy. Lastly I might add that Sextus points out that the contents of his book should be taken absolutely binding, for he says in the introduction that:

as regards none of the things that we are about to say do we firmly maintain that matters are absolutely as stated, but in each instance we are simply reporting, like a chronicler, what now appears to us to be the case.⁸²

Sextus even admits in the very last section of the *Outlines* that many of the arguments contained therein may be weak in persuasiveness, but he recommends them nonetheless for their perceived efficacy in healing dogmatic rashness.⁸³

⁸² *PH* I, 4.

⁸³ *PH* III, 279-281.

CHAPTER 2: ZEN BUDDISM

2.1. Huineng and His Zen Inheritance

Huineng (638-713 AD) came to be regarded nearly a century after his death as the Sixth Patriarch (*Liuzu* 六祖) of Zen Buddhism. The biographical data concerning his life in the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經) is mostly regarded as fiction by contemporary scholars, though the earliest version which has Huineng doing a very un-Confucian thing in suddenly leaving behind his poor, widowed mother to study under the Fifth Patriarch Hongren (弘忍).⁸⁴ The fact that the other versions attempt to tidy this story might suggest that it actually occurred. In any case, Huineng is listed as one of Fifth Patriarch Hongren ten disciples in a historical work entitled *Record of the Laṅkāvatāra Masters* (*Lengqiejing ziji*) 楞伽師資記. Huineng appears seventh on the list, along with the location at which he taught (which seems to indicate that he was a teacher of only regional significance during his own lifetime). The *Platform Sūtra* states that Huineng was born in Fanyang (范陽) and spent his childhood in Xinzhou (新州, modern-day Xinxing, Guangdong Province).⁸⁵

According to the *Platform Sūtra*, Huineng (age unspecified) went to pay obeisance to the Fifth Patriarch Hongren after hearing a verse from the *Diamond Sūtra* recited, and stayed there for just over eight months.⁸⁶ Near the end of his stint at the monastery,

⁸⁴ PS 2. Other versions of the story have the customer providing money for the care of Huineng's mother. In Vol. II of the *Patriarch's Hall Anthology* (*Zutang ji* 祖堂集), the customer, who also has a name, gives Huineng's mother 100 taels of silver. In other versions of the *Platform Sūtra*, the nameless customer only gives 10 taels.

⁸⁵ PS 2.

⁸⁶ PS 3.

Huineng unexpectedly won a verse-writing contest against the monastery's Head Abbot Shenxiu (神秀), who was also coincidentally claimed at one time to be the Sixth Patriarch by a rival tradition known somewhat anachronistically as the "Northern School." And as a result of winning the verse contest, Huineng was secretly passed the robe of the Patriarchate. This became the official story, and through the vigorous efforts of one his most famous disciples, Shenhui (神會), by the end of the eighth century Huineng was recognized as the undisputed Sixth Patriarch of Chinese Zen. At present it is impossible to say how much of the *Platform Sūtra* originates from Huineng himself. Fortunately, however, for our purposes, the historicity of the text is of little concern as we will concentrate on the thought of the text, using Huineng's name a symbol for the teachings found in the *Platform Sūtra*. In the section that follows I give a fuller account of the specific teachings of Huineng, but here it will be helpful I think to highlight a few of main features of the Zen teachings that Huineng inherited from his predecessors in order to better inform our later discussion.

As is well-known, Buddhism originated in India with the teachings of a prince named Gautama. Gautama renounced his comfortable lifestyle in order to find the way to escape the cycle of birth, old age, sickness, and death. Therefore, early Buddhism might be said to have adopted a pessimistic view of human existence which it saw as nothing but suffering, and looked for a means of escape from the dusty world. The Buddha's followers withdrew from their homes and society to devote themselves to teaching of the Buddha ("Awakened One") and practiced meditation in the hope of attaining freedom from suffering. The formula for salvation developed by the Buddha was the Four Noble Truths. These are (1) suffering, which essentially includes all

human feeling and sensation, (2) the origin of suffering as craving, (3) the cessation of suffering, and (4) the path to ending suffering, which is called the Eight-fold Path. And although the Buddha made counter-arguments against the dominant view at the time of the existence of *atman*, or eternal Self, he was also careful not to fully endorse the view of no-Self either (*anatman*) either. He referred to his teaching like a “raft,” that was to be used for “crossing over and not for taking hold of.”⁸⁷

Through the course of its development, Buddhism would, as it happened, make a metaphysical turn leading to the creation of the self-titled Mahāyāna (“Higher Vehicle”) system of thought. Two Mahāyāna sūtras in particular, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Niepanjing* 涅槃經) or *Nirvana Sūtra* for short, and the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (*Lengqiejing* 楞伽經) teach, respectively, the existence of a “Buddha-nature” (*fo xing* 佛性) and “self-nature” (*zi xing* 自性) inherent in all humans. Thus, according to one recent Zen anthology of Zen literature,

In substance Zen Buddhism advocates that the nature of the self is the nature of the Buddha, and that the heart of the self is the heart of the Buddha, that Buddha nature is there in everyone, and everyone can attain Buddhahood.⁸⁸

Thus, it turns out that the eternal *atman*, the very concept which much of early Buddhism so vehemently rejected, made a comeback in Mahāyāna Buddhism in the form of an unchanging Buddha-nature. Moreover, the fifth-century monk Daosheng

⁸⁷ Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*. (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 11.

⁸⁸ Jiang Lansheng., ed., 100 Excerpts from Zen Buddhist Texts.(Taipei: Taiwan, 2001), vii.

(道生) was the first to synthesize the teachings of the Buddha nature and sudden enlightenment, and is a figure to whom Huineng's thought appears much indebted. Huineng makes such extensive use of the doctrine of the Buddha-nature in the *Platform Sūtra* that it becomes one of the central pillars of his teaching. In addition, the First Patriarch of Chinese Zen, the Bodhidharma (*Puti Damo* 菩提達摩), according to tradition, used the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* as his primary text.⁸⁹ The text, developed by the Consciousness-Only School (*Weishi zong* 唯識宗), teaches that there exists a substratum of consciousness, a “storehouse consciousness” (Skt: *alaya-vijnana*, Ch: *a lai ye shi* 阿賴耶識) along with seven types of self-natures.⁹⁰ Huineng also combines the Buddha/self-nature teaching, alternately known as the *tathāgatagarbha*, with the *prajñāpāramitā* (“Perfection of Wisdom”) teaching of “emptiness” (Skt: *śūnyatā*, Ch: *kong* 空) to produce a very unique system of thought and practice.⁹¹ One other important development of note within Mahāyāna Buddhism was its non-separation of religious practice and everyday life. This line of thought is developed most fully in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Weimojiejing* 維摩詰經, a text which Huineng also mines heavily throughout the *Platform Sūtra*.⁹² In the

⁸⁹ There is little reliable historical information on the first three patriarchs of Chinese Zen, the Bodhidharma, Huike (慧可), and Sengcan (僧璨) respectively. The link between the Fourth Patriarch Daoxin (道信) and the Fifth Patriarch (弘忍), however, is well-attested for in the literature.

⁹⁰ *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* V: “Again, Mahamati, there are seven kinds of self-nature [自性]: collection (*samudaya*), being (*bhava*), characteristic marks (*lakshana*), elements (*mahabhuta*), causality (*hetu*), conditionality (*pratya*), and perfection (*nishpatti*)” (Suzuki’s translation). The ambiguity of the self-nature is highlighted by D.T. Suzuki in a footnote in reference to the above verse: “What is exactly meant by these concepts regarded as self-nature (*svabhava*) is difficult to define as far as the *Lankāvatāra* is concerned.” Thus, it seems that Huineng may simply have equated the Buddha-nature with the self-nature. He uses the terms interchangeably in his sermons and discussions. See *PS* 3, 8, 12, 34, 38.

⁹¹ See *PS* 24-25. In contrast, Sheng-yen says, “In point of fact, Platform sutra uses wisdom as the method and regards tathāgatagarbha as its goal. It employs the perfection of wisdom’s view of emptiness to destroy the attachments caused by passions in order to achieve the goal of “realizing one’s clear mind and seeing one’s true nature” (ming-hsin chien-hsing).” Though this is a fairly common interpretation of Huineng’s thought, but Huineng rarely if ever uses the teaching of “emptiness” in this sense.

⁹² Whereas many hold Chinese Zen is a Sinofication of Indian Buddhism, I see it more as an application of the practical spiritual life as already envisioned by the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. One telling point I find is Huineng’s rejection of traditional Confucian mourning rituals (*PS* 53).

Vimalakīrti Sūtra the lines between monastic and lay life are blurred and it is affirmed that even lay practitioners may achieve awakening.⁹³ This represents perhaps one of the most important transitions from early Buddhism. We now turn to teachings attributed to Huineng in the *Platform Sūtra*.



⁹³ Vimalakīrti himself was said to a highly attained lay disciple and revered as one of the greatest disciples of the Buddha (*Vimalakīrti Sūtra* Ch. 2).

2.2. The Fundamentals of Huineng's Southern School of Zen

In this chapter we will discuss the central ideas of Huineng's Zen School. In contrast to some other Zen teachers, Huineng did not place any emphasis on sitting meditation,⁹⁴ and also did not teach practitioners to empty their minds of thoughts. He also made light of the idea that words were unimportant or empty (even though much is made of his supposed illiteracy). In a way, this all seems very un-Zenlike based on common preconceptions of Zen practice. So what exactly *did* Huineng teach? In this chapter we thus examine the main aspect of Huineng's teaching, which consists of the doctrines of prajñā (*bo re* 般若), samādhi (*chan ding* 禪定), no-thought (*wu nian* 無念) and non-dwelling (*wu zhu* 無住), and the self-nature (*zi xing* 自性).

Wisdom and Samādhi

We begin with the all-important Zen teaching of prajñā. Huineng describes prajñā as follows:

Prajñā is wisdom. At each moment of experience, let your thoughts be free of foolishness and constantly practice wisdom—this is the practice of prajñā. At any moment a delusory thought arises, prajñā is nowhere to be

⁹⁴ Sitting meditation however is mentioned in passing in *PS* 53: “如吾在日一種，一時端坐，” but in most other places it is deemphasized. See *PS* 14, 18, 19, and Huineng's famous poem in the Zongbao edition (T48n2008_p0358b24-5): 生來坐不臥，死去臥不坐，元是臭骨頭，何為立功過。 “While alive one sits but does not lie / In death one lies but does not sit / Either way there's nothing but stinky bones / How can this called establishing a practice?”

found; and if at any moment a ray of wisdom shines, prajñā is generated.⁹⁵

Therefore, prajñā is the *practice* of wisdom, which has neither “form nor appearance.”⁹⁶ Prajñā is not objective knowledge, but rather it *occurs* when the mind comes into a state of concentration or attentiveness in which “delusory thoughts do not arise.” In other words, it is a way of viewing phenomenon in which vexing thoughts are prevented from entering the mind; one does not suppress any thoughts that are already there (since the thought to do *that* would itself be delusory!). But before we spell out what constitutes a “delusory thought,” we will first observe how Huineng equates prajñā-wisdom with being in a state of meditative absorption. This wisdom is said to be identical to samādhi-like concentration, meaning that one does not concentrate to find wisdom and neither does wisdom lead to concentration. The two occur simultaneously, and are neither separable nor identical:

Meditative concentration and wisdom in actual fact are not one, and not two. Meditative concentration is the substance of wisdom and, and wisdom is the function of meditative concentration.⁹⁷

To help clarify the relationship between the two, Huineng uses the example of a lamp and its light. The lamp is the substance of the light while the light serves as the function of the lamp. Huineng concludes that “although they have two different names, in their essence there is no duality.”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ PS 26, 般若是智慧。一時中念念不愚，常行智慧，即名般若行。一念愚即般若絕，一念智即般若生。

⁹⁶ PS 26, 無形相

⁹⁷ PS 13, 慧定體不一不二，即定是慧體，即慧是定用。

⁹⁸ PS 15, 名即有二，體無兩般。

Moreover, in an exposition of “sitting in meditation” or *zuochan* 坐禪 (Jp: *zazen*),” Huineng says,

To give rise to no thoughts about external objects is what we call sitting; to see the original nature and remain unperturbed is what we call meditation. What is meditative concentration? To remain transcendent of forms externally is called meditation; to remain unperturbed internally is called concentration.⁹⁹

“Delusory thoughts” are here equated with “thoughts about external objects,” which for Huineng means thoughts stained by attachment.¹⁰⁰ Also seeing the self-nature, or one’s original nature, is identified as “meditation.” “Sitting” is used metaphorically here to describe this state of mind, not the physical act. This metaphorization of traditional Zen concepts is a very characteristic feature of Huineng’s thought.¹⁰¹ Additionally, this state of concentrated awareness of thought is alternately referred to as direct mind (*zhi xin* 直心) and “one-act samādhi” (*yixing sanmei* 一行三昧).¹⁰² Direct mind can, according to the text, be practiced at anytime regardless of whether one is “walking, standing, sitting, or lying down”¹⁰³ This last part is important since even in Huineng’s day, the idea of meditation normally brought to mind the stereotypical form or image of recluses sitting in temples or caves for extended periods of time. Even Bodhidharma, the first Zen Patriarch, is said to have meditated

⁹⁹ PS 19, 念不去爲坐，見本性不亂爲禪。何名爲禪定？外離相曰禪，內不亂曰定。

¹⁰⁰ PS 17.

¹⁰¹ For further examples, see Huineng’s interpretation of the Trikaya (20), the Three Refuges (23), and Discipline-Samadhi-Wisdom (PS 41)

¹⁰² PS 14.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

in a seated position for nine consecutive years!¹⁰⁴ Huineng, however, disagreed with the interpretation of samādhi as a state of in which the mind is absent of all thoughts. For Huineng, “sitting in a motionless posture and eliminating deluded thoughts without invoking a false mind” is, he wryly points out, “not different from being an inanimate object.” The person who practices samādhi does so by actively participating in the world. There is no separation from daily activities; in fact it may be said that it can only be fully realized within activity. Huineng quotes from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* to make just this point: “Externally he is skilled at distinguishing all the various forms of existence, while internally he remains unmoved in the First Principle.”¹⁰⁵ This verse from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* is also an indicator as to why the distinction between lay and ordained life ceases to be of fundamental importance. The monk in earlier traditions had access to the proper environmental conditions necessary to cultivate both mental and physical stillness. But if such conditions were truly the prerequisite of enlightenment, the person in the work-a-day world would of course stand little chance of becoming enlightened. However, once *internal* stillness becomes the only requirement, *anyone* now who was willing to put in the practice could in fact become a Buddha. Moreover, “practice” for Huineng is contemplating and reflection on Zen principles in the context of one’s everyday experience. Thus, Huineng says, “If you wish to practice, it is possible even as a lay disciple; it has nothing to do with life in a monastery.”¹⁰⁶ Finally, we should also observe that Huineng also never sees “enlightenment” as a one-time affair, something that is attained for once and for all. It is from the beginning a moment-to-moment process and will depend on one’s state of the mind at any given time: “If you are deluded during a thought, you are an ordinary

¹⁰⁴ Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism*, 141.

¹⁰⁵ PS 17, 《維摩經》云：「外能善分別諸法相，內於第一義而不動。」

¹⁰⁶ PS 36, 若欲修行，在家亦得，不由在寺。

person; if you gain understanding with the following thought, you are a Buddha.”¹⁰⁷

No-Thought and No-Dwelling

Of utmost importance in Huineng’s interpretation of samādhi is non-attachment to thoughts in the mind while not attempting to eliminate thoughts from the mind. The self-nature can only be seen when thoughts are allowed to freely come and go, or perhaps we may say that it is seen *when* thoughts come and go freely. A delusory thought is any thought which proceeds from a state of attachment. In the following passage, Huineng outlines the three core aspects of his teaching:

This doctrine of mine has from the beginning set up “no-thought” as the guiding principle, no-mark as the essence, and non-dwelling as the foundation, for both sudden and gradual methods.¹⁰⁸

These three principles all may be said to describe the same experience, although from different perspectives. “No-thought” emphasizes the state of being unattached to thoughts; “no-mark” is non-attachment as it relates to one’s environment, and non-dwelling emphasizes the activity of thought-flow. Despite the negative formulation of these doctrines, they are not meant to imply nihilism, which seems to have been a very common misinterpretation even in Huineng’s day. Thus, Huineng warns his listeners:

But if you take this [teaching of no-thought] to mean having no

¹⁰⁷ PS 26, 前念迷即凡，後念悟即佛。

¹⁰⁸ PS 17, 我自法門，從上已來，頓漸皆立無念為宗，無相為體，無住為本。

conscious experience at all and eradicating all thoughts from your mind, this will only amount to dying when give up the last thought.

Thus you will be reborn somewhere else.¹⁰⁹

As to what no-thought actually is, Huineng explains in paradoxical fashion that “No-thought is to be without thought even when the mind is engaged in thought.”¹¹⁰ Now on the face of it the notion of being without thought while in the midst of thinking might seem quite absurd. But such phraseology, as McEvilley notes, represents the “flamboyant” nature of many Zen expressions,¹¹¹ most of which have more tamed characterizations. And this is for true for Huineng as well; “no thought” is defined elsewhere as simply “To be unstained by external conditions.”¹¹² Moreover, Huineng says that when the deluded “place thoughts upon objects,” these thoughts give rise to perverse views.¹¹³ Again, Huineng is not implying that there is something wrong with having the idea of say, a stone. Rather, he defines the problem of attaching a fixed conception or interpretation to the stone. It is not the object *per se* that taints the mind, but the attachment created by the mind when it *clings to an idea it has placed upon that object*. It is possible for a stone, from a particular human perspective, to be construed either positively or negatively, as for example a “bridge” or an “obstacle.” However, the stone, in essence has not been shown to be either. Thus, when an attachment rises to either perspective, the mind becomes “stained”

¹⁰⁹ PS 17: 莫百物不思，念盡除卻。一念斷，即無別處受生。

¹¹⁰ PS 17. 無念者，於念而不念。“No-mark” is in fact defined in an identical way: 無相者，於相而離相。(Ibid.). The doctrine of “no-mark” (Skt: *animitta*) appears first in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. It describes the state of nirvana in which the 10 marks (matter, sound, smell, taste, contact, birth, stability, differentiation, male and female) are absent. Huineng interprets this less literally as intends for his listeners simply to loosen their attachments to these marks while not attempting to dispense with them altogether.

¹¹¹ McEvilley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, 482.

¹¹² PS 17, 於一切境上不染，名為無念。

¹¹³ Ibid., 迷人於境上有念，念上有邪見。

(*ran* 染) by that perspective. One should not let various interpretations of the stone leave any harmful imprints on the mind, thus not allowing ideas about the stone, if you will allow the pun, to become “set in stone.” And the process by which thoughts become, if you will, set in stone is called “dwelling.” The awakened mind, on the other hand, does not come to “rest” on any particular thought or perspective. Thoughts should, in Huineng’s words, “succeed one another without dwelling; past thoughts, present thoughts, and future thoughts all succeed one another without discontinuance.” Huineng also says in this regard that “During each thought, do not dwell supported in any dharma whatsoever. If you dwell in one thought, you will dwell in all thoughts. This is called being fettered.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, even *one* attached thought is one thought too many. This is because every thought is inextricably connected to an infinity of other thoughts and cannot exist in isolation from the whole. Thus clinging to one thought thus necessarily involves clinging to all. Being “un-fettered” means *complete* non-attachment to all thoughts, not merely a reduced number, for it is a mathematical impossibility to subtract from infinity!

The Self-Nature

Huineng essentially taught that all individuals possess a self-nature that is none other than the universal Buddha-nature (*fo xing* 佛性). The whole of Huineng’s teaching may therefore be summed up in four Chinese characters: 見性成佛 (*jian xing cheng fo*):¹¹⁵ “See the self-nature and become a Buddha.” To quote mysticism scholar Robert Forman: “In wu-nien [無念] one directly realizes that one is, in one’s core, not

¹¹⁴ PS 17, 一念若住，念念即住，名繫縛。

¹¹⁵ PS 27.

this or that perception, but transcendental to it.”¹¹⁶ There is neither “Northerner nor Southerner” in the Buddha-nature as Huineng famously said.¹¹⁷ And this not seeing one’s self as this or that perception is to see one’s real nature. On the other hand, by “self-nature” Huineng also has in mind is the notion of an all-encompassing center of being that excludes nothing! There is no conflict here, since philosophically speaking, there is little if any difference between a nature that contains everything and a nature that contains nothing. Or as the late Robert Solomon put in his *The Rise and Fall of the Self* (in the context of 18th century Continental philosophy), “Between the Self as absolute spirit and the self as nothing at all there is, it turns out, very little difference...”¹¹⁸ Thus, the self-nature might be interpreted not only as a true self apart from all perceptions, but also that which equally *includes all perceptions* as part of one’s very own nature.¹¹⁹ For the latter reason, Huineng describes the self-nature as “great”:

Great is the nature that contains all dharmas. All dharmas are the self-nature. See all things human and non-human, evil and good, evil dharmas and good dharmas without rejecting them or being stained by them. Because the nature is like empty space, it is called great. This is the practice of *mahā*.¹²⁰

Thus, when one contains all without being stained or rejected, this is to see the self-nature practice the art of non-dwelling. Nothing is rejected, even the act of

¹¹⁶ Robert K.C. Forman, *Mind, Mysticism, and Consciousness* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 158.

¹¹⁷ *PS* 3, 人即有南北，佛性即無南北。

¹¹⁸ Robert Solomon, *Continental Philosophy Since 1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 202

¹¹⁹ See *PS* 20, 24, 30.

¹²⁰ *PS* 25, 性含萬法是大，萬法盡是自性，見一切人及非人，惡之與善，惡法善法，盡皆不捨，不可染著，由如虛空，名之爲大，此是摩訶行。

dwelling, and neither is anything attached to, including the art of non-dwelling. Thus, dwelling/non-dwelling and other pairs of opposites find their existence in the great space of the self-nature.



2.3. The Text of the *Platform Sūtra*

Though at least 30 known versions of the *Platform Sūtra* are in existence, there are essentially two main texts used by practitioners when referencing the teachings of Huineng, the Dunhuang version (敦煌) and the Zongbao version (宗寶).¹²¹ The Zongbao version, containing about 20,000 Chinese characters, was first appeared in 1291 (and is nearly identical to Deyi's version which we mentioned in the introduction) whereas the much shorter Dunhuang version (12,000 words) is usually dated around 780 AD.¹²² This thesis will rely mainly on quotes from the earlier Dunhuang version though there is in fact little doctrinal difference between the two.¹²³ The Dunhuang goes by the long title: *The Southern School of Sudden Enlightenment, The Supreme Mahāyāna Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra, The Platform Sūtra Preached by the Sixth Patriarch Huineng at Dafan Temple in Shaozhou, One Scroll*. The question of authorship of the *Platform Sūtra*, however, is a complex one, and it will not concern us here.¹²⁴ Following the title it is stated that the *Platform Sūtra* is a sermon of Huineng recorded and compiled by the otherwise historically unknown disciple Fahai (法海). However, scholars are not in consensus as to who actually authored the text, and there are currently seem to be no prospects for finding anything resembling a

¹²¹ The Zongbao version is listed in the canon as follows: Taishō Tripitaka Vol. 48, No. 2008 (六祖大師法寶壇經).

¹²² Philip Yampolsky, trans. *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 98.

¹²³ PS 53 reads: 淫性本身淨性因，除淫即無淨性身。 “The lustful nature is in essence the cause of the pure nature. If you get rid of the lustful nature, there is no pure nature.” Compare this with T48n2008_p0362a16 which says: “淫性本是淨性因，除淫即是淨性身”. “The lustful nature is the cause of the pure nature. Getting rid of the lustful nature is the pure nature.” The first statement accords perfectly with Huineng's philosophy of the opposites as seen in other verses whereas the second reading demonstrates the desire to get rid of one half of the dichotomy, which is alien to Huineng's thought generally.

¹²⁴ See Morten Schutter's “Transmission and Enlightenment in Chan Buddhism Seen Through the Platform Sūtra (Liuzu tanjing 六祖壇經).” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 20 (2007): 379-410, for a detailed examination of the issues surrounding the authorship of the *Platform Sūtra*.

firm answer to the question.¹²⁵ In any case, the historicity of the text is beyond the scope of this thesis, and I will follow tradition and use Huineng's name when referring to the teachings contained in the sūtra.

The Dunhuang manuscripts contain no natural divisions, and citations in this thesis will follow the 58-chapter division convention established by D.T. Suzuki.¹²⁶ I cite the Taishō canon for quotations from the Zongbao text. I will now briefly explain how the content of the text is broken down. The first section of the sūtra provides a preface and sections 2-11 gives biographical data on Huineng (in the first person) centered mostly on his rise to the Patriarchate. In sections 12-19 we find the most important kernel of Huineng's thought, the doctrines of no-thought, no-mark, and no-dwelling, and other teachings intended to distinguish the Southern School of sudden enlightenment from its "Northern" counterpart which purportedly taught a "gradual" way to enlightenment. Sections 20-33 lead the reader through the ordination rites performed at Huineng's sermon, including the Four Great Vows, the Three Refuges, and Repentance ceremonies and ends with a verse on the eradication of sins. Sections 34-36 are a question-and-answer segment which discusses questions on obtaining merit, seeing the Western Paradise, and lay practice. In Section 37 the sermon comes to a close and Section 38 reads like it may have been the final section of the sūtra as it gives instructions for transmitting the sūtra (such instructions also appear later at the end of the book as well). The following section discusses the distinction between "sudden" and "gradual" enlightenment in a rather conciliatory tone. Sections 40-44 provide accounts of Huineng's conversations with disciples some time after the

¹²⁵ Yanagida Seizan has hypothesized that another school known as the Oxhead School wrote the text, but the evidence for this view seems at best circumstantial and Yanagida himself does not suggest that his view is more than a hypothesis. (Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism*, 126).

¹²⁶ See the "Chinese Primary Sources" in the Bibliography for more details on this text.

original sermon at his temple in Caoxi (曹溪). Section 45 contains some teachings of Yogācāra theory and 46 explains the “36 pairs of opposites” (*san shi liu diu fa* 三十六對法). Section 47 discusses again the transmission of the sūtra while sections 48-50 provides farewell verses from Huineng and also verses from the previous patriarchs. Section 51 gives a lineage of past patriarchs. Sections 52-53 provide more poems and verses, and section 54 provides details concerning Huineng’s death and funeral. Finally, sections 55-57 contain more information on the compilation and of the transmission of the sūtra.



CHAPTER 3: SKEPTIC AND ZENNIST TERMINOLOGY

3.1. A Comparison of Key Terms

In this section I will give a brief overview of closely corresponding terms in the Skeptic's and the Zennist's lexicon. The doctrines of *ataraxia* and non-dwelling will be handled separately in the next section.

“Doubt” (Chinese: *yi* 疑, Greek: *aporia*)

And at first glance one might assume that Zennists and Skeptics couldn't be further apart on the question of “doubt”. After all doubt is a problem for Zennists generally speaking as it is seen as something to be overcome. Huineng in fact constantly speaks of “destroying doubt” (*po yi* 破疑)¹²⁷ and repeatedly encourages his listeners to ask questions so that they may be relieved of their doubts.¹²⁸ But as surprising as it may sound, there in fact seems to be no disagreement here since for Huineng being without doubt is not the same as having grounds for making dogmatic affirmations. In fact, doubt seems only bad for Huineng because it represents an actual attachment to “truth,” which means that one is bothered by doubt simply because one *intensely seeks wants a firm truth to hold on to*. Thus, when the Zennist “breaks doubt,” she does not come away *convinced* of any eternal truths as a result. She is rather in a state of mind that that doesn't *fear* that any viewpoints opposed to hers might be true. The Skeptics intentionally “doubt” (*aporein*) statements of the Dogmatic philosophers, and by doing so create *aporia*, which essentially mean “puzzlement” or “distress,” or,

¹²⁷ PS 35-37, 42, 49.

¹²⁸ PS 34, 37.

more literally, “no way out” as this is generally how the person in doubt typically feels after examining both sides of a philosophical debate.¹²⁹ The Skeptical mode of inquiry is thus referred to as “aporetic” or “dubitive.”¹³⁰ And although *aporia* is perhaps closer in literal meaning to the Chinese word *huo* (惑, “bewildered,” “perplexed”), Huineng only uses this term in the sense of “delude” or “mislead.”¹³¹ Thus, “*yi* (疑)” seems to compare best with *aporia* in the given context. In any case, the Skeptic seeks to invoke *aporia* into the minds of his audience in order that they might break dogmatic attachment to their views. Thus, *aporia* for Sextus is only a stepping stone to suspension of judgment; it is not the final destination.¹³² Huineng’s audience, conversely, comes to him typically already in a state of doubt, thus he need not go out of his way to invoke it. However, the Zen master can and does invoke doubt through *kōans* (to invoke “great doubt” as it is in fact called) and paradoxical statements or through otherwise irrelevant and nonsensical utterances to cause students to loosen attachment to their views. As the Japanese Zen master Hakuin Ekaku (隱慧鶴, 1685/6–176/89 CE) famously taught,

“To all intents and purposes, the study of Zen makes as its essential the resolution of the ball of doubt. That is why it is said: At the bottom of great doubt lies great awakening. If you doubt fully you will awaken fully...If those who study are able to make great doubt appear before them, a hundred out of a hundred and a thousand out of a thousand will without fail attain awakening.”¹³³

¹²⁹ *PH I*, 7.

¹³⁰ *PH I*, 7.

¹³¹ *PS* 46, 迷自惑, “self-deluded,” *PS* 49, 惑我宗旨 “distort my teaching.”

¹³² *PH III*, 80-81.

¹³³ Philip Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings*. (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1971), 144.

Thus, according to Hakuin, “awakening” only follows after being thoroughly in doubt, just in the case of the Skeptic whom *ataraxia* does not visit until she has suspended judgment due to her inability to determine truth from falsity after examining the arguments for some theory. The difference, however, is that the Zennist seeks to *resolve* doubt whereas the Skeptic actively seeks to maintain it. But as we just pointed out, the Zennist’s “resolution” of doubt is not concomitant with the gaining of certain knowledge as it would be for the Skeptic. The Zennist’s “resolution” (i.e., awakening), as Hakuin goes on to explain, “cannot be handed down. It cannot be explained. It is just like knowing for yourself by drinking it whether the water is hot or cold.”¹³⁴ Thus, the Zennist does not walk away with knowledge of an indubitable proposition concerning the nature of mind or matter but rather with a new type of awareness. The Skeptic likewise remains in the state of *aphasia* in which he neither affirms nor denies any non-evident proposition, and it too can be seen as a new type of awareness (a non-dogmatic one to be sure!). And Hakuin himself according to one famous anecdote constantly asked the question “Is that so?”¹³⁵ in an attempt it seems prevent his mind from dwelling on any view just as in the case of the Sceptics who never ceases “to raise questions about arguments” since if they ceased to do so they could only expect through their rashness to “miss out on the *ataraxia* that appears to them and that they....think follows a suspension of judgment about everything.”¹³⁶ I am therefore persuaded to the conclusion that what the Skeptic calls calm suspension of judgment is precisely what the Zennist calls not dwelling on judgments (which we’ll say more on in the next section).

¹³⁴ Yampolsky, *The Zen Master Hakuin*, 145.

¹³⁵ Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki, comps. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings* (Boston: Tuttle, 1998), 22.

¹³⁶ *PH I*, 204-205. “Suspend judgment on everything” should I think be taken to mean “everything ‘non-evident’” as Sextus makes clear in other passages (See *PH I*, 13-15).

“Sense Impression” (Chinese: *chen* 塵, Greek: *phantasiai*)

Sense Impressions are raw sense data, which include sight, smell, hearing, touch (feeling), and taste (Buddhism would also include consciousness as a type of sense). Traditionally, Buddhism disparagingly refers to these sensations as the “dusts” because of their tendency to ensnare the individual through either attachment or rejection. The Skeptic, on the other hand, does not assign them any value, but assents to *phantasia* because they are forced upon her.¹³⁷ In modern terminology, the Skeptic’s statements about *phantasia* are *incorrigible*. That is, the Skeptic cannot question the fact that she has a certain feeling; she can be only wrong about how to properly label it. Thus, for example, the Skeptic doesn’t doubt that honey tastes sweet, but simply does not go so far as to assert that it is sweet in itself.¹³⁸ The Zennist on the other hand, desires to be free of attachment to the “six dusts” (*liu chen* 六塵), and is not concerned with the metaphysical status of what they are alleged to “signify.” Huineng says, “The pure self nature causes the six bandits to exit through the six gates, and while in the midst of the six dusts, neither separate from nor be stained by them, but come and go freely; this is *prajñā-samādhi*.”¹³⁹ Thus, for Huineng, tranquility does not come from suspending judgment on the underlying nature of the sense impressions, but rather by not clinging to or placing oneself in opposition to them, which seems to be in essence precisely what the Skeptic does when she follows appearances undogmatically.

¹³⁷ *PHI*, 13.

¹³⁸ *PHI*, 20.

¹³⁹ *PS* 31, 常淨自性，使六賊從六門走出，於六塵中不離不染，來去自由，即是般若三昧。

“Ultimate Reality” (Chinese: *zhen ru* 真如, Greek: *hypokeimenon*)

Zen teaches that ultimate reality can be experienced, and the term used to designate it is “Suchness” (Skt: *tathātā, dharmatā*). In fact, the term seems to blur the distinction between ultimate reality and a fully engaged experience of one’s reality. For the Skeptic, on the other hand, the *hypokeimenon* is precisely the thing that no one has proved as of yet to have knowledge of. It is the “non-evident” object of inquiry. Thus, an object of the Skeptic’s inquiry may appear to have certain properties depending on, for example, how, where, when, or by whom it is observed. But on how the must be *in itself* beyond the appearance the Skeptic suspends judgment. The Zennist, however, rarely, if ever, conceives of Suchness as a primal substance minus all accidental properties. It is for them *the same* reality that we experience everyday, but minus the grasping or rejecting which has always interfered with our ability to perceive *the present reality* in the clearest and most unbiased way. And this state itself is equivalent to what Huineng calls seeing the self-nature. In my opinion the Skeptic’s state of non-assertion (*aphasia*) where nothing concerning things non-evident is affirmed or denied seems to parallel quite closely the Zennist’s state of non-grasping awareness of her reality. The Skeptic does not affirm or deny anything dogmatically in his tranquil condition just as the Zennist observes phenomenon without psychological attachment or rejection. The only difference seems to be then that for the Zennist, such an experience could *itself* be described as experiencing ultimate reality!

“View” (Belief) (Chinese: *jian* 見, Greek: *dogma/doxa*)

Views are a very important concern for both Skeptics and Zennists. For the Skeptic, *dogma* (belief) or *doxia* (opinion) is problematic when it becomes dogma-tized. Dogmatism, does not however, for the Skeptic means not so much connote inflexibility as it does “rashness” (*propeteia*). Sextus defines “dogma” as “assent to something “non-evident,”” and when he says that the Skeptic reports his *pathos* “without belief,” he means dogmatic belief concerning that which lies beyond appearances.¹⁴⁰ For example, if the Skeptic’s senses tell her that something is in motion, she does not deny that something appears to be in motion. The Skeptic rather questions the dogmatic assertion that motion really exists apart from what appears to be the case since such a state of affairs is necessarily “non-evident.” For the Zennist, it is attachment to views that causes one misery and the Zennist likewise does not cling to nor reject views. However, Zen make the distinction between “Correct” (*zheng* 正) and “Erroneous” (*xie* 邪) views (which are perhaps more correctly rendered as “corrective” and “misleading” views).¹⁴¹ Erroneous views are any views that lead to vexations and Correct views are any views that serve to break vexations. However, in the highest stage of awareness, there is, according to Huineng, no reliance on Right views either:

Erroneous views are of the mundane world.

Correct views transcend the world.

When both Erroneous and Correct views are destroyed,

¹⁴⁰ *PHI*, 16.

¹⁴¹ Buddhist scholar Alan Fox suggests this translation. See his article on Jizang (吉藏) in *Great Thinkers of the Eastern World*, Ian P. McGreal, ed., (New York: Harper-Collins, 1995), 84-88

The Bodhi-nature is made manifest.¹⁴²

The arguments used by the Skeptics also behave in just this way. The Skeptic opposes view against view and lives without dogmatic beliefs.¹⁴³ Thus, neither the Skeptic nor the Zennist strongly relies on philosophical views for the maintenance of daily life as philosophy has been unable to demonstrate that any one way of living is more right or wrong than any other.¹⁴⁴ In fact, Sextus states quite directly that “the Skeptic does not conduct his life according to philosophical theory (so far as regards this he is inactive), but as regards the non-philosophical regulation of life he is capable of desiring some things and avoiding others.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, the Skeptic proceeds in accordance with appearances undogmatically as the Zennist continues to mindfully observe without attachment to or the rejection of any views.

“Appearance” (Chinese: *xiang* 相, Greek: *phainomenon*)

The Chinese technical term for “appearance” is “相,” also often translated as “mark.” For the Zen Buddhist, what matters of course is that one does not *cling* to any appearance, though for the most part Buddhists reared in the *prajñāpāramitā* tradition, all appearances are *empty*, that is, they have no self-nature, which essentially means they cannot *rationaly* be proven to self-exist. Huineng does not quite concur with this definition of emptiness in regards to phenomenon as he counters in one place the notion that all things, words in particular, are empty (as such a claim would be

¹⁴² *PS* 36, 邪見在世間，正見出世間。邪正悉打卻，菩提性宛然。

¹⁴³ *PHI*, 23.

¹⁴⁴ *PHI*, 164.

¹⁴⁵ *M XI*, 165.

self-refuting)¹⁴⁶ and in another place his Yogācāra influence would lead one to suspect that he held an idealistic understanding of phenomena.¹⁴⁷ But then again even that interpretation would have to be upset by yet other realist-sounding passages.¹⁴⁸ Thus, for Huineng, there is no attachment to phenomenon regardless of how its ontological status is interpreted. On the other hand, for the Skeptic (Sextus in fact often uses *phainomenon* interchangeably with *phantasia*) the overriding concern is whether a particular *phainomenon* can be legitimately called a “sign” for something “deeper” than the appearance itself,¹⁴⁹ and the Skeptic’s modes are designed to show that it is problematic to assert whether it is or is not. Thus, the Skeptic suspends judgment on the actual nature of appearances and speaks in a conventional manner whilst the Zennist speaks about marks in various ways which she most expedient in the immediate context of her teaching or practice.¹⁵⁰

“Disturbance” (Vexation) on (Chinese: *fan nao* 煩惱 / *luan* 亂, Greek: *tarkatos*)

The Sceptics are in total agreement with Zennists on the desire to end peace-robbing vexations. The Greek term *ataraxia* is the negation of *tarkatos*, which literally means “disturbances.” Thus the Skeptic seeks to be free of disturbances brought on by his inability to reconcile the anomalies involved in the search for truth. The Skeptic, therefore, suspends judgment on the nature of things non-evident and enjoys peace of

¹⁴⁶ PS 46, 自性上說空，正語言本性不空。 “If you say the self-nature is empty, then the nature of that statement is not empty.”

¹⁴⁷ Example: PS 20, 世人性本自淨，萬法在自性。 “The nature of mankind is itself pure; all things exist in the self-nature.”

¹⁴⁸ Example: PS 46, 外境無情對有五：天與地對，日與月對，暗與明對，陰與陽對，水與火對。 “The dichotomies of non-sentient external objects are five in number: Heaven and Earth, sun and moon, darkness and light, yin and yang, and water and fire.”

¹⁴⁹ PH II, 104.

¹⁵⁰ PS 36, 若欲化愚人，事須有方便。 “If you wish to transform the deluded, skillful means are necessary.”

mind from the equipollence derived from opposing arguments one against the other (instead of her former practice of attaching to one and suppressing the other). I would in fact say that the typical type of vexation experienced by Skeptic is argument arises due to dogmatic clinging to one side of an argument while being disturbed by the presence of equally convincing opposing arguments. Thus, when one acknowledges the equality of the two sides, one ceases to struggle over which side to affirm or deny. One affirms neither side while keeping an open mind and proceeding undogmatically with one's everyday affairs. Huineng's style of Zen, similarly, seeks to end vexations by ceasing to struggle against the undesired half of the dichotomy. Thus, we find him saying, "Vexations are enlightenment!"¹⁵¹ as perhaps it just so happens that rejecting the thought of having vexations may in fact *cause more of them to arise*. Therefore, when a dualistic thought is experienced, the Zennist simply acknowledges that "vexations" exist only in relation to "enlightenment" meaning that there is thus no reason to reject the vexation presently being experienced. And when the mind does not resist any thoughts all thoughts are able to flow freely. In other words, seeing the interdependence between "vexations" and "enlightenment" is what in fact what I think Huineng would precisely call "enlightenment!"

¹⁵¹ PS 26, 即煩惱是菩提。PS 40, 煩惱即是菩提。

3.2. *Ataraxia* and *Wuzhu* (無住)

We briefly introduced the concept of *ataraxia* in Chapter 1 and in this chapter we shall give it a fuller treatment. *Ataraxia* is, according to Sextus Empiricus, is the primary goal of Skepticism:

We always say that as regards belief the Skeptic's goal is *ataraxia*, and that as regards things that are unavoidable it is having moderate *pathè*.¹⁵²

Ataraxia is that “untroubled and tranquil condition of the soul.”¹⁵³ But Sextus doesn't settle for all-or-nothing conception of tranquility. He allows some space for things “unavoidable,” by which Sextus means things like sickness, hunger, thirst, and so forth. But by suspending judgment on the issue of whether, for example, sickness is bad by nature, the Skeptic only has to deal with the sickness itself, and is not troubled by opinions about it. But before *ataraxia* is realized, one has to first to learn to weigh arguments pro and con, and in doing so one develops the Skeptical attitude:

“The Skeptic Way is a disposition to oppose phenomena and noumena to one another in any way whatever, with the result that, owing to the equipollence among the things and statements thus opposed, we are brought first to *epoché* and then to *ataraxia*.¹⁵⁴

But what sets the Skeptic in motion is the fact of being disquieted by the confusing

¹⁵² *PH I*, 25-26.

¹⁵³ *PH I*, 10.

¹⁵⁴ *PH I*, 7-9.

claims made by philosophers:

Certain talented people, upset by anomaly in “the facts” and at a loss as to which of these “facts” deserve assent, endeavored to discover what is true in them and what is false, expecting that by settling this they would achieve *ataraxia*.¹⁵⁵

This “being at a loss” is the *aporia* mentioned in the previous section. And after thus being unable to resolve them, the Sceptics “suspended judgment. But then, by chance as it were, when they were suspending judgment the *ataraxia* followed, as a shadow follows the body.”¹⁵⁶ Thus, the path of the Sceptic to *ataraxia* can be seen as proceeding as follows:

Taraktos (disquietude concerning the facts of reality) -> *Skepsis* (investigation)
-> *Aphoria* (puzzlement) -> *Isostheneia* (equipollence) -> *Epoché* (suspension of judgment) -> *Ataraxia* (tranquility) -> Non-dogmatic living according to the “four-fold regimen.”

But “how” or “why” is it that *ataraxia* follows *epoche*? After all, it seems equally possible that the person could experience anxiety, and not peace, after not being able to resolve the anomalies. In fact, Annas and Barnes gives the example of a doctor who tells a patient that there are equally weighty reasons to believe that the person both has and does not have a disease. They contend that the doctor is a “quack” since he has said not worry (due to the equipollence of the judgments) while still leaving the

¹⁵⁵ *PH I*, 12. Mates uses quotation marks in his translation. The word translated as “fact” here is *pragmasin*, which in this context means “object of judgment.”

¹⁵⁶ *PH I*, 29.

patient in a state of uncertainty.¹⁵⁷ But I think an easy reply is that the Skeptic will not rashly determine that it is truly “bad” not to know the full status of one’s health condition. Thus, by suspending judgment on whether one needs a precise answer in order to achieve peace, one is *no longer worried* about not receiving a precise answer. The analogy furthermore assumes that uncertainty can be relieved with empirical evidence, but of course even if the doctor appeared sure that the patient didn’t have a disease, it in way implies that one should cease to worry (the disease may simply not have been detected).

The Skeptic therefore remains in the calm state of *aphasia* and follows appearances undogmatically. And for the last step of living according to the four-fold regimen, the search is not over as Sextus points that some “notable Sceptics” have added “suspension of judgment during investigations” to the ends of Skepticism.¹⁵⁸ Sextus seems to be nodding. And this leads us to ask whether it makes sense to say that the Skeptic can experience tranquility during the course of her continued investigations even though the Skeptic initially only searched because she was perturbed by the anomalies? If the Skeptic is indeed no longer perturbed, what motivation has she to search? Hankinson thinks that the Skeptic would continue to investigate into ultimate truth but not in a “neurotic or all-consuming” sort of way,¹⁵⁹ and Sextus for his part says that it is “sufficient to live, empirically and undogmatically, in accord with the common observances and notions” while “suspending judgment about the things that are said as a result of Dogmatic subtlety and are very far from the usage of daily life.”¹⁶⁰ Thus, as Sextus the doctor may still about searching for the roots of ailments

¹⁵⁷ Annas and Barnes, eds., trans. *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, xxxi.

¹⁵⁸ *PH I*, 30.

¹⁵⁹ Hankinson, *The Sceptics*, 30.

¹⁶⁰ *PH* 245-246.

along with their cures (as that constitutes part of his *techné*), he does not *dogmatize* about them but nonetheless continues to investigate the non-evident causes of disease. He speaks about what appears to be the case concerning the diseases in question.¹⁶¹ But is such an answer sufficient? As we saw in Chapter 1.2, Sextus maintained that a person who doesn't confesses not to know the answer has much more of reason to search than the Dogmatist who claims to already be in possession of truth. The problem with this response as I see it, however, is that a Dogmatist could very well be a person believes that one must arrive at truth in order to be happy (and of course that is not a truth that would hinder one from searching; it in fact provides the motivation to search). Secondly, if the Skeptic will be just as much at peace with or without the answers, then the Skeptic has *no more reason to search than to not search*. Thus, though Sextus the doctor may go still about searching for the roots of ailments along with their cures, it is not clear whether he will be further inclined to search for real truth. In any case, he will not be a passionate inquirer. Thus, whether the Skeptics can continue to honestly search it seems will depend on the inclinations of the individual Skeptics themselves. But none of this should impose on the Skeptic's tranquility if she would also suspend judgment on her own identity as a seeker!

Additionally, for the Skeptics as well as Zennists (as we shall see momentarily), tranquility is only guaranteed for the present moment; it is only as good as one's present thought, so to speak. Sextus uses the term "now" (*nun*) repeatedly when describing the Skeptic's state of mind:

"Whenever the Skeptic says 'I determine nothing,' he is saying this: 'I am *now* in

¹⁶¹ *PH* II, 245-246. In this regard, Sextus seems very modern.

such a state of mind as neither dogmatically to affirm nor deny any of the matters in question.”¹⁶² [emphasis added]

Sextus’ other Skeptic slogans are “To every argument an equal argument is opposed,” “I am non-apprehensive,” “I do not apprehend,” “Everything is non-apprehensible,” “Everything is indeterminate,” “I withhold assent,” “Perhaps,” “It Is Possible,” “Maybe,” “Non-assertion (*Aphasia*),” and “Not more.” Sextus says that the Skeptic does not put these phrases forward as holding absolutely but rather that the Skeptic “declines for the present to take an affirmative or negative position on any of the non-evident matters of inquiry. [emphasis added]”¹⁶³ And while McEvilley is right in pointing out that these slogans are examples of “uroboric or self-devouring propositions,”¹⁶⁴ (in that they cancel themselves out along with what is denied) Sextus does not seem to see their primary use as such:

Even if the slogan “nothing more” exhibits the character of assent or denial, we do not use it in that way, but rather we take it in an imprecise and not strictly correct sense, either in place of a question or instead of saying “I don’t know to which of these I ought to assent and to which I ought not to assent.”¹⁶⁵

Thus, only if the Skeptic were affirming something as holding absolutely would such slogans be self-devouring, and this is not typically how Sextus uses them. Moreover, as it regards the slogan of “not more” (*ou mallon*) Jay Garfield also seems to misinterpret the usage of the slogan in his analysis:

¹⁶² *PHI*, 198.

¹⁶³ *PHI*, 201.

¹⁶⁴ McEvilley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, 450.

¹⁶⁵ *PHI*, 25, 26.

When he [Sextus] says “not more,” he urges that the external world is not more than what we observe, that personal identity is not more than an aggregation of experiences and capacities, that meaning is not more than convention, that causation is not more than regularity.¹⁶⁶

Sextus, to the contrary, remarks that the slogan in question simply “makes evident our *pathos* with respect to which we reach equilibrium through the equipollence of the opposed things.”¹⁶⁷ And Garner, I think, also gets Sextus wrong when he says that although for the Skeptic all philosophical positions remain open, the Skeptic’s “idea is that when we consider, in sufficient detail, the arguments that can be advanced both for and against any philosophical position, we will find that they are equally balanced--pro and con.”¹⁶⁸ But of course Sextus nowhere comes to any such conclusion. But Garner does conclude his remarks with I think a very valid point:

no skeptical attitude attained by balanced and opposing arguments can be generalized to cover (what appear to be) similar cases; and second, any quietude in matters of opinion that has been attained will be liable to be upset by further argument, so far undevised or unconsidered.¹⁶⁹

As it regards to the above two points, Sextus clearly states in the Outlines that “When we say ‘To every argument an equal argument is opposed,’ by ‘every argument’ we mean ‘every argument that has been considered by us.’ [emphasis added]”¹⁷⁰ Thus,

¹⁶⁶ Garfield, “Epoche and `Suunyataa: Skepticism East and West,” 292.

¹⁶⁷ *PHI*, 190.

¹⁶⁸ Garner, “Skepticism, ordinary language and Zen Buddhism,” 167.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *PHI*, 201-202.

the Skeptic freely concedes that her quietude is based on the present state of her investigations. Garner's second objection can also be addressed in a similar fashion as the Skeptic herself therefore makes no guarantees either that her quietude will survive the present moment. Doing so, in fact, could only be expected to take away the Skeptic's quietude in the present moment itself!¹⁷¹ Thus, the non-assertion of the Sceptics means that they "now, are in this condition" regarding the problems set before them.¹⁷² And consequently, their activity might accurately I think be described as one of "mindful observation," as they are neither affirming nor rejecting the things under examination, which is what Huineng says precisely constitutes the Buddha's Path.¹⁷³ But of course even the existence of the "now" is not something Sextus strongly affirms as he has arguments even against the dogmatic presumption of even the existence of the present moment.

Not Dwelling on Non-Dwelling

For the Zennist, true imperturbability (*bu dong* 不動) exists only within an active mind. Thus, we find Huineng saying "If you want to practice stillness, then you will be no different from the insentient. If you wish to practice true stillness, then you will find it in movement."¹⁷⁴ And this brings us to the doctrine of non-dwelling, which we discussed in Chapter 2. Huineng's complete description of the doctrine is as follows:

"Non-dwelling" is the fundamental nature of mankind; successive thoughts are

¹⁷¹ PH II, 143-146.

¹⁷² PH I, 193.

¹⁷³ PS 27.

¹⁷⁴ PS 48, 若修不動行，同無情不動。若見真不動，動上有不動。

not to dwell. Prior thoughts, present thoughts, future thoughts continuously flow without cessation. If a thought is cut off, the Dharma body [*dharmakaya*] is separated from the physical body [*rupakaya*]. Throughout your successive thoughts, do not dwell in any dharma. If you dwell in one thought, you will dwell in them all. This is called being fettered. If among all dharmas there is no dwelling in any thoughts, then this is to be unfettered. This is taking non-dwelling as fundamental.¹⁷⁵

Thus, non-disturbance for the Zennist is seen in terms of the “flow” of thoughts and consequently disturbances are cases of mental stagnation. This is a dynamic conception of unperturbedness, a smoothly flowing river, and contrasts directly with the Skeptic’s conception of tranquility which more resembles a still sea. But is there really a difference? We see that the Zennist speaks of “stillness” and Huineng himself says that the mind is “empty and quiescent” when discriminative thinking ceases.¹⁷⁶ Thus, it is possible that tranquility can be interpreted in terms of both flow and stillness. The Skeptic can be said let impressions flow without confident affirmation or denial about any non-evident thing they may be said to “signify.”¹⁷⁷ Also, we can see for Huineng the non-dwelling is only as good as the present thought as we saw too in the case of the Sceptics; one is able to trade one’s freedom for an attached thought at anytime: “If in one moment there is understanding, a sentient being is a Buddha.”¹⁷⁸ But the question that remains is how does one allow thoughts to flow without interruption without *worrying* that one will in fact interrupt one’s thoughts in the

¹⁷⁵ PS 17, 無住者，爲人本性，念念不住。前念、今念、後念，念念相續，無有斷絕。若一念斷絕，法身即離色身。念念時中，於一切法上無住。一念若住，念念即住，名繫縛。於一切法上念念不住，即無縛也。以無住爲本。

¹⁷⁶ PS 20, 不思量，性即空寂。

¹⁷⁷ For Sextus’ arguments against “signs” (*semeion*), see PH II, 97-133.

¹⁷⁸ PS 30, 一念若悟，即眾生是佛。

future? In other words, if I know that thoughts *should* flow, I will no doubt it seems experience anxiety upon seeing them *not flow*. The answer is simply to *not dwell on that worry either*. One must, however, be able to recognize and admit that one is dwelling in order for the thoughts to flow again and thus restoring the tranquility. Thus, Huineng says, “Constantly see your faults; this is essentially the Way.”¹⁷⁹ This humble, but playful attitude shows up also in a verse Huineng composed in opposition to another Zen master who claimed to be able stop all thinking. The latter’s verse went as follows:

Wo-Lun has a special technique
 He is able to cut off all thinking
 External objects provoke no thoughts
 And the Bodhi tree grows daily

But then,

Hearing this, the Patriarch [Huineng] said, “This verse does not illuminate the mind-ground. To practice in accordance with this verse will only tighten one's shackles.”

Thereupon Huineng gave his own verse:

Huineng has no special technique
 He never cuts off thinking

¹⁷⁹ PS 36, 常現在已過，與道即相當。

External objects constantly provoke thoughts

How can the Bodhi tree grow?¹⁸⁰

Huineng's response is an admission that he has not performed any such great feat, but through this very admission he seems precisely to be performing one! And once the mind is able to not be "stained" by (that is, dwell on) thoughts, it itself finally becomes vast enough to include all of existence as well:

The emptiness of the universe is able to contain the sun, moon, and stars; the great earth, mountains, and rivers, all grasses and trees, evil and good people, evil dharmas and good dharmas, heaven and hell. All these exist in emptiness. The nature of people is just like this.¹⁸¹

So *even if* one judges certain people and things to be evil, one still does not reject them, such that the effect on the mind will be *just as if one did not judge them!* What makes the Zen affirmation of evil things different from the kind the Skeptic is used to dealing is that the Zennist does not "confidently" affirm that certain things are evil even if she calls them such (and is in this regard no different from the Skeptic who uses terms like "evil" undogmatically). And if the foregoing is correct, then the Zen path of liberation via non-dwelling would seem to be as follows:

Disquietude is caused by dwelling on thoughts -> One learns of the Dharma of

¹⁸⁰ T48n2008_p0358a26-b03, 有僧舉臥輪禪師偈曰：「臥輪有伎倆，能斷百思想，對境心不起，菩提日日長。師聞之，曰：「此偈未明心地，若依而行之，是加繫縛。」因示一偈曰：「惠能沒伎倆，不斷百思想，對境心數起，菩提作麼長。」

¹⁸¹ PS 24, 世界虛空，能含日月星辰，大地山河，一切草木，惡人善人，惡法善法，天堂地獄，盡在空中。世人性空，亦復如是。

Non-dwelling and attempts to not dwell -> One dwells on one's dwelling, which causes even more disquietude -> One ceases to dwell on the fact that one dwells -> "Enlightenment" is maintained moment-to-moment by not dwelling on any dharma, not-dwelling itself

We now turn our attention to the practice of employing oppositions as demonstrated in the texts of the Skeptics and Zennists.



CHAPTER 4: THE USE OF OPPOSITIONS

4.1. The Skeptical Modes of Argument

The Zen doctrine of “no-mark” as we saw in Chapter 2 was defined as “being detached from marks while in the midst of marks.” And this description I think dovetails neatly with the Pyrrhonian practice of living with appearances while suspending judgment *as to the real nature of those appearances*. Therefore, the skeptic never a) denies appearances, but neither does she b) make any psychological investment in them. The Skeptic only inquires into *what is said* about appearances, and thus she can be said to live with appearances while not being trapped by them. Moreover, the Skeptic will be expected to report what actions appear “good” from her particular perspective without necessarily implying either that her opinions are objectively correct or conversely that objective values do not exist. Thus, peace of mind for the skeptic outweighs the need to dogmatize about her views. And as we saw earlier, in his *Outlines*, Sextus outlined a number of modes of argument with the consequence being that at the very least any judgment we make about an appearance will be necessarily based on 1) our own individual human perspective, 2) one or more senses, 3) certain mental or environmental conditions 4) the kind of thing is being judged.¹⁸² All of these factors have come into consideration for the Skeptic in his investigations up until now, and with all of these to consider it appears impossible that one should ever have occasion to dogmatize about any judgment. Notice here, however, of my use of the word “appears” (*phainein*), a word which Sextus uses very

¹⁸² We shall leave aside the modes as they pertain to philosophical argumentation and concentrate on those dealing with judging phenomenon.

often.¹⁸³ Sextus does not wish to dogmatize about any of these points as to do so undoubtedly would create a universally applicable judgment that may itself be impossible to defend. On the other hand, we may ask how can the Skeptic's judgments "appear" to be true (e.g. "all things appear relative"¹⁸⁴) if in fact it also appears to be the case that the universal assertion of them would in all likelihood give rise to an equally opposed viewpoint? I think Sextus could very well answer that such an assessment does in fact appear to be correct, but to assert even it as absolutely correct would seem to result in *precisely the same problem* (that is, the arising of an equally opposed viewpoint!). Thus, the Skeptic can continue to speak of things appearing this or that way without dogmatizing and foregoing her tranquility.

Now I shall give two concrete examples of how Skeptical reasoning leads to *atarxia*. Let us take "beauty" as our first example and suppose that I dogmatically affirm that a certain Buddhist statue is "beautiful." The Skeptic could I think analyze it as follows by way of the Five Modes introduced in Chapter 1: First she would ask, using the second of the five modes, "By what criterion are we defining "beauty?" If I give a criterion, then I must also justify that criterion (in order that my claim be credible), and so on ad infinitum. Thus, I fall into an infinite regress immediately. Or perhaps I think it's beautiful because a certain sculpture sculpted it. In that case, beautiful is whatever that sculptor sculpts. And what makes his sculptures beautiful? Because he sculpts them! Thus, I fall into circularity, the fifth of the five modes. Secondly, from the modes of disagreement (1) and modes of relation (3), we are aware that the definition of "beauty" may differ from culture to culture, person to person, or species to species, and likewise to the same person at different times or under different

¹⁸³ "Phainetai." See *PHI*, 4, 7, 19, 20, 22.

¹⁸⁴ *PHI*, 140.

circumstances. Or to give one of Sextus' examples, we find "Ethiopians preferring the blackest and most snub-nosed, and the Persian approving the whitest and most hook-nosed, and someone else declaring that who is intermediate both in feature and coloring is the most beautiful of all."¹⁸⁵ And neither of course will the Skeptic accept my view by hypothesis (4) since it will not be credible without proof. So when I am thoroughly confused about what actually constitutes beauty, I seem left with no other possible alternative but to suspend judgment on the subject. Now this doesn't mean we give up saying "X is beautiful," but I instead speak of things "appearing" beautiful *to me* (and thus we do not make a statement about a non-evident reality). Or as Sextus himself says,

honey appears to us to be sweet. This we grant, for we sense the sweetness. But whether it is sweet we question insofar as this has to do with the [philosophical] theory, for that theory is not the appearance, but something said about the appearance.¹⁸⁶

As a consequence of more humbly recognizing that something is beautiful to me, there is no disturbance caused by any attempt to prove without evidence that my standard or definition of beauty is the sole correct one.

We will now draw one more example from Sextus, this time using *reductio ad absurdum* arguments, which typically go as follows: "If X exists, then it must either be Y or not-Y" (sometimes Sextus provides four options, the other two being both Y and not-Y and neither Y nor not-Y). Thus, if the opponent accepts the premise, then

¹⁸⁵ M VI, 43.

¹⁸⁶ PH I, 20.

the Skeptic then proceeds to demonstrate that unacceptable consequences of assuming either Y or not-Y (or any other positive or negative combination of the two). This of course does not prove that X is non-existent, it rather shows why the existence of X cannot be affirmed or denied *based on the arguments presented*, and thus the only option left is to suspend judgment on the nature of X. (It is important to also note that Sextus always starts out by conceding the thing in question “appears” to exist and that he does not seek to abolish the appearance itself but simply to oppose the appearance against an argument to bring about a suspension of judgment on the “real” nature of the thing in question.) Thus, for example, Sextus puts forth an argument against time in the following manner.

...insofar as we go by the appearances there seems to be such a thing as time, while if we go by the things said about it, it appears not to exist...In addition, if time exists, it is either divisible or indivisible. But it is not indivisible. For, according to the Dogmatists, it is divided into the present and the past and the future. Nor is it divisible, for anything divisible is measured by some part of itself, the measuring part being put alongside what is being measured, part by part, as when we measure a cubit with a finger. But time cannot be measured by any of its parts. For if, say, the present measures the past, it will be put alongside the past and for this reason will be past; and, similarly, in the case of the future it will be future. And if the future should measure the others, it will be present and past; and so, likewise, the past will be future and present which is nonsense. Therefore, time is not divisible, either. But if it is neither indivisible nor divisible, it does not exist.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ PH III, 136, 143.

But a question that naturally arises for the Skeptic though is “What *if* it could be known beyond all doubt that some formerly non-evident entity did exist? This question we address in Chapter 5. We now turn our attention to the Zen use of opposition pairs.



4.2. The Zen Use of Opposition Pairs

As I have been arguing, for both Skeptics and Zennists, opposition plays a primary role in the attainment of tranquility. For Huineng in particular, one section of the text of the *Platform Sūtra* is devoted to an exposition of the “36 polarities (pairs of opposites).”¹⁸⁸ Mentioned there are the 5 polarities of inanimate objects, the 12 polarities of the dharmas and marks in language, and the 19 polarities among “functions which arise from the self nature.”¹⁸⁹ The study of the polarities are said to be of such central importance that, according to Huineng, they “can be used to understand and explain all the scriptures.”¹⁹⁰ One key passage is the following:

Darkness is not darkness by itself; it is because of light that there is darkness. Light is not light by itself; it is because of darkness that there is light. Darkness is distinguished in contrast to light, and light appears because of darkness. Their existences are mutually dependent. It is the same with all thirty-six pairs of opposites.¹⁹¹

As the last sentence of the passage suggests, the substitution of any other set of polarities in place of light/darkness opposition pair would yield the same analysis. Take the dichotomy of beauty and ugliness for example. If beauty is to be *appreciated* as beauty, then there of course needs to be ugliness. Thus, to be happy that one is

¹⁸⁸ There text actually lists 37 polarities. Perhaps an additional one was added as a result of scribal error at some point during the transmission of the text.

¹⁸⁹ *PS* 46, 對。外境無情對有五...法與相對有十二對...自性居起用對有十九對。

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 此三十六對法，能用通一切經。

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 暗不自暗，以明故暗。暗不自暗，以明變暗。以暗顯明，來去相因。三十六對，亦復如是。

beautiful is in effect to *be happy that there are ugly people*; if there were not people so judged, one necessarily could not appreciate one's own beauty. And if *everyone* were judged as beautiful, then there would of course be no meaningful concept of "beautiful" people to begin with. The same also of course applies to the polarities of "sage" and "ordinary person." We normally *prefer* the sage over the ordinary person, just as we normally prefer beauty over ugliness. The irony, however, is that the "sage" is actually one who knows that the idea of a "sage" *is mutually dependent upon the idea of the "ordinary person."* Therefore, the sage can take no satisfaction in his status as a "sage." This is not because our sage feels as if she has reached some high level of attainment, but simply because feeling a sense of accomplishment from becoming a sage necessarily requires that there be ordinary (deluded) people who can serve as a contrast. But since any "sage" worthy of the name would hardly desire that there be deluded people, she therefore feels no satisfaction in contrasting herself with them. In fact, the true sage necessarily welcomes the prospect of *everyone* becoming a sage (after all, that is the purpose of her teaching), and when this happens our sage's own "sagliness" would of course cease to have any significance altogether!¹⁹² And as in the case of beauty, sagliness cannot be appreciated as such without ordinariness. Therefore, the sage has no real motivation to *attach* special significance to either "sagliness" or "ordinariness" or any set of polarities.¹⁹³ Furthermore, Huineng says that "When you are enlightened, you will see that originally there are no distinctions."¹⁹⁴ By this statement, he is not literally suggesting that no distinctions exist as this would imply that there was no difference at all between, say, a Chinese

¹⁹² In other words, the sage is trying to work herself out of a job.

¹⁹³ Compare this to the Daoist sage who also casts off "sagliness": "Abandon sagliness and discard wisdom." (絕聖棄智) *Daodejing.*, Ch. 19. Chan, Wing-tsit. *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

¹⁹⁴ *PS* 16. 悟即元無差別。 This was spoken in the context of the sudden/gradual debate. But it seems that they can be applied to all distinctions generally.

Zennist and an Arabian stallion. Instead, this I think should be taken to mean that in understanding how all distinctions are mutually related to their opposites, our minds should lose the motivation to cling to dichotomous distinctions. As the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi says, “That which makes my life good makes my death good also.”¹⁹⁵ Thus, one cannot appreciate one half of the dichotomy without also appreciating the other. But, then again, to appreciate both is essentially to *cling to neither*. It is important to note that one need not see them as *equally* preferable in all situations (which in any case appears practically impossible), but rather one simply that the disliked one is necessary for the other be preferable in the first place.

As Zen Buddhism is a philosophy of the Middle Path, it necessarily seeks to avoid the extremes inherent in dualistic thinking: “Is the world eternal or not eternal?” “Is there or is there not perception in the enlightened state?” And even aside from the philosophical, in everyday life, we seem to unfailingly find ourselves struggling between two extremes: “Should I or should I step in to resolve this dispute?” “Should I or should I not take this job?” However, according to the Zen School, the good news is that at this very point of standing between two opposing choices that we find ourselves in the best position to experience the state of non-dwelling. In fact, through the joining together of mutually contradictory positions A and not-A the ego is without a firm dwelling point.¹⁹⁶ As Huineng once instructed his disciples “If someone asks you about any dharma (thing), your answer should always be given in dichotomies drawing on the pairs of opposites,”¹⁹⁷ meaning that when my mind gives

¹⁹⁵ *Zhuangzi* Ch. 2. 故善吾生者，乃所以善吾死也。

¹⁹⁶ The *Diamond Sūtra* makes constant use of not {A, ¬A} but rather {A, ¬A, A}. That is, it affirms a proposition, then denies it, and then reaffirms it. I interpret this to be a clever method of forestalling attempts by the mind to dwell on what is first affirmed. The second affirmation following the denial seems to be asserted less dogmatically than in the first instance.

¹⁹⁷ *PS* 45.

rise to one option, I should actively counter it with the thought of its opposite. And once I have juxtaposed both extreme possibilities, the two conditioned polarities will “have no place to go.”¹⁹⁸ Thus, in telling myself that I have to *both do and not do X*, I have in effect given myself a *kōan* (Chin: *gong an* 公案, lit. “public case”). A *kōan* is in most cases an inconsistent statement or question whereby one is instructed to find an “answer.” The purpose of the *kōan* is able to produce the sensation of “great doubt” we spoke of in Chapter 3, and in doing so brings the ego to an impasse. Thus, for example, one of the most famous *kōans* attributed to Huineng, which is found in the *Wumenguan* (無門關, Case #23), reads “When you are without the thought of good or evil, that is your original face.”¹⁹⁹ It is just as impossible to know that you are not thinking of good and evil (since to be aware of it is already to open it to judgment) as it is to both do and not do X. Consider also De-Shan’s (德山) famous “Thirty blows if you can speak, thirty blows if you cannot.”²⁰⁰ In this case, neither speaking nor not speaking is adequate to stave off the thirty blows. The upshot, however, is that by putting the two extremes together (both/and—the third level of the tetralemma) we are able to eventually arrive at an “answer” that recognizes that both extremes are equally problematic (neither/nor—the fourth level of the tetralemma).²⁰¹ Thus, when the ego-mind attempts to contemplate two mutually contradictory dharmas, it finds no escape, and when it acknowledges its entrapment it by *this very means* attains escape, but this time through the door of humility. Contradiction thus plays a prominent role in Zen I think not because Zen is “beyond the ken of ordinary reason” as Suzuki held

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ “不思善、不思惡、正與麼時、那箇是明上座本來面目。” Literally, the text says, “At precisely the time when there is no thought of good or evil, that is the Abbot Ming’s original face.” (Huineng is addressing the listener in the dialogue by name.)

²⁰⁰ *Compendium of Five Lamps* (*wu deng hui yuan* 五燈會元; Jap: *Goto Egen*), Bk II.

²⁰¹ The tetralemma (Sanskrit: *catuskoti*), the “four cornered” logic affirms of proposition, then denies the proposition, then affirms the proposition’s joints affirmation and denial, and finally rejects the proposition’s joint affirmation and denial.

(for how could it be known if it were?),²⁰² but because the ego typically must force itself into contradiction when it strives to articulate ultimate truth. When this happens, humility sets in and one recognizes that one possesses no “ultimate understanding” of enlightenment or spiritually by means of which one may boast. And even if one were theoretically to become “freed” from egotism, one could not possibly become aware of such a fact. If one did, then that “freedom” would necessarily have to coexist with the knowledge of one’s own “entrapment” by the idea of freedom itself! This is perhaps why it is sometimes said in Zen that there is nothing to gain (one necessarily could not be aware of gaining “it” even if one did).²⁰³ Thus, Huineng emphasizes humility since attaching to either X or not-X will lead to egotism; and we have *no other choice* but choose one of them (or perhaps some other equally problematic alternative) if we are to remain active in the world. Therefore, “to think without thinking” means in a sense to think *humbly*, not because it’s good to do so, but simply because one finds no other or tranquility-inducing alternative. And in Chapter 1 we saw that the Skeptic does not take self-devouring slogans as holding absolutely, but uses them to express her lack of assent in regards to claims concerning the non-evident. The Skeptic may regard certain behaviors as right or wrong, but like the Zennist, she cannot but assert them with humility (or “non-confidently” to use Sextus’s wording) since it is goes against common standards of rationality to strongly assert some non-evident truth that one cannot possibly prove. Moreover, we should also I think not read the Zennist not as expressing any mysterious universal truths

²⁰² Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen*, 58. Though perhaps Suzuki simply means that some “truths” simply cannot be stated in non-contradictory language. This would make such pronouncements in Zen “dialetheisms” or true contradictions. However, there is nothing in Huineng’s sermons that suggests to me that he meant his contradictory or paradoxical statements to be taken as literal truth, though neither would he I think say that they definitely shouldn’t be taken as such!

²⁰³ Such as in *PS* 43: 但離法相，作無所得，是最上乘。Compare this to Ch. 31 of Daodejing which states “Supreme virtue is without ‘virtue,’ therefore it possesses virtue. Lower virtue never loses sight of its ‘virtuousness,’ therefore it possess no virtue.” (上德無德，是以有德，下德不失德，是以無德。)”

through her self-contradictory utterances, but also as expressing her non-attachment to or rejection of either half of the dichotomy in question. Suzuki argues that the “ordinary process of reason is powerless to give final satisfaction to our deepest spiritual needs.”²⁰⁴ If that’s true, then *neither* could we expect non-ordinary reasoning to bring any similar satisfaction owing to the fact that ordinary/non-ordinary reasoning is *itself* a dualism. Thus, I would say the way to satisfy our spiritual would be realize both the necessity *and* futility of both types of reasoning!



²⁰⁴ Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen*, 59.

CHAPTER 5: MORALITY AND METAPHYSICS

5.1. On Good and Evil

The question of good and evil/bad has long been an important question in both Skeptic and Zen thinking alike, and we begin our analysis of it with Sextus' remarks on the effects of believing things to be good or evil by nature:

For the person who believes that something is by nature good or bad is constantly upset; when he does not possess the things that seem to be good, he thinks he is being tormented by things that are by nature bad, and he chases after the things he supposes to be good; then, when he gets these, he falls into still more torments because of irrational and immoderate exultation, and, fearing any change, he does absolutely everything in order not to lose the things that seem to him good the person who takes no position as to what is by nature good or bad neither avoids nor pursues intensely. As a result, he achieves *ataraxia*.²⁰⁵

Notice what Sextus doesn't say here: that *nothing* is good or bad by nature.²⁰⁶ He contends rather that believing things to be good or bad by nature is a source of distress. Here Sextus calls on the reader to suspend judgment on what is good or bad as we have yet to discover whether anything is so by nature. Thus, to *rashly assume* that some things are good and bad by nature is what Sextus thinks causes disquiet. As the

²⁰⁵ PHI, 28.

²⁰⁶ Contrast this with the more dogmatic-sounding statement from Sextus's *Against the Logicians*: "and if one were to say that nothing is by nature more to be chosen than to be avoided, or more to be avoided than to be chosen...he will live happily and tranquilly...freed from the distress caused by the belief that something either good or bad by nature is present." (M VI,118) This suggests that things are *by nature* "neutral" in terms of goodness or badness.

quote mentions above, “intensely” avoiding or pursuing is a source (or perhaps a symptom) of disquietude so the Skeptic avoids *it*. This last point, however, seems ironic. To quote Sextus once more:

From all this we reason that if what is productive of the bad is bad and to be avoided, and if confidence that certain things are by nature good and others bad produces disquietude, then assuming confidently that something is naturally good or evil *is bad and to be avoided*.²⁰⁷ [emphasis added]

Now is Sextus here himself confidently assuming that *confidently assuming that something is naturally good or evil and ought to be avoided is itself naturally bad and ought to be avoided*? However he replies it seems that we could use Sextus’s own method against him. His answer it seems will itself either be a confident one or one that is not confident. If it is confident, then of course he is directly contradicting himself. If it is not confident, then since not even he himself has confidence that what he says is true, why should anyone else bother to believe him? Sextus could answer I think by saying that his low level of confidence is *perfectly fitting* in that he is only reporting what appears true *to him*, not what exists beyond that appearance. If things appear differently to someone else, Sextus no doubt would simply suggest that the other person also follow undogmatically what appears good to them as well, even if it is in conflict with the Skeptic’s own preconceptions.²⁰⁸ Thus, the Skeptic maintains

²⁰⁷ PH III, 237-238.

²⁰⁸ And when different goods come into conflict, as is perhaps inevitable in any society, non-dogmatic attitudes would appear instrumental for finding peaceable solutions and reaching compromise. Obviously, if there were logically demonstrable reasons why some things should be encouraged or avoided, then it would not be necessary to debate those things in the first place, and neither would it be rash or dogmatic to assert them. But as it stands, no confident assertions are about the non-evident are warranted by any rational evidence. Of course, one can take a confident stance, but one will literally have *no valid reason* for doing so.

tranquility through the absence of intense feelings regarding her beliefs about that which is not susceptible to proof. This state of mind, however, is not due to apathy or indifference, but rather simply due to the fact that, psychologically speaking, the evidence does not warrant any such enthusiasm. And in the event that the evidence were to become fully apparent to all, then of course neither would there be any reason to strongly affirm the truth of the statement then since the matter would already be settled!²⁰⁹

Now at the end of the previous section we asked what *if* it could be known beyond all doubt that some formerly non-evident entity did in fact exist? To begin with, if it were the case some currently non-evident truth could be known, then it would not be justifiable to “strongly” affirm it? After all, Sextus says that ataraxia is achieved when we “no position as to what is by nature good or bad neither avoids nor pursues intensely.”²¹⁰ But taking no position seems justifiable only in light of our *present* epistemological limitations involved in judging something as “really” X. Thus, it seems that *only if* X remains undefined can the Skeptic remain in tranquility. And consequently, if it could be proven that, say, being X *was* good by nature, then it *would* seem rational for us to be vexed by the thought of not possessing property X and overjoyed by the thought possessing it.²¹¹ Thus, it appears that the Skeptic’s tranquility only holds in the case of *ignorance*! That is, the Skeptic is fine *now*, but this is only because she doesn’t know. And in that case, it would also seem evident that the Skeptic therefore has a vested interest in *not finding truth*. But is this

²⁰⁹ Someone could of course disagree that demonstration works, but in that case

²¹⁰ *PH I*, 28.

²¹¹ *PH I*, 27-28. Sextus here speaks of the error of falling into “irrational and immoderate exultation” upon attaining what seems to be good without, however, explaining his conception of the “irrational” or the “immoderate.”

assessment correct?

First of all, for the Pyrrhonian to carry around such a bias would no doubt itself lead to disturbances; it would be essentially to live in fear of non-evident truths being proved true, which would be unacceptable. And let us conjecture for the sake of argument that the criterion for, for example, an objective standard of human beauty was discovered. And let us say also that the Skeptic herself did not personally measure up to it appearance-wise. According to Sextus' line of reasoning then (i.e., that believing things to be good or bad by nature causes disturbance), at first glance it might indeed seem rational for the Skeptic to become vexed by the thought of not possessing beauty if beauty was in fact a natural good.²¹² However, if the truth suddenly did become evident there would in that case necessarily be no need to *rashly* assert it to begin with! After all, Sextus' problem with the Dogmatists is their precipitancy of judgment. Thus, it follows that if it were the case that belief in objective beauty did not require rash assent, then one will not be conceited *even if one possessed it*. The non-evident becoming evident would no more the cause of conceit than any other incorrigible truth that we cannot be wrong about. And thus there will in fact be nothing left for the Skeptic to do since there is no rashness to be detected in such utterances. But let's even suppose that rashness itself turned out to be universally good. And if it is later conclusively proved that, for example, rashness itself is a natural good and the claim that it is good does not provoke an equally strong counterclaim, now or never, then the Skeptic would *no longer need inquire into the subject*. The Skeptic herself could then assent to the proposition "Rashness is good" and still enjoy peace of mind (as strange as that may sound!) since she couldn't be

²¹² PH III, 281.

wrong about it.

Huineng on the other hand, certainly seems to think of certain things as bad by nature and openly states that some behaviors and mind states are evil.²¹³ However, Huineng in the same breath exhorts his disciples to mindfully observe both good and evil people and things as our nature is vast enough to include them all,²¹⁴ and thus as we noted in Chapter 2 the Zennist does not “confidently” affirm the existence of good and evil things. So even though Zennist might judge something or someone as evil in nature, this judgment causes no distress in that she does not in any strong psychological sense put herself in opposition to what is judged. Thus, we can see why Huineng repeatedly admonishes his disciples constantly to not see the faults of others, since fault-seeing usually tends to lead the unfounded view that there exists some rough-and-ready distinction between one’s “good” Self and the “bad” Other.²¹⁵

At this point let us now ask what implications these approaches have for moral issues of everyday life. Will they lead to the practitioner doing nothing while tyranny and oppression reign? After investigating the things which the Dogmatists have claimed to be good or bad, Sextus writes:

Thus the Skeptic, seeing so much anomaly in the matters at hand, suspends judgment as to whether by nature something is good or bad or, generally, ought

²¹³ *PS* 22, 23.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ See *PS* 14, 36, 44. Huineng is not literally suggesting that we ought to let people get away with murder. Instead his teaching is an expedient means to correcting the habit of being judgmental. In fact, Huineng tells Shenhui in *PS* 44 that even the practice of not seeing the faults but one’s own faults is itself dualistic: “Seeing (one’s faults) and not seeing [the faults of others] is dualistic (lit. “two-sided” *liang bian* 兩邊) “見不見是兩邊。”

or ought not be done, and be thereby avoids the Dogmatists' precipitancy, and he follows, without any belief, the ordinary course of life...²¹⁶

In relation to this, Sextus further maintains that Skepticism “points us toward a life in conformity with the customs of our country and its laws and institutions, and with our own particular *pathé*.”²¹⁷ From this it would seem that the Skeptic would not be politically subversive or feel motivated to change the status quo of, for example, slave-holding societies such as ancient Greece was. The Skeptic it seems would hardly stand a chance of becoming a staunch abolitionist. While this seems true, neither would the Skeptic it seems be anywhere inclined to believe that she or anyone else had a *natural right* to enslave others. After all, historically, appeal to the moral order has been used to justify slavery just as much as it has been used to fight against it. Thus, the Skeptic seems no worse or better off than the ordinary person in this regard.

In his *Against the Ethicists*, Sextus responds to the objection that the Skeptic if forced by a tyrant to do something unspeakable, that the Skeptic would either choose to do it or voluntarily submit to death, and in doing so “choose one [action] and refuse the other, which is the action of those who confidently hold that something to be avoided and desirable exists.”²¹⁸ Sextus responds by saying that the course of action chosen by the Skeptic will be in accordance not with philosophical theory, but rather that the Skeptic will “perchance choose the one course of action and avoid the other owing to the preconception due to his ancestral laws and customs.”²¹⁹ And also according to

²¹⁶ *PH* III, 235.

²¹⁷ *PH* I, 17.

²¹⁸ *M* XI, 164.

²¹⁹ *M* XI, 166.

Sextus, the Skeptic will be better off than the Dogmatist in the similar situation who will suffer even more because of her additional beliefs about the natural badness of what is about to be encountered.²²⁰ Thus, if the Skeptic chooses to be, for example, stoned as opposed to participate in a stoning of another person, it does not follow that she has to confidently reject stoning as bad by nature. The Skeptic's choice will simply be in accordance with what appears to be the best course of action based on her own cultural traditions or perhaps on one's own novel ideas provided one acknowledges their non-rational basis. And of course the Skeptic will not believe that either that she herself is being subject to something that is evil by nature either. If anything, the Skeptic could very develop some arguments that show why death may be preferable to life in this situation if she so happened to find herself disturbed by a firm belief that what she is about to undergo was truly bad.²²¹ However, none of this forbids the Dogmatist from being comforted by her dogmatic beliefs on such a trying occasion. We need only think of religious martyrs whose "faith" comforts during times of persecution to see this point. Thus, while Skeptic can obtain tranquility in the way described above, there is nothing to say that a non-Skeptic cannot, by other means, also attain tranquility.²²²

In the *Platform Sūtra*, it is repeatedly emphasized that we should often give rise to good thoughts to dispel bad ones: "If at any moment a good thought arises, wisdom is born...Just one single good thought can destroy the evil karma that has existed for a

²²⁰ *M XI*, 166.

²²¹ Or even if the Dogmatist believed what she was about to go through was truly bad, contra Sextus, she could be thankful for the truly good times in her life or find relief in the belief that the pain will only be temporary.

²²² Sextus appears to be under the impression that only a Skeptic can know a peaceful life. If he is, he seems clearly wrong about this. However, his being wrong on this point in no way affects his tranquility unless of course he wishes to cause stress to himself by dogmatizing this point!

thousand years.”²²³ In fact, there is some scientific evidence which suggests positive thinking may be good for one’s health as well as one’s peer relations.²²⁴ However, in Zen, even the best thoughts are still not quite good enough. And although good actions and thoughts are generally encouraged, we all know the saying that “the road to hell is paved with good intentions.” So for the relentless seeker who wishes to be and do “good,” it is highly unlikely that her mind will be able to find rest while engaging in discriminations concerning good and evil. But on the other hand, Zen practice is equally unlikely to be suitable for those who lack the motivation to raise such questions as well as the Zennist explores and seeks all possibilities. Tranquility therefore seems impossible to attain while the mind is clinging to or being indifferent to discriminations concerning good and evil. In light of this, the Skeptic, being without a rationally-founded morality, undogmatically relies on custom, the laws of her country, and her own inclinations to guide her actions. The Zennist, somewhat differently, lays aside dependence on the *sila* (monastic rules) that she has grown accustomed to,²²⁵ while by no means rejecting it. Thus, neither the Skeptic nor the Zennist clings to moral rules nor rejects them, but instead allows them, along with everything else in their experience, to inform their actions.

In Zen, the achievement of a tranquil mind seems to first require a firm grounding in morality. The novice practitioner therefore is first expected to “repent,” that is, to vow to never again commit evil as well as maintain awareness of past misdeeds.²²⁶

²²³ PS 20. 一念善，智慧即生。...一念善，報卻千年惡滅。

²²⁴ Felicia A. Huppert, “Positive emotions and cognition: developmental neuroscience and health perspectives.” In *Affect in Social Thinking and Behavior*, ed. Joseph P. Forgas (New York: Psychology Press, 2006), 235-252.

²²⁵ PS 41. 得悟，自亦不立戒定慧。

²²⁶ PS 22. 何名懺悔者？終身不作。悔者，知於前非。

Huineng also does not hesitate to refer to some behaviors or mental states as evil.²²⁷

Huineng also has his own novel interpretation of repentance,

For past, future, and present thoughts, in your successive thoughts be not stained by ulcerous defilements, and all previous jealousies are removed from one's self-nature. This is repentance.²²⁸

Thus, one essential part of the practice is being respectful to all people while foregoing all condescension:

Inwardly, see the Buddha-nature; outwardly, practice reverence. If you make light of people and do not dispense with egotism, then you yourself are without merit.²²⁹

And this carries over also into the transmitting of Zen itself. Thus, if in presenting the teachings of Zen the listener is unreceptive, the Zennist is admonished to

Put your hands together, bow, and encourage the person in goodness. There is no place for dispute in this teaching. If you dispute, you lose the significance of the Way.²³⁰

Huineng finishes by saying that “holding to delusions and disputing dharma teachings

²²⁷ Neither in fact does Sextus. He refers to, for example, masturbation as being one such evil, (*PH* III, 206) though will readily of course admit that he does not know whether that any act is good or evil inherently.

²²⁸ *PS* 22. 前念、後念及今念，念念不被疽疫染，除卻從前疾垢心，自性若除即是懺。

²²⁹ *PS* 34. [內見]佛性。外行恭敬，若輕一切人，吾我不斷，即自無功德。

²³⁰ *PS* 48. 前頭人相應，即共論佛義。若實不相應，合掌禮勸善。此教本無諍，若諍失道意。

causes the self-nature to enter samsara.”²³¹ And he remarks elsewhere that “The Highest Vehicle lies in the highest practice of righteousness, not in verbal disputes.”²³² The Sixth Patriarch also claims, perhaps with more than a little exaggeration, that “When you are free from concepts of self and other, Mt. Sumeru will collapse of itself.”²³³ Moreover, Buddhist scholar Lin Chen-kuo in a paper entitled “Emptiness and Violence” provides examples of violence sparked by confrontations arising out of Buddhist religio-philosophical debates. In the paper, he quotes the Brahmin responsible for the murder of Bodhisattva Aryaveda, a disciple of Nāgārjuna (who may himself have been murdered for identical reasons), as saying “As far as you embarrassed me by an empty knife, I will return you a real knife.”²³⁴ Lin concludes with the suggestion that we

read the term “sunyata” (emptiness, voidness) in the sense of “hollow space,” “opening,” “the opening of opening,” in which the face of the Other will not be humiliated.²³⁵

This indeed seems to coincide with Huineng’s usage of emptiness as the vast emptiness of self-nature which includes Other in all its varieties. In Chapter 2 we quoted Huineng as saying, “All things are themselves one’s own self-nature. View all

²³¹ Ibid. 執迷諍法門，自性入生死。

²³² PS 43. 最上乘是最上行義，不在口諍。

²³³ Lin Chen-kuo, “Emptiness and Violence: An Unexpected Encounter among Nāgārjuna, Derrida and Levinas.” Paper presented at the 19th World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, March 24-30, 2005, Tokyo, Japan.

²³⁴ . This, however, is not a guarantee that violence can be avoided by not engaging in debates. Huineng himself, according to the *Platform Sūtra* was reported to have been pursued several times in his career by rivals (See PS 3). The Rock of Refuge, near Nanhua Temple in Guangdong, China, is where Huineng famously hid while being chased by an “evil party of men.” The story is related in the Zongbao edition: T48n2008_p0355a23-5. The closest example to philosophical violence in ancient Greece is the persecution of Socrates. In his *Apology*, Plato relates that Socrates was, among other things, accused of being an atheist.

²³⁵ Lin Chen-kuo, “Emptiness and Violence.”

human and non-human creatures, good and evil people and things, neither reject nor remain stained by or attached to them.”²³⁶ Thus, even if we do label some people or things as “bad,” we are all the same not to reject them or become “stained” by our own thoughts about them. That is, we need not believe they are bad by nature, but rather that they appear bad to us, at this moment. In this way, there is no artificial separation from Other. And this brings us to an interesting paradox that lies at the heart of Zen teaching: if we are to change the world for the good, then we must not in our minds reject the “bad” people and things of the world. Likewise, if we are to practice righteousness, righteousness is best practiced when our minds are able to encompass both righteousness *and* evil. Thus, if we reject the bad, then we are, in effect, *being bad*. I think Huineng sums up this sentiment in the following lines from his “Markless Verse” (無相頌):

When a person truly practices the Way,
 The faults of the world are not seen.
 If you see the faults of others,
 Then your faults still abound.
 I don't blame others for their faults,
 I blame myself for my own.
 But if one gets rid of the false mind,
 Then vexations will be dashed to pieces.²³⁷

So in essence to be able embrace the bad is essentially the same as not seeing faults of

²³⁶ PS 25. 萬法盡是自性，見一切人及非人，惡之與善，惡法善法，盡皆不捨，不可染著。

²³⁷ PS 36. 若真修道人，不見世間愚。若見世間非，自非卻是左。他非我不罪，我非自有罪。但自去非心，打破煩惱碎。

others. And likewise for the Skeptic, though Sextus does explicitly make this point directly, there is no claim that “dogmatism” is itself is a bad thing by nature. Thus, if the Skeptic were to rashly judge the Dogmatist as really bad, then she would herself be dogmatizing and thus doing away with her own tranquility! The Skeptic too then, in a different way, is also able to break down the wall between self and other by suspending judgment on not only what is truly “bad,” but also suspending judgment on “whom” gets labeled since, if Sextus’ arguments are correct, neither body nor mind, and hence people, are not apprehensible!²³⁸ Thus, if the Skeptic labels anyone as “bad” it will mean neither that the Skeptic believes in natural badness or in the actual existence of persons to be judged as bad. And consequently, the Skeptic’s beliefs will not be strong enough it seems to provoke any disturbance in her mind.

²³⁸ *PH* II, 21-47.

5.2. On the Positing of Metaphysical Objects

Zen as we have shown teaches the doctrines of the Buddha-nature and Suchness as well as a host of other metaphysically-oriented doctrines. For the Skeptic of course, an entity such as a “Buddha-nature” is non-evident, and thus the Skeptic is naturally moved to suspend judgment on whether such a thing actually exists. However, as I will attempt to show, such differences appear superficial in light of the fact that the Zennist’s goals are as therapeutic in nature as those of the Skeptics. This idea is clearly reflected in the following exchange featuring Mazu 馬祖:

“Why do you say that the very mind is Buddha?” he [Mazu] answered, “I want to stop the crying of children.” “Suppose they do stop crying?” asked the questioner. “Then *not-mind, not-Buddha*” was the answer.²³⁹ [emphasis added].

And Huineng in fact states that those who see the nature can in effect establish or negate any teaching, which would necessarily include the teaching of the Buddha-nature itself:

For those who see their natures, setting up or not setting up a teaching equally results in enlightenment. They are free coming and going, without stagnation or obstruction. Action and speech flow accordingly. They see the transformations of the body while never departing from their natures, thereby attaining complete freedom and the samādhi of playfulness. This is called

²³⁹ Feng Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 258.

“seeing the nature.”²⁴⁰

Thus, Huineng sets up the teaching that any teaching can be taken set up or set down as the situation demands. In a similar manner, Sextus Empiricus at the very end of the *Outlines* states,

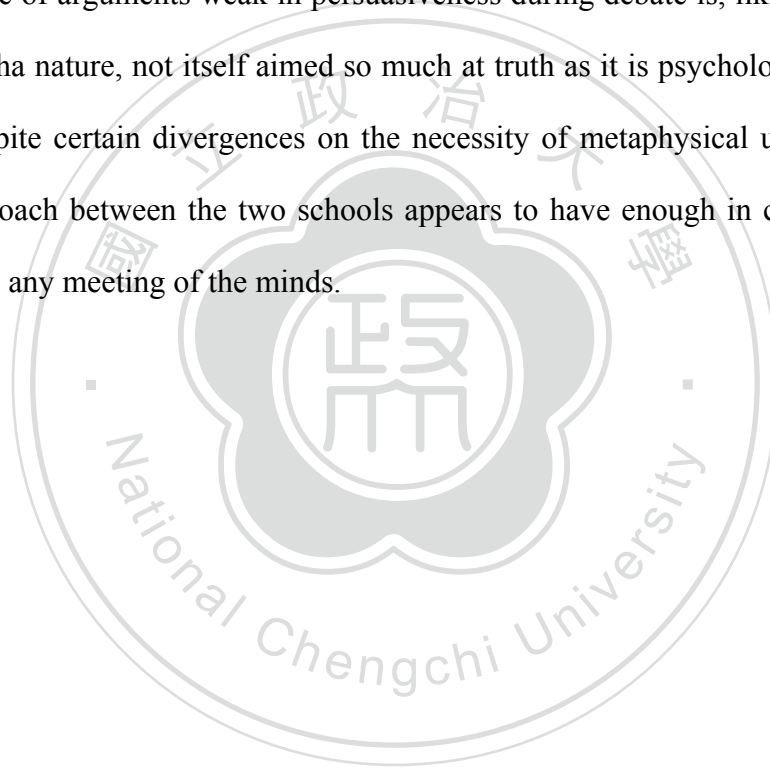
Because of his love of humanity the Skeptic wishes to cure by argument, so far as he can, the conceit and precipitancy of the Dogmatists. Accordingly, just as the doctors who treat physical symptoms have remedies that differ in strength, and prescribe the severe ones for people with severe symptoms and milder ones for those mildly affected, so too the Skeptic sets forth arguments differing in strength.²⁴¹

Thus, the Skeptic uses arguments mainly with the intent to heal the Dogmatists' rashness even if some of those arguments are weak and inconclusive in their own right; the important thing would then seem to be that they *work*. For the skeptics it is the tendency of rashness which needs to be eliminated since it is believed to be the source of all dogmatic theories and disquietude. Knowing this, I am tempted to ask whether the Skeptic would be inclined to attack the Zennist doctrine of the Buddha-nature or any other ontologically suspicious tenet of Buddhist doctrine. I think the Skeptic would attack the Zennist's view depending upon whether the Zennist *appeared to be behaving rashly or not*. At the same time I don't think the Zennist would attempt to offer a *defensive* (or anxious) defense of the doctrine if she

²⁴⁰ T48n2008_p0358c22-5. 見性之人，立亦得、不立亦得，去來自由，無滯無礙，應用隨作，應語隨答，普見化身，不離自性，即得自在神通游戲三昧，是名見性。

²⁴¹ PH III, 245-246.

does choose to offer one at all, since such seems incompatible with the practice of not dwelling on any thought or doctrine. Moreover, the Zennist I think would be inclined to *embrace* the Skeptic's question regardless of how the former chooses to answer. In fact, *that* response, unspoken as it may be, itself might be as good an answer as any. And since the Skeptic is only interested in curing rashness and conceit, she would seem to have no problem with the Zennist who exhibited none of these characteristics *no matter what she believed*. Likewise, the Zennist could equally suggest that the Skeptic's use of arguments weak in persuasiveness during debate is, like the teaching of the Buddha nature, not itself aimed so much at truth as it is psychological therapy. Thus, a despite certain divergences on the necessity of metaphysical utterances, the overall approach between the two schools appears to have enough in common as to not preclude any meeting of the minds.



CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have attempted to demonstrate the similarities in the Skeptic and Zen approaches to attaining tranquility. For the Skeptic, I have argued that tranquility is found in not rashly asserting judgments about the nature of things non-evident and for the Zennist it is learning how to engage in thought without clinging to what is thought. The Zennist dwells in momentary awareness as does the Skeptic who only reports on what she has investigated on up to the present moment. Thus, in my view, the Greek and Chinese minds find a very common ground in this regard. Furthermore, the use of oppositions is paramount: the Skeptic is unable to rest on a judgment because of the equipollence of the two sides of the arguments she examines. The Zennist, in a slightly different manner, does not rest on judgments because she lives in awareness of the interdependence of opposites. Thus, whereas the Skeptic does not attach to, for example, sagliness because, among other things, she demonstrates that rationally speaking it is impossible to become a sage at all,²⁴² the Zennist does not attach because she is fully aware that sagliness is only possible in contrast to ordinariness. The emphases are different, but the psychological result I believe is essentially the same. And though there are some differences regarding metaphysical and ethical statements, the non-dogmatic nature of these stances on either along with their common underlying therapeutic aims in the final analysis make the differences appear largely inconsequential.

Thus, to return to Garner's central question concerning the Skeptic's quietude that we highlighted in the introduction: "what his [the Skeptic's] quietude amounts to, how it

²⁴² PH III, 273-279.

is attained, how it is maintained, and, further and most importantly, how it is supposed to lead to a lack of perturbation?”²⁴³ my answer is that the Skeptic’s simply quietude amounts to a disposition, as Sextus says, of not affirming anything which lies beyond appearances. To appreciate this simple point, we need only reflect on the fact that when Skeptic likes or dislikes some particular thing, she will be immediately aware that her preferences are not *rational*. And when a situation arises, she realizes that no response is any more or less justified than any other. Thus, after judgment has been suspended on the nature of right and wrong, there is no dread or anxiety about making the “wrong” decision. The Skeptic simply proceeds undogmatically, and out of necessity (since remaining inactive would essentially be a choice to commit suicide!), in the way that is most agreeable to her own intuitions. And this inclination may be the result of cultural influences or owe its existence to some other non-rational basis. The Skeptic’s more intuitive mode of being does not bring with it the disturbing “intensity” of either positive or negative emotion. Thus, she lives without disturbance in matters that pertain to belief even though she feels compelled to take action. The Skeptic still is, however, and as Sextus points out, subject to the ordinary discomforts of life. The Skeptic’s one saving grace here is simply that she does not also dogmatically assert anything about the nature of those discomforts so as to not cause herself discomfort of the psychological variety as well.²⁴⁴

With that said, I therefore see my contribution in writing this thesis as one of not only bringing to the forefront overlooked similarities in the Skeptical and Zen approaches to tranquility, but also one of elucidating somewhat the nature of tranquility itself through examining how places arguments and concepts in opposition to one another

²⁴³ Garner, “Skepticism, ordinary language and Zen Buddhism,” 168.

²⁴⁴ *PHI*, 29-30.

assist in bringing it about. The key to tranquility, as I have argued throughout, lies in the practice of placing dichotomies in opposition as opposed to attaching to the “good” side while suppressing the “bad” one. Once the two are placed in opposition, the intellect comes to a standstill and one proceeds intuitively, without dogmatizing. Philosophically of course, talk of “intuition” is always suspect. What legitimizes it here, however, is that there is no claim being made that the intuition acts a guarantor of extra-intellectual truths. It is simply the case that reason is unable to provide a guide for practical conduct, and thus the Skeptic and the Zennist, having no other option, live intuitively without dogmatizing about how the “intuitive life” is preferable to one lived according to (one-sided) philosophical principles (as that *itself* too would appear to be a one-sided argument!). Sextus at many times, however, does argue that the person who doesn’t believe things are good or bad by nature is better off than the person who does or that the “wise man” of the Stoics is worse off than the ordinary person.²⁴⁵ But such arguments are generally not conclusive, but Sextus does not in any case need them to be true in order to retain his tranquility since it may have only *appeared* to Sextus that the Dogmatist could not achieve any sort of permanent happiness in regards to her beliefs. Thus, not only do these arguments not succeed, but they also diverge from Sextus’ *own* stated Skeptical practice. Then again, Sextus doesn’t claim that any of his arguments are absolutely correct, so the Skeptical position he presents itself seems to be able to provide a path to tranquility so long as the Skeptic admits that she may not be any more or worse off than the Dogmatists. And likewise, Huineng criticizes other schools even though he says that in practice we should not see the faults of others. However, as long as he is not “stained” by his criticisms of the “bad” schools (which must necessarily contrast with the teachings of

²⁴⁵ See *PS* I, 27-28, III, 276-277, *M* VI, 110-140.

his “good” school), he seems able to retain his tranquility as well. Thus, in practice, Huineng, like everyone else, must reject some things. But unlike the average person, he rejects them without “rejecting” them, so to speak. Or in the language of the Skeptics, he does not dogmatize his rejections, and thus the psychological impact of his preferring some things to others remains minimal and mental disturbances are thus prevented from arising.

Lastly, before offering my thoughts on directions for future research, I would like to highlight what I consider the downside of my approach of concentrating on the thought of Huineng in this thesis. The Sixth Patriarch hardly mentions doubt in the Platform Sutra, and in his cultural context, it is completely understandable why he does not. In the Japanese tradition, however, there is much said on the relationship between doubt and enlightenment and thus I felt compelled, for example, to include Hakuin’s historically important thoughts on the subject of doubt into the discussion in Chapter 3 because of their obvious relevance. And I think there still remains much more to be said on the connection between doubt and tranquility in the Zen context. Hopefully, this area of research will pique the interest of future scholars. And this brings me to the subject of future research. I believe a comparison between the *Daodejing*’s theory of “non-action” (*wu wei* 無爲) and the Skeptic’s practice of “not resisting” appearances but instead following them undogmatically “without much proclivity or strong pro feeling, as the child is said to be persuaded by or obedient to his teacher” would be of immense value.²⁴⁶ I find A.C. Graham’s description of the Daoist who instead of “pondering choices lets his problems solve themselves as inclination spontaneously finds its own direction, which is the Way” very reminiscent

²⁴⁶ *PHI*, 230.

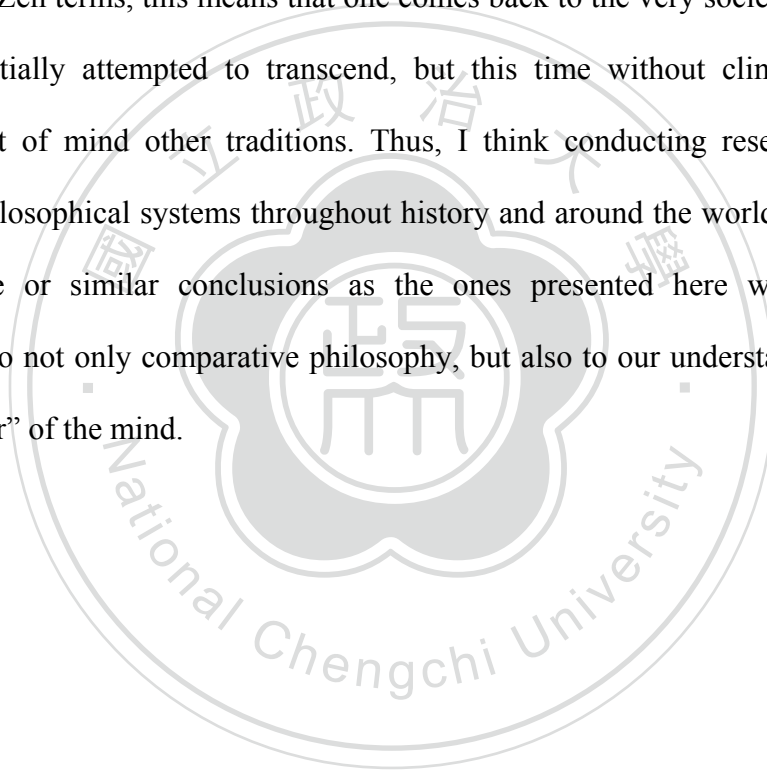
of the Way (*agoge*) of the Skeptics just referred to.²⁴⁷ One might in fact interpret the Skeptic's "four-fold regimen" of life as being something of a consistent statement of Daoism's paradoxical theory of non-action. Moreover, I for one am curious about the philosophical implications of following inclinations. One does it imply about autonomy if the individual ceases to act deliberately and becomes content with being "guided" by conditioned responses and natural urges? Or perhaps a paradox will emerge that suggests that to be free is precisely to be guided (in a subtle way) by these very forces! One could also compare the different ways the Skeptics and Daoist eschew decision-making based on dogmatic standards of good and bad (e.g., the Skeptics arrive at it through dialectic and the Daoists might arrive at it through the contemplation of dichotomies, just as Huineng does). Secondly, as Kjellberg points out in his comparative essay on Sextus and Zhuangzi, Zhuangzi is interested in the "skillful living" that leads to more effective decisions (according presumably to the person's own criteria of "effectiveness") when one does not cling dogmatically to preconceptions about the way things should be.²⁴⁸ I therefore see Zhuangzi's contribution in terms demonstrating how creativity may be unleashed through the unhinging of dogmatic concepts as when he, for example, explains to Huishi how the gourds he labeled useless could have been used for other purposes besides only what he originally had in mind.²⁴⁹ Sextus, on the other hand, does not mention the benefits of non-dogmatic thinking other than the tranquility it is said to bring. Thus, further explorations into this aspect of the non-dogmatic disposition will I think provide a fuller interpretation of what it means to live according to this "Way" of the Skeptics and Daoists, as opposed as to the traditional habit of attempting to rely on unfounded

²⁴⁷ A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*. (Illinois: Open Court, 1989), 234.

²⁴⁸ Paul Kjellberg and Phillip J. Ivanhoe, *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 11-13.

²⁴⁹ Kjellberg and Ivanhoe, *Essays*, 11.

rational principles for guidance. It is important to note, however, that this non-dogmatic mode of living only comes *after* one has inquired into the subject matter in question. Thus, it is not a disavowal of reason, and nor is it to say that reason *cannot* discover truth (interpretations which Zhuangzi sometimes leaves himself open to). It simply means that life requires action and if reason cannot serve as an adequate guide, then it seems obvious that something else *must*. And that something turns out to be undogmatic reliance on our *original* preconditioned ways of thinking. In Zen terms, this means that one comes back to the very society and culture that one initially attempted to transcend, but this time without clinging to it or rejecting out of mind other traditions. Thus, I think conducting research on how different philosophical systems throughout history and around the world have arrived at the same or similar conclusions as the ones presented here will contribute immensely to not only comparative philosophy, but also to our understanding of that “great matter” of the mind.



APPENDIX: A SKEPTIC AND ZENNIST IN DIALOGUE

Skeptic: How is that you teach the doctrine of a non-evident Buddha-nature? Why should anyone believe such a thing exists?

Zennist: We teach it in order to save sentient beings.

Skeptic: But if you have no proof that this non-evident entity exists, why lead people to hold this view?

Zennist: Because it is a view that can lead them to hold no views.

Skeptic: Hmm...That sounds a bit mysterious to me; wouldn't it just be better to get them to suspend their judgment?

Zennist: Is suspending judgment good?

Skeptic: I don't know; I've suspended judgment on that.

Zennist: So why are recommending it to me?

Skeptic: Well, to me it seems better to provide them with arguments which expose the *rashness* of their judgments. Surely this is better than having them believe things which purportedly lie beyond appearances, isn't it?

Zennist: But the very arguments you use to expose rashness you yourself confess are many times weak in persuasiveness. Thus, the function of your arguments is therapeutic, just as is our teaching of the Buddha-nature.

Skeptic: Well, since you put it that way, I do sort of agree that my weak arguments may play the same role, but at least even our most far out arguments are nonetheless theoretically possible.

Zennist: And isn't the existence of the Buddha nature also theoretically possible?

Skeptic: Yes, but strongly affirming its existence would indicate that you are attached to it, would it not?

Zennist: Precisely, that is why we at times affirm it and other times deny it; it all depends on context I'd say.

Skeptic: Well, as a skeptic I only go on what *seems* to be the case to me. And to me there seems to be no such thing as a Buddha-nature. However, I don't deny that there is one; I just do see how it is warranted to affirm that there is one.

Zennist: I see, so you mean that my affirmation of the Buddha-nature is "bad?"

Skeptic: Not in itself, but it appears so to me. But I'll be the first to admit that my basis for believing this has no rational support.

Zennists: In that case, your claim that it is bad is no more credible than the opposite claim that isn't!

Skeptic: Hey are you trying to use my method against me?! I'm just saying that unwarranted assertions seem to lead to dogmatism and a lack of respect for truth.

Zennist: But since we do not cling to these assertions, so how can dogmatism arise? Moreover, we in fact oppose these assertions one against the other. Thus, sometimes we will emphasize darkness over light or the mundane over the sacred, or even the not-Buddha mind or the Buddha mind if we detect in our students attachment to the opposite side of the dichotomy in question.

Skeptic: Yes, that is exactly what the Skeptic does as she investigates truth, except that the Skeptic deals more with arguments as opposed to simple dichotomies. In any case, we place arguments in opposition and rely undogmatically on traditional norms. And in this way, we experience peace.

Zennist: That is itself exactly what the Zennist calls seeing the Buddha-nature; for us, such a state of mind *is* truth!

Skeptic: So if you've already found truth, then won't that make you dogmatic?

Zennist: Haha, perhaps it would if weren't for the fact that finding "truth" for us is uncovering all that we do not wish to see, *in ourselves*. We don't suppress any inconvenient facts about ourselves or the world; we in fact may *need* them to

counterbalance the “convenient” ones we do tend to cling to!

Skeptic: Perhaps we might agree then since that sort of describes our activity as well. But one important difference is that we Skeptics don't see a mental attitude as being “truth.” We conceive of truth as existing external to us, something to be found “out there,” beyond the world of appearances.

Zennist: Well, wouldn't you have to first have reason to believe that a world was out there in order search for truth? It seems that you can only search for truth externally only by assuming that externally reality already exists. But whether it does is in fact “the very thing in question,” as you often like to put it.

Skeptic: You've got a point there I suppose, but since our motivation all along was to find peace of mind, we're not really bothered about whether truth can be found. We arrive at tranquility by simply coming to doubt the once-held uncritical belief that tranquility was only possible once truth was found.

Zennist: So it seems you don't have much of reason to search for truth then...

Skeptic: We are indeed very interested in investigating the claims of those who claim to have found truth. After all, they *might* be correct! And we also constantly examine the veracity of our own beliefs. So I would say we are very interested in truth even if what constitutes the term remains vague.

Zennist: The Skeptic is interested in truth?...People normally think you are interested

in only attacking all claims to truth! Anyway, our “truth,” which is essentially found in leaving behind what we *already believe to be false*, but often slow to admit, as being the same in essence as your activity of openly and honestly searching for “truth” and questioning the veracity of even one’s own beliefs. So do you think I right about the equivalence of two doctrines on this point? (Smiling)

Skeptic: You know what, I think I’ll suspend judgment on that one question and try some of that tea you’ve got there. (Smiles back)

(The Zennist unceremoniously passes the Skeptic a new tea bag.)

Skeptic: So, ma’am, what about our notion of *ataraxia*. I’m curious as to how it compares to your doctrine of “no-thought” exactly?

Zennist: When we become aware of attachment, we don’t react emotionally to that, since to do so would only represent an attachment to “non-attachment.” Thus, we acknowledge our attachments while neither striving to reject or cling further to them. Thus, we say that we are unattached in the midst of attachment, or to put it the standard way, to not think while even in the midst of thought.

Skeptic: Hmm...In a similar way I suppose, we acknowledge that the basis of our beliefs about the “non-evident” are non-rational. Thus, we don’t dogmatize about such things. And we have found that by not dogmatizing about that which we cannot prove, we experience peace. We affirm only those things we can’t be wrong about, such as having a headache or being cold.

Zennist: In that case, wouldn't you worry about being wrong or sometimes accidentally overstating your case?

Skeptic: We're not perfect I guess, so sometimes we bring disturbance upon ourselves by assuming that dogmatism is really bad and do be avoided at all costs. But since we do not say that suspending and *ataraxia* are "good" in themselves, we hardly need fear becoming dogmatic. It might actually itself be good for all we know!

Zennist: Hmm..., nice reply. So the only other real difference between our positions seems to be that you embrace doubt while we attempt to overcome it. These views seem to be polar opposites, or am I missing something?

Skeptic: Well, for starters, to question the truth of a dogmatic belief is already to detach from it. Thus, our doubt can be equated with our non-attachment to views?

Zennist: That's right. If we've attached to the idea that we must eradicate doubt in order to be enlightened, then we will actually always remain in doubt! Thus, we eliminate doubt by not attaching to the idea that we must get rid of it to begin with!

Skeptic: Exactly, and not getting rid of doubt is somewhat similar to our finding something *both good and bad* about doubt, thus enabling us to suspend judgment on whether it's really good or bad. So nothing even about doubt is affirmed or denied, and thus the intellect reaches a standstill.

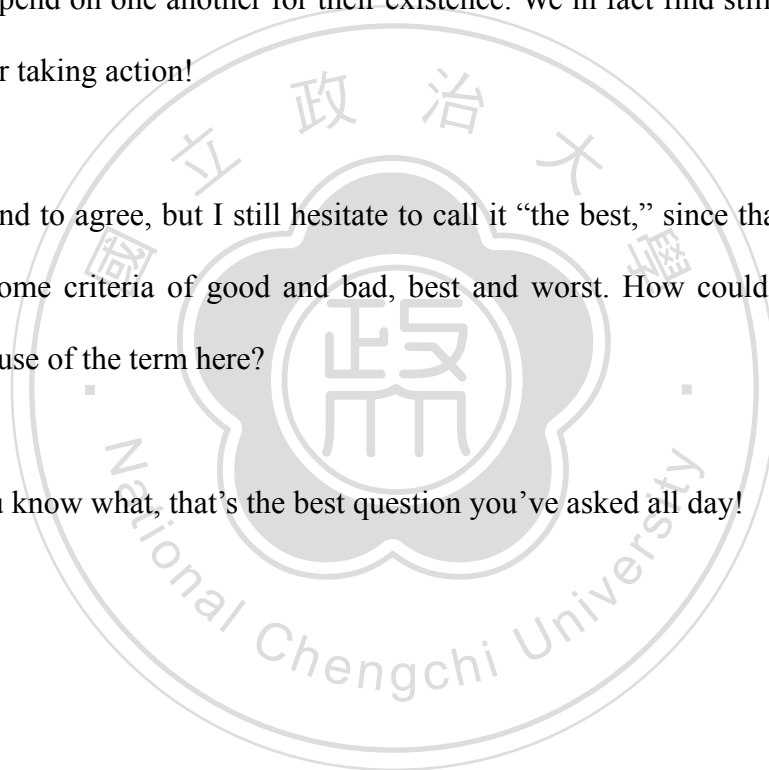
Zennist: A “standstill,” eh? Sounds like what we mean by “neither coming nor going.”

Skeptic: Yes, but perhaps like us, you don’t see that as meaning literally *standing still*. We cannot remain inactive in life. Or do you remain inactive? I notice you guys like to *sit* still in meditation a lot.

Zennist: Actually we do not prefer stillness over action or vice versa; those two polarities depend on one another for their existence. We in fact find stillness to be *the best* basis for taking action!

Skeptic: I tend to agree, but I still hesitate to call it “the best,” since that itself seems to assume some criteria of good and bad, best and worst. How could you possibly justify your use of the term here?

Zennist: You know what, that’s the best question you’ve asked all day!



Bibliography

Chinese Primary Sources

Generally speaking the *Platform Sūtra* is the only Zen (or Chinese) text that has attained canonical status. It will thus serve as the source text for Zen teachings for this study. The manuscript of the *Platform Sūtra* used here is Yang Zengwen's (楊曾文) "New Dunhuang Version" (*Dun huang xin ben* 敦煌新本) of the *Platform Sūtra*, an annotated edition based on the second of the Mogao Caves texts (No. 077). Its full title is *Nan zong dun jiao zui shang da shang mo he bo re bo luo tan jing yi juan* 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經 六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺說法壇經一卷, ("The Southern School of Sudden Enlightenment, The Supreme Mahāyāna Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra: The Platform Sūtra Preached by the Sixth Patriarch Huineng at Dafan Temple in Shaozhou—One Scroll") and as believed to be one of the earliest and most reliable versions of the sūtra available (usually dated around 780 CE).

I follow D.T. Suzuki's traditional chapter divisions when citing the text. Quotes from the Zongbao (宗寶) edition (1271 CE) (full title: *Liu zu da shi fa bao tanjing* 六祖大師法寶壇經; "Dharma Jewel Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch") are cited in accordance with the Taishō Canon standard. And though I have consulted the English translations listed below, the translations from the Chinese texts quoted in this thesis will be my own unless otherwise noted.

卍 Xuzangjing Vol. 24, No. 460 (*Jingangjing kou jie* 《金剛經口訣》)

Chan, Wing-tsit. *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Ge zhaoguang 葛兆光, shiyi 釋譯. *Zutang ji*. 祖堂集. Gaoxiong (高雄): Foguang chu ban she 佛光出版社, 1997.

Katsuki, Sekida and A.V. Grimstone, ed., trans. *Two Zen Classics. The Gateless Gate and Blue Cliff Records*. Boston: Shambhala, 2005.

Price, A.F., and Wong Mou-Lam, trans. *The Diamond Sutra and the Sutra of Huineng*. Boulder: Shambhala, 1969.

Suzuki, D.T., trans. *Lankavatara Sutra*. Boulder, CO: Prajña Press, 1978.

Taishō Tripitaka Vol. 8, No. 223 (*Mohe bore boluomi jing* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》)

Taishō Tripitaka Vol. 48, No. 2008 (*Liuzu dashi fabao tanjing* 《六祖大師法寶壇經》)

Thurman, Robert A. F., trans. *Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra*. Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976.

Yampolsky, Philip B., trans. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

---. ed., trans. *The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1971.

Yang Zengwen 楊曾文. *Xinban Dunhuang xinben: Lizu tanjing* 新版敦煌新本: 六祖壇經. Beijing: Zong jiao wen hua chu ban she 宗教文化出版社, 2001.

Greek and Roman Primary Sources

The primary sources for Skepticism in this study will be Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. I rely mostly on this text as it alone provides a very thorough overview of the Skeptic school and is for good reason Sextus' most well-known text. Sextus' other extant texts focus on specific arguments as opposed to the doctrines of the Skeptic school itself. Secondly, in comparison to Sextus other works, I feel that the *Outlines* contain Sextus' most mature thinking on the subject as it consistently keeps to a non-dogmatic tone. Sextus scholar Richard Bett offers in my opinion a very compelling case for this view that the *Outlines* is more consistent to Skepticism than the other two major texts just mentioned.²⁵⁰ Quotes from the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* are mainly adapted from Mate's translation. The translations of Annas and Barnes and Bury have also been consulted.

Annas, Julias, and Jonathan Barnes, eds., trans. *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Bett, Richard, trans. *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians*. Cambridge: Cambridge

²⁵⁰ See Richard Bett, *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xxiii-xxx for a full review of the evidence.

University Press, 2005.

Cicero, *Academica*. Translated by H. Rackham. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1961.

Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by C.D Yonge. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853.

Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica (Preparation for the Gospel)*. Translated by E.H. Gifford. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903.

Mates, B. *The Skeptic Way: Sextus Empiricus's Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Plato, *The Apology*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House, 2001.

Sextus Empiricus. *Against the Physicists, Against the Ethicists*. Translated by R.G. Bury. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936.

---. *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. Translated by R.G. Bury. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933.

Secondary Sources

Abe, Masao. *Zen and Western Thought*. Edited by William R. LaFleur. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985.

- Albert, Hans. *Treatise on Critical Reasoning*. Translated by Mary Varney Rorty. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Annas, Julia, and Jonathan Barnes. "Doing Without Objective Values: Ancient and Modern Strategies." In *Norms of Nature*. Edited by M. Schofield, et. al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . *The Modes of Scepticism: Ancient Texts and Modern Interpretations*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Barnes, Jonathan. *The Toils of Scepticism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Barrett, Timothy H. "Arthur Waley, D. T. Suzuki and Hu Shih: New Light on the 'Zen and History' Controversy." *Buddhist Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (1989): 116-121.
- Benesch, Walter. *An Introduction to Comparative Philosophy*. Palgrave: New York, 2001.
- Bett, Richard. *Pyrrho, His Antecedents, and His Legacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Bielefeldt, Carl, and Lewis R. Lancaster. "T'an Ching (Platform Scripture)." *Philosophy East and West* 25, no. 2 (1975): 197-212.
- Brennan, Tad. *Ethics and Epistemology in Sextus Empiricus*. New York: Garland, 1999.

- Brunschwig, Jacques. "Pyrrhonism." In *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy. A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, edited by Mary L. Gill and Pierre Pellegrin. West Sussex: Blackwell, 2006.
- Burnyeat, Myles. "Can the Sceptic Live His Scepticism?" In *Doubt and Dogmatism*, edited by M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat, and J. Barnes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Chatterjee, Dipankar "Skepticism and Indian philosophy." *Philosophy East and West* 27, no. 4 (1977): 195-209.
- Conze, Edward. "The Ontology of Prajnaparamita." *Philosophy East and West* 3 (1953): 117-129.
- DeLacy, Philip. "Ou Mallon and the Antecedents of Ancient Scepticism." *Phronesis* 3 (1958), 59-71.
- Dumoulin, Heinrich, S.J. *The Development of Chinese Zen after the Sixth Patriarch in the Light of the Mumonkan*. Translated by Ruth Fuller Sasaki. New York: The First Zen Institute of America, 1953.
- . *Zen Buddhism: A History Vol. 1, India and China*. Macmillan Publishing, New York, 1994.
- Faure, Bernard. *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

---. "The Theory of One-Practice Samâdhi (i-hsing san-mei) in Ch'an Buddhism." In *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Peter N. Gregory, 99-128. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986.

Flintoff, Everett. "Pyrrho and India." *Phronesis* 25 (1980): 88-108.

Floridi, Luciano. *Sextus Empiricus, The Recovery and Transmission of Pyrrhonism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Fogelin, Robert J. *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Justification*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Forman, Robert K.C. *Mysticism, Mind, and Consciousness*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Frede, Michael. *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Fung Yu-lan. *A History of Chinese Philosophy*. 2 Vols. Translated by Derk Bodde. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952-53.

---. *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. New York: Macmillan, 1948.

Garfield, Jay. "Epoche and `Suunyataa: Skepticism East and West." *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 3 (1990): 285-307.

Garfield, Jay, and Graham Priest. "Nagarjuna and the Limits of Thought." *Philosophy East and West* 53, no. 1 (2003): 285-307.

Garner, Dick. "Skepticism, ordinary language and Zen Buddhism." *Philosophy East and West* 27, no. 2 (1978): 165-181.

Garner, Richard. *Beyond Morality*. Temple: Philadelphia, 1994.

Graham, A.C. *Disputers of the Tao*. Illinois: Open Court, 1989.

Gregory, Peter N., ed. *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988.

---. *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Guo Peng 郭朋. *Tan jing xiao shi*. 壇經校釋. Taipei (台北): Wen jin chu ban she 文津出版社, 1995.

Hadot, Pierre. *What is Ancient Philosophy*. Harvard: Cambridge, 2004.

Hankinson, R.J. *The Sceptics*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Hong Xiuping 洪修平. *Zhongguo chan xue si xiang shi*. 中國禪學思想史. Nanjing: Zhongguo ren min da xue chu ban she 中國人民大學出版社, 2007.

Hookway, Christopher. *Scepticism*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

Hu Shih. *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*. 2nd edition. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1963.

---. "Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism in China: Its History and Method." *Philosophy East and*

West 3, no. 1 (1953): 3-24.

---. "The Development of Zen Buddhism in China." *The Chinese and Political Science Review* 15, no. 4 (1932): 475-505.

Huppert, Felicia A. "Positive emotions and cognition: developmental neuroscience and health perspectives." In *Affect in Social Thinking and Behavior*, edited by Joseph P. Forgas. New York: Psychology Press, 2006.

Jiang Lansheng, ed. *100 Excerpts from Zen Buddhist Texts*. Taipei: Taiwan, 2001.

Jin Ronghua 金榮華. *Liu zu tan jing zhong Huineng ci mu qing jie shi bian* 六祖壇經中「慧能辭母」情節試辨. *Dunhuang xue di er shi wu ji* 敦煌學第二十五輯 (2004.7): 227-231.

Kjellberg, Paul. Phillip J. Ivanhoe. *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Kraft, Kenneth, ed. *Zen: Tradition and Transition: A Sourcebook by Contemporary Zen Masters and Scholars*. New York: Grove Press, 1988.

Kuzminski, Adrian. *Pyrrhonism: How the Ancient Greeks Reinvented Buddhism*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008.

Lai, Whalen and Lewis R. Lancaster, eds. *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983.

Long, A.A., and D. N. Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. 2 Vols. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

- McEvelley, Thomas. *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies*. Allworth Press: New York, 2002.
- McGreal, Ian P. ed. *Great Thinkers of the Eastern World*. New York: Harper-Collins, 1995.
- McRae, John R. "The Ox-head School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism: From Early Ch'an to the Golden Age." In *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-yen*, Edited by Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory, 169-253. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983.
- . *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.
- . "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment in Early Ch'an Buddhism." In *Sudden and Gradual*, edited by Peter N. Gregory, 227-278. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988.2
- . "The Story of Early Ch'an." In *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, edited by Kenneth Kraft, 125-139. New York: Grove Press, 1988.
- Popkin, Richard H. *The High Road to Pyrrhonism*. Edited by Richard A. Watson and James E. Force. San Diego: Austin Hill Press, 1980.
- . *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.
- Priest, Graham. *Beyond the Limits of Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge, 1995.

Qui Minjie 邱敏捷. *Tan jing de zuo zhe yu ban ben—yin shun yu hu shi ji Riben xue zhe xian guan yan jiu zhi bi jiao*. 壇經的作者與版本—印順與胡適及日本學者相關研究觀點之比較. Di liu jie “Yinshun dao shi si xiang zhi li luan yu shi jian” xue shu hui yi: Yinshun dao shi yu ren pusa xing,” 第六屆『印順導師思想之理論與實踐』學術會議：印順導師與人菩薩行 (2006.5): 1-38.

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, 1974.

Reale, Giovanni. *A History of Ancient Philosophy: 3. The Systems of the Hellenistic Age*, edited and translated by John R. Catan. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985.

Red Pine. *The Platform Sutra: The Zen Teaching of Huineng*. Emeryville, CA: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2006.

Ren Jiyu. “A Brief Discussion of the Philosophical Thought of the Chan Sect.” *Chinese Studies in Philosophy* 15, no. 4 (1984): 3-69.

Reps, Paul, and Nyogen Senzaki, comps. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings*. Boston: Tuttle, 1998.

Scharfstein, Ben-Ami. *A Comparative History of World Philosophy: From Upanishads to Kant*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Schlütter, Morten. “A Study of the Genealogy of the Platform Sûtra.” In *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 2 (1989): 53-114.

---. "Transmission and Enlightenment in Chan Buddhism Seen Through the Platform Sūtra (Liuzu tanjing 六祖壇經)." *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 20 (2007): 379-410.

Shen-yen. "The Platform Saatra of the Sixth Patriarch." Translated by Yu Chun-fang. *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 5 (July 1992): 319-340.

Shi Ru-chan 釋如禪, bian 編. *Liu zu tan jing yan jiu* 六祖壇經研究. Beijing: Zhongguo da bai ke quan shu chu ban she 中國大百科全書出版社, 2004.

Sinnot-Armstrong, Walter, ed. *Pyrrhonian Skepticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Solomon, Robert. *Continental Philosophy Since 1750*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Stough, Charlotte. *Greek Skepticism: A Study in Epistemology*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1969.

Suzuki, D.T. *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. New York: Grove Press, 1993.

---. *Essays in Zen Buddhism*. New York: Rider and Company, 1949.

---. The Zen doctrine of No-Mind: the significance of the Sutra of Hui-neng (Wei-lang). London: Rider & Co, 1986.

Tiles, J.E. *Moral Measures: An Introduction to Ethics West and East*. Routledge: London, 2000.

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

- University Press, 1998.
- Wu, John C.H. *The Golden Age of Zen: Zen Masters of the T'ang Dynasty*. Taipei: National War College, 1967.
- Wu Ping 吳平. *Chan zong zu shi—Huineng 禪宗祖師—慧能*. Nanchang: Jiangxi ren min chu ban she 江西人民出版社, 1995.
- Yanagida, Seizan. “The *Li-tai fa-pao chi* and the Ch'an Doctrine of Sudden Awakening.” trans. Carl Bielefeldt. In *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, edited by Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster, 13-49. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983.
- Yang Huinan 楊惠南. *Huineng 惠能*. Taipei (台北): Dong da tu shu gong si, 東大圖書公司, 1993.
- Yin Shun 印順. *Zhongguo chan zong shi cong Yindu chan dao Zhonghua chan. 國禪宗史—從印度禪到中華禪*. Taipei (台北): Zheng wen chu ban she 正聞出版社, 1983.
- Zeuschner, Robert B. “The Concept of Li-nien (“being free from thinking”) in the Northern Line of Ch'an Buddhism” In *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, edited by Whalen Lai and Lewis R. Lancaster, 131-148. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983.
- Zhang Yuanxia 張源俠. *Dang liu zu hui neng yu jian fo luo y ide: nie hua wei xiao. 當六祖慧能遇見佛洛伊德：拈花微笑*. Taipei (台北): Di guo wen hua chu ban she 帝國出版社, 2006.