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Through the Mirror: The Account of Other Minds in Chinese Yogācāra Buddhism

Jingjing Li[1]

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Abstract

This article proposes a new reading of the mirror analogy presented in the doctrine of Chinese Yogācāra Buddhism. Clerics, such as Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) and his protégé Kuiji 窺基 (632–682), articulated this analogy to describe our experience of other minds. In contrast with existing interpretations of this analogy as figurative ways of expressing ideas of projecting and reproducing, I argue that this mirroring experience should be understood as revealing, whereby we perceive other minds through the second-person perspective. This mirroring experience, in its allusion to the collectivity of consciousness, yields the metaphysical explication of mutual interdependence and the prescription of norms for compassionate actions.

Keywords Chinese Yogācāra Buddhism · Other minds · Interdependence · Compassion · Second-person perspective

✉ Jingjing Li
jingjing.li2@mail.mcgill.ca

[1] Institute for Philosophy, Leiden University, Nonnensteeg 1-3, Leiden 2311 BE, The Netherlands

1 Introduction[1]

Among the followers of the Mahāyāna tradition of Buddhism, the Yogācārins are known for using their investigation of consciousness to serve the goal of realizing the wisdom of no-self and compassion. They contend that everything in the cosmos depends on the mind[2] in order to appear as a phenomenon for us. Articulated as such, everything in our experience has no *sui generis*, immutable core *qua* a *svabhāvic* self. While promoting this doctrine of consciousness-only (*weishi* 唯識, *vijñaptimātra*), the Yogācārins soon find themselves in a dilemma when it comes to the problem of other minds. If other minds are directly given to us and we can straightforwardly perceive them, then this epistemological realism contradicts Yogācāra idealism by which everything depends on the mind in order to appear as a phenomenon; yet, if other minds cannot be perceived by us, the doctrine of consciousness-only also becomes untenable insofar as the existence of other minds becomes *sui generis* and mind-independent (Kuiji: T.43.1834.1006b).

[1] In this article, I develop my argument by drawing upon the following writings penned by Dignāga 陳那 (c. 480–540), Paramārtha 真諦 (499–569), Xuanzang 玄奘, and Kuiji 窺基:

Dignāga 陳那. *Guan Suoyuanyuan Lun* 觀所緣緣論 (*Ālambanaparīkṣā, On the Insight of the Condition of the Perceived*), trans. by Xuanzang, T.31, No. 1624.

Kuiji 窺基. *Cheng Weishi Lun Shuji* 成唯識論述記 (*Commentary of the Perfection of Consciousness-only*), T.43, No. 1830.

Kuiji 窺基. *Cheng Weishi Lun Zhangzhong Shuyao* 成唯識論掌中樞要 (*The Handbook of the Gist of the Perfection of Consciousness-only*), T.43, No. 1831.

Kuiji 窺基. *Weishi Ershilun Shuji* 唯識二十論述記 (*Commentary of the Twenty Verses on Consciousness-only*). T.43, No. 1834.

Paramārtha 真諦. *Zhuanshi Lun* 轉識論 (*On the Turning Consciousness*), T.31, No. 1587.

Xuanzang 玄奘. *Cheng Weishi Lun* 成唯識論 (*On the Perfection of Consciousness-only*), T.31, No. 1585 (hereafter cited as *CWSL*).

To cite each one of these sources, I place the name of its author before its volume number, sequence number, and page number in the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (Takakusu, Watanabe, Ono, and Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai 1924–1932).

[2] A clarification of translation is needed. In contemporary Western philosophy, the concept of mind is sometimes synonymous with the notion of consciousness. Nevertheless, in the context of Chinese Yogācāra Buddhism, the situation is more complex. Usually, the English term "consciousness" is used to translate the Chinese character *shi* 識 and "mind" is utilized to translate the character *xin* 心. Prior to Xuanzang, Yogācārins in China, Paramārtha (499–569) for instance, did not differentiate the mind (*xin* 心) from consciousness (*shi* 識). The reason why Paramārtha equates the two terms comes from his distinct understanding of consciousness. In the Yogācāra system, clerics have classified eight different types of consciousnesses, each representing a distinct cognitive faculty. This classification will be further elaborated in Section 3. For Paramārtha, everything, including the eight types of consciousnesses, originates from a metaconsciousness *qua* the ninth consciousness *āmala* (Paramārtha: T.31.1587.63c). Since the entirety of one's experience *qua* the mind stems from one metaconsciousness, the mind is tantamount to the metaconsciousness, and there is no need to distinguish the two. As related by Xuanzang in the *CWSL*, early Yogācārins equate consciousness-only directly with one-consciousness-only (*weidushi* 唯獨識) (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.39c). Xuanzang, however, is very critical of this view. From Xuanzang's vantage point, one cannot merge all eight types of consciousnesses into a metaconsciousness insofar as each consciousness has its distinct function of cognizing. Therefore, Xuanzang sorts these eight consciousnesses into three groups. He refers to the eighth consciousness *ālaya* as *xin* 心, the seventh consciousness as *yi* 意, and the other six consciousnesses as *shi* 識 (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.24c). That being said, for later Yogācārins in China, consciousness or *shi* 識 is not always equivalent to mind or *xin*心. To avoid further confusion, I will use the term "mind" to refer to the entirety of one's experience, which is similar to the general meaning of this term in English. The term consciousness will be employed to describe each one of the eight different types of consciousnesses. There are only two exceptions whereby the term "consciousness" will not refer to any specific consciousness but, rather, will mean consciousness in a general sense: first, I translate *vijñaptimātra* as consciousness-only; second, I use the notion of "collective consciousness" to refer to the consciousness of the *we*.

Despite the fact that the Buddhist stance on the idea of self has garnered a growing level of scholarly attention,[3] this master approach employed by contemporary philosophers has overlooked the heated discussions over the issue of other minds among these Mahāyāna Buddhists. It is important for them to solve the problem of other minds because this solution yields the interconnection between the wisdom of no-self and compassion for others. Considering how the development of Yogācāra Buddhism in China has been less studied in English language scholarship,[4] I focus in this article on the account of other minds presented in the doctrine and texts of one particular school of Yogācāra in China: the Dharma-image School of Consciousness-only (*faxiangweishizong* 法相唯識宗). Our investigation could likewise serve as a parallel to the on-going debate on other minds in contemporary philosophy of mind.[5]

To resolve the aforementioned dilemma, Yogācārins, such as Xuanzang 玄奘 and Kuiji 窺基, expound how other minds can be perceived by us. In figurative terms, Xuanzang compares this experience to that of "the world manifesting through the mirror." To understand this mirroring experience envisaged by Xuanzang, I propose to interpret the mirror analogy as a metaphorical way of describing what is currently known as the second-person perspective of experience. This second-person perspective differs from that of the first-person sense and that of the third-person sense.[6] While the first-person perspective usually characterizes *my* self-experience as such, the third-person perspective defines our engagement with another foreign object when we envisage *it* as our rival and antagonist. Standing between the two, the second-person perspective emerges most commonly in a collective context that allows for the possibility of viewing others as the *you* who are distinct from, yet not antagonist to, ourselves. As such, this interpretation of the mirror analogy permits me to argue that, for Chinese Yogācārins, we do have direct experience of other minds when we perceive others through the second-person perspective. This experience further reminds us of the self-other interdependence and motivates us to conduct altruistic actions. These three dimensions—the description of the mirroring experience, the explication of self-other interdependence, and the prescription of moral actions—constitute the Yogācāra theory of other minds.

[3] For recent scholarship on the Buddhist conception of self-knowledge and self-consciousness, please see Arnold 2012, Coseru 2012, Lusthaus 2002, Thompson 2015, and Yao 2005.

[4] For recent scholarship that investigates the theory of other minds in Indian Yogācāra Buddhism, see Tzohar 2016, Mackenzie 2017, and Perrett 2017. Tao Jiang also touches on the problem of other minds as articulated by Xuanzang in the *CWSL*. He contends that *remote ālambana* alludes to a more collective consciousness (Jiang 2006: 73–75). Considering the importance of otherness in the Buddhist tradition, I believe that this question deserves a closer examination.

[5] Modern philosophy of mind provides two models to account for the way in which we access other minds: the theory-theory (TT) and the simulation theory (ST). The former argues that we infer other minds from a framework *qua* a commonsense theory, whereas the latter contends that we use our own mind as a screen to project those of others (Goldman 2006: 8–17). Nonetheless, both models tend to prioritize the first-person perspective of experience. The question phenomenologists like Dan Zahavi intend to address is, why do we have to go through "a circuit through self" to understand others? (Zahavi 2008: 519) A circuit, as such, entails a self-other rift as a result of which I can only interact with other minds through a causal relation with the first cause being either a universal common theory or my own mind. Drawing on the theory of empathy articulated by phenomenologists Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein, Dan Zahavi argues that we do have direct access to other minds through the second-person and third-person perspectives.

[6] For more discussions about these three perspectives in contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive studies, see Gallagher 2001 and Zahavi 2005, 2010.

In understanding Chinese Yogācārins' account of other minds, the rest of this article will unfold in three parts. Section 2 revisits Xuanzang and Kuiji's articulation of the problem of other minds in the Yogācāra context. After elucidating this problem, they introduce two resolutions that are credited to Indian Yogācāra masters Sthiramti and Dharmapāla, respectively. As supporters of Dharmapāla's approach, Xuanzang and Kuiji detail how one can perceive other minds. They compare this perception to "the world manifesting through the mirror." Drawing on current scholarship, Section 3 interprets this mirror analogy as an expression of experience from the second-person perspective. Section 4 clarifies how this perception of other minds furnishes each sentient being with an open possibility between retreating to apathy and returning to empathy. It is this open possibility that enables one to transform apathy to empathy. To end the analysis, the conclusion explores how this account of other minds informs religious training for the Yogācārins.

2 Revisiting the Problem of Other Minds

What is the problem of other minds? Imagine that we are playing the game Pokémon Go on the phone. In our everyday life, we will never confuse the avatars strolling around the virtual city with any real people walking on the street. These people might give us a smile, which we naturally take as them being nice to us. However, philosophical skeptics can always corner us: what if this impression of others being nice to us is nothing but a fantasy? How do we even know they are humans and not avatars created by our own minds? The term "conceptual problem of other minds" has been coined by modern Western philosophers to address the question of how knowledge of other minds is possible (Hyslop 2014).

Coming from a different context, followers of Yogācāra Buddhism are wrestling with a similar issue. Debating with their antagonists—the Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika schools, for instance, who contend that the existence of perceived objects is mind-independent (Lin 2009: 119)—Yogācāra clerics clarify how everything in the cosmos depends on one's own mind in order to appear as a phenomenon in one's experience. As such, the Yogācārins preach the doctrine of consciousness-only: that nothing is mind-independent. Nevertheless, this doctrine is soon exposed to the problem of other minds: if other minds are also nothing but mental phenomena in one's own experience, are other minds merely one's mental productions? When Yogācāra Buddhism was transmitted to China, the problem of other minds soon captured the attention of the clergy. Indeed, the problem of other minds alludes to a deeper issue of solipsism, which Xuanzang recounts in the following manner:

> External form does not really exist, and it is not the object of internal consciousness. Other minds really exist. Are they not the objects perceived by [one's own mind]?[7] (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.39c)

In understanding this problem, it will be of help to return to the doctrinal debates between Yogācārins and their antagonists. As previously mentioned, adversaries of the Yogācārins

[7] All the English translations of Buddhist texts in this article are the author's.

endorse the view that the real existence of objects in one's perception is mind-independent (*lishishiyoufa* 離識實有法), a view that is commonly known as "epistemological realism" in Western philosophy (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.2b). For them, external objects are given to the mind through affection; and if that is the case, the stimuli *qua* external objects must exist independently of the mind (Lin 2009: 121). In their critique of this view, Yogācārins argue that the mind does not passively receive given objects but actively serves as the condition for the possibility of these objects to appear as phenomena. As such, everything depends on the mind, which further consists of eight different types of consciousnesses, to appear in one's experience. This viewpoint is currently known as "epistemological idealism" in Western philosophy. As detailed by Xuanzang, for "those who realize that nothing in perception is mind-independent (*da wu li shi suo yuan jing zhe* 達無離識所緣境者)," they will know that each of the eight types of consciousnesses transforms (*bian* 變) itself to give rise to four distinct and interdependent parts simultaneously: the act of perceiving *qua* the seeing part, the perceived phenomenon *qua* the image part, the underlying self-awareness, and the reflexive awareness of this self-awareness (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.10b). Upon elucidating this fourfold structure of consciousness, Xuanzang *ipso facto* highlights how objects are no longer given passively to the mind. Quite to the contrary, subjective acts, objective phenomena, and self-awareness mutually constitute one another in one's experience. Nevertheless, this epistemological idealism soon encounters the problem of other minds. As mentioned in the excerpt, external forms, namely external objects, do not have real existence, because without consciousness, nothing can appear as phenomena in perception. Other minds, just as one's own mind, should have real existence. If that is the case, can they be perceived? If they can, then these other minds shall have no real existence, just like external objects. Yet, if other minds can be perceived and still have real existence, then this fact indicates that there remains one type of objects in one's perception *qua* other minds that have mind-independent existence, an indication that violates the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness-only. Yet, if other minds cannot be perceived, this unknowability likewise breaks the doctrine of consciousness-only insofar as there is one type of objects *qua* other minds that do not appear as phenomena in one's experience. In detailing this dilemma, Kuiji evokes the concept of "cognition of other minds (*taxinzhi* 他心智)," [8] a notion that means the knowledge of other minds, in his commentary on the *Twenty Verses on Consciousness-only* (*Weishi Ershilun* 唯識二十論, henceforth *WSESL*):

> *WSESL*: If we cannot perceive [other minds], how can we talk about the cognition of other minds?
>
> Kuiji: This is the challenge posed by antagonists [after the *WSESL* asked whether other minds can be perceived]. What can become problematic here? There are two challenges. First, I will expound the dispute regarding the scenario in which other minds cannot be perceived. Then, I will detail the polemic concerning the occasion whereby other minds can be perceived. In the first case, if all the minds of others cannot be taken as intimately perceived phenomena, how could there be a cognition of other minds? Thus, the first challenge [presented by antagonists] can be

[8] Although the literal meaning of this Chinese term *zhi* 智 is "wisdom," it is more accurate to translate this concept as "cognition" or "knowledge" in this context. Here, I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for the suggestion on translation.

formulated as such: what you refer to as the cognition of other minds shall not be qualified as a cognition, insofar as someone cannot directly perceive other minds as this person can with himself/herself and to the external world.

WSESL: If we can perceive other minds, then the doctrine of consciousness-only becomes untenable.

Kuiji: This is the second challenge regarding the scenario in which other minds can be perceived. If ordinary ones and sages can take other minds as intimately perceived phenomena, the doctrine of consciousness-only becomes untenable. This is so, because there would be a type of objects *qua* other minds that can be perceived yet still have real existence outside our own minds. Thus, an argument can be formulated here: what you refer to as the cognition of other minds contradicts the doctrine of consciousness-only, insofar as this cognition allows one to perceive a mind-independent object. (Kuiji: T.43.1834.1006b)

Considering the depictions provided by Xuanzang and Kuiji, the problem of other minds (POM) in the Yogācāra sense can be reformulated in the following manner:

POM1: Presume that other minds can be perceived. Then, they shall be like external forms and have no real existence.
POM2: Presume that other minds can be perceived and still have real existence. This epistemological realism contradicts the idealist position held by the Yogācārins, insofar as there is one type of really-existed objects that can be directly given to one's mind and this givenness is independent of one's own mind.
POM3: Presume that other minds cannot be perceived. Then, the doctrine of consciousness-only also becomes untenable, because there is one type of objects that falls outside of the scope of one's experience.

Therefore, to resolve the problem of other minds, three conditions must be satisfied:

C1 Other minds have real existence;
C2 They can be perceived;
C3 Other minds are not mind-independent, but rely on our minds to appear as phenomena for us.

In this regard, early and later Yogācārins[9] provide two different resolutions. As expounded by Kuiji, early Yogācārins represented by Sthiramati intend to resolve this

[9] By comparing Buddhist texts preserved in various languages, modern scholar Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896–1989) argued that the divide between early and later Yogācāra entailed two distinct understandings of the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousnesses-only in India and China (Lü 1986: 73). For early Yogācārins, consciousness-only means that nothing exists but consciousness. Contrariwise, for later Yogācārins, consciousness-only amounts to the fact that everything in the cosmos depends on consciousness to appear as phenomena for us. Here is the lineage of early and later Yogācāra, both in India and in China, based on the version provided by Yao Zhihua (Yao 2005: 122):

Early Yogācāra: Asaṅga 無著 (fl. 4th c.)—Vasubandhu 世親 (fl. 4th–5th c.)—Sthiramati 安慧 (fl. 6th c.)—Paramārtha 真諦 (499–569), and Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (fl. 6th c.)

Later Yogācāra: Dignāga 陳那 (c. 480–540)—Dharmapāla 護法 (c. 530–561)—Śīlabhadra 戒賢 (c. 579–645)—Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664)—Kuiji 窺基 (632–682)—Huizhao 慧沼 (650–714)—Zhizhou 智周 (668–723)

problem of other minds by erasing the alterity of others and therefore merging the others with the self:

> According to clerics like Sthiramati, for all polluted minds, there is only *svasaṃvitti*, namely, self-awareness, not the image and seeing parts [since the latter two derive from *svasaṃvitti*]. As mentioned previously in this commentary, Sthiramati interprets the doctrine of consciousness as such: what one perceives as the image or the seeing parts [namely, the perceived phenomenon and the act of perceiving], all pertain to one's grasping. Due to the transformation of consciousness, images that are similar to other minds arise. Other minds *per se* are not really perceived. They cannot become the image parts of one's own mind. It is due to mental factors, such as goodness, that images of seemingly other minds arise, to which one gradually has dharma-attachments. From the *svasaṃvitti*, images arise that seem to be other minds. Such images are nothing but false imaginations and they have no existence. The *svasaṃvitti per se* is nourished by the dependent nature. This is how Sthiramati accounts for the cognition of other minds. (Kuiji: T.43.1834.1007b)

Having said that, early Yogācārins argue for understanding the self-other distinction as nothing but a false imagination and a mental fabrication. According to Kuiji, unlike later Yogācārins who identify four distinct parts of the consciousness, Sthiramati rejects the fourfold structure and maintains that everything, including the perceiving act and the perceived phenomena, derives from the underlying self-awareness (Kuiji: T.43.1830.320c). When someone starts to perceive, this sentient being tends to juxtapose the seeing part *qua* the perceiver with the image part *qua* the perceived object. Further based on this juxtaposition, this sentient being is inclined to treat the perceiver and the perceived as polar opposites. Nevertheless, considering how the perceiver and the perceived originate from the same self-awareness, the juxtaposition or even opposition between the two turns out to be a misperception, or in Yogācāra terms, a false imagination. *Mutatis mutandis*, in one's perception of other minds, it is easy to mistreat others as one's opposites. If one could remove this misconception, the possibility returns for this sentient being to perceive directly other minds by turning its own mind into theirs and to experience what others have gone through in their lives. As such, when one sentient being perceives others, it uses its own mind to emulate others and make their minds appear as phenomena. As perceived phenomena, other minds are no longer independent of the mind of this sentient being.

However, one question shall capture our attention. When someone turns his/her own mind to those of others, what exactly is being perceived here? Is this sentient being experiencing other minds, or, is he/she still experiencing his/her own mind? For instance, Cindy is looking at her cat. Upon seeing Cindy, I try to put myself in her shoes, so as to imagine what she is going through and imitate how she would perceive the cat. Through imagination and imitation, what I actually perceive turns out to be the cat, not the mind of Cindy. Upon dissolving the line between the self and others, and upon turning one's mind into those of others, one still cannot perceive other minds directly but can only perceive the phenomenon that appears in the minds of others. That is why "other minds *per se* are not really perceived"

(Kuiji: T.43.1834.1007b). Since the resolution provided by Sthiramati cancels the alterity of other minds and merges the other with the self, this resolution negates the real existence of the minds of others. Eventually, this proposal succeeds in meeting C2 and C3, yet fails to fulfill C1.[10]

A deeper issue concerning Sthiramati's proposal is, again, solipsism, insofar as it implies that one can never go beyond one's own consciousness to know other minds. Indeed, for a long time, the Yogācāra doctrine of consciousness has been labeled as a solipsistic philosophy, according to which nothing exists but the mind of oneself. Yet, is the mind nothing but a closure, or, borrowing Charles Taylor's terminology, nothing but a "buffered self" (Taylor 2007: 33)? If that is the case, what looks like a negation of self-other duality at the surface leads to a reaffirmation of the absolute self-in-itself at the core of early Yogācāra's proposal.

In contrast, Xuanzang and Kuiji applaud an alternative resolution credited to Dharmapāla. It is an alternative that could (1) affirm the real existence of other minds and not cancel their alterity, (2) prove the possibility of perceiving other minds as they really are, and (3) reinforce the notion of mind-dependence. As will be seen shortly in the next section, the resolution promoted by later Yogācārins shifts the focus from *whether* other minds can be known to *how* other minds can be perceived. That is when they bring the distinction between the remote *ālambana* (*shu suo yuan* 疏所緣) and the intimate *ālambana* (*qin suo yuan* 親所緣)[11] to the forefront.

3 Through the Mirror: Nonduality between the Self and the Other

As previously mentioned, Kuiji lists two resolutions to the problem of other minds in his commentary on the *Twenty Verses on Consciousness-only.* After introducing the first resolution, he presents the second one, which is related by Xuanzang in the *Cheng Weishi Lun* 成唯識論 (*On the Perfection of Consciousness-only*, henceforth *CWSL*):

> Who says that other minds cannot be objects for consciousness [to perceive]? It is just that we do not consider other minds as *intimate ālambana*. This is because [when perceiving other minds,] consciousness arises and this arising does not have the real function. Thus, [for this consciousness,] it is not like the hand which can seize intimately external objects, not like the sun which can illuminate intimately the external world. Rather, it resembles the mirror through which the external world seems to manifest. This is how we know other minds, a knowing not in an intimate manner. Those that we can perceive intimately are transformed from the same consciousness. (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.39c)

[10] The critique has been expressed by Kuiji in the following way: "If one contends that the object of other minds can be merged with one's own mind, then this contention is implausible. It is because other minds are the objects for one's mind to perceive. And as such, other minds shall not be apart from the phenomenon cognized by my mind. This does not mean that other minds become my own mind" (Kuiji: T.43.1830.489c).

[11] This Chinese term *qin suo yuan* 親所緣 has been translated into English in several ways. For instance, Louis de La Vallée Poussin translates it as "immediate *ālambana*" (La Vallée Poussin 1928: 430). Lusthaus lists several alternatives, such as "intimate" or "familially related" (Lusthaus 2002: 300). I find the term "intimate" most appropriate partly because it indicates the affiliation of the perceived phenomenon to the consciousness, partly also because of the unique nuance of the term "immediate" in post-Kantian modern philosophy. Thus, to avoid ambivalence, I opt for "intimate," not "immediate."

How shall one understand this mirror analogy? Existing scholarship offers two options. Dan Lusthaus proposes an epistemological reading in which he describes one's perception of other minds as projection (Lusthaus 2002: 503). Drawing on the mirror analogy, Lusthaus argues that one's mind is a cognitive closure *qua* a mind in-itself which can project and, thus, be affected by stimuli such as other minds, outside the closure (Lusthaus 2002: 492). Due to this affection, Lusthaus pinpoints a dialectical relation between the self and the other (Lusthaus 2002: 503).[12] Lusthaus contrasts his reading with the metaphysical one put forward by Louis de La Vallée Poussin who construes such perception as reproduction: just as the image of the entire material world is generated by one's consciousness, so too can other minds be reproduced by one's mind (La Vallée Poussin 1928: 430).

The concern I have for both readings is as follows: why should we always prioritize the first-person access to experience and thus surmise a nearly closed self-in-itself (though not necessarily a *svabhāvic* self) as the center of projecting or reproducing? If we project others' minds on our own and reproduce their experience by imagining ourselves to be going through the same circumstance, we *ipso facto* turn their experience into ours and thus dissolve the existence of alterity. As such, our wrestle with solipsism becomes a futile fight.

Drawing on and developing recent scholarship,[13] I propose interpreting this mirroring experience as that of revealing through which we perceive other minds through the second-person perspective. This mirroring experience further alludes to the collectivity of consciousness. To unpack my viewpoint, let us start with the distinction between two types of *ālambana*. The concept of *ālambana* has been articulated by the Yogācārins to describe that which can appear in our mind and then be perceived by us (Dignāga: T.31.1624.888b). In their critique of epistemological realism, the Yogācārins, championed by Dignāga, contend that every object (*jing* 境) needs to depend on consciousness first to appear as a phenomenon, or in Yogācāra terms, as the image (*xiang* 相), and then to be cognized.[14] In this manner, the Yogācārins differentiate the object (*jing* 境) to be perceived from the phenomenon/image (*xiang* 相) that appears as the object in one's mind. Considering their refutation of epistemological realism, Xuanzang and Kuiji depict the perception of consciousnesses as "having no real function." As elaborated by Kuiji:

[12] Lusthaus's reading is scrutinized and criticized by Lambert Schmithausen. According to Schmithausen, Lusthaus's interpretation of Yogācāra entails an epistemological realism that contradicts the idealistic stance endorsed by the Yogācārins (Schmithausen 2005).

[13] Tao Jiang contends that intimate *ālambanapratyaya*, which he translates as "close *ālambanapratyaya*," alludes to the personal aspect of our experience in contrast to the collective aspect revealed by remote *ālambanapratyaya* (Jiang 2006: 73–75). Although I applaud Jiang's stress on the collectivity, I believe that his argument can be further developed if we can identify what this collectivity is and how it is related to my personal experience. I, thus, find it necessary to explicate the shared characteristics of all the remote *ālambanapratyaya.* In this manner, we could specify that, by "personal," we *ipso facto* refer to the first-personal perspective of our experience, whereas by "collective" we mean the second-personal perspective. More importantly, aside from describing how collectivity is an indispensable aspect of our consciousness, we also need to account for, as the Yogācārins advocate, the way by which such collectivity raises an open possibility for us to form and remove attachments.

[14] For an in-depth study on the ontological status of objects of cognition, please see Lin 2009.

> Having no real functions, it is so for all the dharmas. This is because there is no function, and there is no one who enacts the function. When the mind perceives the object, it is not like the hands or pliers that can grasp external things outside one's body; not like the sun, the moon, or the fire that can emit light to illuminate external things. When the mind and the others perceive, it is like the mirror revealing things. Images appear as the external objects and this is how other minds are known. The image of other minds appears in one's own mind for one to perceive. This is not the knowing in an intimate manner. What can be known intimately is the image part transformed by the same consciousness. This perception has no real function insofar as it cannot really aim at external objects. (Kuiji: T.43.1830.493c–494a)

Upon clarifying the idealist viewpoint, we can turn back to the notions of intimate and remote *ālambana* which have been evoked by Xuanzang and Kuiji to coin these two ways for an object to appear in the mind. The definition articulated in the *CWSL* is as follows:

> *Ālambana* has two types, the intimate and the remote. If the perceived phenomenon is not apart from the consciousness which aims at it [i.e., the phenomenon], is perceived by the seeing part, and gives dependence to this seeing part, this phenomenon is the intimate *ālambana*. If the perceived phenomenon is apart from the consciousness, yet this phenomenon is an archetype that can produce, inside the consciousness, an image part on which the seeing part depends and perceives, this phenomenon is the remote *ālambana*. Regarding the intimate *ālambana*, all the consciousnesses have them, insofar as every consciousness cannot arise without an internal phenomenon on which this consciousness depends and perceives. For the remote *ālambana*, consciousnesses may or may not have them, because consciousness can arise without external phenomenon on which this consciousness depends and perceives. (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.40c)

As elaborated by Kuiji, when a phenomenon is not apart from the consciousness and is cognized by the same consciousness, it means that this phenomenon is originated from this very consciousness (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501a).[15] In contrast, when a phenomenon is apart from the consciousness yet is still being cognized by that consciousness, this phenomenon does not stem from the same consciousness but from something else, such as another mind (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501a).[16] To put it differently, when consciousness

[15] Kuiji further clarifies two types of intimate *ālambana*. The first is the type of phenomenon that originates from the same consciousness. As Kuiji writes, "For the phenomenon that is perceived by the seeing part and gives dependence to this seeing part, there are further two types. First, compound dharma that is transformed by the same consciousness and, thus, is referred to as giving dependence to this seeing part." The second type is more subtle, insofar as it is suchness *per se*, "Suchness *per se* is not apart from consciousness and, thus, is referred to as giving dependence to the seeing part" (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501a).

[16] In parallel with his elucidation of intimate *ālambana*, Kuiji also differentiates two types of remote *ālambana*: those that originate from other minds and those that arise from a different consciousness in one's own mind. As Kuiji states, "The perceived phenomenon and the perceiving consciousness, when they are apart from each other, it means that the perceived phenomenon is either originated from other minds or transformed by other consciousnesses in one's own mind. As such, this perceived phenomenon becomes an archetype" (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501a).

perceives its remote *ālambana*, this consciousness cannot complete this perception alone but must depend on other archetypes (*zhangwaizhi* 仗外質) (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.41a).

In understanding the idea of "depending on other archetypes," it will be of help to introduce how Xuanzang and Kuiji describe eight different types of consciousnesses. The term "consciousness" here amounts to what is known nowadays as "epistemic faculty," *inter alia*, sensation, intuition, and conceptualization. The first five consciousnesses pertain to our five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching). The defining features of these five senses are discontinuousness and manifoldness (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.37a). The sixth consciousness *manovijñāna* is capable of synthesizing and conceptualizing the manifold sensations. Nevertheless, even this sixth consciousness does not endure throughout time. There are several cases in which the transformation of *manovijñāna* can be interrupted, cases such as deep sleep or comatose states (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.38a). To sustain the possibility for these discontinuous consciousnesses to arise and perish, the Yogācārins affirm the existence of the seventh and eighth consciousnesses, which continuously function throughout time. The seventh consciousness, known as *manas*, ensures the continuity of the sixth consciousness (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.19b). As the support of the sixth consciousness, *manas* has the capacity of synthesizing and conceptualizing as well (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.19b). The object intended by *manas* is the seeing part of the eighth consciousness *ālayavijñāna* or, in short, *ālaya*. When *ālaya* perceives, it gives rise to the seeing part *qua* the act of perceiving and the image part *qua* the perceived phenomenon. The image part that can stem from *ālaya* encompasses that of the material universe (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.10a). All of these eight consciousnesses have remote *ālambana*, insofar as one consciousness alone cannot complete its perception but must depend on others. As Kuiji details, the first five consciousnesses are coarse (*cu* 粗), blunt (*dun* 鈍), and weak (*lie* 劣), so their perception in the current moment must rely on the eighth consciousness (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501c). It is the seventh consciousness *manas* that depends on *ālaya* to complete its current perception (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501c). Even the eighth consciousness *ālaya* needs to depend on other minds when perceiving them (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501b).

From Kuiji's interpretation, it is possible to draw a parallel between the remote *ālambana* for the first five consciousnesses and other minds for one's *ālaya.* I contend that this parallel alludes to a part-whole relation. In each moment when an object appears as a phenomenon, the first five consciousnesses can perceive one specific aspect of this phenomenon on their own. Nevertheless, this perception of one aspect is always contextualized in *ālaya*'s holistic perception of the entire world. As remarked by Louis de La Vallée Poussin:

> Note that the eight consciousnesses (with their mental factors, eight *kalāpas*) are apart from one another. Eye-consciousness does not directly perceive blue, part of the image of the material universe that is developed by *ālayavijñāna* (which makes part of the image part of *ālayavijñāna*): the blue is the archetype that, in quality of fundamental condition (*adhipatipratyaya*), conditions an image of blue that is the seeing part of the eye-consciousness. (La Vallée Poussin 1928: 446; my English translation)

This being said, if the eye-consciousness could directly perceive blue, then this direct perception would suggest epistemological realism scrutinized and refuted by the Yogācārins. That is why for Yogācārins like Xuanzang and Kuiji, when the eye-consciousness starts to perceive and blue appears as the phenomenon or the image part for the eye-consciousness, this image of the blue is integrated and contextualized in a larger whole, namely, the image of the entire material universe developed and transformed by the eighth consciousness *ālaya*. As such, the image of the material universe becomes the remote *ālambana* for the eye consciousness which serves as the backdrop for the eye-consciousness's perception of blue. In Kuiji's terms, the perception of the first five consciousnesses in the current moment must rely on that of the eighth consciousness (Kuiji: T.43.1830.501c). Any specific part is contextualized in the whole.

Just like the image of blue is an integral part of the image of the entire universe, one's mind is a crucial unit of the minds of all sentient beings. The depiction of other minds as remote *ālambana* subsequently alludes to a collective consciousness as a shared collective context coconstituted by one's own mind and those of others throughout various stages of the existence of the cosmic history. Just as the image of the entire material universe serves as the backdrop for the eye-consciousness's perception of the blue, so too do the minds of others constitute the collective context of one's own experience. Each individual sentient being perceives other minds through the collective context. Subsequently, Xuanzang and Kuiji shift the question at stake from *whether* other minds can be perceived to *how* they can be perceived. It is not that sentient beings cannot perceive other minds, but rather that they perceive other minds in a distinct way as remote *ālambana*, namely, as the background of one's experience in the collective context. In figurative terms, Xuanzang describes this perception as "seeing the world through the mirror" (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.39c).

This is how we come to terms with our experience of other minds. Our own consciousness does not transform into that of others. In Yogācāra terms, our own mind cannot perceive other minds as the intimate *ālambana*. Borrowing the terminology widely adopted by contemporary philosophy of mind, we cannot experience other minds through the first-person perspective as *I* do to *my* own mind. However, this impossibility does not confine us to the solipsistic account of consciousness and does not *a fortiori* nullify another way of perceiving. We perceive the minds of others in another manner: as the backdrop of the greater collective context. That is, we view others as our friends and partners, namely, as the *you* with whom we co-constitute the collective consciousness of the *we*. Other minds are then perceived through the second-person perspective. In resolving the problem of other minds, Xuanzang and his disciples do not cancel alterity. Nor do they surmise that *our* own mind can exhaust everything in the cosmos. Refuting this solipsism, they turn to highlight the importance of community and collectivity, as a reminder of how the mind of the self and those of others are interdependent.

This approach to other minds, I suggest, is what Xuanzang intends to capture through the mirror analogy. Just as the image in the mirror is never homogeneous with the object revealed through this reflection, so too does our perception of other minds never cancel the alterity of others. Between the *sui generis* and the homogeneous, there stands the interdependence of the self and the other. If the reader will allow, I would like to borrow the analogy provided by the Huayan 華嚴 school of Buddhism in which the I-

you relation is compared to that of the gems in Indra's net, neither homogeneous nor heterogeneous, but revealing one another through reflecting. What constitutes the identity of the gem is the reflection of others, and vice versa. Subsequently, the negation of a *svabhāvic*, solipsist self does not lead to nihilism but rather amounts to the self-other interdependence.

As such, our experience of other minds discloses how otherness is indispensable to our own experience. As Charles Taylor once said in a different context, "we define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us" (Taylor 1985: 33). Even though Buddhists would consider dialogue as one of the many ways of disclosing and revealing otherness, the underlying idea is an affinity: otherness constitutes a crucial dimension of our experiences. As a Buddhist would say, we do not exist as a *svabhāvic* self but live in the cosmos with others, interdependently. Collaborating with others, we become able to build communities and constitute a shared space of meaning. In this way, other minds do have real existence. They can be perceived by us through the second-person perspective and they are not independent of our own minds. Fulfilling C1, C2, and C3, Xuanzang and his disciples promote the alternative solution to resolve the problem of others, which further reveals the importance of collectivity.

4 The Open Possibility between Egoism and Altruism

Nonetheless, if otherness is so indispensable to us, why are we always prone to distinguish the other from the self, or even polarize one and another? As we will see soon, stemming from such second-person experience of other minds, there arises an open possibility between affirming egoistic apathy and awakening altruistic empathy.

The lack of empathy is the silent feature of egocentrism. As Xuanzang and Kuiji expound, the reason why we are prone to treat our individual self as the *sui generis*, immutable substance comes from the wrong ways of perceiving. Among the eight types of consciousnesses, only the sixth and the seventh have the capacity of misperceiving, or in Yogācāra terms, of false imagining (*nengbianji* 能遍計) (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.45c). When *ālaya* perceives other minds through the second-person perspective, *manas* takes *ālaya*'s subjective act of perceiving and is inclined to misconceive this subjective act as a manifestation of a *sui generis*, immutable self (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.22a). This misperception further propels us to prioritize the first-person perspective of experience and continues to cultivate our egocentric worldview. Gradually, *manas* nourishes the first type of our "embodied self-attachments (*jushenwozhi* 俱身我執, *sahajātmagrāha*)" (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.2a). Simultaneously, *manas* treats the invisible other minds as self-irrelevant and self-independent, namely, as *sui generis* entities. Misperceiving other minds as such, we develop the first type of "embodied dharma-attachments (*jushenfazhi* 俱身法執, *sahajadharmagrāha*)" to the minds of others (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.6c).

Meanwhile, the sixth consciousness objectifies the image parts transformed and developed by *ālaya*, including the image of the body and the image of the material universe. In this way, we start to obtain the third-person perspective of experience. When forming an objective representation of these image parts, the sixth consciousness becomes prone to misrepresent the image of the body as a manifestation of a *sui*

generis, immutable self (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.2a). Upon this misrepresentation, we tend to develop the second type of embodied self-attachments (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.2a). Equally, the sixth consciousness is inclined to form a false representation of the image of other minds, as *sui generis* and immutable entities. Consequently, we consider other minds as independent of and irrelevant to our own minds. An attitude such as this contributes to the second type of embodied dharma-attachments to other minds (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.6c).

Based on these embodied attachments, the sixth consciousness is capable of formulating various criteria and categories to strengthen the self-other opposition (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.2a, 6c). As a result, our rudimentary attitude to polarize the self and the other slowly matures into stereotypical dichotomization (*xiefenbie* 邪分別) that underpins our egocentric worldview. These stereotypes demonstrate the "discriminative self-attachments (*fenbiewozhi* 分別我執, *vikalpitātmagrāha*)" on the one hand and the "discriminative dharma-attachments (*fenbiefazhi* 分別法執, *vikalpitadharmagrāha*)" on the other (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.2a, 7a). Through the joint force of these self-attachments and dharma-attachments, we develop our egocentric life story in which others are pushed to the fringes. As such, egocentrism arises and predominates the mind.

From the argumentation outlined by Xuanzang and Kuiji, it can be inferred that attachments emerge not because consciousness transforms itself to give rise to four different parts in its perception, but rather due to how the sixth and the seventh consciousnesses are inclined to misperceive. In this sense, the transformation of consciousness furnishes each sentient being with an open possibility between ignorance and awakening. Such a view of open possibility is encapsulated in the Yogācāra conception of three-nature (*sanxing* 三性): the imagined nature (*bianjisuozhixing* 遍計所執性), the dependent nature (*yitaqixing* 依他起性), and the absolute nature (*yuanchengshixing* 圓成實性). The Yogācārins speak of the dependent nature as that which characterizes how consciousness gives rise to the act of perceiving, the perceived phenomenon, self-awareness, and the reflexive awareness of this self-awareness (Xuanzang: T.31.1585.46c). As neutral as such, the dependent nature lays the foundation for two options. As previously mentioned, either one can remain ignorant of interdependence and continue to misperceive things as one's opposites, or one can open the eyes to see that things are interdependent and realize how various things in the cosmos are empty of *sui generis*, immutable self-existence. While the imagined nature characterizes misperception and egoism, the absolute nature becomes the salient feature of the minds of the awakened, empathetic ones.

Toward the end of his commentary on the *Twenty Verses on Consciousness-only*, Kuiji utilizes the term "ordinary ones" (*fanfu* 凡夫) to depict those who falsely imagine various dharmas, including other minds, as *sui generis* and independent of one's own mind. Upon expounding how "the Buddha's knowledge of other minds do not take other minds as intimate *ālambana* (*fei fo ci zhi, qin neng zhao liao ta xin* 非佛此智, 親能照了他心)" (Kuiji: T.43.1834.1008a), Kuiji continues to remark that:

> If the mind of the awakened one also transforms itself to give rise to various images, those [e.g., other minds] that are not perceived as intimate *ālambana* are not nonexistent. This is so because these appear as the image parts in the mind and they do exist. Yet, this existence does not entail the imagined nature, insofar

> as this nature defines objects perceived by the ordinary ones [not the awakened one]…. The imagined nature characterizes the objects perceived by the ordinary ones. That being said, when attachments arise in the minds of the ordinary ones, the minds transform themselves to give rise to internal images in dependence of these minds and the nature [of these images] is independent of language, knowledge, and the mind, because of attachments. Ordinary ones are attached to these internal images as *sui generis* forms, sounds, and dharmas, etc., rather than perceive them as nonconceptual images transformed by [the mind]. The mind of attachment is that which can falsely imagine and its substance exists. The transformed images whose substance also exists, are known as that which can be falsely imagined. Those to be falsely imagined appear conventionally, insofar as these objects have only conventional, not ultimate existence. They are the attached, due to this imagined nature. The imagined nature only characterizes the objects perceived by the ordinary ones, not the ones perceived by the sages…. Regarding the absolute nature, only sages can realize. (Kuiji: T.43.1834.1008c)

That being said, if one could also open his/her eyes to see things as they really are and embrace the *I-You* interdependence, one would perceive other minds without mistreating them as *sui generis*, self-independent entities. Kuiji speaks of these sentient beings as the sages (*shengren* 聖人) (Kuiji: T.43.1834.1008c). Upon removing all false imaginations, sages obtain the purified, correct cognition of other minds. Although this cognition still does not take other minds as the intimate *ālamaba* and does not merge the self with the other (Kuiji: T.43.1834.1008c), it awakens empathy in sages.

5 Conclusion: Self-Other Interdependence and the Bodhisattva's Compassion

Thus far, we have introduced the problem of other minds encountered by the Yogācāra school of consciousness-only and contrasted the early Yogācārins' resolution to this problem with that of later Yogācārins. In our investigation of later Yogācārins' view of other minds, we have explicated how, for those like Xuanzang and Kuiji, one's experience of other minds amounts to an experience from a second-person perspective; that is, one perceives other minds as the *you* in the collective context of the consciousness of the *we*. This perception of other minds provides each sentient being with an open possibility that lies between affirming egoistic apathy and awakening altruistic empathy. For those who have removed all the false imaginations, their purified knowledge of other minds evolves into wisdom, which, as per Kuiji, pertains to the category of "acquired wisdom (*houdezhi* 後得智)" (Kuiji: T.43.1830.1007c). Now, what does this acquired wisdom entail? Kuiji explains as follows:

> For all those who have realized the acquired wisdom and their minds are purified from mental defilements, their perception is sure to have the image part as well as the seeing part. Yet, except for the Buddhas, all the rest who realize the purified cognition of other minds devoid of mental defilements have not cut off their dharma-attachments. (Kuiji: T.43.1830.1008a)

Why does one still have dharma-attachments when this sentient being realizes the purified cognition of other minds? In understanding this viewpoint, it will be of help to return to the previous interpretation of the knowledge of other minds as an experience from the second-person perspective. Instead of cancelling alterity and merging the other with the self, Yogācārins like Xuanzang and Kuiji highlight the importance of community and collectivity, as a reminder of how the minds of the self and of the other are interdependent. If that is the case, the ordinary ones and the sages shall also share a collective consciousness. They are likewise interdependent. Due to this interdependence, for the sages, part of their remote *ālambana* is still polluted with misperception and, thereby, they have not fully cut off dharma-attachments; for the ordinary ones, since part of their remote *ālambana* is purified from attachments, they are not denied the possibility of correcting their misperceptions. Such an interdependence of the ordinary ones and the sages alludes to the previously mentioned second dependent nature, which makes it possible for the sages to help the ordinary ones on the one hand, and for the ordinary ones to purify their own misperceptions on the other. In Kuiji's terms:

> If the sages know how all the falsely imagined objects do not really exist, the consciousnesses of those sages can still give rise to these nonexistent false images whose existence is similar to nonexistence. It is not that the sages can take these false images as intimate *ālambana*. Due to the dependent nature, the minds of the ordinary and the sage both have intimate *ālambana* that they perceive. In terms of intimate *ālambana*, the falsely imagined is only the perceived object for the ordinary ones. That of the absolute nature is only the perceived object for the sages. Yet, in terms of remote *ālambana*, the falsely imagined can also be the perceived object for the sages. That of the absolute nature likewise serves as the perceived object for the ordinary ones. (Kuiji: T.43.1830.1008c)

Following this line of reasoning, I contend that the sages' cognition of other minds is not fully devoid of dharma attachments, not because they fail to correct the misperception of other minds but rather due to their compassion for the ordinary others. Motivated by this compassion, these sages, who are also referred to as the Bodhisattvas, voluntarily turn to help the ordinary, ignorant ones, insofar as the sages understand how these altruistic moral actions will benefit both their own religious training and that of the ordinary ones. As such, self-other interdependence alludes to the possibility of transformation from apathy to empathy, from ordinary ones to sages, from ignorance to awakening, and from wisdom to compassion. The viewpoint implied by Kuiji and his disciples could also help us understand why later Yogācārins identify both the most ignorant sentient beings and the compassionate Bodhisattvas as the *icchantikas* (Kuiji: T.43.1831.610c). On their path toward awakening, the Bodhisattvas do not leave the ignorant and ordinary ones behind, because the wisdom of these Bodhisattvas enables them to realize how the self and the other are interdependent in a collective setting.

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