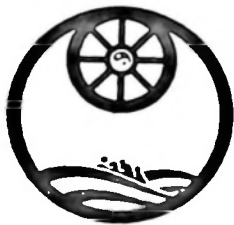


Early Ch'an in China and Tibet

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Lin-chi on "Language-Dependence," An Interpretive Analysis

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This essay is concerned with the recorded sayings (*lu* 錄) of Lin-chi I-hsüan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866), the great T'ang dynasty master of Ch'an Buddhism and father of the sect of Ch'an Buddhism which bears his name. This is a philosophical piece and is not, then, merely historical, exegetical, or philological in character.¹ Nor, however, is there claimed to emerge herein any exact view of Lin-chi, much less any exact intention of his (such claims are difficult to make on the behalf of Ch'an masters). Moreover, no general claim about Lin-chi and philosophy is suggested either; i.e., what is said below includes no assumption as to whether or not Lin-chi was a philosopher in any Eastern or Western sense.

Lin-chi's sayings were therapeutic. They were meant, by his own admission, to untie "knots" (Lin-chi's own word, see below) in the understanding. These knots are possibly universal to everyone's understanding, possibly not. However, on the interpretation below, Lin-chi, noticed a particular sort of knot which can be the result of meta-linguistic views, e.g., views of the basis of language. The method used in this paper, at least initially, is clearly much different than Lin-chi's method. I try to clarify and sometimes argue for what Lin-chi says in order that philosophers may appreciate the impact of these sayings. No doubt philosophical clarification and understanding, if it occurs, is not enough to put one of the mind of Lin-chi. For that, one must be entirely free of the habits, dispositions, attitudes, etc., engendered by the particular meta-linguistic view which emerges and is criticized below as well as, undoubtedly, becoming free of habits, dispositions, attitudes, etc., engendered by other views, other conditions, and possibly other phenomena.

The particular problem (knot) dealt with herein has to do with some passages in Lin-chi's *lu* which could be construed as bearing on the following questions: What is the relationship between language and the world? Upon which side (language or the world) does dependency for significance lie—does language depend on the way the world is for its

significance or is it impossible to go *beyond language* to justify the latter's meaningfulness? This second question has an ontological relative as follows. Are language and its significance the way they are because of the way the world is, i.e., because of the nature of the world and of the particular things in the world; or is the nature of the world the way *it* is because of the way language is, and because of the fact (if it is a fact) that the significance of language cannot be sought beyond the divisions and functions of language itself? If the latter, what, then, would be the ontological status of the Buddhist teachings—the Dharma—taught by Lin-chi; does the name Dharma refer to anything whatsoever which is non-language-dependent? There also arises some discussion of an important issue, about which little is settled herein, regarding the connection between the language/world-view which develops and the nature of self.

Those familiar with Ch'an-literature will have already noticed problems and will find the latter area extremely problematic. Clearly the Ch'an-master Lin-chi, qua Ch'an-master, would have made no distinction allowing any such separation as that between language and the world, or worse yet, between language, world and the mind. As is the case with certain twentieth century 'language-philosophers' who considered their work to be therapeutic, Lin-chi sometimes began apparently with the distinctions and attitudes engendered by meta-linguistic views, etc., of the person(s) supposedly needing the therapy.

From the beginning there is something wrong with the questions asked. But one must remember they are not Lin-chi's questions. It is important to recognize that his consideration of the question of the relationship between language and the world must in the end be seen as part of a therapy. This is something one learns much more clearly from Lin-chi than from his twentieth century Western counterparts. One must work through the problems attendant with attempts to answer the question in certain (ordinary) ways. Then, if the insights brought out below are correct, one may begin to understand the pitfalls of considering the working of language as amounting to a certain relationship between language and the world. Unlike the untying of literal knots, the untying of these metaphorical 'knots' in the understanding sometimes begins with tying them tighter.

Some qualification may be necessary about certain terms which have emerged so far. What I have been referring to as "language" is a phrase I shall be translating as "elements of language," which most of the

time is literally “names and phrases” (*ming chū* 名句). The first of these characters (*ming*), when it occurs alone, will be translated as “general terms(s),” unless it refers specifically to a proper name. The phrase “*ming chū*” seems to be used rather simply by Lin-chi to refer to portions of (e.g., expressions in) both the common parlance and the language found in the Buddhist texts; when he speaks of thinking, it seems to be of the same common language phenomena just mentioned—only to oneself.

When I say we are dealing initially with a relationship between language and the world, by “the world” I mean to suggest ordinary sorts of things, such as trees, rocks, and also (at the beginning, and in the language of the problem) ‘inner’ sorts of ‘things’ such as joy and sadness. Also, whatever general reality one may believe to be in the world is intended to be included in this discussion of the relationship between elements of language and whatever sorts of things-in-general those elements are often thought to refer to.

When questioning in which way the dependency for significance lies, toward language or toward the world, the Chinese character being translated as “dependent (ency)” is *i* 依. I have already given an alternate version of this question. Sometimes it seems helpful to speak in this manner: if the ‘dependency’ in question here is one of language being dependent on the world for its significance, then we could somehow ‘read’ our expressions of distinctions ‘off the world’. Finally, when referring to the ontological version of the question under discussion here, I generally use “ontology” to refer to what gets said about what there is. And when, in this version of the question, I speak of “the way the world is” and “the way that language is,” I am thinking of the traditional philosophical notion of the nature of a thing.² When the Dharma is discussed as an example of the impact of Lin-chi’s sayings on these questions, this Dharma is considered to be Buddhist teachings in general. In this vein, some authors claim Dharma, in this sense, refers to Buddha-truth and/or reality—ontology and epistemology being perfectly blended here. When capitalized below, “Dharma” (*fa* 法) will be restricted to this sense.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND THE WORLD

Is there such a thing as a Buddha, an awakened one? If not a factual question, this is an ontological question about the foundation of the nature of that which is the subject of much Buddhist discourse. It is a

question to which we shall surely want to turn eventually. However, I think that there is much agreement in the twentieth century that questions of this ontological sort are more manageable, or at least an ontological issue often is illumined, by examining key expressions in the question within the surroundings of their common linguistic context. Furthermore, this is a general approach to ontology which I believe helps clarify, for philosophers, a sort of knot which can develop in the understanding of certain individuals. Oddly, this approach approximates methods of Ch'an-master Lin-chi.

Used as an example of this language-approach, the question just mentioned would be approached as follows. What do Buddhists mean when they speak of "awakening?" More language-oriented yet, for Buddhists, what is the meaning of the word "awakening?" The obvious (but ultimately unacceptable) reply to this question is that the word gets its meaning by virtue of its referring to, applying to, or perhaps naming, an 'inner state'.³ Certainly it has been more the exception than the rule, prior to the twentieth century, for anyone to reflect on the nature of meaning and postulate any meaning-theory other than that words get their meanings by referring to, or standing for, things in a broad sense—"X" means X and things like it.

However, in the twentieth century other theories have emerged, for example that of J. Austin, to cite one among many. Austin's theory of performatives,⁴ which is too well known to require elaboration, sees the significance of some utterances to lie in their functions as actions rather than in their functions of putatively referring to one or other form of actuality.

Returning now to the significance of the name The Awakened One, Buddha, we find that the ninth century Ch'an-monk Lin-chi denied that there was anything to which this name refers. He was not, of course, denying that there was a person who was the founder of Buddhism. Rather, what Lin-chi denied was that there was any single thing in actuality, such as, for example, an 'inner' state of mind, belonging to that man and which was also the referent, hence the meaning, of the word "awakening." This will become quite clear below.

In Lin-chi's recorded sayings, we see Buddha or Buddhas (and Patriarchs) referred to as "elements of language" at their very "foundation" (*ti* 底).⁵ How, then, would one account for the meanings of these elements of language? Lin-chi can be seen as doing this much in the manner of Austin. Though certainly not intentionally setting forth a

theory of meaning, he claims these linguistic expressions are ones of “veneration-bondage” (*shang hsi* 賞繫).⁶ Lin-chi is clear that these words (e.g., “The Awakened One”) have no function of referring to a state of awakening—when we speak of an awakened one, as far as he is concerned, we are performing an act of veneration. And it is solely from this act of veneration that the significance of such phrases derives. However, this does not empty Lin-chi’s medicine bag.

Of course, performative speech-acts, such as this one of veneration, constitute but a single instance of the many functions of language which have been remarked upon in the twentieth century. In addition, some still will undoubtedly hold that certain elements of language just do have the sole function of referring to objects in the world and, further, that the ways those objects are spoken about solely depend upon the natures of the objects (a standard ontological view). The true test, on this view, of the intelligibility of what is said about objects in the world requires only the careful inspection (or introspection, if the ‘object’ is ‘inner’) of the object allegedly referred to. Perhaps Lin-chi was pointing out a mistaken apprehension that, in the foregoing manner, “awakening” refers to a state of mind; but, a traditionalist might challenge, “Certainly not all elements of language are bound up with performative functions. Surely many elements of language just straightforwardly, and solely, refer to objects and depend on those objects for the measure of their intelligibility.” What develops below will be in direct opposition to this general view on the relationship of language to the world, though it will take awhile (until the emergence herein of his notion of dependency) to bring out the universality of Lin-chi’s opposition to such a view. I will devote the next few pages to furthering this task.

Lin-chi speaks as though all things (*chu fa*) in this world (or any other world, for that matter) have no nature of their own (*wu tzü hsing*), nor do they have any (causally) produced nature (*wu sheng hsing*).⁷ Why is this? And what, then, would there be, so to speak, to ‘guarantee’ the significance of language? Lin-chi continues his statement relevant to the nature of all things by saying that both names (general terms) and elements of language (*ming tzu*) are “empty” (*k’ung*).⁸ This indicates the possibility of objective, in-the-world referents being called into question in some way (a way we shall soon investigate). By counseling that the elements of language are empty, Lin-chi surely cannot to advantage be taken as saying that there is not significance to language at

all. If so, his saying this would have to be understood in language while at the same time he would be denying the basis for such understanding. Instead, Lin-chi's statement is more profitably seen as denying a certain view of the relationship between language and the world, of the relationship between language and what elements of language are often thought to mean.

Again, the 'common view' is that things in the world are a certain way by their very extra-linguistic natures and that somehow language reflects those natures. So that if we can glean anything at all from language, on the 'common view' what we glean will be something of the reflection of the natures of the things in the world. Lin-chi's sayings show that he acknowledges this common view; they do so, in one way, by showing his awareness of the readiness of (reflective) language speakers to extend their recognition to general terms and subsequently "take them for reality."⁹ Understanding Lin-chi's diagnosis here will aid the understanding of his counsel against holding this view.

What does this "take them for" (*wei*) mean here? Surely it would be absurd to interpret Lin-chi as supposing that many common language-speakers (when reflective) take elements of language as though those elements were the sole reality in the world. There are two other, more satisfying readings of this passage. We can see him saying that many of us act as though our concepts were 'read off the world', that many take elements of language as though they were direct representations somehow actively generated off the world. (This possibility is examined in detail below.) Secondly, is it perhaps as though labels, concepts, or again general terms, somehow independently of the world actively transmit the realities of the world to language-speakers: "I am a tree, green, brown and solid; I, a rock, substantial; I, hunger, uncomfortable; I, understanding, immutable;" etc.? If so, for the Western reader, this latter might be construed as a form of Platonism.¹⁰

It is this latter position that Lin-chi advantageously can be seen as attempting to deflate when he outlines an analogy of language as wearing apparel (*i* 衣). Lin-chi uses this analogy in such a way that we may be struck by the resemblance of elements of language to articles of apparel in the following important aspect. Neither, of themselves, are active. Speaking of elements of language but calling them (articles of) apparel, he counsels us not to give recognition to apparel,¹¹ meaning that we should not recognize apparel (elements of language) as reality

(in the manner suggested in the paragraph immediately above). "Apparel is not capable of acting;" he says, "[it is] man [who] is capable of donning apparel."¹² 衣不能動，人能著衣。 Again, the apparel, the elements of language he is speaking of here are the elements putatively denoting traditional Buddhist entities.¹³ But we are slowly moving toward an attempt, by Lin-chi, to weaken a more universal thesis regarding the relationship of the whole of language to the world in general; for a more universal statement of the dependency of the nature of the things in the world upon the elements of language will soon emerge. The counter-thesis, the view being questioned, will subsequently be seen to be related to a particular sort of knot in the understanding of certain individuals.

FOUR DEPENDENCIES

If this last suggestion of Lin-chi's is the case, that:

(A) language is not of itself active,
then either:

(D₁) language is dependent upon the world for its significance (i.e., 'the world' somehow issues forth in categorical divisions, and divulges the correct ways in which language is to represent it);

or:

(D₂) the view of the categorical-nature of the world which we have is dependent on language.

Contrary to (D₁), we have seen a case above in which Lin-chi's sayings anticipate a contemporary negation of a linguistic view in which all language gets its significance by virtue of referring to, standing for, etc., real things in the world (or by virtue of standing for anything, for that matter). But this information, if true, is not enough to establish the truth of (D₂). A true, universal denial of (D₁) is necessary to establish (D₂). Such a denial, for purposes of partially matching language with some of Lin-chi's sayings, might take the form of the following thesis:

(B) No linguistic categorizations issue forth from the world.¹⁴

This thesis denies that language-speakers can 'read off of the world' the distinctions, categorizations, natures, essences, etc., by means of which they understand the world, or understand each other's statements about the world. For this thesis denies that anything 'stands out' from, or as, the world, by way of categorization, and which could be 'read off' the world.

Lin-chi's sayings support a denial very much, if not exactly, like (B). A small amount of background is necessary to an understanding of this.

During the long history of Buddhist philosophy, metaphysics (both as ontology and metaphysical cosmology) has periodically surged in interest among Buddhist adherents and then fallen from favor, often through attacks by other adherents. A similar background surrounds a general Buddhist conception of metaphysical cosmology, the threefold world¹⁵ (*san chiai* 三界, Skt. *triloka*), the first and second ("fold") of which would include the world as common sense has it. It seems clear that all the categories of existence are meant to be included, in most general terms, in this metaphysical cosmology.

At some point¹⁶ the triplicity of this division of the world began to lose favor among Mahāyānists of 'mind-only' persuasion. Sympathy for this persuasion can be seen in Lin-chi's sayings. This threefold world-conception was also included in language-oriented controversy in *prajñāpāramitā*-literature and the *Mādhyamika*. Some of Lin-chi's advice concerning the threefold world resembles the latter in this respect, i.e., of being linguistically oriented. And here (in Lin-chi's *lu*) negative advice can be found similar to statement (B) above. Lin-chi's statements on the matter arose because some of his monks were taking the threefold world-conception, with its inclusion of the common-sense world-conception, quite seriously. For that matter, Lin-chi himself may have accepted this metaphysical cosmology as being just as good as any other such cosmology. We shall see that he treated it merely as he would any one among many linguistic constructions.

Lin-chi says of the threefold world-cosmology, with all its included categorizations:

The threefold-world does not say on its own "I am the threefold-world." Rather it is you followers of the Way right before my eyes, [you] who are clearly discerning phenomena, weighing and measuring the world, who create the term "threefold-world." 三界不自道，我是三界。還是道流，目前靈靈地照燭萬般，酌度世界底人，與三界安名。¹⁷

We can gather from Lin-chi's remarks that whatever categorizations are encompassed by the threefold-cosmology are not issued forth from the world to subsequently be 'read off' of it. Rather the language-

speaker(s) “weighing and measuring” the world into categories create(s) the statements which put thus and so nature(s) on ‘the world’.

If this suggestion of Lin-chi’s is correctly interpreted above, and if it is the case, what remains as an explanation of the relationship of language to the natures of things in the world? The only other alternative explanation would seem to be the (D₂) alternative. The way the world is as expressed in the way we ordinarily speak—and as further expressed in Buddhist metaphysical cosmology—is a function of the language spoken and not the other way around. In this sense, the natures of the things in the world are dependent on language. Of course, the Ch’an-master Lin-chi was not interested in drawing out such a conclusion. Again, a mere philosophical understanding would not achieve his practical results anyway.

However, there is more to be said. For one thing, the nature of a third ‘dependency’ is divulged in the foregoing quotation. From proposition (A), with which we began this section, combined with an assumed falsity of proposition (D₁) by means of a philosophical interpretation of part of Lin-chi’s saying about the threefold world, it is clear that language is dependent upon something, but something other than ‘the world’. The last quotation cited allows the philosophical construal that language is dependent upon (the minds of) ordinary language-speakers “weighing and measuring the world.” Stated as a further dependency:

(D₃) The significance of language is dependent on the minds (in some sense) of persons.

I would like to delay any further discussion of (D₃)—as well as any discussion of the best interpretation, based on Lin-chi’s sayings, of in what sense “minds” is used in (D₃). It was necessary to draw out this third dependency at this point in order to advance in the investigation. But I shall return to these important considerations in the section below on the subject of ‘the self’. Right now, one further ramification of Lin-chi’s sayings on language-dependence deserves attention.

The particular ramification of dependence to which I now turn is actually much more at the heart of Lin-chi’s teachings, since it lies in the subject-area of “genuine [Ch’an-] insight” (see below). In at least one context, Lin-chi is fairly clear that this insight is very like a genuine (i.e., affective) awakening to the fact (for him) with which I began the body of this essay. This fact was interpreted above as follows—that there is no sort of mental state which is the meaning of the expression “budd-

ha(hood)” such that an instance of that sort of state is possible for individuals to experience in order to entirely know the expression’s meaning. If this is the case, awakening is not an awakening *to* something—e.g., to a state of mind upon which the word “awakening” depends for its meaning—but rather is awakening *from* something, is becoming affectively “nondependent.” As Lin-chi says,

If one awakens non-dependence, buddha(hood) is also [seen to be] non-acquired. If one gets insight such as this, it is genuine insight. 若悟，無依，佛亦無得。若如是見得者，是真正見解。¹⁸

Students of Ch’an, it would seem, are directed toward an awakening from an illusion that they lack some state of buddha(hood), an illusion because of which, in Lin-chi’s words, “. . . their Tao-eye is veiled (screened) and they are not able to clearly [freely] discern.” 障其道眼，不得分明。¹⁹ What is more, this illusion causes a degree of discomfort. Ch’an students, continues Lin-chi, are “discomfited by the restraint of general terms—such as ‘ordinary [person]’ and ‘saintly [person]’ . . .” 被他凡聖名礙²⁰ This again undoubtedly is because of the accompanying belief that ordinary folk lack something which the ‘saintly’ have, e.g., buddha(hood). What is emerging here is a recognition by Lin-chi of a discomfiting dependency upon an illusion, which he clearly connects with some elements of language.

What is the connection in this (fourth) dependency between elements of language and the personal dependency of certain individuals?²¹ Surely it is not the case that the general use of language *by everyone* in an everyday manner has the binding effect of which Lin-chi speaks. If it were the case, then Ch’an-masters, contrary to these very sayings of Lin-chi, could not be considered as being free of the effects of this dependency while they, at the same time, persist in using the ordinary language of the day. No, however much language might be structured so as to *lend itself* to misuse, it must be precisely some other aspect of its use, and not merely the ordinary use of language in general which is responsible for this dependency Lin-chi identifies. Philosophically, Lin-chi can be seen as expressing this very insight. Using as an example the language of the entire twelve divisions of Buddhist teachings, he says,

Students who do not understand [the nature of these teachings]

straightaway generate [their own] ideas from those outward elements of language. 學人不會，便向表顯名句上生解。²²

Thus, for Lin-chi, it is the “ideas,” understanding, or interpretation of language which some individuals “generate” on their own which further leads to their dependency and discomfort.²³

What is the nature and objective of this interpretation-generating activity to which certain individuals may be prone? Let us begin with its nature. Lin-chi characterizes his students in the following manner: that when they encounter elements of language (for example, we might surely suppose, the language of the Buddhist teachings), they “. . . search the heavens, search the earth, inquire of their neighbors, and remain quite flustered.” 照天照地，傍家尋問，也太忙然。²⁴ The language-connected activity which Lin-chi sees in his students is harried searching of heaven and earth, and inquiring of one’s neighbors—an activity which, he claims, remains unsatisfied as to its goal.

What is the goal or objective of this search? Presumably (as already pointed out) it is not simply the correct, ordinary use of their language with regard to such concepts as buddhahood or saintly people. Surely we can assume that they understand their language sufficiently in this regard. If not, they could simply consult the relevant literature armed with grammars and dictionaries. No, in this language-connected effort, they wish to discover some entity to which words like “buddhahood” (“freedom-producing awakening”) refer. They want to ‘get something’ which they can ‘grasp’, perhaps experience in some unchanging real state, so as to ‘really’ know what the expression means, as they believe the Ch’an master does. Of course, Lin-chi sees this simply as a diversion, a seeking after illusory entities. He observes,

. . . Sidetracked, waveringly, you study Ch’an, study the Tao, and acknowledge elements of language. You seek buddha[hood], seek patriarch[hood], seek a [Ch’an] master—and [in doing these] you assume and conjecture. 擬傍家波波地，學禪學道，認名認句，求佛求善知識意度。²⁵

This fourth dependency, then, comes as a result of assumptions and conjecture, as a result (we may interpret) of proposing entities or states of mind which correspond to and give meaning to some of the expressions these individuals hear and/or read.

While there is not much in the way of evidence to further this point, additional inferences can easily be based upon the foundation provided above, that is, upon our philosophical formulations of Lin-chi (A), (B), (D₂), and (D₃). If one assumes these propositions to be true, he will be able to suggest no rational basis upon which one who fully understood and agreed with those propositions would be motivated to seek dependently after conjectured entities and/or states of mind in order to give meaning to what he has heard or read (presumably regarding the Dharma). If these propositions were true, it would be irrational to expect to find categorically pre-divided 'entities' in 'the world' or in 'the mind' which divulge their true meanings (meanings which, supposedly, elements of language merely represent).

This fourth dependency may now be formulated as follows:

(D₄) Some persons are non-free in at least this respect—that they are dependent upon an illusory conception of the relationship of language to the world.

"Illusory conception" here means precisely any view of language which lends itself to searching for entities and/or states of mind which putatively will serve as meanings of linguistic expressions. This would be a conception of language lending itself to seeking after illusions, since the truth of propositions (A), (B), (D₂), and (D₃)—which collectively undermine the possible existence of such entities/states of mind—is assumed here. Given this assumption, an example of one such "illusory conception" would be that encountered at the beginning of this section and formulated as (D₁).

There may be other sorts of dependency which are brought to our attention as a result of Lin-chi's sayings. However, I believe (A), (B), and (D₂)-(D₄)—with the helpful explanatory device of (D₁)—constitute a bare bones analysis of a general problem-area—language-dependency. Bluntly, and summarily stated, this dependency is of: 1) natures of things in the world on language; and 2) some speakers on a meta-linguistic view contrary to 1). This problem-area arises as the result of critically examining the diagnosis of a 'dis-ease' which Lin-chi attempts to alleviate in his *lu*.

AN EFFECT OF LANGUAGE-DEPENDENT ONTOLOGY

As an example of the effect²⁶ of language-dependent ontology, one may consider philosophically the connection of this ontology with some of Lin-chi's sayings on the central notion of Dharma. The notion is cen-

tral because it is generally thought to refer to what the masters (or Buddhists in general) have to teach, i.e., what is conveyed from master to student, by virtue of which the student eventually becomes a master.

The problem, in one light, is this: what does the word “Dharma” mean? If the language-view outlined in the preceding section is correct, one would not pursue this inquiry by searching for some entity, e.g., some inner state of awakening, to which the expression supposedly refers. On that language-view, there is an awakening—but it is an awakening from precisely the propensity to conduct such a search.²⁷ If this view is correct, there is in that sense no Dharma, no entity in reality, upon which the word “Dharma” depends for its significance. One can philosophically see many of Lin-chi’s sayings as specifically supporting just such a point.

In this regard, Lin-chi addresses both the traditional Buddha-Dharma and his own Dharma. On the traditional version, he remarks:

Both within and without the world, neither Buddha nor Dharma appear before one, nor could have ever disappeared. If they exist [at all], all are simply names, words and contextual expressions. 世與出世，無佛無法，亦不現前，亦不曾失。設有者，皆是名言章句。²⁸

Here Lin-chi is not being critical of the Buddhism which came before him. Nor is he stating that the Buddha-Dharma was originally promulgated other than in keeping with his own remarks. Rather he sees students misusing this Dharma, the linguistic expressions of which are, he says, “unestablished superimpositions (施設 Skt. *prajñapti*).” However, these expressions, which originally were intended as a “medicine for illness,” 藥病²⁹ “attract little children,” 接印小兒 he says.³⁰

Of course, he does not mean “little children” literally. Rather he suggests individuals possessed of a certain naivete or simple-mindedness. It is easy to understand, based upon this last quotation, just where this particular ‘simple-mindedness’ lies. The Dharma, Lin-chi makes clear, consists simply of elements of language. But linguistically naive persons subject these elements of language to the semantic interpretation discussed in the previous section and labeled (D₁). Subsequently they search their minds and elsewhere in an empirical manner, seeking Buddha(hood) and Dharma. Under the interpretation of Lin-chi in the last section, he is one who sees through this (D₁) semantico-ontological theory.

Regarding his own Dharma, he claims,

This mountain monk's sayings are all timely medicine for illness and are directed toward its cure. Universally, there is no real Dharma. 山僧說處，皆是一期藥病相治，總無實法。³¹

Since he understood that there is no real Dharma, Lin-chi also understood that his own teachings could not constitute any real Dharma either. What is it that his teachings do, then, if not point to (represent) some Reality/Truth? Again, he says,

This mountain monk has not one Dharma to give to man; [I] just cure illness and untie knots (release bonds). 山僧無一法與人，祇是治病解縛。³²

A consistent interpretation of Lin-chi at this point would see the "knots" which he unties as knots in the understanding of some individuals resulting from the naive propensity discussed above. It was said that some 'simple-minded' students empirically search their minds and elsewhere for such entities or states as Buddha(hood) and Dharma—e.g., entities which may be thought to remain constant as some believe the meaning of an identical word must remain constant. Having himself seen through the (D₁) semantico-ontological theory, Lin-chi's teachings can be seen simply as timely, appropriate 'medicine' to cure them of their 'dis-easeful' seeking. For Lin-chi, as we have seen, since neither of these supposed 'entities/states' appear, i.e., manifest themselves as Buddha(hood) or Dharma, neither could ever disappear, and there is nothing such as this to be sought after.

ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF MIND OR MINDS TO LANGUAGE-DEPENDENCE

In what way is (D₃) the case? That is, in what manner is language dependent for its significance upon minds of persons?

One possible answer to this question can be eliminated immediately. Lin-chi surely may not be interpreted in such a way that language is thought to be dependent upon minds of persons in the sense that meanings for general terms are to be sought for in constant mental states (ideas, notions, etc.). This would be inconsistent with the interpretation of Lin-chi proposed above as well as with the general tradition of Buddhism with which he was in sympathy. In addition, there appears to be no hint of evidence in the *lu* in favor of it.

That possibility having been eliminated, there remains an interesting

problem. (D₃) is formulated in such a way as to suggest a dichotomous (or pluralistic) state of affairs wherein there is a world which is separate from language—and both are separate from mind or minds, the latter of which is more basic than the previous two. This state of affairs would be problematic in at least two ways. First, it seems quite strange to think of language and mind(s) as not being part of the world. Secondly, Ch'an Buddhism is a sect which is notoriously opposed to any view suggesting an ultimate dichotomy.

The second of these two reasons rather includes the first. Given the second, it would seem quite strange—to Lin-chi as well—for there to be any ultimate separation (pluralism) obtaining among mind(s), language, and the world. Of course, the way in which such a pluralism fails to obtain, given the above analysis, is central to the issue of this section. However, one preliminary point bears noticing. Lin-chi's 'medicine' or 'treatment' (as interpreted above) is proffered in the idiom and for the understanding of those afflicted with the 'dis-ease' it is meant to cure. Their questions and their dis-ease suggest that *they* are the ones who are compounding entities—such as sacred sayings, exalted states, and the mind that is conscious of such states. Part of the problem just mentioned is that Lin-chi was offering his teachings in the very language understood by those students and which originally lent itself to their pluralistic views.

Further complicating the problem here, it seems obvious that the concept of language, as is our ontology, may be (and perhaps is) dependent on language for *its* foundation and scope. And, as well, in the same manner in which language is dependent for its nature and foundation upon mind or minds, so the concept (and, in keeping with the above, the nature) of the mind is dependent on language and on mind. There is nothing contradictory about these 'meta-discoveries' although the latter may at least seem paradoxical.

On one side of this paradox it is clear that Lin-chi denies any ultimate, separate, mind. He says, in his primary context of treating students' problems, "The one-mind is already non-existent; you are free in every circumstance." 一心既無，隨處解脫。³³ Yet, on the other side, there surely remain, even after Linchi's Ch'an-treatment of an illness, some interesting questions regarding the relationship of language to mind(s)—language has not sprung full-formed in a vacuum nor is there a mind (for Lin-chi), the nature of which is independent of the ways in which we speak and think about it.

Unfortunately, one cannot find any evidence in Lin-chi's *lu* capable of being interpreted as relevant to the question with which this section was begun. That is, I find no evidence which could be interpreted as addressing any of the following questions on the role mind plays in the foundation of language. Are elements of language (and the ensuing ontology dependent on them) themselves dependent in the sense of being 'projected' on the world by each individual mind? If so, in what sense; and how would we account for agreement, hence intelligibility, in language forms? Are we to account for such agreement by claiming universal conditions of mind in general, i.e., by claiming a contingent, inductive, psychological fact that all minds (so far) happen to have limited the world in similar (material object, inner state, substance/quality, causally related, etc.) ways?

Or is mind (are minds) involved in the founding of language by virtue of there having been sufficiently universal agreement in judgments for language to 'get started' and continue by virtue of being conventional? Not conventional, perhaps, in the sense of resulting from a vote (at a convention) on the way we will all use the elements of language. Perhaps conventional rather in the sense of being based on general, tacit consent, on a practice of using those elements of language in these and these ways, and not in others? On this latter view, while it is a contingent fact that there is language at all, there remain language-forms which a speaker necessarily must be in agreement with in order to be using language correctly and to be understood.

Or is there some other sense in which language is dependent on mind or minds? Again, I see no evidence which would support interpreting Lin-chi's sayings as being on any side of this issue.

However, I believe there are others of Lin-chi's sayings which at least suggest interesting areas for our consideration which are germane to the general area of the question under consideration. Consider, for example, the following advice of Lin-chi:

If you want to be free of life-and-death, to undress or dress in freedom, then instantaneously be acquainted with the man right now listening to the teaching. [This one has] no form, no characteristic, no cause, no origin, no dwelling place—[yet is] lively and diverse. This one is the foundation of all sorts of activities; [yet] the place of this activity is no place. Search for it and it is more and more remote; seek after this and it is more and more cunning. When you speak of this,

call it "mysterious." 若欲得，生死去住，脫著自由，即今識取聽法底人。無形無相，無根無本，無住處，活撥撥地。應是萬種施設，用處祇是無處。所以，覓著轉遠，求之轉乖，號之爲秘密。³⁴

Here there is a (perhaps aspect of) mind (the 'man') described but not in empirical terms, active but not experienced by virtue of its empirical form, characteristics, cause, position, etc.

No experiential qualifications or characterizations apply to this 'man'; yet, as Lin-chi says elsewhere, if left on its own to "adorn" (literally, "dress"), that is, to categorize and characterize, all things immediately can become characterized.

This you, the one now present and listening to the teaching, what will you do to cultivate this, to give evidence for this, to adorn (dress) this? It is not a thing to be cultivated, is not a thing capable of being adorned. [Yet] if *it* is allowed to adorn, all things immediately can be adorned. Do not be confused. 是你如今與麼聽法底人，作麼生擬修他證他莊嚴他。渠且不是修底物，不是莊嚴得底物。若教他莊嚴，一切物即莊嚴得。你且莫錯。³⁵

For the philosophical Westerner, we seem to have here, as in Lin-chi's "mysterious" 'man', an aspect of mind which makes possible the multifariously natured world as we have it but which itself is not an empirical part of the world.

Unfortunately, I see no evidence in these *lu* to warrant further interpretation of what the relationship might be between this 'mind' (as philosophically construed above) and the dependence of language on mind or minds. Nor is there evidence on either side of the question whether the 'man', speculatively brought out above, is 'active' by means of forms which are psychological/contingent or conventional/necessary. Does 'it' adorn with its own contingent, psychological forms? Or does it adorn with language-forms, which we could discover, perhaps, only by asking transcendental questions (of the form "What makes such and such possible?")? Or is some entirely other consideration appropriate here?

Whichever of these (or if none) is the case, these speculations are based on an interpretation of Lin-chi's sayings which undoubtedly is not the only possible interpretation. Whatever way in which one attempts to read Lin-chi, there likely will remain aspects of his 'medicine' which defy comparison with Western methods. For example, it is truly a mar-

velous 'mind' of Lin-chi which is free to either dress or *undress*, to either adorn or *not adorn*. For another, Lin-chi says that the more you search, the more this 'mind' retreats; yet he counsels his students to become instantaneously aware of this 'mind'.

NOTES

An earlier, shorter version of this paper was read at the workshop on "Early History of Ch'an in China and Tibet," July, 1976, in San Francisco. I would like to thank the participants of that workshop for their stimulating comments on that occasion. Upon presenting a longer draft to the membership present at the 1976 Workshop of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy (in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association's Eastern meeting), I was made aware of a few changes which needed to be made. I would also like to thank those who pointed out inadequacies to me at that time.

¹ It is likely that interesting and admirable historical and philological research will continue to be done in the area surrounding Lin-chi's *lu*. However, the 'state of the art' has already progressed nicely. I am thinking at least of Prof. Yanagida's collated text, his Japanese translation, and his commentary in notes, which I have utilized in producing the translations which follow. These are all included in Yanagida Seizan, *Lin-chi lu (Rinzai Roku)* (Kyoto: Kichūdo, 1959).

Another which should not go unmentioned, and which I have also referred to in translating from Lin-chi, is Paul Demiéville, *Entretiens de Lin-tsi* (Paris: Fagard, 1972).

I am relying herein on (what I consider) the fact that however much more interesting historical and philological work will appear in the future, the 'state of the art' in Lin-chi studies is at present sufficient for at least one author to lay those other considerations aside and make an attempt at philosophy, for the Western reader, with what already exists—provided "philosophy" be broad enough here to include 'philosophical therapy'.

Furthermore, I have not chosen, for support of points herein, quotations which were isolated instances. I cannot think of a particular saying of Lin-chi utilized below which does not have at least one companion as to content. I have not bothered, however, to compound these citations on each point—a laborious task which would have made an already lengthy paper cumbersome. If any reader would like to write me for additional supporting quotations for any specific point, I will do my best to supply them.

² I do not find the difference between the western philosophical concept of nature and the Chinese Buddhist concept of nature (*hsing* 性) problematic enough in the following context to warrant lengthy analysis herein—though this is an interesting subject for research.

³ Readers of twentieth century philosophy will immediately notice this to be an extremely controversial theory of meaning which some would say implies the existence of a private language. I do not wish to become embroiled in this controversy

herein. But I would refer any interested reader to my article "Wittgenstein's Later Language-Philosophy and Some Issues in Philosophy of Mysticism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1976, pp. 261-287.

⁴ *How To Do Things With Words* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), throughout. Although Austin eventually abandons his "constative/performative" distinction in favor of the "locutionary/illocutionary/perlocutionary speech act" distinction, the former is entirely adequate for this point-made-in-passing regarding Lin-chi. An Austinian interpretation of Lin-chi's point, in terms of the latter three-fold distinction, might run as follows. In performing the locutionary act of saying, "That man is awakened," devotees are (or have been in the past) performing an illocutionary act of revering or venerating. By performing this illocutionary act of venerating, the devotee may expect to succeed in furthering himself spiritually or expect to convince others about the worthiness of the person venerated. Of course, all this need not happen consciously in every or even in any instance. The point is that many may be confused and think that the illocutionary act is one of ascribing a state of mind.

⁵ See, e.g., Yanagida, p. 113.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Yanagida, p. 94. "All things of the world or out of the world are nothing [in the respect of] self-nature (Skt. *svabhāva*) and nothing [in the respect of] nature-brought-about." 世出世諸法，皆無自性，亦無生性。No self-nature is a standard Buddhist view. No produced-nature resembles Mādhyamika thinking.

⁸ *Ibid.*, "There are just empty names; elements of language as well are empty." 但有空名，名字亦空。

⁹ Loosely, "You readily give recognition to those barriers, names (general terms), and take them as reality." 你祇麼認他閑名爲實。 *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Alternatively, from a more traditional Chinese point of view, this phenomenon could be construed as some form of word-magic. Cf., C. Hansen, "Ancient Chinese Theories of Language," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 2 (1975), p. 246, "Words are seen as exercising a kind of psychological compulsion on the hearer. The word does not just mean 'I approve of X, do likewise.' Its use is approval and causally efficacious in getting the hearer to do likewise. This belief in the power of words over human nature was easily enough extended to include Nature writ large and formed the basis in the belief in word magic that is supposedly characteristic of Chinese thought."

¹¹ "Do not give recognition to apparel," 你莫認衣。 Yanagida, p. 134.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ ". . . The apparel [element of language] of purity, the apparel of the birthless, the apparel of bodhi (awakening), the apparel of nirvāṇa, the apparel of patriarch, the apparel of Buddha." 有箇清淨衣，有箇無生衣，菩提衣，涅槃衣，有祖衣，有佛衣。 *Ibid.*

¹⁴ "The world" here would have to encompass everything except the subject, the I, which apprehends world; thereby, 'inner states' such as fear, discomfort, etc., would be considered as part of the world. This appears to entail a self/world duality. The discussion below on self will throw light on this topic.

¹⁵ Into the worlds of: (1) sensual desire, (2) forms, and (3) formlessness.

¹⁶ At least from the time of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*.

¹⁷ Yanagida, p. 113.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 72. It has been suggested that this “veiled Tao-eye” is better referred to as a delusion rather than an illusion. One reason is that ordinary English more customarily allows “delude oneself” than does it allow any analogous verb-object form with a verb related to “illusion.” However, the perusal of a number of dictionaries shows the verb “illude” merely to be rare, shows that there are usages in which clearly a person is responsible for his own illusion, and also shows that “illusion” and “delusion” are nearly synonymous in the sense used in my text. I prefer “illusion” because of the availability of the noun “disillusionment” for use in partially construing “awakening” in Ch’an Buddhism.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ I do not mean to sound as though this dependency-phenomenon is restricted to but a few cases. Lin-chi says, “Not yet has the sort [of student] appeared [before me] who was [already] unified and singularly free.” 未有一箇獨脫出來底。 Ibid., p. 110. I simply see no reason at present to become embroiled in the issue of how universally this particular malady occurs, if it occurs.

²² Ibid., p. 72.

²³ Lin-chi goes on to say about these “dependencies relied upon” that “. . . [doing this] they fall into causation, etc. . . .” 皆是依倚，落在因 Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 79.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 52. My translation is intended to follow Yanagida’s Japanese translation, *ibid.*, and to be in keeping with his notes on the passage, *ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁶ The effects are widespread. We have seen, herein, a number of them. To name a few concepts which have been affected, there are: buddha (hood), patriarch(hood), the distinction between ordinary people and saintly people, the threefold world, and the twelve divisions of the Buddhist teachings. Elsewhere, *karma* and *nirvāṇa* (to name just two which come to mind) also feel the sweeping effects of this language-dependent ontology.

²⁷ The criteria for correctly identifying the latter sort of awakening, then, will lead far beyond someone’s attempting to identify by introspection an inner state known as ‘the Dharma’, ‘Truth’, ‘Reality’, etc. It is likely that the meaning of the word “awakening” is bound up with such criteria. Please see my previously cited article “. . . Philosophy of Mysticism” in this regard. It is too long a story to begin in this context.

²⁸ Yanagida, p. 148. The last, four-character phrase of this quotation may be taken as idiomatic for “elements of language,” the phrase by which we have been translating the first and last of the four characters, “names and phrases.”

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., p. 67.

³² Ibid., p. 111. I leave the reader to make any comparisons with twentieth century philosophy here.

Yanagida points out that the saying “not one Dharma to give to men” is also used by Tê-shan Hsüan-chien 德山宣鑑 in the *Ching tê ch’uan teng lu* (*The Transmission*

of the Lamp). One may see the phrase in the Taiwan edition of that work, *Chūan* 15, p. 92.

³³ Yanagida, p. 48.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.