

## **A Discussion on Lv Cheng's Vijñapti-mātra Aesthetics Possible Conception and Its Modern Aesthetic Significance**

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**Abstract:** Lv Cheng, a Buddhist scholar and aesthetic pioneer who has been buried in history, published the “earliest monograph on the basic principles of aesthetics in China”. However, why is his unfinished work “Vijñapti-mātra aesthetics” forgotten in the current of the times and rarely reiterated? What is the modern aesthetic significance of such “Vijñapti-mātra aesthetics”? This article believes that the speculation about Lv Cheng’s “Vijñapti-mātra aesthetics” can be further explained by starting with Lipps’ theory of empathy and interest in Vijñapti-mātra. Only when the aesthetic subject uses “emotions” to “observe” “objects” can the aesthetic category be re-established. Through the expansion of “life”, aesthetic objects become aesthetic objects, and then through “heart”, “perception”, “observation”, and “love”, aesthetic experiences are re-perceived, and aesthetic values are re-evaluated with “love” as a link. Overall, the modern aesthetic significance of this “Vijñapti-mātra aesthetics” lies in allowing for the diversity of “beauty” through the wisdom of the “middle way” of “observation”; To achieve the localization of beauty in China through the intersection of environmental phenomena; to expand the aesthetic subjects “life” through the practical concept of “transforming knowledge into wisdom”, and to re-establish the individual’s aesthetic value, making one’s life poetic.

**Keywords:** Lv Cheng; Vijñapti-mātra Aesthetics; The Significance of Modern Aesthetic

### **1. Transference Theory and the Essence of Vijñapti-mātra**

The establishment of modern Chinese aesthetics once fell into the dilemma of “losing external support, leading to internal decline”<sup>[1]</sup>: on the one hand, for Western imports, the legitimacy of Chinese aesthetics disciplines became a game

where the “significant” outweighed the “signified”<sup>[2]</sup>; on the other hand, the revival of Buddhism intersected with “aesthetics”. The problem lay in the fact that while adopting Buddhist approaches to understanding Western learning, there was no solid understanding of Buddhism itself. Lv Cheng (1896.1.10-1989.7.8) actively “stood up” in the face of such a dilemma. On the one hand, Lv Cheng had a universal concern for China’s “art revolution”, and on the other hand, he intended to integrate Western psychology and the thought of consciousness-only. He proposed the concept of “consciousness-only Aesthetics” in his book “Introduction to Aesthetics”: “The speaker has always aspired to establish an aesthetics of consciousness-only. The principle of emotional transfer in Lipps’ theory is quite similar to the tenet of consciousness-only, and I cannot help but prefer it.” However, it is a pity that the concept of “consciousness-only aesthetics” ultimately became an unfinished project of Lv Cheng. Currently, there is little research on his “consciousness-only aesthetics” in China, and it is not effectively combined with the similarities and differences between consciousness-only thought and aesthetics. Therefore, this article intends to combine aesthetics and consciousness-only from two perspectives to restore as much as possible the realm envisioned by Lv Cheng. At the same time, I believe that his concept of “consciousness-only aesthetics” still holds great significance in modern and contemporary times.

In “Aesthetics of Space”, Lipps uses the psychological activity of observing a Doric column as an example to explain the theory of “empathy”, which states that “when we observe such a column, it appears to be alive, powerful, and movable.”<sup>[3]</sup> This determines that “the aesthetic subject is not the everyday ‘practical self’ but the ‘observing self’.”<sup>[3]</sup> Lipps further points out, “But I feel these things not by facing or opposing the object, but by being within the object itself.”<sup>[3]</sup> Lipps intended to achieve unity

between subject and object within the scope of aesthetic discussion. However, under the influence of the rationalism that has been consistently upheld in the West, empathy still exhibits a clear problem of “subject-object dichotomy”. Obviously, the subjectivity of the aesthetic subject is weakened through the subject’s “emotions”, and this weakened part is transferred into the aesthetic object, that is, “the form of the object represents human life, thoughts, and emotions. A beautiful form of a thing is a symbol of spiritual content.”<sup>[3]</sup> The perspective of consciousness-only seems to optimize this problem, which requires the meaning of “consciousness” (vijñāna) to be brought into play. From the usage of “vijñāna”, “there are terms like ‘manifestation’ (pratibhāsa, ābhāsa, also translated as ‘seemingly appear’) to express the meaning of specific representations.”<sup>[4]</sup> That is, the subject with aesthetic cognitive function uses emotions to produce cognitive results for the “representations” of aesthetic objects. So, how do empathy theory and the tenet of consciousness-only jointly constitute the theoretical foundation of Lv Cheng’s aesthetic thought? Specifically, it requires combining the tenet of consciousness-only with the resonance between the two to see.

Firstly, from an ontological perspective, it can be expressed as the thinking process of “comparing and measuring consciousness”. “Present knowledge generally refers to human perception, and knowledge obtained from perception comes from present knowledge; knowledge obtained from perception is also called present knowledge. Taking present knowledge as the starting point, further thinking activities lead to comparison, that is, based on what is seen and heard, one can infer what is not seen or heard, which is called comparison.”<sup>[5]</sup> When placed in the realm of aesthetics, it becomes “aesthetic sentiment”-the experience of “beauty” derived from “present knowledge”, and various conclusions formed under the thinking activity of “beauty” can be transformed from “present knowledge” to “comparison”.

Secondly, from the perspective of human nature, it embodies the concept of “goodness”. Lv Cheng believes that “when we say that the content of beauty must be good, we are only referring to goodness of nature, that is, the beauty of objects must be able to express goodness of nature. That is to say, goodness of nature is not merely

manifested in good deeds.”<sup>[6]</sup> In the context of “consciousness-only aesthetics”, I believe that it refers to the embodiment of one’s “goodness of nature” through the degree of one’s ability to perceive “objects”, and the degree of correspondence with “objects” is the manifestation of one’s “goodness of nature”. In this sense, people can establish their own aesthetic value-that is, the expression of “vitality”.

Thirdly, from the perspective of consciousness-only psychology, it is to understand the subject of human psychological activities-the mind and mental factors. “Mind” refers to the “eight consciousnesses” (the first six consciousnesses are generally similar to modern psychology), and “mental factors” refer to the local conditions of cognitive objects. Regarding the “eight consciousnesses and fifty-one mental factors” established by consciousness-only theory, Liang Shuming<sup>[7]</sup> believes that “it explores and uncovers human emotions and wills almost exhaustively, providing sufficient reference for future psychologists.” Therefore, the essence of “vitality” is actually the unfolding of “consciousness” condensed after individuals perceive “objects” as aesthetic subjects-“aesthetic sentiment”, which is similar to the psychological term “manifestation”.

## **2. “Beauty Perception” and Aesthetic Experience**

### **2.1 “Observation of Beauty”**

Lv Cheng proposed the ingenious concept of “beautiful contemplation” by combining the theory of empathy and the purposive theory of consciousness. In 1922, he pointed out in “The Path of the Development of Fine Arts” that “although the activities of fine arts also involve phenomena such as sensation and emotion, when they are not linked to conceptual thinking, the sensation becomes purer, and when they are not involved with concerns of interest or harm, the emotion also becomes purer. In this way, the aspect of the object’s ‘self-existence’ can be recognized, forming a clear consciousness of existence. Now, we call this activity ‘contemplation’. Continuing from here, there is no fixed limit to the duration of time, there is a kind of synthetic concrete expression, and there is no certainty as to whether it is consistent with the form of the object of inspiration. This

completes a process of special spiritual activity, which we now call ‘contemplation expression’.”

[8] In 1923, he pointed out in “Introduction to Aesthetics” that “the reality of beautiful contemplation, in a nutshell, is nothing but separation and condensation. To sever all relations that can draw our attention away from the other is called separation. To pour the whole activity of the mind into the object and contemplate it according to its nature is called condensation.” [6] In 1925, he reiterated in “Recent Aesthetic Theories and Principles of Beauty” that “from the perspective of process style, the emotion is on one hand a transfer, and on the other hand an expression, ultimately converging in sympathy.” [9] In summary, I believe that Lv Cheng’s conjecture of “consciousness-only aesthetics” is aimed at resolving this “subject-object dichotomy”.

Firstly, the bidirectionality of “observation” carries deeper connotations: in “Shuowen Jiezi”, “guan” is explained as “to gaze intently”, while “gaze” means “to scrutinize”. So what is “scrutinized”? It is “vitality”. Specifically, the most special existence is “human beings”. Lv Cheng believes that “to assert the ‘life’ of oneself towards the reality outside oneself has two ways: ... One is the activity of art, which requires the expansion of ‘life’, unlike the vague attitude in religious activities, which rejects all conceptual thinking and intuitively perceives the essence of reality, making its truth nakedly reveal itself.” In such a situation, allowing others to become aesthetic objects other than oneself is a special case, which is the purport of “sympathy”. Through “empathy” with others and other things, one continuously “manifests” oneself. As Hegel said, “Beauty is the perceptual manifestation of the idea.” The aesthetic subject, while dissolving the subjectivity of “representation”, indicates the enhancement of the true subjectivity of “observation”.

Secondly, compared to the moral significance conveyed by Western rationalism, the way of thinking is more based on a perceptual “intuition”: that is, on the surface, the aesthetic subject uses their own “emotions” to “observe” the “material images” presented by the “vitality” of the aesthetic object. In reality, the aesthetic subject’s “emotions” are “manifested” as an abstract “vitality onto the aesthetic object. The prerequisite for this “manifestation” to unfold lies in the “sensitivity” of the aesthetic object to perceptual emotions-which is also manifested in

the degree to which the aesthetic subject “transfers” their own emotions into the aesthetic object and the degree to which the aesthetic object “expresses” its own “material images” through the aesthetic subject. “Separation” and “condensation” realize the two processes of “abstraction” and “concretization” between the aesthetic subject and the aesthetic object.

## **2.2 Aesthetic Experience: “Observation” of “Object Imagery”**

Firstly, humans, as aesthetic subjects, establish a process of realizing “beauty consciousness” through their interaction with the object of “beauty” (i.e., the aesthetic target). Specifically, the “emotion” in “beauty emotion” is what Lv Cheng refers to as “sympathy”, which can be explained by citing “the emotions that evoke fear and pity” from Aristotle’s “Poetics”. Through this, the subject is reflected in the “dyeing pool” and gains a sense of “self-assertion”, as Wang Guowei puts it, “When I view things, everything is tinged with my own color.” Lv Cheng believes that “to assert the ‘existence’ of oneself beyond the self, there are two paths: one is to demand the permanence of ‘existence’... This is where the commonly mentioned religious activities originate. The other is the activity of art, which demands the expansion of ‘existence’, unlike the vague attitude in religious activities, but rejects all conceptual thinking, intuitively perceiving the essence of reality, so that its truth is nakedly revealed.” [8] That is to say, if the (aesthetic) subject remains only in the “contemplation” under a single perspective, there is no way to truly clarify the existence of “beauty” in both the aesthetic subject and the aesthetic object.

“The contemplation of beauty” defines the value category of beauty, which is “beauty is the personal value of an object in its own imagery.”

[10] In the view of Lv Cheng, the “aesthetic sentiment” towards “objects imagery” mainly includes two types: one is the sensory emotion directed towards sensory objects (the first six senses), and the other is the personal emotion directed towards personality. Of course, the existence of these two types fundamentally relies on the “vitality” mentioned earlier, because “only life can express personality.” [6] Therefore, the value of beauty in this “consciousness-only aesthetics” perspective is summarized as “the value of beauty lies in the object imagery, and it only becomes valid when the object symbolizes a kind of spirit or life. The so-called beauty of an

object lies not in its own body but in the life or the so-called personal value it represents.”<sup>[6]</sup> Under this interpretation, the aesthetic object and the aesthetic subject achieve “empathy” through the “emotion” of the subject’s life.” The beauty of the aesthetic object “object” is confirmed by the “personality”, and the aesthetic subject achieves the aesthetic significance of “the intersection of subject and object, the unity of subject and object”.

Secondly, aesthetic value is obtained through the continuous accumulation and comprehension of aesthetic experience, facilitated by human consciousness. In the view of Lv Cheng, “the human heart is the source of all existence, and its inherent ‘wisdom and light’ illuminates everything. Although this heart is obscured by delusions in the position of ordinary beings, its consciousness remains inherent.”<sup>[11]</sup> As stated in the “Treatise on the Foundation of the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only”: “As the sutra says: ‘All things are only consciousness, and there is no inherent meaning in what is perceived. The consciousness that perceives and what is perceived are naturally transformed.’” Moreover, this kind of consciousness is built on the foundation of self-awareness, “enlightening ordinary people’s perception of beauty, developing their creative abilities, and making them conscious of the necessity of a ‘beautiful life’, which can gradually be realized.”<sup>[12]</sup> The comprehension of aesthetic experience relies on the “attitude towards beauty”- “the attitude we adopt when discovering life in objects is called the attitude towards beauty”<sup>[6]</sup>, which manifests as “love for all life”.<sup>[13]</sup> Specifically, “the ‘attitude towards beauty’ is both aesthetic and contemplative; only when these two aspects are combined can it form a whole.”<sup>[13]</sup>

In Lv Cheng’s view, the practice of such “love” is to understand the “transformation” function of “transforming defilement into purity”. “Due to the change in people’s understanding, it affects behavior, reforms the objective environment, and forms various upward and pure thoughts and habits, gradually replacing the stale and polluted thoughts and habits in the dependent store consciousness. Such continuous transformation leads to changes in overall cognition, behavior, and environment, that is, the defilement is completely transformed and purity is fully realized. This is the destination of transformation”, combined with the previous text, “the destination of transformation manifests

in ‘love’ containing ‘compassion’”.<sup>[3]</sup> This kind of “love” manifests as people being able to “regard things that originally have no life as having life”. Here, “transformation” is a positive practical concept, which will be elaborated on later. From the perspective of “Consciousness-Only Aesthetics”, it is the continuous accumulation and realization of aesthetic experience: first, the prerequisite for this realization is the acquisition of aesthetic experience, which manifests the value of “life” from “experience” to “transcendence”<sup>[14]</sup>; second, this realization includes the continuous accumulation of aesthetic experience, that is, the unfolding of “good nature”, and the great wisdom of “observation” lies in the “middle way” (which will be elaborated on later); third, the continuous accumulation of aesthetic experience enhances people’s “aesthetic sentiment” ability, which is to increase the intensity of the emotional attachment to inanimate objects.

Finally, this aesthetic experience needs to be distinguished from the ethical coloring of traditional aesthetics to re-examine the traditional and outdated aesthetic values. The definition of tradition is nothing more than “truth, goodness, and beauty”. As Chen Wangdao believed, “There are three supreme values in the world: truth, goodness, and beauty. No matter who it is, everyone recognizes these three supreme values. Morality and ethics can all be traced back to ‘goodness’; science can seek ‘truth’, but ‘beauty’ exists everywhere and at any time.”<sup>[15]</sup> However, in the view of Lv Cheng, it should start from “love for all life”:

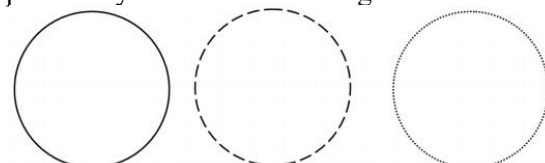
Firstly, this “love” breaks down the “boundaries” set by “me” for “me”, and dismantles the measure of “beauty” set by “beauty’s value”-the “utilitarianism” dimension. To a large extent, we are “limited” by the sole criterion set by “beauty’s value”, leading to the definition of “beauty” having only one standard, and further resulting in the acceptance of only similar “aesthetic feelings” as “beauty” under this single standard. Anything beyond this is a self-righteous adoption of an exclusive attitude, because true art is “for all life”, while practical utilitarianism is “for self”.<sup>[16]</sup> This is also in line with the overall Mahayana Buddhist attitude of universally embracing and caring for all sentient beings. Secondly, this “love” emphasizes the role of “consciousness”, which helps us build our perception ability towards “objects”, that is, the fundamental reason for the generation of

“aesthetic feelings”. In the interaction process between “mind” and “mental factors”, “beauty” is formed, and it is not standardized. From the perspective of consciousness-only, there are infinite sentient beings with infinite “consciousness”, and the “beauty” value possessed by each individual is different, so the “manifestation” in “objects” is also different. Thirdly, the understanding of “objects” and “present knowledge” is achieved from the perspective of “reality”. As Lin Guoliang pointed out, “Both internal and external logics of ancient Indian Buddhism acknowledge that knowledge obtained through present knowledge is correct knowledge. Present knowledge can recognize real phenomena because what it recognizes are ‘real’ things.” [17] Here, “reality” means including: present time (not past or future), present place (not elsewhere), obvious (not obscured by other objects and thus not perceivable), and true (not erroneous). When Lv Cheng mentioned “the contemplation of beauty”, he was referring to the “self-identity” of the cognitive object, that is, the true appearance of things. This is similar to Wang Guowei’s “no barrier” concept of “every word is present”. [18] “The way of grasping present knowledge has the characteristics of present, immediate, and true. The present knowledge obtained is a momentarily generated dependent arising realm, presenting the vivid real world. ... The aesthetic contemplation of present knowledge... can be integrated into the poet’s vivid life experience, vividly and lively represent things, thereby stimulating readers’ life emotions, bringing them into a specific poetic space, and triggering endless imagination and resonance.” [19] Therefore, the biggest problem with traditional and modern aesthetic values lies in their lack of “reality”, failing to restore the true essence of the aesthetic object.

### **3. Utilizing “Consciousness-only Aesthetics” to Explore the Significance of Modern Aesthetics**

Firstly, the “Middle Way” wisdom embodied in “observation” reflects the diversity of beauty. “In rationalist aesthetics, the aesthetic subject and the aesthetic object (the aesthetic object) are separated.” [20] I emphasize the “Middle Way” wisdom here, believing that we should understand how to apply this wisdom to “life”, that is, the ability to utilize aesthetic experience. When using aesthetic experience to judge

“beauty” (i.e., the object of “beauty”), on the one hand, the criteria for “beauty” are shackled, leading to judgments on “beauty” being confined to “limited” “aesthetic sentiment”, and “beauty” presents “single standardization”. On the other hand, because human aesthetic experience often carries a certain strong subjective color, “beauty” presents “division and separatism”. Under the dual contradiction of “single standardization” and “division and separatism”, it leads to a dual dilemma: on the one hand, people are prone to “identifying” with the “aesthetic sentiment” under “single standardization”, mistakenly believing it to be the correct “resonance”; on the other hand, there is no inclusive attitude towards diverse “beauties”. The root of these two situations lies in the lack of “sympathy”, that is, transitioning from “single standardized people” to “single standardized beauty”, and “life” also loses the “aesthetic sentiment” that inspires “beauty”. Therefore, we should also adopt the “Middle Way” wisdom of “observation” towards “beauty”. On the one hand, we should respect and allow the existence of different kinds of beauty; on the other hand, regarding “beauty”, Lv Cheng believes that it is necessary to maintain a clear understanding of one’s own “beauty” and continue to learn-“First, aesthetics is a kind of learned knowledge... Second, aesthetics is a kind of spiritual learning... Third, aesthetics is a kind of value learning... Fourth, aesthetics is a kind of normative learning.” [21] Secondly, “the intersection of scene and image” embodies the localization of aesthetics. Specifically, under the perspective of consciousness-only aesthetics, the “image” and “artistic conception” derived from the “object image” achieve a kind of unity. The author believes that this can be illustrated by applying Husserl’s concept of “Gestalt” (German word meaning “form” or “dynamic whole”) and combining it with the form of “circle”, as specifically demonstrated in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1. Three “Variations” of “Gestalt”**

On the one hand, this is similar to the structure of consciousness-only psychology, that is, human perception, learning, and thinking tend to achieve a certain complete structure in a dynamic manner, and thus possess the ability to

automatically fill gaps or interstices within the structure. That is, the “boundary of beauty” is disrupted and more and more “micro-moments” described by Heidegger emerge. Here, I adopt Zhang Xianglong’s translation of Heidegger’s “technē”<sup>[22]</sup>, which is considered the mechanism that enables truth to be generated (Werden) and appear (Geschehen) in artistic works. On the other hand, the “circle” used in this article also carries the meaning of “perfection in reality” from the “three natures” of consciousness-only psychology, aiming to express the “cultivation” of the practical self. Here, it embodies the “beautiful contemplation” of one’s own “life” with a “beautiful attitude”, thus manifesting as a positive outlook on life. This returns to the “value of beauty” redefined by Lv Cheng—“There are four ends: First, the value of beauty must belong to the image; second, it must be inherent to the image; third, this inherent value must be related to life; fourth, to experience it, one must use beautiful contemplation.”

Therefore, under the “consciousness-only aesthetics”, the “contemplation of beauty” holds promise for a dual localization construction of “artistic conception” and “image” regarding “beauty” to a certain extent—achieving a connection between scene and image under the condition of “emotion” as the carrier. Ye Lang believes that “image” is “the integration of image and sentiment”, while “artistic conception” “is a specific aesthetic image (as will be discussed below), representing the integration of ‘meaning’ (the artist’s sentiment) and ‘scene’ (including ‘objective lens’, ‘situation’, and ‘artistic conception’ as mentioned by Wang Changling),” and “aesthetic emotion is triggered by ‘scene’.”<sup>[23]</sup> As Chen Bohai points out, “Image occupies a central position in the traditional Chinese poetics.” For example, Chen Bohai once stated, “Image indeed occupies a central position in the traditional Chinese poetics, serving as the ‘first cornerstone’ of the literary and artistic theory system,”<sup>[24]</sup> further arguing that the image should be taken as the core to construct China’s literary and artistic theory system. Ye Lang also believes that “in traditional Chinese aesthetics, image is the ontology of beauty, and image is also the ontology of art.”<sup>[25]</sup> Zhu Zhirong even directly proposes, “In traditional Chinese aesthetic thought, image is a core category.”<sup>[26]</sup> Therefore, both “image” and “artistic conception” are

crucial for constructing a localized aesthetic perspective, and the significance of “consciousness-only aesthetics” lies in breaking down the clear boundaries between “image” and “artistic conception”, unifying the two in terms of “emotion”.

Finally, with the continuous “expansion” of “self-assertion”, the practice of beauty has produced positive significance. Lv Cheng’s so-called “the beautiful life, in brief, is to fulfill one’s life through a beautiful attitude” and “to achieve the fulfillment of life through a beautiful attitude.”<sup>[21]</sup> This means that we should live our lives with a “beautiful attitude”—requiring a practical view of “transforming knowledge into wisdom”, that is, “innovation”. In his works such as “Ci’en Sect” and “Observation, Practice, and Transformation”, Lv Cheng repeatedly emphasized the important “practical” role of “transformation” (“transforming knowledge into wisdom”) and “innovation”. For example, “as for the advocacy of the view of consciousness alone, taking transformation as the destination, ... these had positive and progressive significance at the time. And their spirit was later carried forward and did not disappear completely.”<sup>[27]</sup> Lv Cheng defined “transformation” as “as for the aspect of objective phenomena, it is not simply a transfer of knowledge from perception to understanding, but rather a continuous correction of understanding, which leads to the manifestation of the true nature of phenomena and further action, innovating phenomena, so that they develop more in harmony with reality.”<sup>[28]</sup> This kind of “transforming knowledge into wisdom” is a process of progressing from cognition to behavior, with parallel progress on both the subjective and objective sides. This is also consistent with the unity of subject and object that “consciousness-only aesthetics” strives to express, “a doctrine of wisdom obtained through practice starting from epistemology.”<sup>[29]</sup> In Lv Cheng’s view, “due to the transformation of people’s cognition, it affects behavior, reforms the objective environment, and forms various upward and pure habitual practices of perception, gradually replacing the stale and tainted habitual practices of perception in the store consciousness of the known basis. Such continuous transformation, until the entire cognition, behavior, and environment have changed, that is, until taint is completely removed and purity is fully achieved, is the destination of transformation.” It can be

seen that even the aesthetic experience that the aesthetic subject has already gained also requires continuous “innovation”. For example, Feng Qi once proposed in “The Exploration of Wisdom-Introduction to the Three Essays on Wisdom” that “in the process of understanding the world and understanding oneself, knowledge is transformed into wisdom.”<sup>[30]</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

Looking at Lv Cheng's life, it is not unlike the practice of his unfinished work, “consciousness-only aesthetics”. Lv Cheng's true commitment to the construction of aesthetics and Buddhist systems lies in eliminating “misguided attachments” (such as the interpretation of “True Thusness”). The true enlightening significance of this “transforming knowledge into wisdom” practical view lies in helping us understand that “the universal essence of human life is the individual reality and the norms of behavior, which are constant and unchanging, while individual behavior and objective phenomena are impermanent and changeable due to the vicissitudes of fate. If one clings to the self or objects in search of an unchanging legal principle, they will fall into the pain of being unable to find a foothold. To escape this pain, one must have a qualitative leap in understanding, recognizing the true reality of life-‘all phenomena are impermanent, all dharma is void, and Nirvana is pure.’” In his correspondence with Xiong Shili, Lv Cheng mentioned, “Throughout my life, although I have not experienced grand waves, I have forged my own path in the field of learning, enduring both hardships and joys (in arts and aesthetics, Sanskrit and Tibetan metaphysics, I have achieved everything through self-reliance, as my brother well knows). The world is full of difficulties, and the country and people are in distress, which is extraordinary. Yet, after decades of hard work and perseverance, if one does not deeply resonate with the body, mind, and life, but merely seeks to amuse oneself by quoting and extracting fragments, what is the point?” However, what is truly regrettable is as described by Lan Jifu, “The overall environment of modern China does not seem to need such an outstanding scholar as Lv Cheng... What is most heartbreaking is not only the indifference of society towards him, nor the lack of successors for his academic thoughts, but also the fact that the ‘obstacles’ and ‘misguided thoughts’ he

strived to eliminate in Buddhism are still prevalent and flourishing.” Therefore, this article aims to attract valuable contributions by throwing out a humble opinion, reaffirming that Lv Cheng's “consciousness-only aesthetics” has strong modern significance. Unlike the traditional rationality of the West, it can truly reconstruct China's unique “beauty”, and such a holistic “consciousness-only aesthetics” represents a positive practical view, with human emotions as the fundamental bond, truly expanding “life” and reestablishing its aesthetic value. With an “aesthetic attitude”, one can achieve “aesthetic contemplation”, turning one's life into an artistic practice process of “beauty”.

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