

II. TENDAI'S DOCTRINES OF THE MIDDLE PATH AND REALITY

Tendai-Buddhism is a school representing, most faithfully and elaborately, the Middle Path of the Buddhist doctrine. It is a school founded, in the sixth century, by a Chinese monk from Tendai, named Chi-ki; and its chief aim was to achieve a higher synthesis of the external-realism of materialistic tendency and the acosmism of transcendental extreme. It further elaborated the theory of reality along the line of the thought above indicated, and on the basis of the "Lotus of Truth." This book, as has been observed above, may be called the Johannine Gospel of Buddhism. It tries to solve the problems of reality by the key given in the identification of Buddha's enlightenment with cosmic truth.

Omitting further reference to the book, I here cite a saying which became the starting point of Tendai's theory of reality. The saying is a verse in Nāgārjuna's *Madhyāmika Śāstra*, or Treatise on the Middle Path. It says:

Everything arises according to causation;
We regard it as a vacuity (*śūnyatā*),
(But) it is phenomenal reality by virtue of appearance,
Which is at the same time the Middle Path. (p. 503.)

Vacuity (*śūnyatā*, or *suññatā* in Pali) is an ancient term used in Buddhism, and meant something beyond common sense or ordinary ratiocination (cp., for instance, *Samyutta*, 55, 52; 20, 7; etc.). It was not a mere negation, as it is often understood; but speculations at which we must now glance clustered about it.

"Vacuity" was understood by the transcendentalists to mean the voidness of phenomenal things, and so the real entity was interpreted as being beyond all distinctions and causal relations. This position is most fully stated in the one hundred thousand *ślokas* of the *Prajñā-pāramitā*, a book aiming at "the annihilation of all relativities" by an almost endless repetition of *neither, nor*. But this annihilation was always carefully dis-

tinguished from the nihilistic view (*uccheda*) that nothing exists, because the Buddhist vacuity supposes a something beyond relativities, unknowable, yet attainable in meditation.¹ Now Nāgārjuna accepted the transcendentalist standpoint, but at the same time admitted an apparent reality (*prajñāpti*) in what is given (*upadā*). What he called the Middle Path was a synthesis of the two points of view. In spite of his adherence to the Middle Path, which was the precious inheritance of Buddhist thought, he did not give a definite statement of it, but left it to the domain of contemplative vision, attainable by only a select few. Thus, it was Tendai's task to draw a more positive and definite conclusion from Nāgārjuna's statement of the Middle Path, and for this purpose he translated the two extreme views into the terms of universality and particularity.

Vacuity, according to Tendai, means nothing but the non-being of a particular existence apart from the universal Dhammatā. We speak of this or that thing or substance, quality or condition, and think it to be a reality, in and by itself. Nothing is more erroneous than this, because we know that nothing in this world, visible or tangible, exists without causal nexus. It is a Dhammā, a thing or condition, because it is a manifestation of the Dhammā, the law of causation. Vacuity does not mean the voidness of any existence in itself, but vanity of the view that sees in it a reality apart from the fundamental Dhammatā.

Thus, the thesis of vacuity implies the antithesis, that what is apparently existing is a reality, in the sense that it is given, given as something the meaning of which must be sought deeper and higher. In other words, an abstract universality is a vacuity, not less than a mere particularity; either is a mere abstraction apart from a datum. A particular datum may be an appearance, and yet be a product of the universal law of causality, and a manifestation of the fundamental nature of existence. A thing or a con-

¹ It was this aspect of Buddhism, concisely put in the "Diamond Cutter," that attracted Lafcadio Hearn's poetic genius, and was connected by him with Spencerian agnosticism.

dition exists actually, and although it is subject to decay, and may disappear according to causality, it is so far a reality — a phenomenal appearance.

The synthesis amounts to affirming both vacuity and appearance at the same time. The conception of vacuity has shown us that a particular existence is void, when taken in itself; but it points to the reality of the universal, as an outcome of a thoroughgoing negation of relativity. On the other hand, the idea of phenomenal appearance has demonstrated that there is a reality in phenomena which is no less essential to our conception of being than the reality attached to the universal. The world of the universal, the unity of all things in the fundamental nature (*dhammatā*), is the foundation of every particular existence, pre-existent to all particular manifestations. Yet its manifestations in concrete beings, Dhammās, are as real as the pre-existent universals, being subject to the laws, Dhammās, which rule all. That they are ruled by the same laws shows their unity in the basis. The particular derives its being from the universal nature of things, while the universal could not fully realize its true nature without manifesting itself in a particular. Both are real, but either by itself is imperfectly real. The Middle Path consists in uniting the two aspects of existence, universal and particular, and in seeing therein the true reality. To this argument, the consideration of Buddha's personality gave the key, and we shall see how it is developed.

As to the relation between the particular and the universal, the case of Buddha is not only an example, but the typical representative. He was born as a human being, passed through mental struggles, and finally attained Buddhahood, and lived the fifty years of his ministry as the Truth-revealer. This is an actual life of a particular person, and no one can deny its facts, except the docetists,¹ against whom the orthodox Buddhists took a united stand. Yet he was a Buddha, because he was enlightened in cosmic truths and realized the universal nature of Buddha-

¹ Cp. the author's article on "Docetism (Buddhist)" in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

hood, which is called Bodhi, or Enlightenment. He is Bodhi incarnate, so to speak, and Bodhi is the universal and fundamental nature (*dharmatā*) of the spiritual existence, which is pre-existent to appearance of particular Buddhas, and the *a priori* basis of their attainment. The epithet "Tathāgata" is an adequate expression of the relation between the universal Bodhi and particular Buddhas. Buddha's personal life is a particular phenomenon, and the significance of his Buddhahood is lost, is a vacuity, when considered apart from the Truth he has attained and revealed to us. Yet the Truth (*tathā*) is a mere abstraction, a dead name, unless there appears a Tathāgata in concrete human life. The true reality in the person of Buddha consists in the dignity of the Tathāgata attained by a particular person, in virtue of the universal Bodhi which is the essential condition of his communion with the Buddhas of the past and of the future.

This solution of the relation between the particular and the universal in the person of Buddha as the Tathāgata serves, at the same time, as the solution of the questions which arose concerning the acquisition or inherence of Buddhahood. Buddhahood is an acquisition, viewed from the standpoint of phenomenal appearance, as is actually shown in the career of Buddha. But it is, at the same time, inherent in his nature, and also in each of us, because without the pre-existent universal Buddhahood, a Buddha loses the foundation of his dignity. He has become a Tathāgata by treading the same way, the One Road, as all other Tathāgatas, and by thus entering the communion of Buddhahood; and this apparent acquisition is the necessary development of the Buddhahood inherent in an individual and pre-existent to individual persons. The standpoint of the Middle Path thus emphasizes equally both the *a posteriori* acquisition and the *a priori* inherence of Buddhahood, because either one of these two aspects, without the other, is an imperfect idea of the Buddha as such. In other words, Buddha is really a man, and verily the Truth. As a man he has realized the truth of the oneness of existence; he is the Truth-winner. The person in whom

the Dhammatā of the universe has come to light, and who has "become Truth," "become knowledge," cannot but be the adequate representative of the Dhammatā, that is, the Tathatā. The Lord of Truth, the Ruler of the Realm of Truth, derives his dignity from the very source of Truth, and therefore he can work as the Truth-revealer. The actual human manifestation is a condescension on the part of the universal Truth; while the latter is first embodied and actualized in the former.

The universal Buddhahood is called Dharma-kāya, or "Truth-body," while the personal Buddha is Nirmāna-kāya, or "Condescension-body"; and these two, together with another, the Sambhōga-kāya, or "Bliss-body," the spiritual manifestation of Buddhahood, make up the Buddhological Trinity. This doctrine of the Trinity is a very old one in Buddhism, and Tendai emphasizes the unity of the three, because the three aspects, considered as a unity, constitute the only right view of Buddha's person, and of the true reality exemplified *in* his person.

The Trinity of Buddha's person, however, is not limited to him alone, but in each of us is inherent the corresponding Trinity, or, as we may conveniently express it, the unity of the universal foundation and the particular manifestation. A concrete human being is a reality, but his full meaning is based on humanity in general. There is *a* man, and he is *the* man who would embody in his person the essential nature of humanity, not in the abstract, but concretely. The universal "humanity" is the "Truth-body" of every human being, and his life under particular conditions is his "Condescension-body," while his own self-consciousness, and the influence that he means to exert upon his fellow-beings constitute his "Bliss-body." In short, the unity of the universal man and the particular man is the reality of man.

The same remark applies to every other kind of existence, and Tendai assumes, in accordance with Buddhist tradition, ten different realms of sentient beings. The nethermost one is the hell (*naraka*), or rather purgatory, where beings of extreme viciousness, deprived of the light of wisdom, are tormented by their own vices. The furious spirit (*asura*) is a manifestation of

hatred and greed; the hungry ghost (*preta*) represents never-satisfied greed, combined with stupidity; the beast (*tiryak*) is the life of stupidity and blindness; the heavenly worlds (*deva*) are the abodes of those beings who are intoxicated with pleasure and careless of others. These five, together with mankind (*manusya*), are the six stages of transmigration. Above these, are two kinds of beings who are self-satisfied in their own attainment in meditation or learning, and make no further effort to realize the vitality of the universal communion, represented by the learned *Śrāvaka* and the self-contented *Pratyeka-buddha*, above referred to. The *Bodhisattva* is a being, who, having attained a certain height of spiritual illumination, is striving earnestly for the salvation of others. Above them all stands Buddha, in whom the universal communion and the fundamental nature of all beings are realized in idea and life, and who, by virtue of his wisdom and mercy, leads other beings to the same light. Thus, in every being in each of these classes there is manifested the relation of the universal and the particular, the concrete life of the universal Dhammatā; but it is in Buddha alone that the full light of universal truths and the all-embracing communion are realized.

Though Tendai thus distinguishes the ten kinds of existence, he emphasizes the interchangeability of their natures and the interdependence of their existence. Take, for instance, the case of Buddha. Although he is above all others, he has in no wise lost the character of the others, or he could not arouse in himself compassion for others. Even in him, the nature of the extremely vicious is still inherent, the only difference between his nature and that of others being that in him the inferior qualities are subdued, and not allowed to work. Similarly with all others, even in the beings in the hells, Buddhahood, and humanity, and other capacities are still extant, though latent. Viewed in this way, the ten realms of existence and their respective natures are interchangeable and communicable. This point is formulated as the theory of the "mutual participation" of all existences; and since *all* ten are present, whether actually or potentially, in

each of the ten, the interrelations among them are hundredfold, that is, ten times ten.

To develop and explain the doctrine of the "mutual participation," Tendai formulated the conditions of existence in any realm in the ten categories of being. The classification is taken from the Lotus, in which these categories are adored as the key to Buddha's insight into the world.¹ They are: 1. Essence; 2. attribute; 3. manifestation or mark; 4. potency; 5. function; 6. first cause; 7. secondary cause; 8. effect; 9. retribution; and 10. the consummate unity of all nine. We can easily see that these categories are nothing but an extension and amplification of the original tenet of causality (*paticca-samuppāda*).

By causality we usually understand today the necessary connection existing between an antecedent and its consequent. But the Buddhist conception of causality is more flexible, and is applied to the same kind of necessary link, to any relation of interaction, interdependence, correlation, or co-ordination, founded on an intrinsic necessity. The necessity may be a link existing between the beings or phenomena, or between the thing and the knowledge of it, or *vice versa*. In this respect, the Buddhist idea of causation covers the same ground as the *ratio efficiens*, as formulated in Scholastic philosophy. Although all these relations may finally be reduced to the terms of antecedent and consequent, the Buddhist would not confine the causal relation within the idea of *time* relation.

This is a consequence of the conception that all existences are correlated by the virtue of the same *dhammatā*, and that therefore the relations existing among them are mutual, both in reality and in thought. The cause, in the usual sense of the word, conditions the consequence, but the consequence no less condi-

¹ The formula is found in the second chapter of the book (p. 30 in the Kern-Nanjio edition). The Sanskrit text has five categories and their ultimate union: What (*ye te dharmāḥ*), how (*yathā te dharmāḥ*), of what condition (*yādṛṣas te dharmāḥ*), with what marks (*yal-lakṣṇanās te dharmāḥ*), of what entity (*yat-svabhavās te dharmāḥ*), and the summation of the five.

tions the cause, though the mode of conditioning differs. A cause without its consequence is nonsense, and, at least so far, the former is conditioned by the latter. In this way, the application of causality was extended, and the formula of causality, cited above in the original wording by Buddha, may be applied to the ten categories, as the mutual relations conditioning one the other. Take, for instance, the categories of "essence," "attribute," and "mark." Because there is an essence, its attributes manifest themselves; because there are attributes, we know that there is the essence; because there are attributes, the marks appear; because there are marks, the attributes are discernible, etc. In this way the mutual dependence of the categories is established, and applied to the existence of every being, which is made up of a certain configuration and concatenation of the conditions, and in which the conditions of the categories are necessarily present.

It may make the position of Tendai clearer to speak, in this connection, of a division of Buddhist thought about the idea of causality. The question was whether causality should be understood as a serial causation or as a relation of mutual dependence, and the difference between the two conceptions involved the difference between a static and a dynamic view of the world.

The one school, which took the serial view of causality, traced, forward and backward, the evolution of the phenomenal world out of the primeval entity, and the involution of the former into the latter. The other school emphasized the interrelation and co-ordination of things, almost without regard to the questions of origin and final destiny. The latter was Tendai's position, and is known by the name "Reality-View," in contradistinction to the "Origination-View" or "Emanation Theory," of the other. Whatever the difference may signify, and whatever the original teaching of Buddha may have been, the "Origination-View" always inclined to take the derivative phenomena more or less as illusions; while the "Reality-View" devoted its attention to a close examination of existences as they are, and inclined to justify every being as a necessary phenomenon in the

world of mutual interdependence. The former aims at reabsorption of the individual minds into the primeval Mind, while the latter sees in the full presentation of facts and relations the consummate realization of universal enlightenment. Thus, almost contrary to our expectation, the philosophy of the "Origination-View" is static, while the "Reality-View" tends to be dynamic. The theory of "mutual participation" was a result of Tendai's conception of causality in terms of correlation and co-ordination.

Another group of categories, to explain life in group (*dhātu*) is threefold: the *stage* on which a certain group of beings play their rôle and manifest their nature; the *constituents* which supply materials and components to the stage; and the *individuals* making up the realm.

Now all of these kinds of being, and the categories of existence, are essential to the consideration of reality, of the true nature of any being. The Middle Path view consists in taking up all these conditions of being, and in summing them up in one term, that is, "Reality" — the reality as it is, as it is conditioned, as it is grounded, and as it ought to be. Thus, in this view of reality is expressed the conception of Dhammā as the consummation of the various views held by different schools, and as the final unification of the manifold aspects implied in the term Dhammā. In fine, the Tendai Buddhist conception of reality consists in harmoniously uniting all aspects of existence, and in realizing the working of the many-sided Dhammā, even in one being; even in one particle of dust, as the followers of Tendai are fond of saying.

To recapitulate, Tendai had examined the manifold views of reality, and found justification in each of them; and his ambition was to unify them, by looking at every particular existence as if it were an adequate representative of the whole cosmos (*dharma-dhātu*). His conception of reality is equivalent to seeing everything *sub specie aeternitatis*, but his *aeternitas* differed greatly from that of Spinoza in being not monistic, but "according to the three thousand aspects" — ten realms to each of ten, this hundred in the ten categories of existence, and this thousand multiplied by the three categories of group existence.