8. P. V. Kane, vol. iv, pp. 885-6.
9. For a long description taken from the Mahābhārata, Vanaparvan, 188, 30-64, cf. Kane, vol. III, pp. 892-5.
10. For an extensive treatment of the Kalivarjyas cf. Kane, vol. III, pp. 926-68.
11. Ibid., p. 930.
12. Ibid., pp. 4, 33, 244.
13. Manu, I, 86.
14. Viṣṇupurāṇa, VI, 2, quoted in Kane V, 925.
15. Śāntiparvan, 231-2.
16. Śāntiparvan, 340, 349.
17. Ibid., 12. 70. 6-7.
18. Ibid., 12. 70. 6; 12. 92. 2; 12. 13.
19. Cf. J. T. F. Jordens, *Dayānanda Sarasvatī, his Life and Ideas,* O. U. P., Delhi, 1967, *passim.*
20. Cf. Ibid., pp. 106 - 7, 251 - 2.
21. Cf. Dayānanda's *Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas,* Chapter I.
22. Cf. J. T. F. Jordens, *passim.*
23. Cf. Dayānanda's *Satyarth Prakash,* first ed., Banares, 1875, pp. 308 - 9, 373, 219 - 20; second edition, ed. Yudhisthir Mimamshak, Sonipat, 1972, pp. 329 - 34, 407 - 12.
24. *Satyārth Prakāsh,* second ed., pp. 591 - 2.
25. Cf. J. T. F. Jordens, *passim.*
26. Cf. P. J. Marshall, and also D. Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance,* Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1969.
27. Rajnarayan Basu, *Hindudharmer Shreshtatā,* Calcutta, 1872; for a discussion cr. Jordens, p. 78.
28. Cf. e.g. C. D. Church, 'The Myth of the four Yugas in the Sanskrit Puranas; a diamensional study', *Purāṇa,* vol. XVI, no. 1, Jan. 1974, pp. 15 - 18.
29. Rajnarayan Basu, ibidem.
30. This was developed by the Swami in particular in several chapters of his *Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas,* and frequently referred to in his voluminous Commentary on the Rgveda and the Yajurveda.
31. *Rishi Dayānanda Sarasvatī ke patra aur vijñāpan,* ed., Pandit Bhagavaddatt, 2nd ed., Amritsar, 1955, pp. 250, 261.
32. Cf. Jordens, pp. 279 - 80, 89 - 91.
33. Ibid., *passim,* especially Chapter XII.
34. Milton Singer, p. XVIII.

THE EMPTINESS THAT IS COMPASSION: An Essay on Buddhist Ethics

Robert A. F. Thurman

1. *Establishing the Complexity*

The great Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna wrote to his friend, King Udyāna of the Śatavāhana dynasty, the following famous lines (Nāgārjuna: 1975, 76): [1]

> Just as the grammarian makes one study grammar,
> A Buddha teaches according to the tolerance of students;
> Some he urges to refrain from sins, other to do good,
> Some to rely on dualism, others on non-dualism;
> And to some (he teaches) the profound,
> The terrifying, the practice of enlightenment,
> Whose essence is emptiness that is compassion.

There could be no better entry into the study of Buddhist ethics than the contemplation of these words, containing both the variety, the difficulty, the profundity, and the simplicity of the subject.

Now this variety is the first thing with which the contemporary ethicist must treat his questions such as "Is Buddhist ethics deontological? Is it teleological? Is it something again different? Or is it no such thing, not ethics at all?" "Buddhism" in a sense refers to a vast complex of religions, philosophies, practices, etc. spreading over all Asia over 2500 years of history. It is absurd to imagine that all its ethical teachings are only of one type. After all, there is a wide variety in Christian ethics over its large range of extension, including its marginal sects. Furthermore, aside from vast cultural and historical diversity, it is necessary to recognize another complicating factor, namely, the inveterate tendency in Buddhist thought and psychology to classify persons into a hierarchy of types, according to their stages of development and understanding, both as developed in their immediate lifetimes and as inherited (not from their parents) from their own experiences in former lives, a kind of transmigratory genetic code. Thus, each different type has an ethical code appropriate to it, resulting in a plurality of ethical codes corresponding to the variety of beings. This stands in contrast to Western ethics in general, particularly the deontological type of legalistic ethics of obligation, wherein every human being is basically the same, and any superiority in function of realization, as in the case of the saints, is attributed not to intrinsic qualities of the individual but to purity as fortune in receptivity of divine grace. The ethics of virtue on the other hand, such as those developed particularly by Augustine, exhibit strong similarity to the stratified ethics of the Buddhist systems, but I will return to this below.

An early typology of persons is found in the *Milindapañho,* and consists of five ranks, the "alienated individual" *(pṛthagjana),* the "stream-winner" *(srotāpanna),* the "once-returner" *(sakṛdāgamin),* the "non-returner" *(anāgamin),* and the "saint" *(arhat).* Ethically, the basic divisions here are fourfold; namely into the ordinary person who is lost is worldliness, seeking his own pleasure and other ephemeral ends, is a layman, and needs certain basic restrictive precepts; 2) the "stream-winner" who has heard the Buddha Dharma, and seeks heaven by virtuous action, or seeks nirvana by entering the monastic order; 3) the "once - and non-returners," who are mendicants devoted to liberation via single-minded practice of the three

precepts of morality, meditation, and wisdom, and 4) the saint, who has reached his final goal and has become an embodiment of good will, having totally extirpated all selfish desires. (Rhys-Davids: 1890, I, 155ff.)[2]

The basic divisions here correspond to some of the categories assumed by Nāgārjuna in the opening quote above. Thus, 1) those who most be taught to refrain from evil are the "alienated individuals," 2) those urged into doing good are the "stream-winners," 3) those relying on dualism are the seekers of liberation who divide samsara and nirvana into two and earnestly seek extinction in the latter, 4a) those who rely on nondualism, are Mahayanists, especially the Vijnānavādin[3] bodhisattva, as the Mahayana is the one road open to the saint, and 4b) those capable of the profound are the superior types of bodhisattvas and even Buddhas, who can be classified as "diamond persons" *(Vajrasattva)*.

Āryāsanga elaborates another stratification theory, including the classes of 1) classless *(agotraka)*, 2) disciple-class, 3) hermit-class, and 4) bodhisattva-class, which in some respects resembles the above.[4]

Kūkai, the founder of the Shingon school of esoteric Buddhism seems to have tacitly accepted these categories, elaborating the sub-classes still further to correspond with the hermeneutical schemes current in Far Eastern Buddhism since the days of Chih I.[5]

Often Buddhist writers resort to these typologies without explicitly delineating them. Thus for example, we can find in the following passage of Nichiren a sophisticated typology of persons, which he elaborated in the context of referring to their perceptions of the *Lotus Scripture* (Anesaki: 1923, 94):

> All the letters of this Scripture are indeed the living embodiments of the august Buddhas, who manifested themselves in the state of supreme enlightenment. It is one's physical eyes that see in the book merely letters ... The blind do not perceive anything in the letters of the Scripture; the physical eyes of man see the letters; those who are content with self-annihilation see therein emptiness; whereas the saint (bodhisatttva) realizes therein inexhaustible truths, and the enlightened (Buddhas) perceive in each of the letters a golden body of the Lord Śākyamuni.

Especially interesting in this quote is Nichiren's addition of the categories of the "blind" and of the "enlightened Buddhas," with the middle three categories being the same as my types above.

Finally, there is the scheme of Atisa of the "three persons" which was picked up in Tibet and eventually was used as framework for Tsong Khapa's famous *Stages in the Path of Enlightenment* (cf. Wayman: 1978), namely 1) the small person, being the self-seeking worldling after his own ephemeral pleasures and other impermanent goals, 2) the mediocre person being the seeker of his own personal liberation in a dualistically conceived nirvana, and 3) the great person, being the bodhisattva who seeks the welfare of self and society in perfect Buddhahood, and Buddhaland perfection. If we add "non-person" below the small, the "Buddha-person" above the great, note that we have returned to the Nichiren typology. I have arranged all these typologies into a diagram for ease of comparison (See Diagram 1).

Lest it be thought that this type of stratification is an oriental habit reflecting a hierarchical, stratified class society, let us briefly glance at Augustine's classification of persons according to their ability to fulfill the golden rule of the Sermon on the Mount, as given in *Matthew 5:38 - 41:*

> Ye have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth': but I say unto you, 'Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.'

In commentary on this passage, Augustine distinguishes eight levels of ability in persons: 1) the lowest is the aggressor who attacks without provocation; 2) the retaliator who over-reacts to the injury done him; 3) the retaliator whose reaction is commensurate with the injury ("eye for an eye"); 4) the retaliator whose reaction is milder than the injury; 5) the injured party who does not retaliate; 6) the injured party who exposes himself to a slightly less strong injury (turns the other cheek); 7) the injured party who exposes himself to another equal injury (gives his cloak also); and 8) the injured party who exposes himself to a still graver injury (goes the second mile) (Augustine, 80-83).[6] When we juxtapose this scheme to the Buddhist typologies (See Diagram 2) we see that types 1 - 4 constitute "small persons," 5 the "mediocre," and 6 - 8 the "great persons." Noteworthy at this stage is the fact that this typology of Augustine is nowhere connected with a systematic psychological analysis of the different eight types, and hence there is no explicit attempt to develop a methodology for the cultivation of saintliness or holiness. We nevertheless observe that those such as Augustine who engage in analysis in this area tend towards an ethics of virtue and away from the rigid, dogmatic ethics of obligation that basically considers all human beings the same, equally sinful hence equally salvable only through a completely gratuitous divine will, hence equally governed by an inflexible code of commandments enforcing categorical obligations. But I shall return to this below.

In the attempt to employ Western ethical categories to organize the variety of systems of obligations, virtues, aspirations, and ultra-obligations we confront in the Buddhist teachings, the two classical categories of deontology and teleology (the former basically from the Hebrew legalistic mode, the latter basically from the Hellenic rationalistic mode) seem altogether too constrictive of analytical perspective. Thus rather than succumb to the pretension that they do indeed constitute an exhaustive alternative, we may take our inspiration from the move of H. Richard Niebuhr, who, out of dissatisfaction with conventional attempts to classify Christian ethics in terms of the old alternative, brilliantly added a third category of "dialogical," adding the metaphor of "man the responder" to the metaphors of "man the obeyer," and "man the maker," the virtue of "responsibility" to those of "obedience" and "creativeness," the quality of "fittingness" (or "justice") to those of "rightness" and "goodness" (Niebuhr: 1963, 47ff.).[7]

Once we employ this category, as well as the two former, we seem to have all the conceptual tools necessary to deal with the complex stratification of Buddhist ethical systems, the "dialogical" being especially crucial in dealing with the ethics appropriate for the advanced beings, the saints, the bod-

hisattvas, and even to approach the inconceivability of the acts of the Buddhas.

2. *Clearing the Ground*

However, before I engage in this analysis, I must bring out and refute, definitively, I hope, a widespread and, in my opinion, extremely counter-productive view of Buddhist ethics, which usually boils down to a more sophisticated version of the old "them heathen just ain't got no morals" adage.

If this sounds harsh, it is intended to be so, in order to reflect clearly back the distorting harshness of any view that concludes that any category of humanity, any race, faith, or nation, has a basic lack of "individuation," "ethical thought," "moral powers," "moral faculties," etc. whatever you want to call that which the members of the judging culture pride themselves in possessing.

Now there are a number of subtle ways in which this view is still maintained, but the principal one can be found in the argument that the Buddhist has no real sense of "individuality," which results either in un-self-conscious immersion in his collectivity following prescribed patterns of traditional mores, or else self-annihilative mystical tendencies of world-rejection. The evidence for this rather startling fact (i.e. that this religion which spread over all of Asia having until recently the largest membership of all world religions and all without any violent crusades, should be fundamentally or untimately devoid of a moral sense) supposedly lies in the core Buddhist notion of "selflessness," or "emptiness," and the related "nirvana." This is then compared invidiously with Christian notions of "immortal soul," supposed to stand behind modern notions of "protestant ethic" and "rugged individualism." Next, a series of other notions are attached such as "concern for material welfare," "rationality," "moral conscience," "ethical choise," etc. which thus reconfirm the uniqueness of "Western Man." [8] To refute this complex of false notions, I will expound my theses and then support them with arguments of my own and of Nāgārjuna.

To present the three theses in succinct form:

1) True individuality, the seal of the autonomy and the unique value of the individual person over and above his collectivity, is logically based on the fact of "selflessness"; because a metaphysically given fixed "self" would be incompatible with any living individual, and a socially constructed "self" is always a stereotyped traditional general pattern imposed upon the unique, particular, living individual person.

2) All the great ethical Teachers have invariably founded their teachings on their insights into some form of selflessness, expressed in terms appropriate to their respective cultures and times; because the calls to freedom (Buddha), love of God (Christ), Supreme Self (Yajnāvālkya), benevolence (Confucius), spontaneity (Lao Tzu), righteousness (Moses), goodness (Zoroaster), and so forth, all involve a negation of an original sinful self and a second birth beyond in freedom, variously described.

3) Far from aiming at any ultimate "obliteration of the individual," all Buddha's teachings aim at the individual's freedom, happiness, and moral perfection in service to others; because such is the definition of the *Dharma* (Truth), *Sambhoga* (Beatitude), and *Nirmāna* (Incarnation) *Kāya* (Bodies) of a Buddha, and Buddhahood is the ultimate goal of all Buddhist teachings.

The process of "growing up," either in the biography of a child or in the history of a culture begins and proceeds as the persons involved discover that they have no "given" fixed selves, and thus, "to be themselves," a conscious effort of self-creation is required. Cultures tend to arrest this process at a certain point, freezing the individual's growth into a predetermined mold of class, role, occupations, etc., and individuals become free of these stereotypes to the degree that they realize the conventionality of any such given identity. Historically, a society seems to need a multi-tribal, urbanizing, pluralistic living situation to be able to tolerate this type of individualism, and, as this began to occur in the "axis age," it is not accident or mystery that this insight began to be articulated in that period throughout the Eurasian *oikumene*, with the Buddha Śākyamuni outstanding as the most radical and systematic of these teachers (Toynbee: 1973, 180 ff). His doctrine of "selflessness" was a powerful critical tool that enabled many individuals in that role-ridden, highly hierarchical society to awaken to their unique individuality irrespective of social, cultural, and religious stereotypes. It was also the cornerstone for the society-transforming institutional innovation of monasticism, which effectively created a free space beyond role-requirements and social obligations wherein individuals might pursue their self-realization.

Now, the source of the common misunderstanding of this crucial doctrine, and the key to its understanding, lies in the distinction between the "empirical self" *(vyāvahārikātma)* and the "absolute self" *(pāramārthikātma)*. Thus, "selflessness" refers to the absence of an absolute self in the empirical self. Never and in no way does it deny the existence of empirical selves. Empirical selves change, grow, decay, perfect themselves and destroy themselves, do good and do evil. "Absolute self" is merely an incoherent notion, a misuse of language, that nevertheless is often used to reinforce the false idea that growth, change, transcendence, etc. are impossible or unnecessary. Thus, empirical selves become liberated when they critically transcend habitual adherence to their hypothetical absolute selves. And this is neither more nor less than a technical way of putting the psychological process Jesus was referring to in his famous "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." Nowhere is it stated that empirical selves become liberated by obliterating themselves, just as Jesus did not say "Who loses his life for my sake is just fine being nothing"!

Nāgārjuna, in the XVIIIth Chapter of his *Wisdom*, [9] clearly expresses this process and warns against the danger of the nihilistic excess arising from mistaking the negated absolute self for the empirical self. His famous analysis begins:

> If the self were the aggregates, it would be subject to birth and destruction (i.e. the absolute self would have become empirical). If it were other than them, it would lack any aggregative capacity. (Brackets mine) (See Appendix)

That is, the hyperbolic absolute self would not retain its absoluteness if it were the same as the aggregates, which are entirely relational and non-absolute processes. And if it were something absolutely different, being non-

aggregative, it could not combine with the aggregates, hence could not be possessed by them, be contained by them, contain them, possess them, etc.; i.e. relate to them in any way. Careful scrutiny of these arguments leads to recognition of the absence of any absolute self amid all these ongoing processes. This realization is the fundamental self-transformation that is the aim of the teaching. Nāgārjuna continues:

> Without a self, where will there be property? Relieved from "self" and "property," there is no selfishness and no possessiveness.

Once free of the misconception of being or having an absolute self, the obsession with the property of that self (i.e. absolute property, starting with the body and mind) decreases, and the foci of selfishness and possessiveness are removed. This is a far cry from any obliteration of any self that was ever there, i.e. any form of an empirical self. However, there was apparently then as now the widespread tendency to absolutize the absence of the absolute self, or to fasten with addicted habituality on the perceived absence of the previously assumed hypothetical self. So Nāgārjuna explicitly cautions against this misinterpretation.

> Who is "Mine"-less and "I"-less is not found. Who sees the "mine"-less and the "I"-less does not see.

Thus, those who think that the Buddhists aim at an experience of "I"-lessness, or that they reify the experience of the absence of a non-existent entity, do not understand this verse and many others like it. The idea of personal experience beyond the personality vectors "I" and "mine" is simply incoherent. "Empirical" means "experienced by someone," whether it is a deluded empirical self or an enlightened empirical self. Nāgārjuna makes this even more explicit some verses later:

> Buddhas mention "self" and also teach "selflessness." They also teach no such thing as "self" and no such thing as "selflessness."

Thus, while "selflessness" is the key critical concept for liberating the self from the constriction of fixed absolutistic self-images, some presumed "state of selflessness" is not to be constructed apart from the state of this relative empirically self-ful world. Neither term of the polarity self and selflessness is to be reified into any sort of absolute entity.

Well then, but how about nirvana?" one may object. "'Self' can be qualified as 'absolute' and 'empirical' and annihilation of individuality avoided. But the question of 'nirvana' or extinction is not so easily settled." Now, it is granted that built into the concept of nirvana/extinction is a strong susceptibility to being misunderstood as an obliteration of individuality. In Sakyamuni Buddha's time, it was popular among an elite group of ascetics to seek escape from all suffering in a state of permanent bliss in union with godhead *(Brahman)*. The elite of the hierarchical, holistic Brahmanic society was no longer satisfied with even its dominant role at the heart of the ritual matrix. Its members wished to become the object of the sacrifice, the godhead itself, the one fixed self-role that contained all the others. The escape from the growing pluralism and complexity of society with its attendant differentiation and individuation was sought by merging each drop back into the great ocean of *Brahman*. The Buddha could not have told these seekers that there was no escape, that they were all in this together, that they had to build a new world. Rather he had to conform to their escapism to attract

them to a self-discipline that would strengthen them, free them from misconceptions, and lead them to confrontation with reality. Thus, the concept of "nirvana" was critical iron with which to hook the seeker of escape and then to lead him beyond the ultimate self-indulgence of transic, anaesthetic consciousness-obliteration, into the conscious acceptance of full maturity as a free, responsible individual. This explains why *nirvana* is never given a positive content in philosophically rigorous contexts. The Buddha remains silent, non-committal, when pressed to give an exact description of nirvana, although in exhortatory contexts he often describes it in soteriologically glowing terms. In short, since philosophically he denies that nirvana is a *place* somewhere else beyond the world, it should be understood as a critical concept and not part of any naive, dualistic ontology.

Nāgārjuna as usual makes this quite explicit.

> What is not abandoned, not obtained, not annihilated, and not perpetuated, not destroyed, and not originated -- that is called "nirvana."

Obviously this is no ordinary "object" or "state of being" or any sort of "place," but rather precisely, a soteric usage for the absolute. He goes on to critique all notions of nirvana, as either a "something" *(bhāva)*, a "nothing" *(abhāva)*, both a something and a nothing, and neither a something nor a nothing. The last of the four is particularly interesting in our context of distinguishing nirvana from the "obliteration of individuality," as it represents the denial of the mystic's reification of nirvana as an "ineffable state."

> The proposition "nirvana is neither something nor nothing" is established only when "something" and "nothing" are already established. If nirvana were found to be neither something nor nothing, by whom would that "neither-something-nor-nothing" be known?

The mystic's *via negativa* that ends up with the final reification of anin-expressible "beyond" that is still the goal and *summum bonum* (although it is neither something nor nothing, nor something and nothing — that is, beyond naive realism, nihilism, and indeterminism) is here expressly refuted.

Now Nāgārjuna, unlike some more polemical Mahayanists, does not consider himself to deviate from the essence of *Nikāya*[10] Buddhism. He takes pains to show that the non-duality he elucidates is found in the *Nikāyas* as well.

> "The Lord exists beyond cessation" is just not said. "He does not exist ..." "... both ..." "... neither ..." — none of these are said.

These are some of the well known "fourteen impredicables" *(avyākrta)*, or questions the Buddha refused to answer to a Brahman questioner, knowing that whatever he said would be misunderstood.[11] Again the mystic might think a reified ineffable is indicated, all the silences pointing to the "beyond." But Nāgārjuna anticipates this, insisting that the present reality itself is equally ineffable, transcendent, mysterious, immediate yet always elusive to our conceptualizing.

> Also "This present Lord does not exist" is just not said. "He does not exist ...," "... both ...," "... neither ...," — none of these are said.

So, if nirvana is "beyond individuality" and so on, then so is this present

situation right here "beyond individuality." *And if you maintain that nirvana is an empirical extinction, you cannot account for action, and causation, etc. even provisionally,* but are logically stuck in taking the position that realized Buddhists are not only *ultimately* self-annihilative, but also are immediately, utterly autistic, not present in any present moment or place. As this is patently absurd, the alternative is to acknowledge that the focus of Buddhist ethics on "nirvana as the only peace" (4th epitome)[12] is not some eventual "obliteration of individuality" which makes all mundane morality and action etc. "ultimately senseless," but rather the quality of the individual's experience and participation right here and now. Liberation is thus not a disappearance, as Nāgārjuna states in his *Ratnāvali* (Vaidya; 1962, 360) Nāgārjuna; 1975, p 27).

> Ultimately the world cannot through nirvana disappear. Asked whether it had an end, the Conqueror was silent.

It is rather the freedom of the living moment from all conceptual constructs habitually imposed upon it to stereotype it with general patterns and haze over the clarity and exquisiteness of its unprecedented uniqueness *(tattvam)*, its suchness *(tathata)*. And it is also the concomitant autonomy of the individual to participate with the utmost sensitivity in that moment's actuality. But I run ahead of the argument here.

Nāgārjuna climaxes his critique:

> There is no distinction at all between samsara and nirvana. Nor is there any distinction at all between nirvana and samsara. The limit of nirvana is the limit of samsara. Even the subtlest thing between them is not found. The views of that beyond cessation as the extremes, etc. and as permanence etc. all are based on (notions of) "nirvana" (conceived as) "final end" or "point of origin."

In short, nirvana is not a final conclusion. There well may be a further objection here, that "this might fit Mahayana nondualism, and Nāgārjuna may even think his view is at the heart of the *Nikāyas* as well, but the Theravadins, Mahasamkhikas, etc. certainly did not, they saw nirvana as a final escape." There is some force to this argument, hence I initially admitted above that nirvana was an intentional approximation of an escape-state. Nevertheless, it is not so hard to understand that it is not merely a negative state. The most elementary consideration of the cosmology of the *Nikāyas* shows clearly that nirvana is not a mystical supra-individual absorption in either infinitudes, voids, or ineffabilities. For, the four states of the formless realm are precisely states of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing whatsoever, and beyond conception and non-conception.[13] And, it is clearly stated both in Śākyamuni's biography and in the Abhidharma that none of these states, these various types of "obliterations of individuality," are themselves nirvana. Rather, nirvana was attained by Śākyamuni when he went beyond obliteration, that is, beyond the four form realm contemplations and beyond the four formless realm absorptions. Obviously, since the word "beyond" already lost its spatial meaningfulness when he left the form realm, it is doubly metaphorical here, and nirvana is not another "fourth realm." Finally, there are many texts of the Nikāyas we could pursue here and note that they do not confirm any preconception about "obliteration of individuality" but this is not the occasion.

Having made the crux of the matter clear, however, I hope now we can

study the complexities of Buddhist ethics free of the qualm about some final obliteration or extinction awaiting all and rendering their ethical activities "senseless" in the end. Let me add to this merely Anagarika Govinda's exquisite capping phrase, that,

> We are still captured by crude similes of quantitative magnitudes, in place of qualitative values, when we compare the ultimate experience of liberation with "the drop that slips into the shining sea." I would be more appropriate — though paradoxical from the viewpoint of three-dimensional logic — to say that the "sea slips into the shining drop." [20] (Govinda: 1977, 28).

3. *Ethical Analysis*

To return to the analysis of the ethical systems, let us go back to the diagram of types of persons targeted in the Buddhist teachings, attending particularly to the right-hand column, in which I have made a composite of the different personality types drawing from all the formulae.

The first thing to notice is that, from both Asanga and Nichiren, we have the "classless" and the "blind" person, which is to say, the "non-person," the nonindividual, the person whose ego has no empirical self-differentiation, because of infancy or of psychosis. This is obviously an extreme pathological condition. Indeed, it is probably that there is no living being at all quite utterly devoid of ego-sense, and hence this category is rather a limiting case. Incidentally, note that those who would insist that the goal of all this is "self-obliteration," are tacitly aligning the "Buddha" category with the "non-person" category, hence insinuating that the goal of all Buddhists is the pathological condition of "egolessness" (indeed a common mistranslation of "selflessness," which I myself in early years of Buddhist studies used to be guilty of): i.e. that nirvana is a sickness. Far from that, the Buddha is said to have a "Diamond Individuality," *(Vajrātma)*, a compassion-made personality that is hard as diamond and indomitable in its will to alleviate the sufferings of sentient beings. But I will return to this point after discussion of the intermediate stages.

To begin with the detailed description, we encounter at the basic level in the Buddhist civilizations the laws of moral behaviour, which are to be obeyed in the pristine deontological sense. In this sense the Buddha's edicts *(pravacana)* are supremely authoritative in determining right and wrong. The fortunate person who hears of these laws and obeys them rises in the world to the higher human and divine stations, all of his practice and evolution categorized under the heading of "ascendence" *(abhyudaya)* (contrasted with "transcendence" *(niḥsreyasa)*). Important here is the ten-fold path of unrighteous acts, usually phrased prohibitively, in proper deontological rule-pattern. They are, 1) not to take life, 2) not to take what is not given, 3) not to commit sexual misconduct, 4) not to lie, 5) not to cause dissention, 6) not to speak harshly, 7) not to chatter foolishly, 8) not to covet, 9) not to harbor malice, and 10) not to hold wrong views. The first three restrain physical unrighteous acts, the next four verbal ones, and the last three mental unrighteous acts. Note that action can be mental and verbal as well as physical. Note also that these acts all strongly impinge on others' material and spiritual welfare. Obedience of these rules leads to heaven and human birth, disobedience to hells, described in vivid and terrifying detail,

ghost realms, and bestial life forms. These rules are fundamental for the "inferior person" in Atisa's "three person" scheme, namely the person who seeks his own material welfare, ranked according to whether the time perspective is for the one life only or for future lives also. The whole legalistic metaphor this pattern of ethics for the inferior person uses is completed in the figure of Yama, the great judge of the dead, who meets the soul of the departed sinner in the "between" state, who has messengers who recite the sins and virtues, and whose minions apply the torments of hell or mandate a destiny in one or another of the six realms of life.

Now the next level of person, called "mediocre" by Atisa, is one who realizes the essential misery of all life states and seeks his own liberation. He is even more aware than the inferior person of the terrors of the life-cycle, so much so that a brief sojourn in heaven does not make up for the states of hell with their unimaginable torments. Thus, he shifts from the deontological mode to a more teleological one, considering that he can control his own destiny, is a "maker" rather than an "obeyer," and can attain a final good, a *summum bonum (niḥsreyasa)* of transcendence in nirvana. Of course, teleology is always mixed with deontology, as no one obeys rules without a basic belief that it is best for him to do so as well as right for him. And the mediocre person still obeys the rules set forth by the Buddha, not only to avoid evil action but also to attain nirvana. Still there is a tendency to move from obedience to creativeness, from a concern with the right to a concern with the good, the ultimate good, accessible through a rigorous ascetic regime of self-cultivation. The limitation of the teleological component here is that the mediocre person does not aspire to deliver other living beings from the misery of the life-cycle, believing that he has not the ability nor responsibility to do that, and that his best way of adding to the general level of goodness in the world is to at least liberate himself and cease inadvertently to harm others. He also considers that he may set a good example for them and thus help them indirectly, as well as teaching them and spreading the good news of the Buddha's Dharma during his lifetime here as a mendicant. The last point here to stress is that arhats, the saints of *Nikāya* Buddhism, are not included among the mediocre persons, since they have already attained their own personal liberation, and hence are not among the seekers of individual liberation. It is logical then, and yet I do not recall seeing this explicitly stated except by the Prāsaṇgikas in another context, that arhat/saints must fit in the next category of persons.[14]

The third category of persons is that of the great persons, which includes principally bodhisattvas, enlightenment Heroes, and secondarily and perhaps to their surprise arhats/saints. The bodhisattvas are indeed a kind of spiritual utilitarian, as they aspire to a cosmic enterprise of world-transformation, changing the universe of suffering of six realms into a pure land or "buddha-land," such as the famous Sukhavati of Amitābha.[15] Their mode is thus teleological, their goal being the supreme general welfare as consummated in the collective attainment of a buddha-land existence by all sentient beings, insofar as they resolve themselves not to attain unexcelled perfect enlightenment or Buddhahood until that time. Their metaphor is thus that of the creator, heroically active in the creation of universal goodness. No longer primarily concerned with the obedience to laws, Dharma for them now means transcendent Truth, in the quest of which they dedicate themselves to fulfilling what we might call, borrowing from Urmson, the "ultra-obligations"[16] of the "transcendences" *(paramita)*, the six known as charity, morality, tolerance, industry, meditation, and wisdom. The first is realized in the giving away of everything including body, life, family, and prized possessions, as is exemplified in numerous former lives *(Jātakas)* of the Buddha as Vessantara, etc.; the second in a total embodiment of moral living, as in the Mahabodhi life and others, the third in total acceptance of others' wrong-doing without any resentment or anger, as in the life of the ascetic unjustly dismembered by the king, known as Kṣāntirādin; the fourth in effort toward the attainment of the fulfillment of the individual and the general welfare in Buddhahood;[17] the fifth in uninterrupted concentration on that aim in all circumstances; and the sixth in the direct experience of the ultimate reality of all things. Each of these transcendences is said to contain all the others, and wisdom, the sixth, is said to be the eyes of the others. Thus, the ability to give oneself away, body and soul and life, for the sake of others is not gained until the nature of ultimate reality is cognized, and the nature of ultimate reality is not realized while retaining any selfish possessiveness in regard to the subtlest atom of the self.

In regard to interactions with others, a bodhisattva practices the four social policies *(samgrahavastu)* of giving gifts, speaking pleasantly, conforming to others' purposes, and accomplishing others' aims. The Mahayana Scriptures contain innumerable other categorizations of the bodhisattva deeds, carried on in the ten bodhisattva stages. In our context, the extreme teleological nature of "great person" ethics is quite apparent, becoming as I said almost utilitarian in such deliberations as those of Asanga, when, in the *Śīla* chapter of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi,* he mentions that a bodhisattva can at exceptional times kill, or steal, commit adultery, or lie, if his motivation is to benefit sentient beings, and if his causal awareness is such that he can prevent a greater amount of suffering on the part of his victim in future lives by thus depriving him of his present life, etc., and this the bodhisattva may do, volunteering as it were to go himself into the hells in retributive effect of his sin (Asanga: Ms, 430). Here is a quite utilitarian "calculus of pain," in Berger's phrase (Berger: 1976, 3), with even some slight potential for being worked up into a "just war" theory. Perhaps the reason such was never done in the 2500-year history of Buddhism, that is, no formally legitimated crusade was ever engaged in, is that this type of multi-life spiritual utilitarianism is only practicable for the "great beings" completely free of hatred and wrong motivations, as otherwise they would only go straight into the hells and any positive result of the calculus of pain would be precluded. (Theoretically, only an army of bodhisattvas could wage war meritoriously, with never an angry thought, and such has never happened on this planet.)

Finally we come to the Buddha stage, to the Buddha-person, which almost includes bodhisattvas on the 8th stage and above, as well as possibly the saints, whose wisdom is said to equal that of 8th stage bodhisattvas, though their bodies are vastly inferior due to their lesser cultivation of compassion. And here the categories of deontology and teleology no longer serve. Clearly, we do not want to rank a Buddha back with the non-individuated infant pre-person. Yet how do we categorize the ethical system followed by such persons? Here the category of "responsibility" developed by H. Richard Niebuhr seems to serve very well to convey the sense of the Buddha-ethic. A

Buddha has, in the Kantian language, a self-legislating will of absolute rightness, being a Body of Truth, and a Body of Beatitude, respectively the fulfillment of self-interest and fulfillmet of others' interests in perfect wisdom and perfect compassion. He is thus incapable of willing anything unrighteous. In his case there is no question of obedience to any other will, as his own will in itself is pure rightness. On the other hand, a Buddha can have no goal, since total perfection for himself and for others has already been attained in his attainment of Buddhahood, and therefore he has nothing to make, nothing to create, and hence there is no question of any teleology for him. Infinite goodness is universally present to such a one and thus is no longer quantifiable, although he retains precise sensitivity to the measurings and confusions of others. Therefore, the "right" and the "good" having been perfectly achieved, the "fitting" is the only way of expressing his activity, and "responsibility" as interactive responsiveness to the needs and requirements of others is his ethical mode. This language of Niebuhr's (which grew in the Christian context out of his dissatisfaction with the tortuous attempts to read deontology into the radical and essential statements of the Christian ethic on the one hand, and the shoddy capitulation to materialism in settling for teleological utilitarianism on the other), fits uncannily well with attempts to describe a Buddha's ethic. *Tathatā*, suchness, is a name for the ultimate reality, conveying the absoluteness and uniqueness of each moment and situation, and *Tathāgata*, a Buddha's generic name, means "One Who Realized Uniqueness," hence one whose "fittingness" is consummate.

The important point to recognize here is that a Buddha is not distinguished by his omnipotent aloofness from the social world, having achieved some sort of ultimate isolation from which he yet can manipulate others. Nor is he distinguished by having merged with the social others into an undifferentiated mass, merely becoming anything-everything else, hence adding nothing to it. Rather, a Buddha has achieved the fullest *individuality*, the "ego-self whose nature is the diamond of the knowledge of emptiness," having emptied himself of all conceptual stereotypical structurings and having thereby become immeasureably alive with each unique cosmic scene, as well as the fullest *sensitivity,* delicate, empathetic consideration of the states and needs of specific, individual others. This kind of state is what is meant by defining Buddhahood as the perfection of wisdom and compassion.

To underscore this new image of Buddhahood, it may perhaps help to recount the story of Asanga, the great scholar and saint of the Gupta era (c. 350 - 430 C. E.) India, in his encounter with the future Buddha, Maitreya, "The Loving One."

Coming from the great center of monastic learning, Taxashila, in northwest India, near modern Peshawar, Asanga left the abbotship of the major monastic university and went to the mountains to practice ascetic contemplation. He considered that the world was fast going downhill, the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha had been beneficial to many, but all too many in his decadent age eight centuries later were no longer able to realize them. His vow was to purify himself and pray to the future Buddha Maitreya, believed by pious millenial Buddhist to be dwelling in the Tushita heaven while awaiting the time to enact his own twelve docetic acts of a Buddha. For three years, the great scholar prayed and contemplated in a remote cave under

ascetic conditions of the utmost rigor. No result. Discouraged, he descended the mountain, until he came to where a man was rubbing a piece of iron with a cloth. "What are you doing?" "Making needles," said the man and showed Asanga a stack of thin, sharp needles. Thus inspired with greater patience, he returned to his cave for another three long fruitless years. Again leaving he saw a bird making a nest on a rocky ledge, and notices that where its wing-feathers brushed the cliffside as it came in for landings with twigs in its beak, the rock was deeply cleft. Again repenting his own lack of endurance, he returned for a third three year stretch. Still no sign of Maitreya answered his ardent invocations. After nine years he again wandered forth in utter dejection. This time he paused by a mountain stream, and, stooping to drink from a great bowl carved in the rock, he observed that it had been formed by water-droplets dripping slowly, one by one. Once more his resolve was restored, and he returned to pursue his goal with a renewed vigor, certain this time that he would not falter before beholding Maitreya's face. But the next three years were an unbroken monotonous desolation.

Finally after a full twelve years of arduous strivings, something snapped inside the man. He had been deluded, he decided. Either the story of the Buddha Maitreya was pious myth, or else he himself was so steeped in sins Maitreya disdained to appear to him. In any case, this present life of his was barren and futile, and obviously any further dedication to this pursuit was a waste of time. So he might as well wander on back to civilization and try at least to sweep the monastery, or be of service in small ways, perhaps to return to more lofty pursuits in some future life. So, a broken man, so despaired he felt numbed, beyond any tremor of anguish, he strayed down the mountain, aimlessly, wandering he knew not where. After an indeterminate time and distance, he came upon the outskirts of a town, and was passing through the refuse dumping area, when he met a bitch who was whining in pain to catch his attention. The horrid sight brought him out of his daze, she was scabby and skinny, practically all her hair had fallen out, and her hindquarters was a single suppurating sore of raw flesh, in whose already gangrenous parts live maggots could be seen crawling and writhing. Barely alive, she yet whined imploringly at Asanga. Wasn't there something he could do? Having hardly seen a living creature for twelve years, he was horrified and yet absorbed by this sight. He sat down in the dust next to the dog and stared at her thinking what to do. "If I scrape off the maggots and wash her wounds, perhaps they might have a chance to heal. Ah, but they all the writhing worms themselves will perish horribly in the dry dust." Then, he had an idea. "I will cut off a slice of my own flesh, from the little meat left on my thigh, and place the maggots on that for the time being, while I clean the bitch." Taking a broken shard from the refuse pile, he immediately cut off a slice of his meagre flesh and laid it on the ground next to the bitch. He then reached down with thumb and forefinger to pick off the worms one by one. He found it impossible to grasp them without damaging them, but after some consideration had a further idea. They would be attracted by the warmth and moisture of his tongue and would crawl onto it. He then could spit them gently onto the thigh meat, one by one. Inspired by this plan, he stuck out his tongue and leaned down over the bitch's hindquarters. When really close to the putrid flesh, the stench and the sight turned even his ascetic stomach, and he had to close his eyes, though resolutely reaching out

with his extended tongue. Suddenly there was a noise before his face like an electric short-circuit or buzzing hum. He drew back with a start, and opened his eyes, to behold, of course, the glorious radiant vision of the future Buddha Maitreya, standing enhaloed in a rainbow globe of light, about the same size as the previous sick bitch. Overcome with emotion and joy, he prostrated himself countless times, reciting the Lord's praises and bubbling over with gratitude. He then knelt quietly before the smiling Lord and gazed lovingly upon him, losing all track of time. Finally coming to his senses, he addressed Maitreya: "My Lord, overwhelmed as I am by your radiance, I must ask you a single question. What kept you away for so long? I have done nothing but fix my thoughts on you for twelve long years, and yet you granted me no meeting until today." The Lord Maitreya replied, "Dear son, but I have been right with you all along, right before you, just you couldn't see me. I am love, and you lacked compassion until this moment. Without compassion, one cannot see love. If you find this hard to believe, take my upon your shoulder through the town, and you shall see. Go ahead." Asanga took the globe of light upon his shoulder and rushed off ecstatically through the town. "Behold! Behold! The future Buddha, Maitreya the Loving One has showed himself to us. Love rules in the world! Rejoice! Rejoice!" And so on. To his shock, the townsfolk did not catch his enthusiasm but, after staring in wonder, became angry with him and drove him out of town with stones and insults. And naturally. For they say a bleeding, emaciated naked yogi with a putrid bitch on his shoulder shouting and raving about the Lord of Love! Dejected, he departed with the Lord, encouraged finally by the fact that an old charwoman at the edge of town saw a single lotus foot on his shoulder and offered him some bedraggled flowers. As the story goes, Asanga went with Maitreya magically to Tushita heaven, where he was dictated five books containing a preview, as it were, of the future Buddha's teaching, to be received at large in the world not until over 100,000 years have passed. These five books are greatly treasured in Mahayana Buddhism, along with the voluminous and extraordinary elucidations composed by Saint Asanga. But I have digressed, perhaps out of my own love for this remarkable story.

The point of the story for our purposes, for the discussion of responsibility, unpacked as responsiveness, consideration, accountability, and solidarity, (Niebuhr: 1962, 61 ff.), is that true compassion is not some sort of mere rule-obedience, "Oh, I should help this bitch because Buddha said so!", nor some teleological, purposive calculation, "Oh, how can I accomplish the greatest good of the greatest number of dogs — let me ignore this hopeless case and found an A.S.P.C.A. (not that more ASPCA's are not needed)," but rather action generated from the total sensitivity that compels full responsiveness to an immediate situation of suffering, consideration as to how best to accomplish the best response, accountability as willingnes to give of oneself if necessary, and solidarity in being able to sacrifice joyously for a larger good. Of course, Asanga's stage here was that of a high bodhisattva, not that of a Buddha, where the parameters of "the situation", or th range of total sensitivity, have expanded beyond conceivability, and therefore we can never say with certainty, that a Buddha will definitely act such and such a way in such and such a circumstance. Thus it is said that a Buddha's being is

utterly inconceivable, however much he may be described as perfect this or that, or likened to anything in metaphor, he will transcend the definition and elude comparison, this conveyed in his body by the invisibility of the top of his *ushnisha*, even by the gods.

I hear the rumbling here of some further objections, namely that, "Well, here we are back in some ineffable state of Buddhahood, at least a kind of "supra-individuality," beyond all categories and even metaphors. Rather "situational" in thrust, quite unlike the tenor of our fundamental Western deontological mode of ultimate obedience to the commands of God!"

In response to this, I am drawn first to quote from Maitreyanatha's verse in the *Ornament of the Mahayana Scriptures* (Asanga: 1970, 50):

> Buddahood is not a unity, due to variety of (beings') heredities, non-meaninglessness (of stores), appropriateness (of fulfilling beings), and to beginninglessness. It is not a plurality because of (their) non-difference in the stainless ground.

Thus, individual beings enjoy their own individual Buddhahoods, as Beatific and Incarnational Bodies, while not missing the transcendent experience of perfect supra-individual integrated stability and peace as the Body of Truth. Nothing predicated of transcendent being can capture its essence. No metaphor can exhaust it, not even that of responsiveness, sensitivity, compassion, and so on. In a sense, any metaphor loses its normal meaning when drawn out to its ultimate or limiting case usage. And we should also take care not to attach a negative to such transcendentality when we run out of positives.

Just because the term "individual" is strained to the breaking point with Buddhahood, why do we suppose its contrary "universal," fits any better? When "finite" no longer serves, why should we reify "infinite"? We should rather heed Wittgenstein's rule that, whenever we start to get fixated on one side of a polarity, when its opposite has lost all nearing, we can be quite sure we have become "bewitched by language," which has "gone on holiday" and is taking us on a joy-ride or reificatory confusion. Thus, nirvana may be "supra-individual" all right, but so is it "supra-universal." Buddhahood may be beyond multiplicity and differentiation a Body of Truth, alright, but so is it beyond oneness and non-differentiation as Bodies of Beatitude. Ultimate reality may be "beyond self" (fixed and frozen), but so is it "beyond selflessness," as Nāgārjuna has said above. Hence, a Buddha enjoys a "Diamond Self," Nichiren's "Blessed Buddhas" see golden Sakyamunis in every letter of his scriptures, and the "parinirvanized," somewhat mummified, Buddha, Prabhutaratna, is eternally present in his gigantic jeweled stupa that springs high out of the ground whenever the Wheel of the *White Lotus Scripture* is turned. Buddhahood is the *personal* enjoyment of inconceivable beatitude for the long-suffering bodhisattva, and not merely some anti-climatic, anaesthetic blank, and "experience" implies individuated boundaries, even in the pleasure of letting them go. So much for the first part of the objection.

Regarding the second part, the bravo "Western" sense of ultimate deontology seems to rest more on the vibrato of dramatic assertion than on any meaningful language. Let us look at some of its *loci classici* with some analytic care.

> Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy mind, and love thy neighbour as thyself. This is all the Law and the Prophets.

Where is the notion of "obedience" here? Is it in the mention of the "Law"? But is this not mentioned as a critique of the Pharisaic, literalistic, legalistic, rigid cleaving to the letter of the laws, even when this may prove harmful in individual cases, as in the exceptional case of the crucifixion of Jesus himself for that matter? Certainly this is a statement to be obeyed, a Word of God through his Son, but the fulfilling of this Law, the obeying of this Word carries the obeyer beyond the rule/ruled tension in obedience into a state of realization of mutual love/grace with God, whence a loving responsibility for the neighbor. "Obedience" thus outstrips its own binary meaningfulness, as rule and ruled are fused in the harmony of love.

Further, Augustine's "Love God and do what you will"; Bernard's fourth level of integration, termed "Love of self for the sake of God"; Luther's radical critique of any means-ends orientation of works aiming at salvation — all these as limiting-case, ultimate usages of the metaphor of "obedience," and take one beyond any sort of meaningful sense of "deontology."

Finally, the same argument can be made with regard to Kant's supposedly deontologically paradigmatic "categorical imperative," the most succinct and philosophically clear-cut formulation of an ultimately deontological ethics. In fact, he loses all touch with the necessary polarity-tension involved in obedience to law when he actually described it. As he says himself, "A perfectly good will, therefore, would be equally subject to objective laws of the good, but it could not be conceived as constratined by them to act in accord with them, ... Thus, no imperative hold for the divine will, or more generally, for a holy will. The 'ought' here is out of place, for the volition of itself is necessarily in unison with the law." His further use of language such as "self-legislative will" etc. exhibits precisely the same sense of being quite beyond the tension between rule and ruled that is essential to the metaphor of "obedience" at the heart of deontology.

Thus, while the deontological aspect of Western ethics holds, just as does that of the Buddhist ethics, for the "inferior" and "mediocre" persons, as well as for the "neophyte" and "great" persons, it loses its applicability, just as in the Buddhist case, for the advanced great persons, the prophets, the "saints," God and His Incarnation. The reason that so many have assumed Western ethics to be "ultimately deontological" is that any person's actual attainment of "holiness of will," through actual reception of the Lord's grace through Christ's intercession, and subsequent manifestation of that divine will to the neighbor, is *automatically ruled out.* Thus, as Kant says, his imperatives are inevitable as "formulas expressing the relation of objective laws of volition in general to the subjective imperfection of the will of this or that rational being, e.g. the human will."

And thus, Christ's "Kingdom of God," Kant's "Kingdom of ends" are only abstractions, never in principle realizable by humans, according to the view that claims the ultimacy of deontology in the West.

But, this seems too extreme. God would be depreciated utterly if we were to suppose that He could not incorporate humanity into His Kingdom, just as Buddha could be accused of callousness if he did not openly show the way to nirvana, share his own Beatitude with suffering living beings. Christ's

mission would have been in vain, Augustine's injunction facetious, and Bernard's fourth level absurd.

Ah, but if you now say that "True, the rarest individual may realize perfection in God through Christ, but only so rarely. The majority always need laws and must be unquestioningly obedient to them in order to live tolerably with their imperfections of will."

I grant that. But then I must insist, the same holds true about the realization of nirvana, arhat-sainthood, not to mention Buddhahood. So why then do you persist in making invidious comparisons, pointing to the highest realization in Buddhism, beyond obedience, creativeness, hard to fathom but somehow still responsive, and comparing it with Western everyday imperfect life as fundamentally deontological, forgetting there ever was a Christ or a Saint in the West?

But now that this is drawn more clearly, perhaps there will be less of this approach and a new level of comparative studies will become possible.

Amherst College

Diagram 1

alienated individual	refrain from evil	classless	lowly man	blind man	nonindividuated "nonperson"
stream-winner	do good		child-like	ordinary sees physical letters	materialistic one-life-only self-seeker
once-returner	rely on dualism	disciple-class	infant-like fearless	escapist sees emptiness	spiritualist heavenly-future self-seeker
non-returner		hermit-class	phenomenologist	mediocre person self-escaper	renunciate escapist nirvanic self-seeker through authority
saint	rely on nondualism	bodhisattva class	karma-free mind		renunciate escapist self-seeker hermit
hermit Buddha	profound	tolerance	Mahayana mind of compassion	bodhisat sees numberless realizations	self-fulfilled saint turning to social goals
				great person universal liberator	bodhisattva aspirational
			of inconceivability (*PP*)		bodhisattva functional stages 1 - 7
			mind in unique harmony (*Lotus*)		bodhisattva culminational stages 8 - 10
			Profound exoteric non-immutable (*Avatam.*)		Buddhas non-unitary non-multiple
perfect Buddha			glorious esoteric mind	Buddhas see golden Sakyamunis	supra-individuals i.e. "selfless" diamond-individuals (*Vajrasattva*)

Diagram 2

Augustine	Asanga	Composite
aggressor		non-person materialist
over-reactor	small person	
even retaliator		spiritualist
ameliorative retaliator	middle person	renunciate escapist
non-retaliator		saint
mild self-sufferer		bodhisattva
	great person	
even self-sufferer		bodhisattva saint
total self-sufferer		culminational bodhisattva
God?		Buddha?

Notes

1. Since these words are thematically important, the specialist might appreciate seeing the original Sanskrit (Vaidya: 1960, 310): *yathaiva vaiyākaraṇo mātṛkāmapi paṭhayet/ buddho 'vadattathā dharmaṃ vineyānām yathākṣamam/ keṣāṃcidavadaddharmaṃ pāpebhyo vinivrttaye/ keṣāṃcit-puṇyasiddhyarthaṃ kesamcid dvayanisritam/ dvayanisritamekesam gambhiram bhirubhisanam/ sunyatakarunagarbham edesam bodhisadhanam/.* The text in context in its English translation may be found in the reference given in the text. The translation given here is my own.

2. See diamgram 1, below. This typology seems typical of the *Nikaya* Buddhist schools, or 'Hinayanists.'

3. The Vijnanavada school of Mahayana Buddhism traces its origin to the Buddha's teachings recorded in the *Samdhinirmocana* and *Lankavatara* Scriptures, as systematically developed by the great philosopher Asanga (c. 350 - 430 C. E.) in numerous works. His school developed epistemology and psychology to a remarkably sophisticated degree, emphasizing non-dualism through a recognition of the predominantly constitutive role of mind in nature -- whence its name "consciousness-only" school.

4. Asanga's works generally employ this classificatory scheme. For full discussion, see Ruegg: 1969, 455 ff.

5. Chih I (538 - 597) founded the T'ien T'ai school of Chinese Buddhism, and elaborated a sophisticated typology of beings, worlds, stages of realization and so forth (Hurvitz: 1962). Kukai may have been inspired in his categories by Chih I (Hakeda: 1974). See diagram 1, below.

6. My attention was first drawn to this passage by my colleague, David W. Wills, of Amherst College, during a colloquium we taught together in 1978. Its importance was emphasized by my student, Michael Van Kleeck, in a term paper written in that course.

7. Again I must thank Professor Wills for suggesting the usefulness of the third category developed in this book.

8. The holders of such views are, for the moment, best identified by themselves. My "quotes" only indicate typical statements, not those especially of any one individual, as such views have been quite widespread, and their holders usually do not intend any racist implications, however inexorably they may follow.

9. The following quotes from Nagarjuna's book called *Wisdom,* the basic formulation of the Middle Way *(Prajna nama mulamadhyamaka - karika)* are from my own translation of the XVIII and XXIVth chapters, the original Sanskrit found in Vaidya: 1960; the complete chapters given in the appendix.

10. "Nikaya Buddhism" is a coinage of Prof. Masatoshi Nagatomi of Harvard University, who suggested it to me as a usage for the eighteen schools of pre-Mahayana Indian Buddhism, to avoid the term "Hinayana Buddhism" which is found offensive by some members of the Theravada tradition.

11. These impredicable questions are namely, whether or not the Buddha 1) exists after death, 2) does not, 3) both does and does not 4) neither does nor does not; whether or not the world 5) is limited, 6) is infinite, 7) is both, 8) is neither, 9) has a beginning, 10) has not, 11) both has and has not a beginning, 12) neither has nor has not a beginning; whether or not the self 13) is the same as the body, or 14) is different from the body.

12. The famous four "epitomes" *(uddāna)* of the Dharma are 1) all created things are impermanent, 2) all contaminated things are miserable, 3) all things are selfless, and 4) nivana is the only peace.

13. These four "realms" are common knowledge to all Buddhists, as meditationally achieved realms beyond the highest heavens. Their Sanskrit names are *akasanantyayatana, vijnanananantyayatana, akimcanyayatana,* and *naivasamjnanaivasamjnayatana.* They are described in detail in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosa*, wherein, furthermore they are distinguished from mere unconsciousness *(asamjnika)* and a special "unconsciousness-trance" *(asamjnisama-patti).* See de la Vallee Poussin: 1971.

14. Of course, the Scriptural basis for this view of the saint (arhat) is in the *Lotus Scripture,* with its doctrine of "one vehicle", where the Buddha insists that all living beings eventually become Buddhas, and that there is no obliterative cessation short of perfect Buddhahood. The Mahayana philosophical schools, however, tended to depreciate the Nikaya Buddhist saint, thinking that his liberation was only a facsimile, so to speak, and that he had to go back to the beginning as a bodhisattva. This tendency was strongly criticized by Candrakirti, who considered it sacrilegious, an abandonment of Dharma, and insisted that saints were truly liberated, proceeding to Buddhahood voluntarily as bodhisattvas in heavenly realms. See Thurman: forthcoming, V.

15. This heavenly realm Buddha-land is exquisitely described in the *Sukhavativyuha Scripture* (Cowell:

16. The references are to some of the most famous *Jatakas,* rendered most beautifully by Aryasura, in his *Garland of Life-Stories.* (Aryasura:

17. This is a literal translation of the famous *mantra* of the *Guhyasamajatantra,* used in most of the Tantric rituals; *Om sunvatajnanavajrasvabhavatmako 'ham.*

Appendix

Chapters XVIII and XXV of Nagarjuna's Wisdom

XVIII -- *The Analysis of the Self*

1. If the self were the aggregates, it would be subject to birth and destruction. If it were other than the aggregates, it would lack an aggregative capacity.
2. Without a self, where would there be property? Relieved from "self" and "property," there is no selfishness and no possessiveness.
3. Who is "mine"-less and "I"-less is not found. Who sees the "mine"-less and the "I"-less does not see.
4. Where "I" and "mine" are destroyed, internal as well as external appropriation are destroyed; and through its destruction, birth is destroyed.
5. Ending of action and passion brings liberation. Action and passion come from thought-constructions, themselves from mental fabrications; but fabrications end in emptiness.
6. The Buddhas mention "self," and also teach "selflessness." They also teach no such thing as "self" and no such thing as "selflessness."
7. The expressible ceases where ceases the range of mind. Ultimate reality is unoriginated and undestroyed, just like nirvana.
8. The Buddha's Doctrine is that all is reality, all is unreality, all is both reality and unreality, and all is neither reality not unreality.
9. The definition of "reality" is "non-dependent on another, peace, unfabricated by fabrications, nonconceptual, and undifferentiated."
10. Whatever exists dependent on something is not the same as nor different from its dependee. Therefore, there is neither annihilation nor permanence.
11. The nectar of the Doctrine of the Buddhas, the World-Saviors, is "non-unity, non-plurality, non-annihilation, and non-permanence."
12. When perfect Buddhas no longer manifest and even Disciples have ceased, then, from non-association, flourishes the intuitive wisdom of Hermit Buddhas.

XXV -- *The Analysis of Nirvana*

1. (Opponent:) "If all this were empty, there would be neither creation nor destruction; whose then is nirvana, through abandonment or cessation?"
2. (Nagarjuna:) If all this were not empty, there would be neither creation nor destruction; whose then is nirvana, through abandonment or cessation?
3. What is not abandoned, not obtained, not annihilated and not perpetuated, not ceased and not originated -- that is called "nirvana."
4. Nirvana is not a something, marked by old age and death. It is imperative that existence not lack old age and death.

5. If nirvana were a something, it then would be created. For no sort of uncreated something can anywhere be found.
6. If nirvana were a something, how could it be non-acquisitive? For no nirvana-something is found without acquisition.
7. If nirvana is not a something, how can it be a nothing? Where nirvana is not something, it is not found there as nothing.
8. If nirvana were a nothing, how could it be non-acquisitive? For no nirvana-nothing is discovered without acquisition.
9. Just transmigratory life, acquisitive and dependent, is taught to be nirvana without acquisition and dependence.
10. The Teacher proclaimed the abandonment of both something and of nothing. Thus it is wrong to designate either a something or a nothing as "nirvana."
11. If nirvana were both a something and a nothing, then freedom would be both something and nothing; and that is unreasonable.
12. If nirvana were both something and nothing, it would not be non-acquisitional, since both of these are acquisitional.
13. How could nirvana be both something and nothing? Nirvana is uncreated, while something and nothing are created.
14. How could nirvana be both something and nothing? Those two never exist together, just like light and darkness.
15. The proposition "nirvane is neither something nor nothing" only when "something" and "nothing" are established already.
16. If nirvana were found as "neither something nor nothing," by whom would that neither something nor nothing be understood?
17. "The Lord exists beyond cessation" is just not said. "He does not exist ...," "He both exists ...," "He neither exists ..." -- none of these are said.
18. Also "the present Lord exists" is just not said. "He does not exist ..," "both ...," and "... neither ...," -- none of these are said.
19. Samsara is not at all distinguished from nirvana. Nirvana is not at all distinguished from nirvana.
20. What is the limit of nirvana is the limit of samsara; not even the subtlest interval between them is to be found at all.
21. The views concerning the beyond after cessation, finitude and so forth, and eternality and so forth -- all these reify nirvana, ultimate extremes, and primordial extremes.
22. All things being empty, what is infinite and what finite? What both infinite and finite, and what neither finite not infinite?
23. What is just that? What something else? What permanent and what impermanent? What both permanent and impermanent and what neither?
24. Bliss supreme is the surcease of all apprehensions, the surcease of all perplexities. No Doctrine at all was ever taught any one by any Buddha!

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YAO HSING'S DISCOURSE ON MAHAYANA BUDDHIST CONTROVERSY IN EARLY FIFTH-CENTURY CHINA

Whalen W. Lai

Included in Tao-hsüan's *Kuang Hung-ming-chi* is a little-noticed "Discourse on Various Profound Meanings in the Buddha's Teaching" by Yao Hsing, [1] ruler of the Later Ch'in during 383 - 415. The royal treatise seems simplistic; the text itself is corrupted. The piece has attracted little attention from scholars.[2] After all, Yao Hsing is better known as the barbarian ruler who patronized Kumārajīva the translator than for any original thinking himself. That is still true but the present study will introduce the said *Discourse* as an important signpost of the times. It reflects both significant institutional changes in the patronage of the faith and some unsettling philosophical controversy in the early fifth century. To unravel these requires more than stylistic philology and more than doctrinaire Buddhology. One must relive the tensions of that era.

The *Discourse* is actually an exchange of opinions between Yao Hsing and the king and Yao Sung, his brother and Marquis of An-ch'eng. It began when the king, upon the last wish of the Empress, sent to the Marquis a pearl-laden statue of the Buddha. It was presumably a treasured devotional object that belonged to her, and the gift might have been to compensate a similar one Yao Sung had yielded as a gift to the famed gentry monk, Hui-yuan of Lu-shan, in the South in 405 at the urging of the king.[3] It seems that Yao Hsing happened to discover, at the bottom of a drawer, some dated thoughts he had once had concerning matters in the Buddha-Dharma. One of these concerns the matter of the Three Times (past, present, future) which he had already discussed with Kumārajīva and to which Kumārajīva had sent an approving reply. This reply he enclosed for his brother. However there were three other pieces, drafted around the same time with which Yao Hsing had also hoped to engage Kumārajīva. Unfortunately, Yao Hsing now recalled, Kumārajīva had "suffered a turn for the worse" and so the pieces were unsent, left at the bottom of the drawer. What with political unrest and the Empress' death taking his mind off such lofty topics, Yao Hsing had forgotten about them until this chance to exchange views with his brother. Yao Sung then wrote back, hardly daring to contradict Kumārajīva's approval of the thesis on the Three Times but more willing to air a friendly disagreement over the other three topics: on Prajñā, Śūnyatā and a rather obscure issue relating to the Buddha's Light (see infra). Yao Hsing wrote back defending his original reading, and Yao Sung prudently bowed out of the debate, thanking the king for his instructions. The *Discourse* as such ends here. Fortunately, we have an additional piece of information, a postscript as it were. It seems that Yao Hsing, maybe sensing the prudence of Yao Sung, wanted a more public and more decisive victory. He showed the exchange to Seng-chao, the famed disciple of Kumārajīva an expert on the Emptiness philosophy, in effect asking him to adjudicate. Seng-chao was in mourning for Kumārajīva but could hardly refuse and could certainly not undermine the king's thesis. He sided with Yao Hsing in the essay "Nirvāna as Nameless" [4] which became part of the collected essays of Seng-chao, the *Chao-lun.* In that sense, the *Discourse* is more than the intellectual pastime of a king and a nobleman, two amateur philosophers (though I do not think they are so