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The Spirituality of Emptiness in Early Chinese Buddhism

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THE CONCEPTUAL INTERPRETATION and practical application of Buddhist emptiness underwent many stages during the introduction and assimilation of Buddhism in China, including the attempt to "match" (*ko-i*) Buddhist concepts with Neo-Taoist ideas, most significantly Taoist "nothingness" or "void" (*wu*) with Buddhist emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā;* Chinese *kung*). This process reached an early climax philosophically in the San-lun interpretations of Chi-tsang (549–623) and in the realms of both philosophy and practice in the Sinitic synthesis of T'ien-t'ai Chih-i (538–597).[1] The understanding (and misunderstanding) of emptiness in early Chinese Buddhist history is best illustrated by the Chinese attempts to interpret the Mādhyamika theory of the two truths—the mundane, provisional, worldly, or conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and the real or ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya*). An unfortunate legacy of the *ko-i* practice of matching Buddhist concepts with Taoist terms was the tendency to discuss emptiness and the two truths in terms of *yu* (Being, existence) and *wu* (non-Being, nothingness). The provisional truth was often discussed in terms of *yu* or worldly existence, and the ultimate truth in terms of *wu* or nothingness, that is, emptiness. The ambiguity of these terms is such that *yu* could be interpreted negatively (from the Buddhist standpoint) as substantial Being or positively as conventional, dependently co-arising existence. *Wu* could be interpreted positively as a denial of substantial Being or negatively as nihilistic nothingness. The same could be said for the English pairs of words "Being and non-Being" or "existence and nothingness."[2] This ambiguity, as well as the strong ontological and dualistic implications of these terms, contributed to the confusion concerning these concepts. In this essay I will discuss the early Chinese Buddhist interpretations of emptiness and the two truths with special emphasis on the "spirituality of emptiness" as the Middle Way developed by Chih-i.

Interpretations of Emptiness and the Two Truths

Kumārajīva's definitive translations of major Mahāyāna texts and Mādhyamikan treatises in the early fifth century provided the foundation for advancing beyond the "matching concepts" identification of emptiness with the Taoistic void. Kumārajīva himself, in his letters to Hui-yüan answering questions on the Buddhist view of the nature of reality, denied the validity of speaking in these terms: "In this context it is not possible to speak even in terms of 'neither *yu* nor *wu*,' let alone in terms of *yu* and *wu*" (T 45, no. 1856, 135c27).[3] Nevertheless, the practice continued. Seng-chao, one of Kumārajīva's most outstanding disciples and famous for his understanding of emptiness, wrote influential essays on themes such as prajñā-wisdom, emptiness, and nirvāṇa. In his essay on "the emptiness of the unreal" (T 45.152a–153a),[4] Seng-chao discusses the meaning of emptiness utilizing the framework of the two truths. First he refers briefly to previous interpretations of emptiness, which he classifies into three schools or trends. The first trend was to explain emptiness as "mental negation" (*hsing-wu*): emptiness refers to the state of the mind when it does not conceptualize about or reflect on things and does not mean that things do not exist. Seng-chao criticizes this position by pointing out that, though it is correct concerning the importance of a calm mind, it is incorrect in that it fails to perceive the emptiness, or lack of substantial Being, of phenomenal things. The second trend was to explain emptiness as "identical with form" (*chi-se*). Form, or phenomenal matter, is empty because it is not form "in itself." Seng-chao points out that this is correct insofar as form is not independently existent but depends on other things for its existence. He then criticizes this position for not going one step further to point out that "form is not (substantial) form," and that "emptiness" in itself has no independent existence either. The third trend was to explain emptiness as "original non-Being" (*pen-wu*). All things derive their existence from an original state of nothingness. This view was compatible with traditional Taoist ideas of the primordial nothingness out of which the world emerged, but Seng-chao points out that when the Buddhist scriptures speak of things not existing, the meaning is that they do not have ultimate existence and lack substantial Being. The Buddhist texts are not nihilistically denying all existence nor affirming the idea of a primordial nothingness.

Seng-chao presents his interpretation of emptiness through a discussion of the two truths. After affirming that language is inadequate to describe reality and ultimate truth, he makes a noble attempt to do just that. The content of the "supreme real truth" (*paramārthasatya*) is illustrated with paraphrases from the *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (*Ta chih tu*

lun; T 25.57–756), "All dharmas are neither with nor without marks" (T 25.105a7), and Nāgārjuna's *Middle Verses* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārika;* T 30.1–39), "All dharmas neither exist (as substantial Being) nor inexist (as nothingness)" (T 30.7c16). However, the statement "neither existence nor nonexistence" does not mean that one totally denies the reality of all phenomena and suppresses all senses in order to realize the real truth. The conventional (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and the real (*paramārthasatya*) are one. This is explained in stanzas which are considered by some to contain the essence of Seng-chao's teaching:[5] "That though inexistent they exist is what 'not inexistent' means" (T 45.152b5–6).[6]

It is my contention that this position is needlessly obscured by the fact that the Chinese terms *yu* and *wu* are used with two different meanings, depending on whether they are affirmed or denied. Thus *yu* in the sense of substantial Being and *wu* in the sense of a nihilistic nothingness are denied, but *yu* in the sense of conventional, dependently co-arising existence, and *wu* in the sense of a lack of substantial Being are affirmed. Therefore "nonexistence" is affirmed in the sense that though phenomena have conventional existence, they have no substantive Being. "Not inexistent" is affirmed in the sense that though phenomena have no substantive Being, they are not complete nothingness. Seng-chao does not explicitly identify *saṃvṛtisatya* with *yu* and *paramārthasatya* with *wu,* but sometimes comes close to doing so. After quoting the famous statement from the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* (*Pancavimśatisāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā Sūtra;* T 8.217–425) that there is no difference between supreme truth and conventional truth (T 8.378c), Seng-chao explains that the supreme truth means non-Being (not-*yu*) and the conventional truth means not a nonexistent (not-*wu*), and that "non-Being" and "not nonexistent" have ultimately the same meaning (T 45.152b17). The argument is taken one step further by pointing out that a Buddhist cannot accept the position that things are nonexistent nothingness, because this is the extreme and heretical view of annihilationism. Neither can he accept the position that things have substantial Being, because this is the extreme and heretical view of eternalism (T 45.152b23–29). Since things are not complete nothingness, annihilationism is wrong. Since things do not have substantial Being, eternalism is wrong. Thus the content of the real truth can be spoken of, at least negatively, as "neither Being nor nothingness." Finally, Seng-chao approvingly quotes the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra* (T 14.537–557) that "dharmas are neither Being nor nothingness; all dharmas arise through causes and conditions" (T 14.537c15). Phenomena have no substantial Being because they are merely a complex of causes and conditions, but are not nothingness because as a complex of causes and conditions they have conventional existence.

Seng-chao can be credited with pointing out the ultimate unity of the two truths and clarifying the difference between traditional Chinese interpretations of *wu* as primordial nothingness and the interpretation of emptiness in the Buddhist prajñā-wisdom tradition. On the other hand, he continued in the practice of discussing the issue in terms of *yu* and *wu.* He clearly did not mean to identify the conventional truth with *yu* and the supreme truth with *wu,* since he explicitly defined the supreme truth as beyond the confines of this duality, but his discussions are still dominated by this ambiguous terminology.

Positive Interpretations of Emptiness

Counterparts to the "negative" interpretation of emptiness in terms of nothingness were the "positive" interpretations of emptiness reflected in the popular *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*[7] and the *Ch'eng-shih lun* (*Satyasiddhi Śāstra*).[8] It is no accident that many of the so-called *Ch'eng-shih lun* scholars, such as Seng-min (467–527) and Chih-tsang (458–522), were also authorities on the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra.* This sūtra presented emptiness in terms of universal Buddha-nature, the notion that all beings have the potential to attain Buddhahood. All beings can attain Buddhahood precisely because emptiness, the lack of any self-existent and substantial Being, is the nature of reality. As it is stated in the famous chapter on Noble Activity, "true reality is the Tathāgata, and the Tathāgata is true reality; true reality is emptiness and emptiness is true reality; true reality is the Buddha-nature and the Buddha-nature is true reality" (T 12.685b25–27). However, the reference is not to a self-existent and substantial reality. Buddha-nature, like emptiness, "neither arises nor passes away, neither comes nor goes, is neither past, present, nor future, is neither produced by causes nor produced without a cause" and so forth (T 12.687b8–10). Emptiness means that Buddhahood is the "natural" abiding nature, or "spontaneous" reality, of all beings, and that one need only awaken to this fact and thus realize one's inherent enlightenment.

Another popular way to interpret emptiness positively was through the analysis of conventional or provisional existence (*chia*) as presented in the *Ch'eng-shih lun.* Conventional existence, or "conventional designation" (*prajñāptirupādāya*), is the positive side to emptiness in that it expresses the lack of substantial Being in the positive sense of being the confluence of causes and conditions such as aggregates, forms, colors, and so forth. The chapter in the *Ch'eng-shih lun* on "the characteristics of conventional designation" (T 32.327c–328c) gives over twenty different variations on the meaning of this term. For example, conventional designation, or existence, is so called because of the arising of phenomena from different dharmas. A bottle depends

for its existence on the various factors of color, and so forth, and has no reality in itself (T 32.328a6–8). A chariot is a designation for a certain combination of wheels and axles and so forth, but the name "chariot" and the concept of the chariot do not exist in, nor independently of, this accumulation of things. The wheels, axles, and so forth are the causes and conditions of the chariot, but there is no substantial Being which is referred to by the name "chariot" (T 32.328a 10–14). Moreover, different people perceive the same thing in different ways. When people see a horse some say they see the horse's tail, some the horse's body, some the skin, and some the hair, as in the parable of the blind men and the elephant. Or, upon hearing music, some say they hear the sound of a harp, some the sound of a violin, and so forth. In other words, there is no ultimate consistency to people's experiences. Therefore we cannot say that we see real forms or hear real sounds, but can only give them conventional designations (T 32.328a16–24). Conventional existence depends on relative factors. Things are here or there, long or short, large or small, teacher or disciple, father or son, rich or poor, and so forth (T 32.328c11–14). These various explanations of conventional designation, or existence, were eventually summarized by the *Ch'eng-shih lun* scholars into three categories. Conventional existence was defined as that which is (1) causally arisen, (2) continuous, and (3) relative.

Let us take as representative of this trend a prominent scholar of the *Ch'eng-shih lun* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Chih-tsang (458–522), one of the "three great Dharma-masters of the Liang period."[9] Here again the inquiry into the meaning of emptiness proceeds through a discussion of the two truths. Chih-tsang taught that the Middle Way is the essence of the two truths. The two truths are not separate realities with one as the "basis" or "essence" of the other, nor are they simply the same. In Chih-tsang's words, "The two truths are two yet nondual; the two truths are identical with the Middle Way. Since they are nondual yet two, the Middle Way is identical with the two truths. Therefore the Middle Way is the essence of the two truths" (T 45.108a4–6). The two truths as "two" emphasize the conventional distinction between the two truths and the reality of conventional existence, yet fundamentally they are part of one reality which is nondual, the Middle Way. This theory is expanded into the theory of the three aspects of the Middle Way.

1. The first aspect is the Middle Way of the worldly, or mundane, truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*). This category consists of three variations: (a) The worldly truth is not nothingness (*wu*), for it contains the potential causes for realizing the fruit of Buddhahood and the principle of reality. It is not substantial Being (*yu*), for there is no substantial fruit which is attained. This is the Middle Way of causation, the first of the aforementioned three kinds of conventional existence, which means that dharmas are neither Being nor nothingness.

It is the middle in the sense of denying the duality, or two extremes, of *yu* and *wu*. (b) The worldly truth is not eternal, for dharmas are constantly perishing; on the other hand, it is neither nihilistic nor indicative of complete annihilation, for there is continuity. This is the Middle Way of conventional existence as continuity, which means that dharmas are neither eternal nor completely annihilated. It is the middle in the sense of denying the duality, or two extremes, of eternalism and annihilationism. (c) The worldly truth is the Middle Way of relativity. As pointed out above, things are long or short, large or small, and so forth, only in relation to other things. This is the middle in the sense of denying the duality, or two extremes, of unity and differentiation.

This threefold classification of conventional existence is an analysis of the phenomenal in its ontological (causally arising), temporal (continuity), and logical (relativity) aspects. In this view, although the mundane world of phenomena is "real," it is a conventional, dependent, temporary, and relative reality.

2. The second aspect of the Middle Way is that of the real truth (*paramārthasatya*). This refers to the real truth as neither existence nor nonexistence, a common description of emptiness.

3. The third aspect of the Middle Way is that of the harmony of the two truths. This refers to the Middle Way as that which clarifies the harmony of the two truths as neither merely the real truth nor the mundane truth. This is different from the Middle Way of the real truth in that it is neither merely the real truth nor the mundane truth, but a harmony of the two (T 45.108a10–20).

In this theory Chih-tsang has neatly incorporated the three aspects of conventional existence from the *Ch'eng-shih lun* with the doctrine of the middle and the two truths to provide an explanation of the unity of the two truths in one reality which is not adequately described by the contrasting duality of existence and nonexistence or non-Being and nothingness. Nevertheless, it is significant that the explanation of the Middle Way of the mundane truth is both more detailed and clearer than the other aspects, and reflects the attempt by *Ch'eng-shih lun* scholars to interpret reality from the perspective of, or with emphasis on, this mundane conventional existence.

Chi-tsang's Critique of Emptiness

It was Chi-tsang (549–623) of the San-lun school who attacked this emphasis on the positive interpretation of conventional reality and refocused on emptiness itself as the central concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism. His writings

are among the earliest which record and discuss previous interpretations and trends in Chinese Buddhism. Chi-tsang's commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Middle Verses* (*Chung-kuan lun-shu;* T 42.1–169) contains a brief outline of various interpretations of emptiness and the two truths among the Chinese Buddhist community and provides us with some information concerning the interpretation of these concepts in and before his day.[10] These early trends are presented in three overlapping groups: the Three Schools, the Seven Trends or Six Schools, and the *Treatise on Three Theses* (*San-tsung lun*) by an eminent layman named Chou-yung. The Three Schools, the first four of the Seven Trends, and the first three of the Six Schools correspond to the three trends discussed by Seng-chao in his essay on emptiness and need not be repeated here. The remaining three are as follows:

1. Only Consciousness. This position is attributed to a Yü Fa-k'ai, who is said to have taught that "this triple world is a dwelling for a long night. Mental consciousness is the subject of a great dream. If one awakens to the fundamental emptiness of this triple world, deluded consciousness will be exhausted" (T 65.94c), and "the assembly of existents which is perceived now are all perceptions in a dream. If one awakens from the great dream after dawn brightens this long night, then delusions are overturned, the deluded consciousness is extinguished, and the triple world is seen to be empty. At that time there is no place from which anything arises, yet no place which has no arising" (T 42.29b4–7). Chi-tsang criticizes this simple idealism, or complete denial of objective existence and reality, by claiming that "if this were true, then when one experiences the great awakening he will not perceive any of the myriad phenomena, and the worldly truth is lost. What, then, is perceived by the Tathāgata's five kinds of eyes?" (T 42.29b7–8).[11] In other words, what is truly perceived by the Buddha in his perfect perception is not an illusion, but real.

2. Magical Illusion. This position is attributed to a certain Dharma Master Yi, to whom is attributed the following interpretation.

> All dharmas are the same as magical illusions. Because they are the same as magical illusions they are called the "worldly truth." The mind and spirit are real and not empty; this is the (truth of) supreme meaning. If the spirit is empty, then to whom are the teachings given, and who cultivates the Path to advance from an ignorant state and attain Sagehood? Therefore it should be known that the spirit is not empty. (T 65.95a4–7)

This position is the opposite of "Mental Negation"; it completely denies any external reality and affirms the continuous and ultimate reality of the mind, or spirit, which sounds suspiciously like an eternal soul. Chi-tsang criticizes this position as follows:

> A sūtra[12] says that the actions of magical illusions have no good or evil retributive value. If all dharmas are the same as magical illusions, then what difference is there between a real person and an illusory person? (Then a person's actions would have no karmic effect and there would be no cause for being reborn in hell or the Buddha's Pure Land.) Also, the sūtras borrow (the notion of) nothingness to destroy (the notion of substantive) reality. When (the notion of substantive) reality is gone, then it puts away (the notion of) nothingness. (This position of "magical illusion") does not recognize this meaning of the sūtras. (T 42.29b12–13)

Thus Chi-tsang rejects both extremes: the one-sided affirmation of mental activity alone, which involves the denial of external reality (the standpoints of "magical illusion" and "only consciousness"), and the one-sided denial of mental illusion, which involves the simple affirmation of external objective existence (the standpoint of "mental negation").

3. Confluence of Conditions. This final position is attributed to Yü Tao-sui, who taught that "existence due to the confluence of conditions is called the worldly truth. The identity with non-Being due to the scattering of conditions (there is no substantial Being since conditions do not continue but scatter and come to an end); this is called the truth of supreme meaning" (T 42.29b 13–14). Also, "existence due to the confluence of conditions is called the worldly (truth). Non-Being due to analysis (of dharmas) is the real (truth). It is like earth and wood being assembled to make a house. The house had no prior substance. It had a name but no reality. Therefore the Buddha said to Rādha, 'When the marks of visible form are extinguished, there is nothing to perceive'" (T 65.95b1–4). In other words, phenomena consist of the coming together of various causes and conditions and have no substantive eternal Being. This position is not problematic as far as it goes, except that it is an overly simplistic and dualistic understanding of the two truths which identifies *yu* (as the confluence of conditions) with the worldly truth, and *wu* (as the lack of substantial Being due to the mere confluence and scattering of causes and conditions) with the supreme truth.

More significant than the above outlined trends are the "three theses" proposed in a work by a layman named Chou Yung. The *Nan Ch'i shu* says that "at the time in the capital there were masters who established various meanings of the two truths. Three schools existed, each espousing a different idea. Chou Yung authored the *San-tsung lun* locating the thread that runs through the three schools."[13] These three theses are (1) conventional designations are not empty; (2) the emptying of conventional designations; and (3) conventional designation is emptiness.

Conventional Designations Are Not Empty

Chi-tsang describes this position as teaching that

> When the sūtras speak of "the emptiness of visible form" this refers to its emptiness and lack of a true substantive nature; therefore it is called empty. It does not mean that conventional visible reality is empty (nothingness?). Since the substantive nature is an empty nothingness, therefore it is called empty. This is the real truth. The non-emptiness of conventional reality is called the worldly truth. (T 42.29b17–19)

Anchō elaborates:

> A sūtra says that the reality of conditioned co-arising is eternal in nature and form whether there is or is not a Buddha. How can one say that it is nothingness (*wu*)? Another sūtra says that all dharmas are empty. This lack of a subject (*svabhāva*) in all dharmas, an inner emptiness or lack of a substantive subject, is called the worldly truth. This lack of a substantive subject in all dharmas itself is the real truth. (T 65.95c10–14)

This is a bit confusing, but the position is clarified by the use of a metaphor, that of a "meatless chestnut." In the *Meaning of the Two Truths* Chi-tsang explains this metaphor as follows:

The two truths theory of the "rodent-gnawed chestnut" school says: the sūtra has elucidated that all forms are empty. This school takes that to mean that there is the absence of a permanent nature to the form but there is not the absence of the form as such. This view is comparable to a chestnut gnawed (empty) by rodents. The meat inside is all gone, but the shell remains intact. The external is as it was. Therefore it is called an "empty chestnut."[14]

In other words, dharmas or phenomena have no eternal substantive Being, but the outer shell of conventional existence does exist. Chi-tsang criticizes this interpretation by pointing out that both the self-existing subject (*svabhāva*), or self-nature, and lack of this subject (*asvabhāva*) are empty. In other words, it is not enough to affirm the lack of a substantial Being *in* all dharmas; the "shell" of conventional reality is also empty. A correct understanding of "conventionally designated things" would recognize their emptiness.

The Emptying of Conventional Designations

This position teaches that "the worldly truth is that all dharmas arise through the confluence of conditions, and therefore have an essence. To analyze the conditions and discover that one cannot find any center is called the real truth" (T 42.29b24–25). This thesis is represented by the metaphor of the

"bobbing melon." Chi-tsang adds that "the sunken melon is the real; the floating melon is the mundane" (T 42.29b26). In other words, the real truth is represented by the melon of reality that has sunk beneath the surface and disappeared, for it has no ultimate existence. The mundane truth is represented by the melon of reality that bobs above the surface and can be perceived as existing. The problem with this position is that it tries to have its melon cake and eat it too. It attempts to recognize as valid both the floating and the sinking melon, both existence and nonexistence, both mundane and real truth, without dealing with the nature of the melon (reality) itself and the relationship between the two states of the floating or sinking melon. Chi-tsang criticizes this position by pointing out that "to say that first there are conventional dharmas but that later these are emptied is to return to the position of the 'confluence of conditions.' Therefore it has the fault of 'nothingness due to the analysis and scattering (of dharmas)'" (T 42.29b26–86). In other words, reality as emptiness is not merely a matter of analyzing each component phenomenon and pointing out the lack of substantial Being in each dharma, a practice often attributed to the *Ch'eng-shih lun* scholars.

Conventional Designation Is Emptiness

This position makes an identification of the two aspects of conventional designation and emptiness, and thus the complete meaning of this phrase would read that "emptiness is conventional designation and conventional designation is emptiness." Chi-tsang summarizes this position as teaching that "conventional designation in itself is identical with emptiness" (T 42.29b28–29). Chi-tsang claims that this was the position of Chou Yung, but adds that Chou Yung bases it on Seng-chao's essay on emptiness. Seng-chao is quoted as saying:

> Although *yu*, yet *wu*. Although *wu*, yet *yu*. "Although *yu*, yet *wu*" is a denial of Being. "Although *wu*, yet *yu*" is a denial of nothingness. In this way, it is not that there is no thing, but that things are not truly (substantial) things. If things are not truly (substantial) things, in what way are they yet "things"? (T 42.29c1–3)

Seng-chao is also quoted as saying that "things are not real (substantial) things, therefore they are conventional things. Since they are conventional things, therefore they are empty" (T 42.29c4–5). This concludes Chi-tsang's presentation of the third position. No metaphor is given.

This third thesis thus acts as a kind of synthesis of the first two theses. The first thesis affirms the existence of conventional phenomena by denying its emptiness. The second thesis denies the first by affirming the emptiness of conventional phenomena. The third thesis resolves the tension between

the first two by affirming the identity of conventional phenomena and emptiness. This pattern anticipates T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's threefold truth formulation of conventional existence, emptiness, and the Middle, but before we examine Chih-i's contribution, let us finish with Chi-tsang.

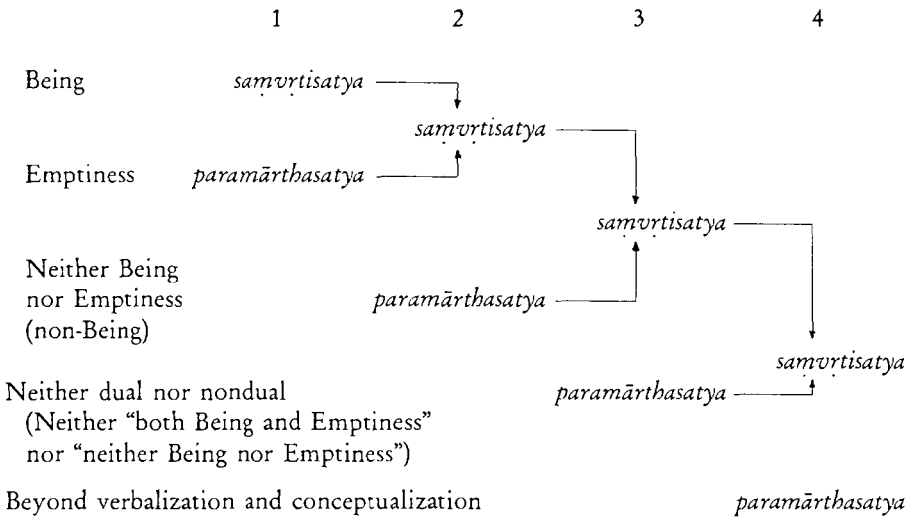
The Four Levels of the Two Truths

Chi-tsang's writings on emptiness are vast and complicated, but the concept is well illustrated by his theory of the four levels of the two truths. In his *Commentary on the Middle Verses* the question is first raised as to why this formulation of four levels of two truths is constructed (T 42.28b10–11). The answer is that various people have various capabilities. Those who are clever and have a good understanding of the Buddhist way can awaken to the correct path upon hearing of the first level, and do not need the other levels. Those of middling ability do not attain awakening upon hearing of the first level of the two truths, but enter the path upon hearing of the second level, and so forth. In other words, the two truths are a *teaching* designed to lead one to the correct way, and are not a complete description of the principle of reality, which is beyond verbalization and conceptualization. Thus the four levels of the two truths are progressively sophisticated teachings concerning reality, not the principle of reality itself.

At the first level, Being (*yu*) corresponds to the worldly truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*), and emptiness corresponds to the real truth, or the truth of supreme meaning (*paramārthasatya*) (see chart). In the *Commentary on the Middle Verses* this is illustrated with a quote from the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom:* "Bodhisattvas dwell in the two truths and preach the Dharma for the sake of sentient beings. They explain emptiness for the sake of those who are attached to Being (*yu*), and explain existence (*yu*) for the sake of those who are attached to emptiness" (T 42.28b15–16).[15] Thus at the first level emptiness is presented as the teaching designed to lead and teach those who are mired in a naïve realism, who accept the substantial existence of phenomena. On the other hand, *yu* as conventional existence is offered as a counterteaching to those who would become mistakenly attached to emptiness. In the *Meaning of the Two Truths,* the contrast is between Being (*yu*) and non-Being (*wu*), and in succeeding passages "emptiness" and "non-Being" are used interchangeably.

At the second level, the duality of both Being and emptiness from the first level becomes the worldly truth, and the denial of this duality, "neither Being nor emptiness," is the supreme truth. Again the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* is quoted: "The worldly truth is explained as 'both Being and non-Being.' The truth of supreme meaning is 'neither Being nor non-Being.'"[16] At this

Chi-tsang's Four Levels of the Two Truths



level the affirmation of the duality between existence and emptiness is a conventional, worldly truth, and the denial of this duality is the real, supreme truth.

At the third level the duality of all of the above, both the affirmation and denial of the duality of Being and emptiness, corresponds to the worldly truth, and the transcendence of all dualities corresponds to the supreme truth. Here the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* is quoted: "Do not be attached to any dharmas of non-duality, for there is neither unity nor duality."[17] At this level the transcendence of all dualities, even the idea of duality itself, is taught.

At the fourth and final level, again all of the preceding levels of verbal expression, the duality of Being and emptiness, of duality and nonduality, and all the teachings of the first three levels, are verbal teachings and thus relegated to the realm of the worldly truth. That which is beyond verbalization and conceptualization is the supreme truth. A long paraphrase of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* is given to support this final level:

> When one truly and completely discriminates all dharmas, one sees that (dharmas have) no self-nature but only conventionally given designations. All wish to discriminate the meaning of the worldly truth. Thus bodhisattvas arouse aspiration (for enlightenment). All dharmas without exception are beyond verbal description; the mind and its activity is quiescent and like space. All wish to discriminate the meaning of the real truth. Thus bodhisattvas arouse aspiration (for enlightenment). (T 42.29b19–22; T 9.447a9–12)

Theoretically this progressive affirmation and denial of each previous duality would continue infinitely, but Chi-tsang cuts it off at the fourth level. He has made his point, that the supreme truth is not a description of the principle of reality but refers to that which is beyond verbalization and conceptualization. Any verbal or conceptual description necessarily belongs to the realm of conventional worldly truth. In this sense Chi-tsang escaped the trap of discussing the two truths and emptiness merely in terms of Being or nothingness or some combination thereof.

Emptiness and the Threefold Truth

Chih-i, the founder of the T'ien-t'ai tradition, also succeeded in going beyond the Being/non-Being, existence/nonexistence trap in explaining emptiness by systematizing a "unified theory" which integrated the concepts of conditioned co-arising, emptiness, conventional designation or existence, the two truths, Buddha-nature, and so forth, with the concept of the Middle. This was explained with the concept of the threefold truth. The key inspiration for this concept was a verse from Nāgārjuna's *Middle Verses* XXIV, 18: "All things which arise through conditioned co-arising, I explain as emptiness. Again, it is a conventional designation. Again, it is the meaning of the Middle Way" (T 30.33b11).[18] Chih-i interpreted this verse in terms of the two truths into a threefold truth. These three aspects were, first, emptiness or the absence of substantial Being, often identified with supreme truth; second, conventional existence, or the temporary existence of the world as dependently co-arising phenomena, often identified with the worldly truth; and, third, the Middle, a simultaneous affirmation of both emptiness and conventional existence as mutual aspects of a single integrated reality.

For Chih-i these three aspects were not independent of each other but integral parts of a single reality. The objects of our experience have a temporary reality. We do experience something. Nevertheless, the world which we experience is empty of an eternal, unchanging substance, or Being. Lest one lapse into a mistaken nihilism, one must realize the Middle Way. One must realize the emptiness of phenomenal reality simultaneously with the temporal reality of these empty objects. This Middle Way, however, must not be grasped as an eternal, transcendental Reality; it is, rather, manifested in and through and is identical with temporal, phenomenal reality, which is again in turn empty of an unchanging substance. The circle is complete in itself, what Chih-i calls "a perfectly integrated threefold truth." This is summarized in the *Profound Meaning of the Lotus (Teachings)* as follows: "The "perfect threefold truth" means that the Buddha Dharma is completely included not merely by the Middle Way but also by the real and the mundane

(truths). This threefold truth is perfectly integrated; one-in-three and three-in-one (T 33.705a5–7).

A correct understanding of the threefold truth, then, reveals that reality is "one truth," a perfectly integrated unity. In the final analysis even this is reduced to "no truth," for the concept of a single reality, though it stretches the limits of language, is still a conceptualization that is inadequate to describe reality itself. Finally Chih-i is left quoting one of his favorite passages from the *Lotus Sūtra:* "Cease, Cease! No need to speak. My Dharma is subtle and hard to imagine."[19] Reality, emptiness, cannot be grasped conceptually; truth is beyond words.

Yet Chih-i used words and concepts and was quick to point out the necessity to do so. One can make a valid attempt to describe verbally what is ultimately indescribable, as long as one is aware of this limitation. In Chih-i's case this meant describing emptiness in terms of, and in relation to, related concepts such as conventional truth, dependently co-arising existence, and the Middle Way. He thus avoided the false dualism of Being and non-Being and provided a philosophical analysis of emptiness on which one could base one's practice and lead a life of Buddhist spirituality.

The Practice of Emptiness

The nonphilosophically-minded reader may well wonder what the preceding technical discussions have to do with spirituality. It is difficult to know, because of a lack of any extant records, exactly what these concepts meant in the daily lives of most of these Chinese Buddhists and how they were applied to their spiritual growth. Chih-i, however, provided voluminous writings giving detailed instructions on Buddhist practice and the implications of emptiness for the spiritual life. For him, practice and doctrine were like the two wings of a bird, or the two wheels of a cart; they support each other and are meaningless if taken alone.

Chih-i had already studied the Buddha Dharma under many masters when he joined Hui-ssu (515–577) on Mount Ta-su in 560 C.E. His biography states that he chanted and contemplated the *Lotus Sūtra,* and when he reached the twenty-third chapter, which tells of the bodhisattva who burns his own body as a sacrifice to the Buddha, Chih-i attained a "great awakening" of insight into emptiness. His "body and mind were emptied and he entered, quiescent, into contemplation . . ." (T 50.191c28–29).[20] It is said that his teacher Hui-ssu praised him, but pointed out that this realization was but an early stage in understanding the teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra,* equivalent to realizing the emptiness of all dharmas.[21] This was truly a significant insight, but not yet a realization of the integrated nature of emptiness and conventional existence.

From Ta-su, Chih-i went to the capital Chin-ling, where he mingled with the top Buddhist scholars of the day and gave the lectures which are now known as *Instructions on the Gradual Practice of the Perfection of Meditation* (*Shih ch'an po-lo-mi ts'u-ti fa-men;* T 46.475–548). This text gives detailed instructions on how to meditate and gradually advance along the path of contemplation. Chih-i left the capital for Mount T'ien-t'ai in 575 to continue his meditative practices. Details of this stay on Mount T'ien-t'ai are unknown, but he returned again to Chin-lin ten years later to give the lectures now known as his *Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra* (*Fa-hua wen-chü;* T 34.1–150), *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus (Teachings)* (*Fa-hua hsüan-i;* T 33.681–814), and the *Great Cessation and Contemplation* (*Mo-ho chih-kuan;* T 46.1–140). These works contain a synthesis of Buddhist philosophy and practice centered on the threefold truth and threefold contemplation.

Concretely speaking, Chih-i summarized Buddhist practice under the categories of four kinds of samādhi and ten objects of contemplation.[22] Let us take a closer look at one of these, the "samādhi of neither walking nor sitting," as an example of these practices and an illustration of the content of Buddhist spirituality.

The fourth of Chih-i's four samādhis, the "samādhi of neither walking nor sitting," is not merely a miscellaneous category, a grab bag of practices that did not fit into the first three samādhis, but rather is the most applicable of all the samādhis. As Chih-i says, "it includes walking and sitting as well as all other modes of behavior" (T 46.14b27–28).[23] In the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* this samādhi is called the "samādhi of an awakened mind (or consciousness)," though it does not elaborate on how it is to be practiced,[24] and Chih-i's master Hui-ssu called it the "samādhi of following one's own mind (or intentions)." The crux of this samādhi is to concentrate on each thought as it arises in the mind. Therefore any and all thoughts, constantly, in any and all situations, are the immediate objects of one's contemplation. The term "awakened mind" is further explained as having an enlightened understanding of and through mental activities. As Chih-i explains, "When the practitioner's thoughts arise, one should reflect upon and contemplate them, not being distracted by their origin or consummation" (T 46.14c2–3). Chih-i goes on to describe one setting for practicing this samādhi, based on the *Sūtra on Petitioning Avalokiteśvara* (**Ṣaḍakṣaravidyā-mantra;* T 20.34–38), with instructions on how to adorn the meditation chamber, to pay reverence to various Buddhas and other Buddhist saints, to kneel, burn incense, scatter flowers, concentrate one's thoughts; "after finishing the offering, assume the lotus position and with body erect and mind regulated, fix the thoughts and count the breaths, with each thought corresponding to ten breaths. When ten thoughts have been completed, rise and burn incense for the sake of

sentient beings. Petition the three treasures (of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha) three times; also call on Avalokiteśvara, and join the ten fingers and palms. Then recite the four-line verses . . ." and so forth (T 46.14b–15a).

This samādhi, however, is not limited to monks following the literal and detailed practice of this specific ceremony. It is a practice available for anyone at any time and place to cultivate a spirituality of emptiness in everyday life. The essence of this practice is found in the nature of the mind and specific thoughts. Chih-i illustrates the emptiness of phenomena, and the mind, by discussing four phases of a thought: (1) pre-thought, (2) imminent thought, (3) the thought proper, and (4) completed thought. He argues, following Nāgārjuna's style, that one cannot logically prove how a thought arises from a state of having no thought, but actually thoughts do arise. The thought, however, is not a substantial, eternal thing, but passes away to the phase of a completed thought. The thought arises neither out of nothingness nor out of substantial Being. The mind is not nothingness, for it allows thoughts to arise, but it has no substantial Being, for it lacks eternal, unchanging existence. In Chih-i's words:

> Even when pre-thought has not arisen, it is nevertheless not ultimately nothingness (*wu*). It is like a person who has not yet performed an action and then performs it. It cannot be said that there is no person because the action has not yet been performed. If it is said that no person is present, then who performs the action afterwards? It is precisely because there is a state of pre-performance of the action that there can then be a performance of the action. It is the same with the mind: it is because there is a state of pre-thought that there can then be a state of imminent thought. . . . Although pre-thought is not yet in existence, it does not follow that there are then no thoughts at all. As for completed thoughts, they can be contemplated even though the phase of the thought proper has passed away. It is like one cannot say that a person is inexistent when he has finished doing something. . . . The perishing of mind, or the completed thought, is analogous to this: one cannot say that the perishing is eternal, for this is annihilationism which denies both cause and effect. Therefore, although the state of "completed thought" means that (a thought has) perished, it is still possible to contemplate it. (T 46.15b26–c6)

Thus both the mind and its thoughts are empty. They are not "merely empty," however. The four phases of thought are to be understood in the threefold terms of emptiness, conventional existence, and the Middle. "Although the four phases of thought are empty, one may perceive within emptiness the inclusion of various things in the four phases until one perceives everywhere the Buddha Dharma as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River. . . . This is called the four phases of thought of conventional designation." And "since dharmas arise through causes and conditions, they do not exist substantially. Since they do not exist (substantially), therefore they are empty. Since they

are not empty (nothingness), they do exist (conventionally). . . . This threefold truth embraces the Buddha's knowledge and insight, and such is the full understanding of the four phases of thought" (T 46.16a23–28). With this understanding, one should cultivate the ability to spontaneously contemplate each thought, good or evil, as it arises in the mind, and to thus realize the true nature of our existence.

Thoughts themselves are discussed concretely by Chih-i in terms of thought about "good" and "evil" matters. "Good" matters are summarized as the six perfect virtues (*pāramitā*) of charity, morality, patience, diligence, meditation, and wisdom. (1) In all of one's activities one "contemplates sentient beings with the eye of great compassion." This is the perfection of charity. (2) In all of one's activities "there are no beings whom one injures or causes harm, nor does one apprehend (and judge) their sinful or meritorious features." This is the perfection of morality. (3) In all of one's activities "(agitating) thoughts do not arise in one's mind, thus one is unperturbed and without attachment." One's senses are all quiescent, unmoved. This is the perfection of patience. (4) In all of one's activities one is not aware of specific physical actions, like the raising or lowering of one's feet. All activity and understanding are spontaneous; there is no sequence of first having a concept and then realizing it. One realizes that dharmas do not sequentially arise, abide, and then perish. This is the perfection of diligence. (5) In all of one's activities one does not think in dualistic terms of "mind and body" or "saṃsāra and nirvāṇa." There is no dharma (phenomenon) which one dwells on or becomes attached to. One does not savor the bliss of nirvāṇa nor cavort in saṃsāra. This is the perfection of meditation. (6) In all of one's activities one realizes that the senses, sense organs, and so forth are empty and quiescent, and one is neither in bondage nor liberated. This is the perfection of wisdom (T 46.16b26–c6).

It is the contemplation of "evil" rather than "good," however, which is the major focus of Chih-i's analysis. The reason is that "evil" thoughts are the usual fare of our mundane lives, and they are most accessible to one's contemplation. If a desire arises in the mind, do not ignore it but take it by the horns, as it were. Or, in Chih-i's words, "contemplate it minutely in its four phases: pre-desire, imminent desire, the desire proper, and the desire completed" (T 46.17c29–b3). Contemplation of the desire in this fashion will show that that desire is empty of substance and is thus conquered. Chih-i compares this to going fishing: the desire is like a fish, and one's thought the fishing line. "If the fish is strong and the line is weak, it cannot be forcibly pulled in. But if one lets the baited hook enter the fish's mouth and allows it to swim around, diving and surfacing freely, then before long it can be hauled in" (T 46.17c24–26). In conclusion, "when one contemplates in this way, there is no perceiver of the sense object, and no subject opposed to

the objective world, yet both are illumined clearly. (The threefold reality of thoughts, desires, and other phenomena) are like illusory transformations (conventionally existent) and empty, and with regard to the nature of reality (the middle) are not mutually obstructive" (T 46.18a24–26). In fact they are integrated and mutually inclusive.

Threefold Cessation and Contemplation

As one can see from these concrete illustrations of Buddhist practice and ideal spirituality, there is basically a threefold pattern underlying the specific instructions. Chih-i refers to this pattern as "threefold contemplation." The threefold truth refers to the reality of the objective (and subjective) realms in terms of emptiness, conventional existence, and the Middle. Threefold contemplation refers to a general pattern of practice which allows one to attain insight into the true nature of reality and the bliss of enlightenment. As Chih-i writes in his commentary on the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra,* "Reality as the two truths and the threefold truth is the objective realm which is illumined through threefold contemplation" (T 38.525a17–18).

Threefold contemplation actually refers to both threefold cessation (*śamatha*) and threefold insight/contemplation (*vipaśyanā*). Some Western scholars have commented on the tension, and even contradiction, between these two aspects of meditation in Indian Buddhism,[25] but in T'ien-t'ai Buddhism the two are always seen as harmonious and complementary. When the waters are still (*śamatha*), one can see to the bottom of the pond (*vipaśyanā*). Chih-i's mature development of this concept is succinctly presented in *Great Cessation and Insight,* where he discusses the meaning of "cessation and insight" (*chih-kuan*) (T 46.24a–25b).

Chih-i first discusses three kinds of "skillful cessation" in the pattern of the threefold truth: (1) cessation as realizing that the true essence of reality is empty of substantial Being; (2) cessation as realizing expedient conventional existence which arises through conditions; and (3) cessation as putting an end to both extremes of discriminatory conceptual categories.

1. "Cessation as realizing emptiness" describes the stage of spiritual discernment wherein one advances beyond "naïve realism," the acceptance of objective reality as having substantial Being, to the realization of the emptiness of all things. As Chih-i says:

> All dharmas arise through conditions. (Things which arise through) conditioned co-arising are empty and without self-Being. . . . Since one knows the conditioned co-arising, conventional confluence, illusory transformation, and empty nature (of reality), this is called its essence. Conceptualized delusions

come to an end upon realizing emptiness; therefore emptiness is (the nature of) true (reality). (T 46.24a3–5)

2. "Cessation as realizing expedient conditions" refers to the realization of conventional existence as the coming into being of all things through conditioned and dependent co-arising, which Chih-i calls the "non-emptiness of emptiness." The emptiness of all things does not mean that they are nothingness. Their conventional existence as interdependent entities is real. As Chih-i says:

> Those of the two vehicles (accept only emptiness as) the essence of true (reality), so they do not consider as necessary the "cessation of expediency" (realizing conventional existence). Bodhisattvas understand conventional existence and should put it into practice. They know that emptiness is not empty (not nothingness), therefore this is called an "expedient means." One discriminates and chooses medicine in accordance with the disease, therefore it is called "in accordance with conditions." The mind is at rest with regard to the mundane truth, therefore it is called "cessation." (T 46.24a9–11)

3. "Cessation as an end to both discriminatory extremes" refers to the contemplation and realization of the synonymous nature of both "extremes" of mistakenly understood emptiness and conventional existence. A discriminatory and one-sided attachment to either concept is mistaken; reality is simultaneously empty of substantial Being and is conventionally existent. As Chih-i says:

> (To think that) samsāra flows and moves and that nirvāṇa is a (constant and inactive) maintenance of an awakened state is a one-sided view of practice and activity, and does not correspond to the Middle Way. Now, if one knows that the mundane is not mundane, then the extreme view of the mundane is put to rest, and if one realizes the non-mundane (nature of conventional existence), then the extreme view of emptiness is put to rest. This is called "cessation as an end to both extremes." (T 46.24a13–15)

Threefold contemplation also follows the same threefold pattern. The three aspects are:

> 1) To enter (insight) into emptiness from (the viewpoint of) conventional existence. This is called the contemplation of the two truths. 2) To enter (insight) into conventional existence from (the viewpoint of) emptiness. This is called the contemplation of equality. 3) These two contemplations are the path of expedient means for attaining entry to the Middle Way, wherein both of the two truths are illuminated. The thoughts of the mind are extinguished and put to rest, and one spontaneously enters the sea of universal wisdom. This is called the contemplation of the Middle Way and the truth of supreme meaning. (T 46.24b5–8)

1. "Entering (insight into) emptiness from conventional existence." At this first level of contemplation, conventional existence refers to the ordinary, mistaken perception of phenomena as existing substantially, and "entering emptiness" means to negate the existence of independent substantial Being in these phenomena. Thus, as Chih-i says, "When one encounters emptiness, one perceives not only emptiness but also knows (the true nature of) conventional existence" (T 46.24b10–11).

2. "Entering (insight into) conventional existence from emptiness." At this second level of contemplation, conventional existence refers to a correct understanding and positive acceptance of objective phenomena as interdependently and conditionally co-arisen. Emptiness here refers to a mistaken attachment to the concept of emptiness, or a misunderstanding of emptiness as merely a nihilistic nothingness. As Chih-i says:

> If one understands ("enters") emptiness, (one understands that) there is no emptiness. Thus one must reenter conventional existence. One should know that this contemplation is done for the sake of saving sentient beings, and know that true reality is not (substantial) true reality but an expedient means which appears conventionally. Therefore it is said, "from emptiness." One differentiates the medicine according to the disease without making conceptual discriminations. Therefore it is called "entering conventional existence." (T 46.24c8–11)

This is compared to blind men who regain their sight. They can then perceive both space (i.e., emptiness) and forms and colors, and can differentiate between various grasses and trees, roots and stalks, branches and leaves, medicine and poison. At the first level one perceives the two truths but is one-sidedly concerned with emptiness and cannot utilize or perceive the reality of conventional existence. If one's eyes are opened concerning the validity of objective conventional reality, one perceives not only emptiness but also the visible forms of conventional existence. One can then understand the minute, conditionally co-arisen phenomena of everyday life and use this knowledge to benefit others.

3. "The contemplation of the Middle Way" refers to the highest level of contemplation, wherein one simultaneously and correctly perceives the validity of both emptiness and conventional existence. As Chih-i says:

> First, to contemplate (and attain insight into) the emptiness of conventional existence is to empty saṃsāra (of substantial Being). Next, to contemplate (and attain insight into) the emptiness of emptiness is to empty nirvāṇa. Thus both extremes are negated. This is called the contemplation of two (aspects of) emptiness as expedient means to attain encounter with the Middle Way. . . . The first contemplation utilizes emptiness, and the latter contemplation utilizes conventional existence. This is an expedient means recognizing the reality of

> both, but when one enters the Middle Way, both of the two truths are illumined (simultaneously and as identical). (T 46.24c21–26)

The above three contemplations have been presented as a graded progression from the first contemplation to the last. Chih-i calls this "progressive contemplation," the detailed and graded practice of contemplation explained in works such as *Instructions on the Gradual Practice of the Perfection of Meditation.* The most superior contemplation, however, and that discussed in *Great Cessation and Insight,* is what Chih-i calls "perfect and immediate cessation and insight." In this case the three aspects of emptiness, conventional existence, and the Middle are contemplated simultaneously and spontaneously, and immediately perceived as being integrated, nondual, and synonymous. As Chih-i says:

> When the truths are contemplated as an object of cessation, (it is realized that) these are three truths yet one truth. When cessation is sustained by means of (insight into) the truth, (it is realized that) these are three cessations yet one cessation. . . . Therefore it says in the *Middle Verses,* "Dharmas which arise through conditioned co-arising are identical to emptiness, identical to conventional existence, and identical to the Middle." (T 46.25b9–18)

The concept and term *chih-kuan* (*śamatha-vipaśyanā,* cessation and contemplation/insight) itself can be interpreted with this threefold pattern to harmonize their apparent tension or contradiction. Cessation involves an "emptying" of the mind of all deluded thoughts, ignorance, passionate disturbances, and other obstacles to clear understanding. Contemplation involves insight into the true features of reality, an understanding of the multifarious aspects of existence. Together they form a harmonious tension in which reality is correctly understood and Buddhahood fulfilled. Cessation and contemplation/insight are attained simultaneously and in a single instant, as one can see clearly to the bottom of a pond when the water is still and clear.

For in Chih-i's final analysis, threefold cessation and threefold contemplation occur, or are present in, one single instant or one single thought. All aspects of reality are contained (at least potentially) in each and every phenomenon, and a single flash of insight in a single moment is sufficient to, even the key to, realizing enlightenment. One should cultivate a state of quiescence which spontaneously includes the perfection of Buddhist virtues, and neither be agitated by nor attached to any conventional, empty phenomenon. This is the goal and ideal state of Buddhist spirituality.

Notes

1. Some of these topics have already been referred to in the articles by Lai and Unno. To avoid repetition I have abbreviated overlapping areas or attempted either to approach the same issues from a different perspective or to add new information. The reader is advised to read this article in tandem with the contributions of Lai (chapter 11) and Unno (chapter 12, section I).

2. Nāgārjuna warns against this common tendency in his *Middle Verses* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārika*): "Those who think in terms of self-existence, other-existence, existence, and non-existence do not grasp the truth of Buddha's teaching." Mervyn Sprung, *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters from the Prasannapadā of Candrakīrti,* 158. I use the term "Being" with a capital "B" to refer to the idea of reality having substantial existence, precisely what is denied by "emptiness," in contrast to the Buddhists' acceptable idea of existence as arising causally and interdependently.

3. See also Richard H. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China,* 184.

4. Or, to put it in terms of the other side of the paradox, "emptiness (does not mean that things are) not real." See Walter Liebenthal, *Chao Lun, The Treatises of Seng-chao,* 54–63, esp. 61 n. 222. See also Tsukamoto Zenryū, ed., *Jōron kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1955); Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika,* 140–46; Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy,* 350–56; and Fung Yu-lang, *History of Chinese Philosophy,* 2:264–65.

5. Liebenthal, *Chao Lun,* 57 n. 197.

6. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika,* 224.

7. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra.* This refers to the Mahāyāna version of the Buddha's last sermons and his final entry into nirvāṇa. See T 12, no. 374, 365–604, and no. 375, 605–852.

8. The *Ch'eng-shih lun* (T 32, no. 1646, 239–373) is extant only in Chinese translation, and the reconstructed title "*Satyasiddhi Sāstra*" (Accomplishing the Real) is speculative. There is a study and English translation made from a Sanskrit reconstruction of the text by N. Aiyaswami Sastri, *Satyasiddhiśastra of Harivarman* (Baroda: University of Baroda, 1978).

9. For Chih-tsang's biography, see *More Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Hsü kao-seng chuan;* T 50.461c–463c). Chih-tsang's writings are not extant, and we must rely on the outline of his position given by Chi-tsang in *Treatise on Mahāyāna* (*Ta-ch'eng hsüan lun;* T 45.15–77) and *On the Meaning of the Two Truths* (*Erh-ti i;* T 45.77–115).

10. Chi-tsang's brief comments are expanded in a subcommentary by the Japanese scholar Anchō (763–814) called *Notes on the Commentary on the Middle Verses* (*Chūron shoki;* T 65.1–247).

11. The five kinds of eyes, or eyesight, attributed to the Buddha are (1) physical eyes, or that which is perceived by the physical eyes; (2) divine eyes, or the perception of divine beings, who can perceive the future destiny of sentient beings; (3) the wisdom eye, or the perception of those of the two vehicles, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, who perceive the emptiness of all phenomena; (4) the Dharma eye, or the perception of the bodhisattvas, who perceive the entire Dharma for the sake of saving sentient beings; and (5) the Buddha eye, or the perception of the Buddha, which includes all of the above.

12. Kumārajīva's translation of the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* contains the following: "'Subhuti, what do you mean? The various illusory things produced magically by a master of illusions, whether they be elephants or horses or cows or sheep or men or women, what about these things? Do these illusions have karmic causes and conditions which function as karmic causes and conditions for falling into hell or being born in the place where there is neither conceptualizations nor no conceptualizations, or not?' 'They do

not, Bhagavan. These magical illusions are empty and have no true reality. How can they be said to have karmic causes and conditions which function as karmic conditions for falling into hell or being born in the place where there is neither conceptualizations nor no conceptualizations?'" (T 8.413b16–22).

13. See Whalen Lai, "Further Developments of the Two Truths Theory in China: the *Ch'eng-shih-lun* Tradition and Chou Yung's *San-tsung-lun*," in *Philosophy East and West* 30 (1980) 139–61; and the section on "The Satyasiddhi Detour" in Lai's article "The Three Jewels in China" (chapter 11 above).

14. See Lai, "Further Developments," 146.

15. Kumārajīva's translation of the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* reads, "Śāriputra, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva dwells within the two truths and for the sake of sentient beings explains the dharmas of the worldly truth and the truth of supreme meaning. Śāriputra, although the two truths are unattainable by sentient beings, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva practices the perfection of wisdom and utilizes the power of skillful means in order to preach the dharma to sentient beings" (T 8.405a15–18).

16. Kumārajīva's translation of the *Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* has only "The Bodhisattva Mahāsattva speaks of sentient beings as both existing and not existing based on the worldly truth, not on the supreme (truth)" (T 8.378b9–10). It does not mention "neither Being nor non-Being."

17. The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* says, "From within the wisdom of non-duality / The Lion-man (the Buddha) appears, / Not attached to the dharma of non-duality / For he knows it is neither one nor two (or, 'there is neither unity nor duality')" (T 9.610a21–22).

18. I base my translation on Kumārajīva's Chinese translation, since that was the basis for Chih-i's interpretation. For the original Sanskrit, see volume 4 of the Bibliotheca Buddhica edited by Louis de La Valleé Poussin, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikas (Mādhyamikasūtras) de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti* (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970) 491; and J. W. de Jong, ed., *Nāgārjuna Mulamadhyamakakārikāh* (Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1977) 35. For other English translations of this verse, see Sprung, *Lucid Exposition*, 238; Frederick J. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning*, 213; Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika*, 40; Nagao Gadjin, "From Mādhyamika to Yogācāra: An Analysis of MMK XXIV. and MV I.1–2," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 2:1 (1979) 31.

19. See *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, trans. Leon Hurvitz, 28.

20. See Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-i (538–597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*, 109.

21. See Ōchō Enichi, *Hokke shisō no kenkyū* (Studies in Lotus Thought) (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1981) 287–88.

22. For a summary of the four samādhis and the ten objects of contemplation, see chapter 12, section I, by T. Unno.

23. For an English translation of the *Great Cessation and Insight*, see Neal Donner, "The Great Calming and Contemplation of Chih-i. Chapter One: The Synopsis."

24. There is an earlier work by Chih-i devoted entirely to this samādhi called the *Commentary on the Samādhi of an Awakened Mind in the Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* (T 46.621–627), which is for the most part repeated in the *Great Cessation and Insight*.

25. See Edward Conze, *Buddhist Meditation*, 17; and Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, 13–14.

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