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The World Conception of Chu Tao-sheng

By Walter Liebenthal, Santiniketan*

In two earlier papers we tried to describe the world in which Chu Tao-sheng lived, the China of the 4th and 5th centuries, with its conflicting religious aspirations, and then we followed him on his way through this world. Now we have to see what Tao-sheng thought of the teaching of the Buddha and how he interpreted it.

1. The Sage Is Cosmic Order

During his stay on Lu-shan Tao-sheng must have taken part in the conversations in which the nature of the Highest Being was discussed. For all interest of Hui-yüan and his circle was focussed on this subject. Many quotations from the famous commentary on the *Chuang Tzu*, composed by Kuo Hsiang, are found in Hui-yüan's writings.¹ In this commentary the term *li*^a (Cosmic Order)

* For the historical background and the biography of Chu Tao-sheng see the papers in Vol. XI Nos. 1 and 3 of this Journal.

1 Concerning Kuo Hsiang cf. Fung Yu-lan, *Chuang Tzu*, Shanghai 1933, Appendix, "Some Characteristics of the Philosophy of Kuo Hsiang". Kuo's understanding of *li*, a term very common in his commentary, becomes clear in a comm. on *Chuang Tzu* 5.4 (ch. 2 p. 39b): "Chung-ni has said: Death and life... wealth and poverty... are changes operated by Fate (*ming* 命)." Comm: "Because of the Order of Fate (*li*) all these events must happen as they do and there is no escape.... It is not by accident that we have our lives... What we are not we cannot be; what we are we cannot but be..." So our life is determined by a cosmic order which is impersonal. Nobody activates this order (非有使然者) (*ibid.* 22 ch. 7 p. 55b), but Chuang Tzu himself knows a Maker of Things (造化者). And Kuo Hsiang, at the end of ch. 11, stresses the difference between Heaven, ruler, and Man, subject.

a 理

is used in about the same meaning as by Hui-yüan and later by Tao-sheng. That makes one wonder whether Tao-sheng did not on this mountain become acquainted with the concept of that Order, innate in Existence, of which the Buddha is the personification.

The *locus classicus* of *li* is found in the *I Ching*: “(The sages), in perfect harmony with Cosmic Order, in realisation of their own nature, fulfilled the will of Heaven.”² Allusions to this sentence are common in Tao-sheng’s commentaries (1c; 2a, b)³. Chuang Tzu identified *li* (or *tao*) with *tzu-jan*^a, nature (with the accent on its unaided^b power never deviating^c from its course).⁴ In this sense the term is used by Tao-sheng (1a; 2c). The Buddha is in perfect harmony with *li* (1c); Buddhist Order, *Dharma*, is Order of Nature (2i, j). To be in harmony with Nature is to be good (2h). To Tao-sheng the natural order of things is revealed in the *Dharma*.

On every possible occasion Tao-sheng stresses the oneness of the Buddha and his Order (1e, f, g; 2d, e). “*Li* is indivisible” (14b). Why? Because it is source (2f) and goal (2h, l). To conform with *li* means to attain *Nirvāṇa* (2m). As source *li* is *t’i* (3a; 4e) and also *wu* (the Void in the sense of Lao Tzu, “Mother of Things”) which to Tao-sheng is identical with *śūnyatā* (1h; 2g) and *wu-wei* (11b). In China *śūnyatā* is non-World, i.e., that which is not because it is radically different from anything that is.⁵ World is the manifold, non-World the source which is one and from which things have deviated (2j, m). To it they return (1e, i; 3a). World is illusion, but the integrity of things, non-World, is real (3b; 4d). This, their real state is not existing apart from that we are in, but, as we might say, the two states are actually merely two aspects of one and the same. Existence is nothing

It seems that two clouds of associations, that around Heaven and that around Nature, did not touch; Heaven, as dynastic ancestor and providence, was “ruler” (主), but Nature did not suffer any intruder in her course and was therefore “without ruler” (無主). Hui-yüan inherited this phrase from Kuo Hsiang, see below 13.

2 *Shuo-kua* ch. 9 p. 1: 窮理尽性以至於命 (i. e. 天命).

3 References to translations from Tao-sheng’s works which will be published later.

4 *Chuang Tzu* 16 ch. 6 p. 6a.

5 Attempts to get at something wholly unspecified by way of negations are common not only in Buddhism but also in the West. In fact, the resulting “nothings” are not at all unspecified.

a 自然 b 自 c 然

existent (3a-g). In reality, in the original, unspoiled, unborn state, when things were still integrated in the Whole, they were also in union with the Buddha, the Ancestor of creation (7c).

This is Tao-sheng's earliest picture of the Buddha, still without certain essential features which developed later (below 13), —or at least draft of his picture sufficient to compare it with that the Indians had of the Great *Śramaṇa*, and to decide whether it was derived from the latter or not.

2. The Indian and the Chinese Buddha

In India a Buddha is one who has awakened to the truth. Anybody may become a Buddha; many of them occur under various names in the sutras. When, as in the formula of ordination, "*buddham śaraṇam gacchāmi...*" ("I follow the Buddha..."), the singular number is used, reference is to Gautama, the man. The Indian Buddha is not a cosmic figure.⁶ He is an individual at the end of his career; one does not become the Buddha but a Buddha. Yet, because all Buddhas are perfect, they are the same and are therefore called one. For a perfect individual is identical with all perfect individuals. The *Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṅkāra* says: "The Buddhas are one because the *dharmakāya* is one."⁷

Dharmakāya is the state of perfection acquired in *Nirvāṇa*. I think we should continue translating this word as "Body of the Law".⁸ For, though it is described as filling the *dharmadhātu*,

6 A cosmic figure is such by reason of its position in the cosmos, viz. as source, goal, top, bottom, centre etc.

7 IX p. 77 (ed. S. Lévi): "*bahutvamapi neṣyate buddhānāṃ dharmakāyasyābhedāt.*"

8 Th. Stcherbatsky translates "The absolute Whole" (*The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa*, Leningrad 1927, p. 41), also "substance of the Universe" (*ibid.* p. 175). De la Vallée-Poussin says that it is identical with *śūnyatā*. (Cf. "The Three Bodies", *JRAS* 1906.) However we translate, it is essential to keep in mind that *dharmakāya* is a state which is attained by an individual having passed through a career. Substance seems to refer to something impersonal. Now, the *dharmakāya* is acquired in a process in which the adept loses all individual traits, he becomes the Whole, yet this Whole is distinguished from the assemblage of *dharma*s, forming the Whole (*dharmadhātu*, *sarve dharmāḥ*), by the fact that it is acquired. (Cf. *Triṃśikā* ed. S. Lévi, p. 45). "Because he... is free from all impurities, has become master over all *dharma*s (i.e., is free from bondage), his body is called Body of the Law."

that is, the realm of all the *dharma*s, it remains a state of a person, to be distinguished from cosmic or other ontological states. A *Yogin*, at the end of his career, is bodyless, he is no more a single individual driving in the stream of *Samsāra* but has become the Whole, or the true state of things, or the impersonation of that truth, the *Dharma*. Simultaneously with the transformation of the mundane world which he has brought about he himself is transformed: while he formerly resounded with desires, he now resounds with the *Dharma*, is saviour and saved at once. Kumārajīva, in his correspondence with Hui-yüan, says:⁹ “(The *dharmakāya*) fills the empty *dharmadhātu* in all ten directions; its radiance illuminates numberless *Buddhakṣetras*. The sound of sermons penetrates their numberless realms so that the communities of Bodhisattvas who have attained to the tenth stage may hear the *Dharma*. For the purpose of conversion an unlimited number of *Nirmāṇa-buddhas* emanate from the body of the Buddha filling all directions. They appear as needed by the different types of Beings, of unequal radiance, colour, shape and intelligence. The true body of the *Tathāgata* is invisible even to the Bodhisattvas of the ninth stage, much more so to the lower grades of saints and to ordinary men. Why? Because the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha is not found in the Three Worlds, is not acquired through the three types of good deeds.¹⁰ It is produced by the unlimited purifying merits during the incarnations (*jātaka*) and therefore lasts like *Nirvāṇa*. The true *dharmakāya* is like the sun; his *nirmāṇakāyas* are like the rays of the sun. A Buddha in the *Sūramgama-samādhi* who has lived 700 *asaṃkhyeya kalpa* and Śākyamuni both are one identical *kāya*. If there is only one Buddha, one must emanate from the other.”

All Buddhas teach the same, so there is only one identical *kāya*, one Law, which is promulgated in innumerable, individual sermons. Like rays of the sun, *nirmāṇakāyas* (phantom bodies) emanate from *dharmakāya*. The Buddha is said to multiply¹¹ though actually it is the Law that multiplies, not a cosmic agent such as Hui-yüan's Highest Being (the Sage). Though in his

9 XLV 123a 1–13.

10 That is, ordinary deeds: bodily, verbal, mental.

11 É. Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse*, Louvain 1944, t. I pp. 531–545 (cf. XXV 124b–126a), calls this “la multiplication des Buddhas”. An instance is the Great Miracle in Śrāvastī (*ibid.* p. 532).

correspondence Kumārajīva concedes to Hui-yüan the oneness of the Buddha, he means it differently and thus, after all, this interesting controversy ended in a draw; both correspondents were thinking in different patterns.

To Tao-sheng the Buddha is Existence, that to which we belong and which we have yet to reach or fulfill. He is identical with the Ten Thousand Things, yet is not their manifoldness but their integration. He is that oneness from which we have come and to which we return,—a cosmic, not an individual, state, personalized.

In India the Buddha is the Divine Teacher who out of compassion with suffering mankind has resigned his *Nirvāṇa* and remained on earth in order to preach. How did Tao-sheng interpret this fact?

3. Buddha's Response—Kan-ying^a and San-shih^b

Hui-yüan understood the Sage, sitting motionless in the centre of the universe, as cosmic national saviour who had revealed himself in the Order of the Ancient Kings, of Confucius and of the Buddha. Tao-sheng, when he defined Buddhist Order as *li*, transferred him into the associative pattern of Nature revealing herself in growth, providing every creature with what it needs.¹²


12 Wang Pi describes the benevolence of Nature when commenting on *Lao Tzu* 5. He says: "Heaven-Earth answers the nature of things; it neither interferes nor creates. The Ten Thousand Things give themselves their order, therefore Lao Tzu says that Heaven-Earth is not benevolent. A benevolent (cosmic agent) would dispose (of things) and introduce (wilful) changes; he would aid (the one against the other) and thus interfere. If things are disposed of and (wilfully) changed, they lose their bearings (正); if they are aided and thus interfered with they are robbed of their share (in cosmic life). (For life with all it implies is precious.) If things are robbed of their share (in cosmic life), they cannot reach consummation. Earth does not produce grass (especially) for the cattle, and yet the cattle have grass to eat; she does not produce dogs for men, and yet men have dogs to eat. If nobody interferes with their course each of the Ten Thousand Things gets exactly what it needs. Thus all are supplied. The favour (read 惠) of a self-willed (cosmic agent) would not be sufficient to answer (all needs)." I think 正 is here synonymous with 理, cf. *Chuang Tzu* 18 ch. 6 p. 33a.

a 感応 b 三世

We have seen that all cosmic figures who occupied the *t'i* position acted like Nature "without self-willed effort".

Originally, this was a maxim of rule held out to princes. Not taking sides, they should, like Nature, allow all creatures to reach their predestined ends without interference. Thus they would fulfill their duty of national salvation. That was still the ideal of Hui-yüan. But when the Buddha became a popular god, those who suffered below, hearing of the impartial rule of the newly revealed Sage, expected that they would be protected and cared for. They hoped that he would "listen to their call"^a and save them from all evil in this and the other world. The lonely magician (far Buddha) shifted from his throne in the Origin of Things to present times (near Buddha) in order to respond to individual wants.¹³

Tao-sheng describes the Buddha as powerful and wise as the Sage is characterized in Chinese tradition (1j).¹⁴ Powerful, that means, full of the magical power inherent in nature; wise, that means, conscious of each creature's wants. Withdrawn, he haunts the nameless origin of things, manifest, he responds (*kan-ying*) to the needs of the Beings. We shall now try to find out what this term implies.

Kan-ying is a Chinese motif which is pictured in Hexagram 31  (*Hsien-kua*) of the *I Ching*. The commentary *T'uan-tz'u* says: "*Hsien* expresses *kan*. Above a weak (female trigram), below a strong (male trigram). Two life-forces^b are in *kan-ying* relation to their mutual benefit. He waits (?), she enjoys (his courtship) . . . When Heaven and Earth are in *kan-ying* relation, the Ten Thousand Things are formed and rise. When the Sage moves the heart of men so that they enter into the *kan-ying*

13 *Wu-wei* 無為 does not imply passivity but rather non-identification with anything in particular during action so that growth is not impeded. Yet growth is to be activated by uninterrupted sympathetic response. The sun must rise every day, spring must be at time, all creatures must be fed. This the Sage-King must bring about without fail as it is done by the seasons. He is the universal will active in growth, he must never be less. When he schemes (勞), things lose their somnambulist innocence (貞); when he responds, everything carries out automatically its natural functions and all goes well. Cf. *Chuang Tzu* 22 ch. 7 p. 46b where *wu-wei* (無為用心 p. 48b) is described: 其用心不勞其応物無方.

14 *The Book of Chao* p. 25.

a 感應 b 氣

relation with him, then all things under the sky enjoy peace. Watch what all the creatures in Heaven-Earth love (*kan*), and their natural inclinations are laid bare to you."

The reverted position indicates that the male and female forces are in balance; the male has voluntarily yielded its place to the partner. Such relation, the same commentary says, gives a chance that it lasts. The relation between Sage and Man is analogous to the above; it is uncompetitive and therefore constitutes a guaranty of peace.

The term *kan-ying* (or simply *ying* in the same meaning) occurs often in the *Chuang Tzu*. There it is the Sage who responds to urges rising in the creatures. "(The model ruler) responds as Nature does."¹⁵ The qualification "as Nature does" here implies that such a ruler does not act arbitrarily, he merely responds as the mirror or echo.¹⁶ Yet, as time went, *kan-ying*, originally expressing an objective state of well-balanced harmony, because it signified the act of a subject, Heaven or the Sage, began to take the meaning of grace. In the passage, found in the *Chuang Tzu*, "Birth is to the sages a move of Heaven, death a transformation of the universe. . . . Whenever a response is expected it is given,"¹⁷ the last phrase, whatever it meant to Chuang Tzu, was later understood as assurance that prayers will be heard. In Buddhist monasteries, written on tablets, it tells visitors that the Buddha will protect them against the vicissitudes of Fate or, what is the same, against the retributions of *karman*.

Indian *karman* (*yin-kuo*^a or *san-shih*^b) was in China equated with Fate (*li-shu*^c).¹⁸ There are cosmic forces which must be in balance or else bad omens are seen. There are persons, gods or demons, who avenge Order if it is disturbed. Heaven threatens dynasties with extinction. Whether ill luck was caused by forces or persons is unessential for our purpose, whatever they were,

15 *Chuang Tzu* 14 ch. 5 p. 38b 夫至柔者…應之以 自然，然後調理四時。

16 The simile of the mirror occurs three times, that of the seasons often.

17 *Chuang Tzu* 15 ch. 6 p. 3a: 聖人之生也天行，其死也物化…感而後應 (cf. 5e). Variants are 有感必至，有緣必開， etc.

18 Cf. *Shih Hui-yüan's* Buddhism, documents 5 and 6. *Li-shu* (or simply *shu*) was discovered in the stars, the numbers, and other events which seemed to stand to one another in the relation of cause and effect or of foreboding and realization.

a 因果 b 三世 c 歷數

they had to be counteracted. Thus theories were formed and diagrams drawn to explain how they worked. *Karman* was to the Chinese a cosmic law connecting accidents with immoral deeds, not very different from Taoist theory connecting diseases with certain transgressions. It was a mechanical law replacing the rule of a heavenly judge,¹⁹ yet, though there was no karmic agent to be addressed, there were the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who would accept offerings and grant prayers (*Chinese Karma*).

A theory may be phrased in the same way, labelled by the same term, and yet imply very different meanings. The Indian Buddhists, relying on a mechanical law of retribution, save themselves by their own effort. The Buddha has climbed the ladder to *Nirvāṇa* under the same conditions. He cannot interfere with *karman*. One's own efforts overcome *karman*.

In popular Buddhism these efforts are not made but the Buddha is expected to help like other gods. Or, we may say, he is a good spirit who helps against evil ones. Offerings are made which will bring returns, and pious devotion is shown that one's loyalty might be obvious. Rather strangely Buddhist hells are reserved for Taoist Judges, while the Buddhas rule in paradises. Buddhist *kan-ying* in popular understanding can be studied in the Taoist classic, the *Kan-ying Pien*.²⁰ There *kan-ying* is a cosmic moral law, controlled by Heaven and the Director of Destinies. And the law that is executed by these persons is Buddhist *karman*. Nature has left the stage.

Tao-sheng's hope was set on "becoming a Buddha" (below 8) or on union with *li*. In this perspective the help of gods in daily life, their protection against the threats of hell in the life hereafter, and the promise of a seat in Amitābha's Paradise were not ends worthwhile to be pursued. Thus in the mind of this great

19 "What we choose, good or bad, corresponds to forms and sounds; what we get as answer corresponds to reflections and echoes. We get interested (in life) and hope (for the wrong things), whereupon a corresponding answer automatically follows. Where is there an 'unknown judge' (幽司 = 司命)?" The automatism of Kuo Hsiang's natural growth is in these lines understood as a cosmic moral order (*karman*), also acting automatically. *Shih Hui-yüan's Buddhism* p. 254a and p. 257b.

20 Translated by F. H. Balfour in *Taoist Texts*, Shanghai 1894, p. 113-118.

a 感應篇

religieux the term *kan-ying* assumed quite another, most interesting meaning.

4. Tao-sheng's Concept of Kan-ying

The relation of the Buddha Śākyamuni to the suffering Beings is described in the *Lotus of the Law*.²¹ He has, it is said, appeared on Earth with one definite aim: "To proclaim one all-important truth the Buddha has arisen in the World." This he did in order to "open the eyes (of the Beings) so that they may see what is known to the *Tathāgata*." In this act the Buddha has manifested his Great Compassion (*mahākaruṇā*). Proclaiming the Law the Buddha answers our spiritual needs, material wants are in this context unessential. So his Compassion is understood also by Tao-sheng. Yet to him the response of the Buddha is that of Nature who does not appear only in assemblies but is always present, guiding each single Being through the whole course of its career on Earth. Responding to their needs, as echo and mirror respond to sounds and forms, Nature lets things grow. And each is supplied in accordance with its nature. So we are supplied with the *Dharma* by the Buddha; we are "watered by the rain of the *Dharma*" (1p), sent the three Vehicles, each a different one in accordance with his mental faculties.

The Indian theory of salvation is complicated and not very consistent. What interests us here is that the rôle of the Buddha is limited to turning the Wheel of the Law. This is called "planting a root". Where there is no root (*mūla*) nothing can grow. Because the Buddha himself has planted a root, he is able to foresee the future development of a believer whom he has met in a distant past (*vyākaraṇa*). The believer, being thus "seeded" (*avaropita-kuśala-mūla*), collects merits and thus progresses automatically, relying on *karman*. The underlying metaphor of growth was, to my knowledge, not elaborated.

Another theory relates the chances of a Being to be saved to his position in the clan of the Buddha. He may be destined for *Nirvāṇa* from the outset (*niyata*), or his success depends upon his behaviour (*anivata*), or he does not belong to the clan and

21 SPS IX 7a: *tathāgata-jñāna-darśana-samādāpana-hetu*. This Kumārajīva translates: 欲令衆生開仏知見故.

has therefore no chances (*agotraka*). In this picture the Buddha does not occur.

Tao-sheng rejected predestination as taught in the second theory. All Beings are destined for Buddhahood (below 7). The first theory he changed characteristically. In China “nature” is “growing nature”. Growth is a miracle^a. It is activated by the male element. This activation during union^b of the two principles creates in the creatures an urge, or spring^{c22} which unnoticeably works^d below the surface till it manifests itself in a seed, in a sprout, a stir of something seemingly lifeless^e. Nature is always pregnant with new forms which cannot be traced to their sources^f. There are no stages in this development, no accumulations of parts; creatures appear in a finished state after a long preparatory period. Yet the result announces itself somehow even earlier.

This is the metaphor in which Tao-sheng pictured spiritual development (11a). Beings are seeded from the beginning (below 15) and their development is constantly re-activated or “guided” by the Buddhas. They carry a spring^g which leads them towards the Buddha^h. A state of expectancy or more or less maturity (pregnancy, cf. 51) prevails which is brought to fruition through touch (5c) during a reciprocal relation of loveⁱ or trust. The Buddha may in this relation appear as the father whose children we are (*gotraka*) or as the one we shall be, or whom we shall join, in the future (below 8). Finally, the fruit of Recognition drops and we discover ourselves as Existence regenerated. Forebodings of this process there are many: we cry for the Buddha^j,

22 The term *chi* 機 would be worth an investigation. In the fifth century it replaced *yüan* 緣 which Kumārajīva still uses to translate *pratyaya*. Sanskrit equivalents of *chi*, as *yantra* or *vema*, refer to machines. The Chinese Buddhist meaning is different. We have “spring”, “trigger”, “first stir of a motion” (*Hsi-tz'u* B4). We read 冥機, 靈機, 神機. In the *Chuang Tzu* 7.5 ch. 3 p. 33a seq. it is “life” activated by the male element (cf. the preceding metaphor of the hens without cock). I do not presume that Tao-sheng thought of insemination through the Buddha, but that idea is not far off. To the distinction of 德 and 性, which denote innate faculties, *chi* is acquired through touch, a longing develops for the partner etc.

a 冥 b 和 c 機 d 潛牽 e 堯著 f 密至 g 昔化之機, 機緣 h 向仏 i 感 j 扣聖

pray (5i), the earth may tremble (5g), Buddhas manifest themselves in many ways.

What then is our responsibility in this process of growth? We must return the love of the Father and thus create an opportunity for him to help. For without a form the mirror cannot reflect. It is, however, never too late to turn towards him and thus restore the natural state of peace between father and children. We cannot, even if we wished, forfeit our claim to Buddhahood (below 7).

In India, Buddhist *karman* was a law enacted by an impersonal force. Punished were social taboos and rules though we do not know clearly which rules. But we know all about karmic punishments. We have learned that in China the sword of karmic justice was wielded by a Taoist Judge, later identified with Yama. Tao-sheng knows nothing of this Judge and his punishments; we ourselves decide upon our future. All children seek the way home, but some are led astray by bad influences (5b) and jeopardize their future. Karmic conditions after death are allocated not by any Judge but by the children themselves who look in the wrong direction (below 7).

We are heirs to the throne without knowing it; we try to acquire a position in which we already are. If we walk away and enforce our rights by collecting merits we do something useless and wrong because that implies an attempt to escape from the Buddha. The Sage is Existence; he is always and everywhere present^a. "In the square he is square; in the round he is round" (12b), and "his guidance never fails" (14d). He cannot be escaped but must be trusted. We must turn towards him and hope for the right thing. "All hopes are fulfilled" (5f)²³ but nothing besides their fulfilment can be expected. As a form conditions its shadow, so each Being creates himself his Heaven or his Hell (5d seq.).

Kan-ying has no Sanskrit equivalent; it can be understood only by reference to Chinese thought. With Tao-sheng it denotes a relation of trust between a Being and the divine will present in Existence, replacing fear of Fate (or *karman*) (17c). *Karman* need not to be feared because we are safely guided by one whose

23 In the quotation from Liu Ch'iu below 感 is explained as 希, hope.

a 内常存

infinite compassion warrants that he will not fail us. His word that he will not forsake the last of the Beings is to be trusted.

Life must be lived from a centre^a which is the Buddha, if it is to be a religious life. All activity that does not originate there is not in accordance with *li* or irreligious. So Tao-sheng says that prayer even for the help of the saviour is irreligious^b (5f). A child need not ask for food, he need not express thanks, and yet his demands are heard and his thankfulness taken for granted. Nothing is demanded but faith, a complete surrender of one's individual will to that of Cosmic Compassion.

(Ch'i) Liu Ch'iu^c defines:²⁴ "Turning round in the wheel of incarnations, we are suffering and hope for delivery. This longing which is articulated in prayer (*k'ou*) to the Sage is *kan*. He who has overcome all resistance through compliance²⁵ and has revealed himself²⁶ has pity on us and acts accordingly. This response through which we are saved is *ying*." The Buddha knows what is our best (1p); his divine hand mysteriously guides us through the hazards of *karman* (15k).

5. The Body of Response

With the above in mind, it seems evident that to Chinese readers of the sutras the term *ying-shen*^d could only suggest the responding Buddha such as he has been described in these pages. To Tao-sheng it is that aspect of the Buddha which manifests itself in his daily guidance (5f), symbolized by the outstretched hand, the cloud reaching deep (1p), by the lamp lit in the dark and other similes. This aspect is also called the "near Buddha" (10, 11a) in contrast to the "far Buddha", the lonely, inaccessible cosmic ruler in the Origin of Things. The relation between these

24 Yu-lu p. 68a 13-15.

25 順通 = 感通. Cf. *Hsi-tz'u* A9.

26 示現 = 出現於世. *SPS IX* 7a.

27 The Compendia composed under the Sui and T'ang contain notes on *kan-ying* which deserve to be studied. Those found in the dictionaries do not exhaust this subject. Cf. *Ta-ch'eng hsüan-lun* 5.3 XLV 66 f.; *Miao-fa-lien-hua ching hsüan-i* ch. 6a XXXIII 476-9; *Ta-ch'eng ssu-lun hsüan-i* Hsü 1. 74/1 ch. 6 p. 30d-56a. There exists a large popular literature on *kan-ying*. Cf. Hackmann, *Laien-Buddhismus in China*, Gotha 1924.

a 內 b 發於外 c 劉虬 d 應身

two aspects was then construed as that between the *t'i* and *yung* aspects.

In Indian Buddhism two, three or more Bodies (*kāya*) of the Buddha occur. Omitting all detail, we may say that the Body of the Law (*dharmakāya*) represents the Buddha idealized as Revelation; the Apparitional Body (*nirmāṇakāya*) represents the various manifestations of Revelation, whether through Buddhas or through men, animals and other Beings;²⁸ the Body of Bliss (*sambhogakāya*) was added because it was felt that the Buddha deserved a reward for so many good deeds committed during many eons.

The *dharmakāya* was translated as *fa-shen*^a, the *nirmāṇakāya* as *hua-shen*^b and the *sambhogakāya* as *pao-shen*^c. But in our period we find also *ying-shen* for *hua-shen*²⁹ and, in translations of Paramārtha and others, rather oddly also for *sambhogakāya*.³⁰ De la Vallée-Poussin defines "*corps d'harmonie qui se conforme aux dispositions des fidèles (et qui ne peut être que le nirmāṇakāya)*". But in fact, whatever Sanskrit term was underlying, for Chinese readers *ying-shen* simply denoted Existence, or Nature, bending down and beckoning her stray children home.

6. The Response of the Buddha Is Conditioned

This is the title of one of Tao-sheng's papers. From it we know that in China the response of the Buddha constituted a problem. In Indian Buddhism the condition which makes a Being receptive of the Doctrine is called the Root of the Good (*kuśalamūla*). As a root, or seed, lying in the soil seemingly lifeless, sprouts when watered by the gardener, so a Being which possesses a Root is receptive to the Doctrine and grows, while another one which does not possess this Root remains unaffected. The classical story illustrating this fact, namely, that the Buddha can do no-

28 SPS IX 57a 20.

29 J. Rahder, *Glossary of the Daśabhūmika-sūtra* (Buddhica, deuxième série, tome 1), Paris 1928. *Sub nirmāṇakāya*. Also (Sui) Hui-yüan, *Ta-ch'eng i-chang* 19, XLIV 837-844.

30 Literature concerning the doctrine of the Bodies is found in the *Siddhi*, Appendix III p. 762 ff. Cf. Obermiller, *The Doctrine of Pāramitā* (Acta Or. vol. XI), Leningrad 1932, reprint p. 45 ff., and D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in the Lañcāvatara Sūtra*, London 1930 p. 308

a 法身 b 化身 c 報身

thing but offer the means of salvation for acceptance or refusal is found in the *Mahāprajñā-pāramitā Śāstra*.³¹

Once the Buddha, accompanied by Ānanda, entered (*Śrāvastī*) in order to collect alms. A poor woman was standing in their way. Then Ānanda said: "The Buddha may save this piteous woman." —"Ānanda," said the Buddha "she is unreceptive."³²—"Go nearer," said Ānanda, "when she sees you endowed with the two types of characteristics, peculiar to a Buddha, and the rays of light (emanating from your body), she will rejoice and become receptive." So the Buddha approached her, but she turned her back to him. He tried from every side but in vain; she just looked upwards in the sky. So he came from above, but she looked downwards. He rose out of the earth, but she covered her face with both hands, (not out of malice but because) she did not notice him. Then the Buddha said to Ānanda: "What further should I do to make her receptive? This type of Beings cannot be ferried over^b. They cannot see the Buddha." ... "Rain drops everywhere (even among the *Pretas* (souls punished by thirst), but they cannot taste it (because they do not notice it)."

The poor woman of this story had, in the course of her career, not yet planted the Root of the Good (*anavaropita-kuśalamūla*); she had not reached that state of maturity in which the message could be accepted. She must wait and the Buddha must wait, for *Karma* is stronger than both.

So much for the Indian side. The Chinese Buddhist thinkers interpreted this story differently. Or, they had different associations rise when they read that the Buddha under certain conditions acts, under others not^c. We must never forget that the Chinese Seekers of that time knew virtually no Sanskrit. The Buddha appears when there are Beings ripe to be converted^d and disappears when there are none^e. This implied that the Sage who to Tao-sheng and his contemporaries was identical with Nature, behaved like a human, choosing between action and non-action, conscious of what he was doing^f, which was impossible.³³

31 XXV 125c 6–126a 7; É. Lamotte, *Le traité* I p. 541 f. Dictionaries s.v. 億家.

32 A believer qualified to attend an assembly is called 有緣 or 有機緣, a phrase still used. Making contact with the Buddha is called 結緣 and the manifestation of one's maturity 起緣. Cf. such phrases as 宿世因緣 (contact in a former incarnation), 根緣 etc.

33 "The Sage (like the mirror) reflects without purpose" 聖人無由而照之. *Chuang Tzu* 2.3 ch. 1 p. 27b.

a 無因緣 b 無度因緣 c 為無為 d 有緣 e 無緣 f 有智

This problem could never rise in India because there the Buddhas were many and naturally behaved like human beings.

Tao-sheng, when challenged by Fa-yao^{a,34} must have felt strongly the impossibility of solving this dilemma.³⁵ If the Buddha was acting automatically (here used in the sense of blindly), or as Fa-yao said, if he was identical with Locana, who was there to guide us? Tao-sheng's concept of *kan-ying* and with it his whole buddhology was in danger. Salvation, he had said, is not a mere dream; it is real because the Buddha and his compassion are real (6a, b). As Vimalakīrti took upon himself the disease of the World so the Buddha shares all our suffering. For, being Existence itself, he can have no fate apart from our own. Tao-sheng must have thought in this way.

This assumption is evidenced by an interesting quotation unearthed by Tang.³⁶ "Tao-sheng has said: The response of the Buddha is conditioned (by the peculiar situation of each Being). He may follow³⁷ them into the Doleful Abode and share their misery; he may have desires like them and share their bondage; he may follow the Good Law and be converted by hearing a sermon.³⁸ His response is therefore conscious. (Fa-)yao used to say: (His response) is not conditioned. This he proved by reference to Locana (Nature). All the *kāya* of the Buddha are one with Locana (the Chinese cosmic Buddha in the *t'i* position). Only in the shadow-world (the traces) there are differences and therefore the *kāya* there are various." The case is that of Nature's

34 Y.T. Tang, *Shih Fa-yao* 釈法瑤. 国立北京大学国学季刊 5. 4; also *Tang, History* p. 650 and 691. He lived A.D. 404-473 or a little later.

35 The problem was an old one. Already Ho Yen 何晏 (third century A.D.) had written a pamphlet "The Sage neither hates nor loves, neither grieves nor rejoices" (聖人無喜怒哀樂論). Ho Shao, the biographer of Wang Pi (*Wei Chih* 28, *Chung Hui chuan* 鍾會伝. comm.), reports that Wang did not agree. Ho's paper is not extant, but Wang Pi's retort, which was widely quoted in Buddhist scriptures, is known. "The interest of the Sage (shifts from one Being to the other) in response (to their wants) but he does not make common cause with any of them" (聖人之情応物而無累於物者也). That version of *wu-wei* agrees with that of Seng-chao, but not with that of Tao-sheng.

36 Cf. Hui-ta, *Chao-lun shu*. *Hsü* 2B 23/4 p. 421a 18.

37 I read 因 with Tang l.c. p. 650.

38 Cf. NS 370b 21 and passim, also CSPA p. 404a 3: 在人身作仏.

a 法瑤

automatic action as against the purposeful action of the saviour.³⁹

7. The Way and the Goal

Buddha is *li* which has revealed itself in that unforfeitable opportunity, waiting at the bottom of Existence, of reconciliation with Cosmic Fate which is love (5a, m), unrequited as long as it is unrecognized but ready to respond to each of our groping steps. When we recognize the Buddha, as the Prodigal Son recognizes his father, we are in the goal. This act is essentially one, it cannot be performed in instalments (below 12). But to the goal a way is leading (3c, 4d) which, as all ways, consists of many steps. These have to be climbed; no short-cut is possible. We have to learn (4a, b, e, l), to follow a teacher (4a). Yet, true teaching will not help us to accumulate knowledge but free us from wrong evaluations. It is merely destructive.

In India a number of stages (four, ten or seventeen) leads to Buddhahood; merit (*karman*) is acquired during many world-periods (*kalpa*) till the last bond connecting the soul with Earth is cut. But Tao-sheng felt that, if too much emphasis is laid on the stages, these are liable to replace in our minds the goal and thus become barriers between ourselves and the Divine. They are, he thought, an unnecessary and even dangerous *détour*.

Lao Tzu had said that *tao* is reached not by acquisition but by abandonment. "Abandon and abandon again till nothing is left to be abandoned" (*Lao Tzu* 48). This passage was often quoted, also by Tao-sheng (14g). It meant that with every step forward we get more and more entangled with life. Better to disentangle oneself and regain Origin (4e), the state free from conflicts (3a). Origin—, is it another World, like that in which we live, with more differentiation and consequently more stages, labour, and frustration to overcome?

If so, our pilgrimage would never end; there must be a moment of arrival. "When the mountain is climbed the landscape of the goal appears all at once."⁴⁰ "The fruit drops when it is ripe" (14b). "The woodcutter halts when only empty space is left" (14a). In Tao-sheng's picture the two Worlds are represented

39 Tao-sheng followed the NS. This makes me wonder how much significance we should attribute to the fact that in the above passages the Buddha not only guides but actually shares the misery of the Beings.

not as the two aspects of one and the same (as with Seng-chao) but as the two phases of one process: a long, drawn out way (3d; 4a, b) leads through a multitude of most diverse, fleeting, disturbing phantoms to the one, final moment of Recognition, described as a flash (4d).⁴¹ In this moment we know that we ourselves are the Buddha whom we are seeking. Then learning is no more useful (14e).

If I understand Tao-sheng correctly, he means that the activities, called "gradual", performed during the pilgrimage, are valuable only if done with a view to the final goal; they are valueless when done for minor goals. So, he says: "One-sided suppression of mentation (*citta*), as done by the Three Vehicles, leads to that bondage which is characteristic of small life. But if one is conscious of the fact that these achievements are means (not the goal), then they lead to salvation. Those who strive for karmic fruits are bound; they are rewarded by positions inside the Three Worlds and remain human. Not until that mental act (*prajñā*) which cuts the fetters are they free" (4c). Thus the change that is demanded is a change of vista. You must turn the back to World and "face the Buddha". You must not let yourself be lured into World by the prospect of pleasure in a Heaven. "Whatever happiness one may find there, it is always small when compared with the Great Vehicle (the One) though it might be great enough when measured with worldly pleasures" (4b).

In anticipation of the final solution, when the veil of *Māyā* will fall and Existence be realized, Tao-sheng lived and knew that he was a phantom, played not playing, powerless in the eternal flux, as long as he was unaware of being led astray by mirages (4a). But then, at the end of the pilgrimage, when Recognition flashes through him like a thunderbolt (14e), his life will no longer be casual; he himself will be the player^b (3e, 4i).

8. Becoming a Buddha

In China the idea of retribution during one's lifetime had

40 *The Book of Chao* p. 189.

41 The following terms refer to the way: 形, 惑, 行, 信, 学, 新; the following to the goal: 見, 覺, 悟, 觀, 証, 解. Cf. also (6c; 7b).

a 向仏, 仏対 b 自在

taken a number of different forms.⁴² In popular Buddhism or Taoism gods were approached like officials or judges by worshippers who behaved like supplicants. Believers arrived in the temple displaying their loyalty and carrying presents for distribution among those whom they thought to be able to influence the gods in their favour, the priests. That describes Buddhist *Karma*,⁴³ but already before Buddhism the attitude of the believers must have been similar. Chinese popular Taoism and Buddhism are not two fundamentally different religions. While Taoist demons punished sinners in the body, Buddhist *Karma* retaliated with bad conditions in after-life.

Tao-sheng fought Buddho-Taoist popular *Karma* not, as I think, for scientific but for religious reasons (15a-c). In this respect I differ from Hu Shih and Tang Yung-tung. If I am wrong, the picture I am drawing now would not change much. With Tao-sheng *karman*^a is a natural law^b (17c), functioning like the mirror or the echo, which never fails (15g, 12b). In *Nirvāṇa* its power, in the good and bad sense, is exhausted. One with the totality of things, in union with Buddha, we are safe from *karman*.

Even good deeds, rewarded by rebirth in desirable Planes of Existence, keep us inside *Samsāra*. Nothing is desirable there. A direct, radical, solution is wanted,—a relation to the Buddha other than that of bargaining rewards against donations and exchanging punishment for transgressions. Tao-sheng found this solution when he studied the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* and, at the end of his life, the *Lotus of the Law*. We shall deal with the first later (below 13) and here only anticipate the result. In the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* Tao-sheng read of *gotra*, the family of the Buddha including all Beings, the good and the bad alike (above 4). *Gotra* is Existence; to this we belong; this is the only value which counts (2h). In this perspective the distinction between good and evil, merit and demerit, has no meaning. “No merit is found at the

42 In India the theory of karmic retribution had taken two forms: a) the twelve members of the chain of causation (*nidāna*); b) the theory of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*). As these theories were never discussed in China we may assume that they passed unnoticed by the public.

43 I am writing *Karma* when I refer to the Buddho-Taoist popular *Karma* of the fatalistic masses, and *karman* when I refer to the Indian law of causation.

a 因果, 三世 b 歷數

bottom of things" (16g). We cannot be good in the sense of being less nearer to Existence.⁴⁴ "We are all Buddhas, all in *Nirvāṇa*" (6c).

We are Buddhas; we are heirs to the throne; this claim is unforfeitable. But, unaware of the pearl we possess in our own body (below 15), we neglect to follow the straight path and let ourselves be blinded by (unreal) prospects. The blind must suffer. But the Buddha is waiting for us. His hand of Mercy is always outstretched (*mahākaruṇā*). With that, as we have seen before, another causality entered the picture, that of growth which is guided (1p; 7g; 15d, k 3). It imposes on us another duty, other than that of doing good deeds; it demands that we answer mercy with trust, or requite love with love.

This causality, that of *kan-yīng* (above 3 and 4) is best studied in Tao-sheng's notes to the parable of the Prodigal Son found in the *Lotus Sūtra*.⁴⁵ The son leaves his home and wanders in pursuit of fortune. He returns poorer than before, comes to the house of his father but does not recognize it. The father knows who he is but keeps silent, employs him, watches him and promotes him, when he sees that he has lost his former unruliness. On his deathbed he reveals his secret and makes him heir of the estate.

In the *Sūtra* this story illustrates a conversion from the Small to the Great Vehicle. The father (Buddha) does not force the son to abstain from his useless wandering but waits till he is ripe for home. This educational principle of letting him ripen by experience is called the Skillfull Means of the Buddha. Tao-sheng, unlike the *Sūtra* sees the return of the son under a cosmic perspective (return to Origin). The father is Order (*li*) personified, and the final recognition and instalment of the son in his heritage is that of Cosmic Self-recognition and Self-restitution, Cosmic Salvation, as reflected in our personal salvation. The dramatic end symbolizes cosmic and personal awakening, the long wandering cosmic deviation from unity and our own fruitless pilgrimage provoked by Illusion. As the son, so the cosmos and we ourselves are guided back to Original Order by Cosmic Compassion.

44 Cf. *Lao Tzu* 2 and *Chuang Tzu* 16 ch. 6 p. 7b: "(Who strives to be) good betrays the Way; (who fosters) morality endangers Virtue" (離道以善險德以行).

45 Chapter 3 (*adhimukti*) IX 16-17; CSPS pp. 403d-405b.

Growing towards the moment of Recognition, not allowing himself to be deflected from the straight path by the prospect of whatever pleasures, this is what Tao-sheng understood as "becoming a Buddha" and what Hsieh Ling-yün contrasted to the aim of donor Meng who wanted "a seat in Heaven". The conflict between these two Buddhists typifies the rift which runs through the whole history of Chinese Buddhism.

In the following sections I intend to deal with critical papers which Tao-sheng probably wrote during the first period, that is, before the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* was translated in A.D. 417. Readers who are not interested in these details may pass over the following and continue with 17.

9. (True) Piety Requires No (Mundane) Reward (Writings B1)

Hu Shih translates:⁴⁶ "Good action requires no return", and adds: "which strikes a hard blow at the Indian conception of merit." But first I think that Tao-sheng believed in the fact of *karman*, or at least thought it to be possible (15a-c), then that he was interested only in the religious side of this problem. I wonder if the above sentence which titled one of his papers had not another meaning than Hu assumed. Chi-tsang quotes a passage from this paper. "Every pious act, insignificant as it may be, leads to Buddhahood; it does not receive a mundane reward." This he explains: "Piety which expects something in reward receives what it expects; piety which does not expect anything in reward receives what is more than anything."⁴⁸ He also quotes a number of sutras as evidence.

I did not trace Chi-tsang's quotation but accidentally hit upon a sentence in the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra* which says the same thing (16a). The idea is fundamental in *Mahāyāna*. The first *pāramitā*, that of spending, *dāna-pāramitā*, requires from the *Bodhisattva*, that while spending he is not conscious of doing a meritorious act.⁴⁹

The higher type of piety, longing for Buddhahood is, in comparison with the lower type, longing for rewards on Earth and in Heaven, "truly good" (16b, c; 15k 9), and the lower type is, in this perspective, "no good."⁵⁰

46 Hu Shih, *The Development of Zen Buddhism in China*, in *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 15, Peking 1931.

47 一毫之善並皆成仏。不受生死之報。 *Fa-hua i-shu* ch. 4. Taishō XXXIV p. 505a 20. Cf. (7a).

48 有所得善受有所得報。不所得善受不所得報。 *Ibid.* p. 505a 26.

49 *The Book of Chao* p. 140 and (16d).

50 Cf. CVS p. 397b 11. Cf. (2i).

51 CVS p. 357c 16.

In the VS *Ti-tzu p'in* (3) Vimalakīrti explains that spending while asking for reward is not spending, that taking the vows and other moral endeavours are useless for attaining Buddhahood if the Saint is not free from attachment. Karmic retributions are sought as long as one sticks to life, but they become irrelevant as soon as one turns away from life. They are, therefore, not worth pursuing. Vimalakīrti says:⁵¹ "Taking the vows... (the monk) may expect no advantage, no (karmic) reward." Tao-sheng did not fight the Buddhism of the sutras, but his goal was to establish Buddhism in what he believed to be its original purity. If Hu says that he "revolted" against Buddhism this cannot mean that he revolted against the popular misconception of it.

10. The Dharmakāya Is Bodyless (Writings B5)

In a paragraph of the *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* ch. 2 dealing with the relation between the immortal body of the Buddha (*dharmakāya*) and his mortal incarnations (*nirmāṇakāya*)⁵² Chi-tsang quotes a passage from the CSPS (12a) which gives an idea of its subject matter.

I have dealt before (above 1) with the oneness of the Buddha. So I only summarize what I believe to have found. On the Indian side it cannot be proved with certainty that cosmic oneness was ever maintained by any of the schools. On the Chinese side this was read into the sutras from the very beginning. The Buddha in the *Lotus Sūtra* is long-lived, *amitāyus*^a, in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* he is immortal, *nitya*^b.⁵³ In both sutras he is not single. But Tao-sheng does not distinguish. His Buddha, or *dharmakāya*, is Nature, present in all things, timeless, spaceless, Cosmic Life.⁵⁴ All the images which human beings may make of him are merely "reflections of themselves in the water of their hearts" (12b). The Cosmic Buddha is immutable and yet constantly changing. He is in *Nirvāṇa* and *Samsāra* at the same time, for he is the selfsame totality of Existence.

Chi-tsang reduces the problem to that of the Middle Path. As we have seen, Tao-sheng did not understand the Middle Path as it was understood in the *San-lun* School. To him Buddha was a living person, as in the *Lotus Sūtra*, with the only difference that, while in the *Sūtra* he represents the *Dharma* which appears on Earth in the three types of Vehicles, with Tao-sheng he manifests himself in the thousand forms of nature

52 XXXIV 377a 14.

53 Hörnle, *Manuscript Remains* no. 143; in the *Lotus* this is "*sadā sthitaḥ*" (ed. Wogihara p. 271. 14). The classical passage is found in the NS 382b 10: "Good men and good women, you must always meditate upon these words: immortal is the Buddha."

54 "Only of things we may say that they exist or do not exist. How to say that of the Sage?" (CSPSp. 408d 1.) (存亡之異出自群品。豈聖然耶.)

a 長壽 b 常住

that are all “preaching the *Dharma*” to the believers. This he means when he says (12a) that “his life is neither short nor long.”

11. The Buddha Is Not Found in a Paradise (Writings B6)

The title of this paper is, as in the preceding case, explained by Chi-tsang (13b). Chi-tsang refers to a passage in Tao-sheng’s commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra* (13a). The *Sūtra* itself says:⁵⁵

My Pure Land is not destroyed, though all view it as being burnt up,
And grief and horror and distress thus fill them to the full,
Those creatures, full of sin by reason of their evil *karma*,
Through *kalpas* numberless hear not the name of the most Precious
Three.

But those, who virtuous deeds shall do, are gentle and of upright
nature,

These will ever behold me here expounding to all the Law.

So the *Sūtra* says that it depends on the *karman* of the Beings whether they see the Pure Land destroyed or not; in reality it does not change. Perhaps Tao-sheng meant just that. He explained the *Sūtra* quite correctly but fought the illusion of the masses who took a Paradise for a goal worthy to be pursued. Perhaps, in his paper, he contrasted it with the Eternal Pure Land of the Buddha, as did the *Sūtra*.

That Heavens and Hells are man-made seems to be the orthodox Buddhism.⁵⁶ *Karman* lasts as long as we hope and fear; it vanishes as soon as we recognize their unreality. Our hopes are mere reflections and echos of our inner state. But from them World is made (*cittamaya*). The VS says:⁵⁷ “The various types of Beings are (represented in) the *Buddha-kṣētras* of which you, the Bodhisattva, speak.”

12. Instantaneous Illumination (Writings B2)

In his biography Tao-sheng is said to have maintained that Final Illumination is instantaneous. This he did perhaps in a letter. Hsieh Ling-yün’s letters on the same subject were written in 422 or 423, so Sheng’s were written before that date. We do not know who the correspondents were, but his opponent, Hui-kuan, whose *Pien-tsung lun* could not have been written until after 430 because it quotes the northern edition of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, was probably not among them. From the translations (14a, b) we gather that Tao-sheng’s letter contained the following:

55 SPS 16 IX 43c 12 (transl. Soothill p. 208).

56 Both belong to the *gati* (Planes of Existence) created by *karman*.

57 VS XIV 538a 21: 衆生之類是菩薩仏土.

1. It emphasized the indivisibility of *li*.
2. It identified *li* with *śūnyatā*. The simile of the wood-cutter, introduced by the unknown opponent and answered by Sheng, illustrates these points (14a).
3. It emphasized the radical difference between the way and the goal, illustrated by the simile of the dropping fruit (14b).
4. It quoted as evidence a passage from Kumārajīva's comments on the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (14h) in which Instantaneous Illumination is defined as *mahābodhi*.
5. No influence from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* is as yet noticeable.

In the biography, Instantaneous Illumination is mentioned before the *icchantika* dispute. Therefore, because Instantaneous Illumination is based upon the doctrine of *li*, events may have followed each other in the following order: discovery of *li* as the *dharmakāya* (on Lu-shan); identification of *li* with *śūnyatā* (in Ch'ang-an); Instantaneous Illumination as the logical consequence (under the influence of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*). We could even speak of two periods in which the doctrines of Instantaneous Illumination and the Buddha nature of all Beings were developed. This is, of course, nothing but a working hypothesis.

I do not think that Tao-sheng's letter dealt with the Stages. I have discussed that point at length in *The Book of Chao*, Appendix 3.⁵⁸ The *Chien-wu lun* (14c) and the *Chao-lun* Part IV, 8–13⁵⁹ argue about the Vehicles (*yāna*); the Stages (*bhūmi*) come into the picture only because (in the series of the Common Stages) the last three places before the Buddha, Stages 7–9, are reserved for the released of the three Vehicles. These Saints, when they have reached their respective Stage (the Arhat the seventh, the Pratyekabuddha the eighth, the Bodhisattva the ninth), are considered as in *Nirvāṇa*. Thus it is said that in the seventh Stage *anupatti* is reached,⁶⁰ by which is meant that the Arhat is not reborn thereafter; he is then bodyless and has overcome World.

This became different when with the *Daśabhumikā*, translated by Kumārajīva, a career running right through to the tenth Stage, became known. though there, too, the seventh Stage had retained its original function as the end of the incarnations (*anupatti*). This career was reserved for the Bodhisattva. With its arrival *anupatti* ceased to be identical with the end.

When Tao-sheng wrote his paper, "Explaining that with the first thought of the eighth Stage (the Saint) realizes his desire and attains *Nirvāṇa*,"⁶¹ we do not know. His argument might have been the same as that of the *Chao-lun* IV. The Saint reaches *Nirvāṇa* in the seventh Stage; he is within *Nirvāṇa* with the first thought of the eighth. *Nirvāṇa* is *li*, which is one and indivisible. How then can the existence of three more

58 *The Book of Chao* p. 182 ff.; cf. *Tang, History* p. 651–663.

59 *Taishō* XLV p. 159, 160, transl. *The Book of Chao* p. 131–138.

60 *Ibid* p. 171–174. Doc. (14a) note 11: "*Śamatha-vipaśyanā*, the seventh *bhūmi*, denotes the fruit, namely final achievement."

61 Writings B 14.

Stages be explained? Sheng could not, without opposing the sutras, contend that *Nirvāṇa* is reached in the tenth Stage. So he says, as everybody at that time did, that it is reached in the seventh.⁶² But then he argues that, as seen from the vantage point of True Reality, the eighth Stage must be the end of the way, that is *li*. What follows is a pious lie taught for the less intelligent only. In Reality, there are no more Stages (or Vehicles) after *anutpatti*,⁶³ but to lure the Beings out of the burning House of Life, the Buddha created three unreal phantoms of the one true goal.

Before the *Daśabhūmikā* became popular, all the teachers relied upon the *Prajñāpāramitās* (common Stages).⁶⁴ Then the confusion began and the opinions were divided between *anutpatti* in the first, the seventh, the eighth and the tenth Stages.⁶⁵ Tao-sheng seems to have taken no position in this dispute. In each case he simply followed the sutra⁶⁶ with the reservation that in truth there are no Stages at all, but only the way and the one moment of Illumination, the goal. In the *Upāya-kauśalya parivarta* (2) of the *Lotus Sūtra* the moment of Illumination (*tathāgata-jñāna-draśana*) is divided into four parts. Following the sutra Sheng says, "Not only study is gradual, but in insight too, four steps are to be distinguished."⁶⁷ These he enumerates, adding, "Speaking as a Mahāyānist, these four steps are taken by the believer in one single act of Illumination."⁶⁸

Tao-sheng recognizes Stages for the period of learning,⁶⁹ but final

62 Add to the evidence quoted in *The Book of Chao*, notes 749 and 779, (14d) and Chi-tsang XXXVIII 915a 12. In the CVS Kumārajīva and more so Seng-chao often say that *anutpatti* is attained in the seventh Stage (e.g. 384a, b; 397a). Sheng does not argue this point. In CVS 392a 27, Kumārajīva divides the ten *bhūmi* into two parts: 1–7 *duḥkhadharmakṣānti* to *arhat*, 8–10 *anutpatti* to *buddha*. Sheng 392b says: "After *duḥkhadharmakṣānti* the fetters are cut, and (the Saint) sees for the first time. He had to forsake Life in order to attain Illumination, which is beyond Life. (Now) he need not again (forsake Life). (Therefore, the *Sūtra* treats) non-forsaking as synonymous with *bodhi*."

63 *The Book of Chao* p. 174–5.

64 There were Chin Tao-lin, Tao-an, Hui-yüan, Seng-chao, Kumārajīva. Add to the evidence quoted in note 62 Yu-lu 47b 11: 八地無染謂之智也.

65 The Scholia contain much material but no names are quoted. Cf. Chi-tsang XXXVIII 915a 9 ff.

66 So he follows the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* when it construes a Stage even beyond the tenth. He says: "In the tenth *bhūmi* something is seen of the goal though indistinct. First when all limitations have gone, and finality is reached with *li*, (the Saint) sees. Cf. CNS 299d 10, also *ibid.* 299b 10 (cf. *Lun-yü* 6. 28)

67 CSPA 400a 11.

68 *Ibid.* b 17.

69 Cf. (14f) and (g).

vision is not one step in a row of seven, ten or thirty-seven steps or achievements (14a). It is *sui generis*.

To sum up what we have found: Tao-sheng's Instantaneous Illumination^a meant that the moment of realization, *bodhi*, is only one. In this one moment the meaning of Existence, *li*, is understood. What precedes is the way, leading through Illusion. During the way Stages may be distinguished. But they contain nothing of the goal which is seen first at the very end of the long pilgrimage. It is impossible to reach it quicker, in total or in part (14a par. 2; 14d par. 3; 14f, g).

From this definition it follows that Tao-sheng's Instantaneous Illumination did not imply a short cut to salvation. Gradual Illumination was, in the eyes of Tao-sheng, not possible at all.⁷⁰ His Instantaneous Illumination has, therefore, nothing in common with Instantaneous Teaching^b, a point often misunderstood in popular books on Buddhism.

The term Instantaneous Teaching was introduced by Hui-kuan, the main opponent of Tao-sheng on this question and author of a *Treatise on Gradual Illumination*, who maintained that *Nirvāṇa* is not the same for all the Beings. He is said to have classified the sutras in an introduction to the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*.⁷¹ He distinguished two types, the Gradual and the Instantaneous ones, and five Periods^c, the first divided into three Vehicles, together seven Stages^d. This was, if not the beginning, yet one of the earliest attempts of such classifications^e. It was taken up by Liu Ch'iu in the Introduction translated in 14a. Hui-kuan rated the *Avataṃśaka Sūtra*, the translation of which he assisted, as Instantaneous. This *Sūtra* uses the simile of the rising sun.⁷²

70 Derk Bodde, Fung-Bodde, *History* vol. II p. 277, says: "With Tao-sheng the highest state can be achieved only *in toto*, and not in a gradual and piecemeal fashion. . . Everything done previously to this final experience may be called learning, but it cannot be regarded as enlightenment itself. Strictly speaking there is not such a thing as 'gradual enlightenment'."

71 *San-lun hsüan-i* XLV 5b 4; *Fa-hua hsüan-lun* 3, 1720 XXXIV 382b 23 (both Chi-tsang) and *Fa-hua hsüan-i* (Chih-i) 1716 XXXIII 801b 4. Cf. *Tang*, *History* p. 834 ff.

72 Cf. Dictionaries under 高山頓說, *Hua-yen shu* 1735 XXXV 508c 2, (Sung) *Hua-yen ching* LX 616b 14, (T'ang) *Hua-yen ching* X 266b 3. I am translating this important passage from the latter text. "(The body, i.e. the teaching, of the *Tathāgata*) resembles the sun rising over Jambudvīpa, first illuminating the Himalaya mountains and all the other high mountains, then the black mountains (those covered with trees), then the elevated plains, finally the rest of the great earth. The sun does not reflect: first I shall illuminate these then those, but the mountains and the plains are more or less high. Therefore the light reaches them earlier or later.

Like (the sun) the *Tathāgata Arhat Samyak-sambuddha* turning the Wheel of the Law lets the all pervading rays of his wisdom illuminate

a 頓悟 b 頓教 c 五時 d 七階 e 判教

Tao-sheng knew neither this *Sūtra* nor this simile; most probably the debate on Gradual and Instantaneous (or Sudden) Teaching started after his death. In the classifications he is not listed under "sudden".⁷³

The distinction between these topics is of some consequence for another problem, namely, that of Tao-sheng's influence on Ch'an Buddhism. The origin of Ch'an Buddhism is still obscure. It cannot be discussed in this paper. One should not let oneself be deceived by the use of the term "Instantaneous Illumination" in the Southern School. Shen-hui (died 760 A.D.) used this term to distinguish his branch of Ch'an Buddhism from that of Shen-hsiu. He was, of course, interested to get himself to the top level of the classifications which all ended with Sudden (as we may say now instead of Instantaneous) Teaching. Other schools, as, e.g., T'ien-t'ai (on which Shen-hui relied also for his Patriarchs) did the same. There was no school, inclusive of Northern Ch'an, which called itself "gradual". If we accept the *Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* as an eighth century product, my translation (14j) would prove that eighth century Ch'an Buddhism understood by "sudden" that "people are quick and slow", and the quick-witted, say their own followers, could do it

the whole *dharma-dhātu*. First he illuminates the *Bodhisattva Mahā-sattva* etc., finally all the Beings who possess a definite root of the good (*niyata kuśala-mūla*). According to their abilities (*citta-saṃtāna*) the range of his Wisdom is widened till finally it embraces the whole of creation."

The meaning of this simile is that the reason why not all the Beings are released at once lies with themselves not with the Buddha. This is exactly what is discussed in *The Book of Chao* IV. 9, 11, 13. It has nothing in common with Tao-sheng's Instantaneous Illumination.

73 Tao-sheng was counted (by the Classifiers) among the followers of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* because of his doctrine of the Buddha nature of all Beings, the Buddhahood of the *icchantika*, and other doctrines originating in this *Sūtra*. Thus he is considered as Gradual! *Āyusman* (Elder) Li 長者李通玄, an older contemporary of Shen-hui, distinguishes, in the *Hsin hua-yen-ching lun* ch. 3, 1739 XXXVI (735b 4), four classes of Teachings (one *Hīnayāna*, two *Mahāyāna*, one Instantaneous). Under the third class he says: "The *niyata* (Beings with a limited career), the two *yāna* (*Hīnayāna*), the *icchantika*, all become Buddhas. This is all *Mahāyāna* has to say. This Teaching is called Gradual, because gradual progress from *bhūmi* to *bhūmi* is taught." Under the fourth class he says: "Instantaneous Teaching. In one moment of *anupatti* (the believer) becomes a Buddha. No progress from *bhūmi* to *bhūmi*." The following two sūtras quoted as evidence (the *Viśeṣacintā-brahma-paripṛcchā*, translated by Kumārajīva, 586 XV 36c 7 and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* XVI 509c 21, or 555c 14, were not used by Tao-sheng. Cf. also 1866 XLV 481b and 1929 XLVI 769a, b.

without any preparation. This doctrine would correspond to Instantaneous Teaching, as outlined above, not to that of Tao-sheng.

The same applies to Shen-hui.⁷⁴ It is possible that he knew the documents (14a, b), but did he know any of Tao-sheng's pamphlets? Had he his picture in mind, or perhaps a very different one? Cf. below 19.

13. Buddha Nature

What appears in the World as our self is not our True Self. The material body, a product of our fancies, contains no fine-material spirit or soul (*shen-ming*^a). So Kumārajīva had taught. Yet there must be somebody who suffers and is delivered from his suffering. This had been the main problem in Ch'ang-an. Hui-yüan, whose language is less clear than enthusiastic, denied the existence of a "master of the house". "There is no master in the house who receives (the fruit of his deeds)."⁷⁵ He had inherited this phrase from Kuo Hsiang (above 1). With Kuo Hsiang it referred to the autonomy of nature which did not suffer an intruder^b; ⁷⁶ with Hui-yüan the word "master" rendered *ātman*, soul^c; with Hui-jui it meant "guarantor of karmic rewards"^d.⁷⁷ If the existence of a "master", (creator, guarantor soul, etc.) was denied, this implied that no god or other principle existed, competitive with nature (*tao*), which in the Buddhist period was conceived as ruled by karmic laws.

When the interest in religious questions expanded and replaced that in the magic-natural course of things (the vicissitudes of fate), when people called for salvation from fate through the grace of the Buddha who carried the secret and would reveal it to them, the doctrine of the *Prajñāpāramitās* that nothing was real, not even the Buddha, must have been extremely disappointing.⁷⁸ We have seen that Tao-sheng worked incessantly on a picture in which the Buddha was established as Cosmic Father and Guide. To this picture belonged an eternal soul, the relation of which to the Buddha substantiated the final union of the believer with Him. Already before the translation of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* Tao-sheng had protested against Hui-yüan's denial of souls. "Though neither *ātman* nor *pudgala* exist, there is certainly one who receives the reward (of his piety)."⁷⁹

The solution came with the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* of which Tao-sheng may

74 Cf. 胡適校神会和尙遺集 p. 100, 120, 130.

75 受之無主. *San-pao lun*, *HMCHI* 5 p. 34b. 7, cf. *Shih Hui-yüan's Buddhism* p. 256.

76 *Chuang Tzu* 2. 9 ch. 1 p. 47a.

77 Cf. *Yü-i lun* LV p. 42a 21, 23.

78 *Yü-i lun* 1. c. p. 42a. b.

79 非無受報之主 *CVS* 416c 14, also 353c 18.

a 神明 b 造化之主 c 受報之主 d 積功之主, 仇之真主

have heard already in Ch'ang-an.⁸⁰ This sutra (which the Chinese took to contain the same message as the *Lotus*, viz. that of the Buddha as the eternal Father whose children we are) speaks of a True Self^a, acquired in *Nirvāṇa*. In *Samsāra* we possess no self, are subject to birth and death, suffering, impure (*anitya, duḥkha, anātma, aśuddha*), in *Nirvāṇa* all is reversed. As much as I could learn from a superficial study of this sutra, the theories of the True Self (*bhūtātman?*) and Buddha nature must be distinguished, but Tao-sheng, rejoicing at the discovery of a concept which guaranteed the identity of sufferer and released, did not distinguish. To him the True Self is the Buddha, the Cosmic Ancestor and Father, who grows in us to his true stature, Existence rejuvenated.

I wonder if in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* the Chinese word *hsing*^b does not stand for two different Sanskrit terms, namely, *buddhatvam* (*buddhatā*) and *gotra*.⁸¹ The first of these words denotes the state of a Buddha,⁸² the second "membership of Buddha's clan". *Gotra* gives a claim to Buddhahood.⁸³ There existed many theories about *gotra*. Three, four, five were distinguished, conducive to different goals.⁸⁴ But this speculation was unknown to Tao-sheng, so we need not analyse its contents in detail.

The theory of the *gotra*—a kind of Buddhist Calvinism—classified the believers in those predestined to Buddhahood, those not predestined and those who might become Buddhas under certain conditions (above 4). That implied a gradation of Buddha's children such as was proposed by Hui-kuan (14c), just the opposite of what Tao-sheng believed to be true. For, as we have seen (above 1), he believed in the one, selfsame

80 The first part of the *NS Dharmakṣema*, 10 *chüan* (corresponding to 5 *p'in* and identical with the *NS Fa-hsien*), was translated A.D. 404 and the foll. years; the last part which Dharmakṣema had gone to get in Khotan was translated 414–421 (Bagchi 419). Dh. came to Ku-tsang 姑藏 shortly before 401 when Chü-ch'ü Mêng-sun conquered Liang, and he could have met Kumārajīva and Seng-chao, who then brought the news to Ch'ang-an. Tao-sheng wrote the CVS before 417.

81 The Index of Mochizuki's *Busshō Kaisetsu Daijiten* has *buddhatā*, the *Bukkyō Daijii*, ed. Ryūkoku Daigaku, vol. VI p. 4009c *buddhatvam*. But the *Mahāvvyutpatti* 61, 1–5 (1260–1265) *buddhagotra*; the *Ratnagotra Sūtra* is 宝性論. In 三性, 五性, we have evidently *gotra* though normally *gotra* is 姓 or 種性.

82 *Buddhatvam* is a rare word. LANKAVS (Sanskrit) 140-12. 13: "*kleśadvaya-prahāṇācca...buddhatā bhavati*".

83 Obermiller, *The Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā* p. 99 says: "...element of the saintly lineage (*gotra*), otherwise the fundamental element of the living beings (*sattva-dhātu*), or the Essence of the Buddha (*tathāgata-garbha*). It is the Absolute itself...there can be no essential difference...with the various living beings." This would fit well with Tao-sheng's concept, but unfortunately he cannot have known the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*.

84 *Siddhi* p. 721.

a 真我 b 性

Buddha who is Existence, reflecting^a itself (7e), and all creatures belong to his family. There can be no exception (6a). The full significance of this theory will be clear when we remember that we are in the Chinese Cosmic Empire, topped by the Sage, the Cosmic Ancestor. To say that all creatures share the Buddha nature, implied that they possess immortal souls and thus will be ancestors in the end.⁸⁵ Thus the fundamental distinction between those born noble and the rest was abolished: "We all are Buddhas," heirs to the throne (8a).

That the True Self exists is "the reason why our salvation is secured".⁸⁶ It is a fact with which nothing can interfere.⁸⁷ It can only be recognized or not.⁸⁸ We cannot accelerate its manifestation by stirring up dust which may merely impede our vision, but we must wait for it in confidence till the divine child has matured.

14. Buddha Nature Will Be Realized in the Future (Writings B2)

Tao-sheng wrote a paper with this title the contents of which can only be guessed. According to Tang,⁸⁹ 当 means "in future". In this sense it is often used in Tao-sheng's commentaries (8a).⁹⁰ If so, this paper might have dealt with "becoming a Buddha".⁹¹

15. The Shrine of the Tathāgata

The Shrine of the *Tathāgata*, *tathāgata-garbha*^b, is my own body (or in the cosmic aspect, *saṃsāra*) in which a precious thing, Buddha nature, my claim to future Buddhahood, is hidden. "In our own body the *Tathāgata* is to be discovered," says the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*.⁹² The *Tathāgata* in myself is my True Self^c. This is a treasure comparable with gold, or a pearl^d, a secret^e, the holiest of holy things.⁹³ I therefore propose to

85 In ancient China only the noblemen had lasting souls and could therefore be worshipped as ancestors. This time had, of course, gone long ago, but the idea must have been lingering in the fifth century. Notice the early tendency of the noblemen to reserve Buddhism for themselves.

86 *Cheng yin* 正因 (7g).

87 本有今無.

88 本無今有.

89 *Tang, History* p. 637.

90 Cf. also NS 617b 23; 651a 19.

91 This dispute is according to Tang l. c. related to that about 本有 and 始有. Cf. *Ta-ch'eng hsüan-lun* 3 XLV 36c 9.

92 於自身中觀如來藏. NS *Fa-hsien* 887a and b.

93 No Chinese word covers our "holy". In Chinese Buddhism 神 means rather "magical". 宝 comes nearer to this conception. 三宝 is the trinity holy to Buddhists.

a 見 b 如來藏 c 真我 d 金藏, 寶藏 e 秘密藏

translate "shrine" rather than "storehouse". De la Vallée-Poussin and others translate "matrix" or "germ".⁹⁴ This would be adequate only for the later phase of development of this term. In the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* *tathāgata-garbha* is a cosmic womb filled with seeds, *bīja*, and is identical with *ālaya-vijñāna*. In earlier translations, viz. the *Śrīmālā-devī-siṃha-nāda*, the *Nirvāṇa*, *Tathāgata-garbha* and other sutras of this class this notion is absent. Tao-sheng could only have known the two last mentioned sutras. In these *tathāgata-garbha* denotes a treasure, or a receptacle which contains it, such as, e.g., the *garbha* of a pagoda.⁹⁵ Chinese 藏 translates this meaning exactly⁹⁶ while "matrix" would be 胎.⁹⁷

It seems that Tao-sheng, and the Chinese of the fifth century in general, could not distinguish between terms such as a *gotra*, *bīja*, *mūla*, *kūla-vamśa*, *garbha*, *bhāva*, which in Sanskrit are not synonymous at all, but took them to be identical with the Nature of the Buddha (*Tathāgata*, Myself), hidden in each of the Beings and awaiting discovery.⁹⁸ Dis-

94 Cf. *Siddhi* p. 754 (cf. p. 110). The literature quoted there is out of my reach.

95 The *Ichijō-bus-shō-e-nichi-shō*, *Taishō* 2297 LXX p. 174a 20 says that Tao-sheng relied upon the *Fa-tsang ching* 法藏經. Which one? *Taishō* 821 is without significance; 1626 (1627) enlarges the *Śrīmālikā* theory of the *Tathāgata-garbha* (空, 不空, 如来藏, cf. *Taishō* XII p. 893b 19 and 221c 16) and is too late. There remains only *Taishō* 666 (cf. 667) XVI *Ta fang-kuang ju-lai-tsang ching*, transl. A.D. 420 by Buddhahadra. Tao-sheng might have known this sutra. It contains nine similes: 1. Buddha hidden in a lotus-flower; 2. honey in a tree; 3. grain in husk; 4. gold in a rubbish-heap; 5. treasure in the house of the poor; 6. kernel in the fruit; 7. golden statue hidden before starting a journey; 8. *cakravartin* hidden in a poor woman's womb; 9. discovery of a golden statue by cleaning it. There is no simile of a growing seed. Even in the eighth the *tertium comparationis* is the fact that something precious is hidden not that something grows. Cf. Obermiller, *Sublime Science* p. 213; and Wassiljeff, *Der Buddhismus* p. 150 quoted in *Siddhi* p. 754. Wassiljeff picks out n. 8 and n. 9, omitting the rest.

The similes in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, *Ju-lai hsing p'in* 13, are similar to those of the *Tathāgata-garbha Sūtra* (NSFa p. 833): 1. treasure in the house of the poor, (corresponding to *Tath. Sūtra* 5); 2. milk made tasteless; 3. a pearl in the forehead of a fighter entering his body; 4. a rare herb in the Himalayas; 5. diamond which is indestructible like the *tathāgata-garbha*; 6. recognition of the knife.

96 藏 spoken *tsang*⁴ is "storehouse", spoken *ts'ang*² "treasure". *Garbha* has the same two meanings.

97 Suzuki, *Studies* p. 177.

98 Tang (p. 636) quotes a passage from the CVS which I have translated in (11a). There we read of a growing seed which Tang thinks is identical with *garbha*, as did (Sui) Hui-yüan, cf. *Wei-no i-chi* 3, 1776 XXXVIII 489c. But Tao-sheng, when he wrote the CVS, did not yet know of *garbha*.

covered, it is seen all at once, as the treasure found, the fruit which drops etc. Tao-sheng must have relied on the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* in which the *tathāgata-garbha* is defined as follows:⁹⁹ “Self (True Self¹⁰⁰) means *tathāgata-garbha*. All Beings possess the nature of Buddha, this being their Self. This Self has since beginning continually been covered by rubbish (*kleśa*). Therefore it is not recognized by the Beings.” Tao-sheng comments: “*Garbha* means *li* which is eternal bliss, is hidden, and has not yet come to light” (11b).

This is the same idea which is also expressed in the *Lotus Sūtra* which in Tao-sheng’s paraphrasing says (1n): “All Beings possess the innate ability to see what is known only to the Buddhas. But this knowledge is covered by rubbish. This the Buddha removes and thus makes knowledge possible.”

16. The *icchantika* (Writings B8)

The *icchantika*¹⁰¹ are Beings who cannot grow and reach consummation in *Nirvāṇa* because the Root of the Good (*kuśala-mūla*) has been destroyed (*samucchinna*).¹⁰² They are excluded from the family of the

99 NS 407b 9 f.: 我者即是如來藏義。一切衆生悉有仏性即是我義。如是我義從本已來常為無量煩惱所覆。是故衆生不能得見。

100 NS *Fa-hsien* 883b has 真實我者是如來性。Notice how Fa-hsien writes 性 for 藏 without being aware of the difference.

101 The etymology of the word is doubtful. Cf. *Siddhi* p. 724; Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* p. 219 note; Wogihara, *Mahāvvyutpatti*, notes p. 23 (*itthantvika*, “those destined to remain on Earth”). Tang, *History* p. 651 explains *icchā-antika* as those “whose goal is lust”, but in NSDh 519a 14 this word is said to have the opposite meaning, namely, of “those whose striving is at the end”. In the NS they are defined as “loafers, idlers who sleep the whole day like corpses” (NSFa 873c 11); “dry wood and rock...boiled roots...drowned in urine...incurably sick...having no prospect of *bodhi*...conceited...reviling the *Dharma*... absolutely wicked... base, ignorant... pretending to be *Arhats* (!), abusing the *Vaipulya Sūtras* (!)... not accepting the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (!)... born blind... worse than those who commit the four *pārājika* and the five *ānantarya* (*ibid.* 892a–893b)... chewed kernels (*ibid.* 897c 8). According to these definitions the *icchantika* are, in the NSFa, not so much unhappy beings, lacking intelligence, but unbelievers, abusers and enemies of *Mahāyāna*. As they pretend to be *Arhats*, they should be *Hīnayānists*. Were they originally a sect? *Sunakṣatra* whose story is told in the second part of the NSDh (560b–563a) is an *icchantika*. In this part he is saved at the end. The study of quotations in the *Indo Bukkyō koyū meishi jiten* by Akanuma Chizen p. 660 s.v. *Sunakṣhaṭṭa Licchaviputtā* may solve this problem.

102 NSDh 393b 14.

a 一闍提

Buddha (*agotraka*)¹⁰³ and are predestined to hell (*niyata*). Tao-sheng opposed this dogma. He maintained that Fa-hsien's edition of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, where it occurred, was incomplete. We are told that he was ousted from the *Sangha* but later justified. Do the texts as we possess them now corroborate this story?

Fa-hsien's edition of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* ends with the "sleep" of the Buddha who after entrusting the True *Dharma* of the *Tathāgata* to the *Sangha*, represented by Mahākaśyapa and Ānanda, and announcing his illness, lies down in the familiar posture of the "Sleeping Buddha" statues, and remains in this attitude as a symbol of the state in which the Buddha, though no longer corporeal, does not enter *Nirvāṇa* but continues his guidance of the world. But Dharmakṣema's edition continues without interruption with Kaśyapa questioning about the disease of the Buddha. The second part is about three times as long as the first and has no marked end.¹⁰⁴

In Fa-hsien's edition (and the first part of the northern edition) *Nirvāṇa* is denied to the *icchantika*. A whole chapter (*Wen-p'u-sa p'in* 17, cf. northern edition p. 417c-423c) is devoted to the demonstration that they are lost for ever. This is done in no less than forty similes all ending with the phrase that all the Beings can be saved "with the exception of the *icchantika*". To make sure, Cunda in the last chapter (*Sui-hsi p'in* 18 p. 897c 4) asks again whether they can be saved through the intervention of somebody else. The Buddha answers: "That you must not say. Of what use will watering be if you put in the earth a myrobalan fruit the kernel of which you have chewed and eaten? That is the case of the *icchantika*. Having destroyed their good root (*samucchinna-kuśala-mūla*), it is impossible that they repent and their heart turns to the good."

The second part of the *NSDh* following upon the "sleep" (p. 428-852) preaches the opposite. This begins already on the first page. Three *āvaraṇa* are distinguished: *kleśa*-, *karma*-, and *vipāka*-; they are compared with diseases. All, inclusive of that from which the *icchantika* suffer, can be healed by the vow of a Bodhisattva. In the same vein it goes through the next 150 pages (cf. e.g. pp. 459a 12, 482a 29 f., 488b 8, 493c 24 f., 519a f., 524c 2, 549a 12, 560c 25, 562b 22 f., 569a 8 f., 574c 8, 579b 14 a.o.). In *p'in* 12.6 (586b 2) it is said that "what a stick is for the emaciated that this sutra is for the *icchantika*."

103 Above 13.

104 D. Tokiwa in *Busshō no kenkyū* p. 178 cuts the *NS* into three parts, 1-6, 7-9, 10-13. But at the end of 5 Kaśyapa asks already which karmic reward the intonation of this sutra will bring. Dharmakṣema brought five *p'in* to Ku-tsang, Fa-hsien five to Chien-k'ang. This cannot be accidental. Was the second part (6-13) composed after the first,—perhaps by the *icchantika* themselves? How did Dharmakṣema hear of it? And why did he think it important enough to return all the way in order to get it?

Tao-sheng could not have found passages in Fa-hsien's version corroborating his opinion that the *icchantika* are admitted to *Nirvāṇa* because such passages do not exist.¹⁰⁵ But he must have known, probably through Fa-hsien himself,¹⁰⁶ of the other *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (the second part of the *NSDh*) asserting the same admission which in Fa-hsien's version is denied to them.

The *MSCH*, *Shuo-ch'u* 10, contains two propositions of Tao-sheng which maintain the Buddhahood of the *icchantika*. For in Tao-sheng's world-view there is no room for Beings excluded from *Nirvāṇa*. Seen from within (*li*) nobody is good or bad, all are on the way, with all ways leading to the same goal. "No Being is excluded from Buddhahood, all are released." (Docs. 6c, 8a.)

17. Tao-sheng's Belief in Revelation

As I have pointed out before, Tao-sheng's criticism was not directed against Buddhist Revelation but against those who clung to the words barring themselves from the way to the true meaning. This he expressed by a famous simile. A passage in his biography says:¹⁰⁷ "A symbol is used to convey a meaning; when that has been done the symbol is to be forgotten. The words (of the sutras) are good for conveying truth (*li*); when truth has been seen words are no more needed. Since the sutras have been brought to the East, access to them has gradually been barred by the translators. *Tao* can be propagated, but (one must keep in mind that) the fish-trap must be forgotten when the fish is caught."

This simile is found in the *Chuang Tzu*.¹⁰⁸ It is also used

105 As it seems to me, Tang misunderstands the problem when he looks for versions in the first part of the *NSDh* which would prove that the translator of the *NSFa* made mistakes, and that the original text of the *NSFa* did not exclude the *icchantika* from *Nirvāṇa*. Even if some such passages could be found, they would not be conclusive because too many others prove the opposite. Of the three passages he quotes, the first p. 647-8 (*NSFa* 873c 11, *NSDh* 393b 5) is evidently an emendation. If we supplement the beginning and read 夫 with the oldest mss. instead of 不, it runs: 又解脫者名曰虛寂. 無有不定. 夫定者如一闢提究竟不移. The next five lines ending with 若言畢定不移不成仏道無有是處 say the opposite and do not fit the context. The second pair of quotations (*NSFa* 881b 24, *NSDh* 404c 4) does not contain a contradiction. The third (*NSFa* 893a 8 and *NSDh* 419b 5) is insignificant.

106 See Liebenthal, *A Biography of Chu Tao-sheng* in *Mon. Nipp.* XI, 3 p. 64 ff., notes to 7.

107 *Yu-lu* p. 111a 2. Cf. 14d.

108 *Chuang Tzu* 26 ch. 9 p. 11a.

by Tao-an, Hui-yüan and other monks of their circle. The distrust of the word was very common in China.¹⁰⁹

The problem is world-wide. The literature of all the religions contains warnings against pharisaism. Indian Buddhism was no exception.¹¹⁰ But with Tao-sheng the fight against the word had a peculiar significance. Tao-sheng believed in Buddhist Revelation. "The Buddha does not lie" (17a, b). "Everything in the sutras has its meaning."¹¹¹ He seems to have believed in miracles (17d) and in the effectualness of Buddhist spells (*dhāraṇī*) (17c). But on the other hand, we read: "What is told in the *vyākaraṇa* stories¹¹² did it actually happen that way? No, but in order to attract those believers who hope for (marvellous) futures (these stories are useful)" (17e).

So the Buddha tells stories which are not actually true in order to convert Beings more easily. This is called his skilfulness in using expedients, *upāya-kauśalyam*^a (17f). It is illustrated in a number of parables, especially in the *Lotus Sūtra*, the parables of the burning house, of the wanderer in the desert who is deceived by a mirage, and that of the father who announces his death so that the children may drink a medicine (17a). Tao-sheng, following the sutras, excuses as *pia fraus* the teaching of the Three Vehicles (often), of single deities (17g), of miracles (17c, e), even the use of words for describing Truth (17c).¹¹³

It is difficult to say how much Tao-sheng believed in miracles.¹¹⁴ In some cases he seems to belittle the fanciful descriptions of Buddhist Heavens,¹¹⁵ but I think even then his intention was merely to put emphasis on their inadequacy in defining the in-

109 Cf. the *Hsi-tz'u* A ch. 7 p. 10a: "Script cannot fully render language, language cannot fully render the meaning." Also *Meng Tzu* V, 4.2 and *Chuang Tzu* 13, 10 ch. 5 p. 33b foll. a. o.

110 Cf. VS XIV 556c 9: 依於義不依語.

111 CSPS p. 409 c 1.

112 Stories in which past and future events, unknown to the believers, are told.

113 In the *LANKAṬṬ* this is called "lamp of deceptive words" *vāgvikalpa rutapradīpa* (*Sanskrit* p. 155). Tao-sheng calls this "symbolic truth" (名實).

114 When he was accused of heresy he prayed that "while still in life, my body may be covered with leprosy in case what I have said is contradictory to the sutras" etc. Did he not mean what he said?

115 Cf. *Writings* B 12.

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describable *li*. His interest was religious, not scientific; he spurns rewards in Heaven because he knows that they amount to nothing if measured with the standard of his final goal.

Indian Buddhism is definite in principle but tolerant in practice. Each Being must follow his own way, maturing slowly till he can be told the final truth. Therefore the Buddha appears in many shapes and preaches many doctrines which seem to contradict each other, but actually express the same though in different ways. "He adapts his teaching to the level of each single Being."¹¹⁶

So Tao-sheng could refer to sutras when he fought popular beliefs, yet the use he made of this allowance was un-Indian. He aimed at the state of things realized in union with the Buddha which is attained by mere recognition. In this one goal he was interested, smaller goals were for the "small kind". This shows the Chinese. No Indian or Tibetan ever measured with this standard.¹¹⁷

18. Tao-sheng's Meditation

In India meditation is a highly technical matter; the body has to be trained (*āsana*), breathing regulated (*prāṇāyāma*), the thoughts are guided in a desired direction (*pratyāhāra* etc.) and finally extinguished (*samādhi*) in order to make room for the bliss of union with a goddess or with the Absolute. In the centuries preceding the eighth the Chinese Buddhists tried to imitate this performance till they resigned themselves to the traditional Chinese form of meditation. They "sat and forgot" as the meditators in the *Lieh Tzu* and *Chuang Tzu* had done, or tried to produce hallucinations of blissful states.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, meditation was a duty of the Buddhist monks and a part of their routine; daily long sessions in the Meditation Hall slowed down their reactions, and those who once had been the proud educators of Emperors degenerated to "little Buddhas", the pet monks of

116 Cf. CSPA p. 402b 4: 仏化在人.

117 Buddhism, also *Mahāyāna*, is a theory, which goes along with *yoga*-practice. Tao-sheng's attitude is neither.

118 Taoists used to communicate with their gods in meditation.

a 坐忘, 晏坐

the later middle ages.¹¹⁹

All we know of Tao-sheng's meditation is contained in a piece of commentary which will be given in translation among the documents (19a) to be published later. According to what it says, he must have understood by *samādhi*^a the Taoist form of meditation having as its goal absorption in nature. That seems to be involved in "hiding one's body" or "storing one's *manas*".

Yet, it is not possible that Tao-sheng could have taken seriously such performance, simply because he was a creative thinker. He worked hard at shaping his vision of the truth, an activity not different in principle from that of Western poets, artists or *religieux*, and cannot have had time for hallucinations. Genuine visions in which our existence is re-interpreted and our future designed are not found in subconscious states but in an absorption or Socratic *ekstasis*,¹²⁰ which also implies retirement from "the world of the senses" yet is not to be mistaken for meditation in the technical sense. This Tao-sheng, Seng-chao, and others called *t'i*^b (the term we know, but used as a verb, cf. la, e, o; 4e; 19a; *Chao-lun* XLV 153a 9).

The use of this word shows Tao-sheng as a mystic. He sought the truth alone, not relying on any mundane authority. Virtue is not to be acquired; it is there when all hope for gains is relinquished, as an extreme apprehensiveness that an unnamable hope may be deadened by partial fulfilments, as a radical openness to the Voice of Existence. Virtuous^c, Tao-sheng has "lost the body" and "become a Buddha". How to describe this state Should we say "*ekstasis*"?

19. Conclusions

Hu shih sees the history of Chinese Buddhism developing in a series of emancipations from the burden of Indian imagery and speculation, one phase in the battle of reason against super-

119 With these remarks it is not my intention to slight Ch'an Buddhism. I think of figures as P'u-tai who was typical for many others.

120 *Ekstasis* is implied in the term *miao* 妙. *Miao yu* 妙有 is the ecstatic bliss in which a new world is experienced; *miao chieh* 妙絕 ecstatic absorption etc. Tao-sheng experienced this as touch of the Divine, the One (*miao i* 妙一).

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stition. After what we have found in our analytical study of Tao-sheng, we might rather say: it is one phase in the age-old Chinese struggle of the Great Man against the Small Man, of the man who feels himself responsible for the Whole, who is willing to sacrifice his private interests to Order, and the irresponsible, selfish member of the fatalist masses. This issue always divided China. The conflict between Hsieh Ling-yün and Meng I is one typical instance.

Tao-sheng's effort is called philosophical by modern Chinese scholars. But why not call it religious? He drew a picture symbolizing man's position in the Whole and marked out the way he would have to take in order to attain salvation. Analysing facts men are philosophers; pointing at goals, grasping for paths, seeking emancipation from death, they are religious, independent of the name they give the Unknown to which they try to find the right relation. They may love or fear It or Him, approach or hide, in each case they deal with transcendent matter defying scientific analysis and thus have entered the field of religion.

When Nan Yung Chu questions Lao Tan, or when Hui-yüan corresponds with Kumārajīva, or Tao-sheng with Wang Wei, what they seek in such discussion is a true picture of the universe, one in which they can live,—not an experimental evidence of facts. Whether those pageants and figures which appear in their pictures also occur as facts, whether they are verifiable, they do not ask. What they call "truth" is not scientific truth.

Tao-sheng's picture, as all interpretations of World in general, is construed in analogy to underlying experiences. Experiences, as that of growth, or those of mutual love, origination, of the accidental, of home and family, of wandering, toil etc. are used to describe World and man's position in it. His description was, to some extent, new; it was consistent in itself. In comparison with what else was produced by contemporary thinkers, we may call it great. Studying the fragments of his writings we possess, one is impressed by the seriousness of his effort to solve the Great Riddle of Life.

In the centre of Tao-sheng's buddhology we have found the Sage. The Sage is Existence, that Order at the bottom of things which alone is reliable. He is Ancestor, Nature (growth), Father, Guide. Our relation to him is that of pilgrims who go home, of children who are loved, though they wilfully stray from the right course, of heirs who need only wait till all will be theirs.

At the periphery of things we struggle with phantoms which

lure us away into a never ending competition for possessions, as long as we are unable to see that we fight for what we possess already, to recognize in our self the Buddha whom we are unconsciously seeking. These phantoms we have to expose as unreal, as mere mirages, one by one, in a slow process, till at the end of our long pilgrimage the radiant landscape of the goal will appear in one, all-comprising vision. This final moment Tao-sheng called Instantaneous Illumination. For it he waited in an attitude of trust, of willing surrender, ready to sacrifice all karmic rewards on Earth and in the Heavens for one experience: that of the treasure found, when he will be the *Tathāgata* himself and share responsibility for cosmic growth with the One in the Centre of the Universe.

That attitude belongs to a nobleman, one of the "great kind", not to a commoner, of the "small kind", like those donors who bargained with Amitābha for seats in Heaven. As heir to the throne he wants no favours for himself, he does not classify believers as more or less worthy ones, as Hui-kuan did, but recognizes one distinction only, that between father and child, emperor and subject, player and those who are played with, guide and those who are guided.

This picture, which is that of a mystic, suggests a historical classification of Tao-sheng with Hui-yüan rather than with seventh century Ch'an Buddhism. Essential features, characteristic of Ch'an Buddhism, are absent, above all the emphasis laid on mind^a, its original, quiet, state^b, and on the yogic practice to restore its quietude: non-attachment^c, non-reasoning^d, non-purposing^e. Tao-sheng knows no short cut to salvation.^f Further, Ch'an ontology is based upon the doctrine of the Middle Path: *Samsāra* is *Nirvāṇa*; as no step can lead nearer to the goal, striving is useless, living alone is possible and necessary. Make the best of it! You cannot make it better! Do not fear, rather trust blindly! All is the same, as seen in the aspect of the absolute. That attitude is completely absent in Tao-sheng's world-view.

The Ch'an picture is that of the masses, of those who do not want to be bothered with dangerous responsibilities, who, as Chuang Tzu would say, live happily in the mud. Tao-sheng's picture is aristocratic. He wants to take upon himself the responsibility for cosmic growth. As I see it, not much can be said in

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favour of his being the virtual founder of Ch'an Buddhism.¹²¹

121 Hu Shih even says "Zennism". But Ch'an Buddhism and Japanese Zen Buddhism are two ideologically completely different things.