

Buddhism in Ecological Perspective

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Up to the present time, one of the most difficult problems for genuine mutual understanding in trans-cultural religious dialogue has been that of proper context. Each tradition, while remaining faithful to its own unique articulation of reality has, at the same time, to exercise sensitive care against a distorted reception of the other's equally unique world view. Undoubtedly, it is neither possible nor desirable to assume the stance of the *tabularasa* (the mind as a clean slate) and to simply bracket one's own intellectual and spiritual heritage. The history of the transmission of ideas from one culture to another attests to the marvelously creative syntheses which have evolved from the active translation and assimilation of novel thought into a native consciousness.

While the twentieth century has clearly witnessed a dramatic mutual interest in and dialogue among global religious traditions, and while enormous strides have been made to distance the age of reciprocal indifference and/or open hostility among adherents of different beliefs, and while on the academic level there has been a prodigious energy in linguistic analysis and translation of religious texts, there are, however, equally clear indications of popular retrenchment in a fundamentalistic and literal interpretation of, and devotion to, one's own sectarian persuasion. In the face of increasing secularity and base materialism, the value of such a trend might be defended with forceful conviction. Nevertheless, a return to rigid denominationalism threatens not only a regressive fragmentation at the heart of human global discourse, but signals the eclipse of those very religious traditions that revert to such narrow parochialism.

In the earlier stages of earth history, the multiple expressions of human spirituality, dra-

matically determining entire cultural patterns, developed and flourished as the effulgent manifestations of the earth's own interiority, its multiple responses to the Mystery that called it into being as one organism. Their distinctive doctrines and scholastic elaborations, their ritual enactments and symbolic representations were the differentiating phases of the earth's own groping self-identity as a planetary recognition of the Absolute. Should any one of these religious traditions fail now to accept such an interpretation, rejecting this properly global context for itself, it would signify a critical failure to understand the essential nature of the earth as a living psychic process and, thus, as the profound subjectivity animating and sustaining that tradition's more articulately conscious expressions. Any insistence, therefore, by any of the earth's religious traditions to entrench itself within the limited context of its own geographic-cultural origins and sphere of influence will have tragic consequences.

It will severely hamper the future status of dialogue with other religious traditions; it will vitiate the very tradition itself through a self-alienation from the very ground of its revelatory experience of the sacred; also, more devastatingly and, thus, much more culpably, it will surrender the earth, that planetary recognition of the Absolute. It will surrender it to the destructive pragmatism of the same secular materialism which such a religious tradition would profess to abhor.

If, in the earlier stages of their history it was, as indicated above, a natural and spontaneous process of development for human religious traditions to explicate their own unique understanding of reality, it is no less natural, though much more imperative, for them now to enter the next phase of their growth, again correlative to the evolutionary

dynamics of the earth. To assume a genuinely planetary context from the inner resources of their own unique intuition, every tradition needs to discover a common global concern that will creatively sustain a forum for their future mutual dialogue. They need to evoke, again from their own distinctive heritages, symbolic expressions of, and revelatory encounters with the sacred that would lead to a renewal of psychic-spiritual energy. Finally, to adopt a planetary context will be a faithful response to the organic biosphere that is earth, presently imperiled for want of adequate defense from the very religious witnesses that should be testifying to its inherent sacrality. For, undoubtedly, one of the crucial factors in the planet's contemporary degradation by technological profiteering is the failure of human religious traditions to have elaborated an ecological philosophy, spirituality, and ethic that would not only forcefully convict such behavior, but would have persuasively educated human consciousness against its very conception.

A notable exception to this critical appraisal is the tradition of the Buddha, which, from its earliest inception to its later highly sophisticated refinements, demonstrates a singular concern for the processes and significance of the phenomenal world. The following study will identify and elucidate a continuous pattern of Buddhist reflection out of which emerges an ecological cosmology in which the reality of each thing mutually participates in and depends upon every other thing. The intuition which creatively sustained the consistent focus for the development of so comprehensive a vision across the diversity of Buddhist thought and practice has been succinctly phrased in the original Pali term, *paṭiccasamuppāda*. Often translated as "conditioned co-production" or "dependent origination," a more literal rendition, "the-together-rising-up-of-things" better conveys the notion that the appearing and standing forth into being, the existence, of any particular thing is a dynamic collaborative process of many other things. No thing exists in and of itself, but only as

a context of relations, a nexus of factors whose peculiar concatenation alone determines the origin, perpetuation or cessation of that thing. A line from the Pali canon, revered by all the schools of the Buddhist tradition as an original statement of the Enlightened Founder himself, pithily formulates the fluid contingency which is the very nature of the phenomenal world:

imaṣmirh sati idaṃ hoti;
imassa uppādā idaṃ uppajjati;
imasmirh asati, idaṃ na hoti;
imassa nirodhā, idaṃ nirujjhati.

This being, that becomes;
from the arising of this, that arises;
this not becoming, that does not become;
from the ceasing of this, that ceases.¹

In such a universe, any element is the combined shape and apparent form of a specific number of other elements; its unique nature is to have none; its identity can only be defined as the expressive manifestation, the conditioned representation of those other elements. The phenomenal world of persons and things is here interpreted as so many clusters, groupings, or literally "heaps" (P. *khandhā*; Skt., *skandhas*) of five basic psycho-physical elements. *Rūpa* or material form, is the first and includes the four primary elements of earth, water, fire, and air, as well as the five sense organs and their respective sense objects. The second is *vedanā* representing feelings, while the third *saffhā* (Skt., *saṃjñā*) refers to all possibilities of perceptual experience. The fourth cluster, *sankhāra* (Skt., *saṃskāra*) includes all good, bad, or indifferent dispositions, tendencies, volitions, strivings, impulses and emotions. Finally, the fifth basic element is *viññāna* (Skt., *viññāna*) or consciousness, as either pure awareness or the process of ideation and thought.

In the light of our purpose to delineate the value of Buddhist thought to contemporary ecological concerns, two points might be noted thus

far. First, there is the insistence by the Buddha himself and the *Abhidharma* schools of his followers that existence is a thoroughly contextual process: No person or thing is an independent, self-subsisting reality, but comes into being, persists, and ceases as a given function of other factors. The failure to understand that life perdures only as a complex aggregation of multiple conditions, is a decisive indictment of modern technological-industrial pragmatism. The *dictum* of the Buddha, ". . . from the arising of this, that arises . . . from the ceasing of this, that ceases," assumes a dire cogency when applied to a mentality entranced by technical power, and heedless of consequence in a biospheric context where the destruction of one life form is the impoverishment that spells the destruction of all.

The second value in this phase of Buddhist thought is its exacting critique of the notion of ego as the discrete, self-consistent, self-individuating and self-directing center and end of all human activity. In reality, this belief in one's own unique and abiding personal identity is a conceptual trick, an ignorant superimposition upon what is only a composite derivative of those five "heaps": bodily form, feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness. The Buddhist analysis into the subtleties of their interrelationships represents one of the most profound moments in the history of human psychology and epistemology. But the central issue in the excoriation of the belief in one's personal autonomy, one's ego, lay in the Buddhist conviction of it as the origin of all misery and sorrow.

The very act of accepting one's self as a center of ultimate significance initiates a process of differentiation; the self-identity as this unique "I" is only possible by setting oneself over and against all other persons and things. Once entrenched, the ego identity maintains a twofold momentum *vis-à-vis* those persons and things from which it considers itself essentially distinct. On the one hand, perpetual self-aggrandizement through the possession of, and control over, its

world becomes a thirst that suffers with every frustration, and which craves more with every satisfaction. On the other, the ego's inherent desire for self-perpetuation drives it further from a recognition and acceptance of the organic processes out of which its composite nature is derived, sustained and will return.

A contemporary Buddhist assessment of human domination and manipulation of the environment rests upon this notion of the ego. The human collectivity in its awesome application of rational thought to technical expertise, has realized a new phase of self-differentiation. If, on the individual level, the human being identifies itself as an autonomous center of self-given reality, which is essentially different from all others, a more profound alienation has recently taken place on the level of species. For, in the process of self-definition, one not only perceives oneself as an autonomous personality but implicitly as a human personality. Scientific rationale, functioning through ever more refined delineations and distinctions, has so informed the modern mentality that inherent to every ego image is the notion of one's identity as *homo erectus*, *homo sapiens*, *homo faber* (the human as upright, the human as knower, the human as maker). With each qualification the human species has increasingly determined itself as a distinct entity, transcendent to, rather than shaped by and participating in the planetary processes of the biosphere.

If the Buddhist tradition traced a direct causal link between human sorrow and suffering to the failure to recognize oneself as a dynamic process of many contributing factors, a conditional composite of the five *khandha*, the analysis is no less trenchant when applied to contemporary humanity as a whole. Allured by its technological achievements, the human species has been seduced by its own power of craft into a belief of self-autonomy: in an idealized future it would perceive itself and its security as completely independent of what it deems the uncertainties of merely organic processes, capable of subsisting in artificially

constructed space colonies or at the least, in vast urban centers, protected from the ambiguities of nature by finally asserting a total control over it.

Indifferent to the insight of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, that it "rises up" with the collaborative effort of the entire biosphere, the human species has no independent center unto itself, has no *sabhāva* (Skt., *svabhāva*) or self-subsistent nature of its own, and while it is unique, that uniqueness is entirely derivative from the planet. The species, enamored of itself, has forgotten its true nature as a peculiar configuration of the earth which shaped and sustains it, that, as a collectivity, it can be analyzed and reduced to a mere aggregation of the skandhic components of matter, feelings, perceptions and consciousness. It is this forgetting of its own conditionality that accounts, on the one hand, for the devastating drive of humanity to dominate, possess, and manipulate the natural world and, on the other, is the root cause of a malaise pervasive in modern society — an unfocused anxiety, loss of enthusiasm, and general experience of life as a weary process of woeful struggle, an updated social version of the classical Buddhist concept of *dukkha* (Skt., *duḥkha*). With every accomplishment of its applied techniques, the human species repudiated the organic conditions that had determined its evolutionary emergence and arrogated an entrepreneurial stance towards the natural world as an entity essentially distinct from itself. And if this pretense allowed an objectivity which further promoted the advance of technique, it simultaneously aggravated the alienation that sickens the modern spirit.

If there be a cogency to this Buddhist diagnosis of contemporary humanity's estranged disaffection from, and despoliation of, the planetary environment, its prescribed treatment may be no less appropriate. The Buddha's antidote to the disease of craving desire and its attendant sufferings evoked by a belief in the autonomy of one's ego, was the Noble Eightfold Path consisting of right views, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mind-

fulness, and right concentration. Central to all of them and explicit in three of them (right views, mindfulness, and concentration) is the concern for correct perception: to see reality as it is.

One of the most influential scholastic commentaries, exhaustively detailing the types and methods of meditational *praxis* through which the Buddhist tradition realized that perceptual goal is the *Visuddhimagga* or *Path of Purification* by the fifth century monk, Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa. From any perspective, it remains a classic of human psychology, but viewed from the present interest in the development of a Buddhist ecological philosophy and spirituality, those teachings from it that might appear only as exotic and bizarre elements of a foreign culture, assume a new dimension.

Specifically, there are innumerable references to, and precise instructions for, meditations on the inevitability and experience of old age, sickness and death; on the sub-division of the human body into 32 parts, each with a specific function and relationship to the others; meditation on varieties of physical decomposition and decay; on the minute details of breathing and eating; and a comprehensive correlation of each of the 32 parts of the body (both human and non-human) with one of the four primary elements of air, earth, fire and water. But whether the meditations involve the macabre concentration upon a bloated and festering corpse or the more refined attention to the inflow and out-flow of breath, all such exercises share a common purpose: to see reality as it is, namely, as a realm in which nothing arises and stands forth into being of its own power, but whose origin and persistence is a function of conditions, factors which are themselves products of other factors. To smash the illusion of a world populated by autonomous entities, extraneous and unrelated, the Buddhist tradition relentlessly focused the contextual nature of reality, exposing the component parts, the heap of relations that alone give a thing its identity.

As indicated in our opening remarks, Buddhism, as all other religious traditions, must be interpreted as the self-articulation of a planetary consciousness, the earth as a sacred recognition of the Absolute. If that is so, then the intensive psychic energy of *Theravāda* Buddhism, which percolated through history and spread and rooted itself throughout the countries of Southeast Asia, will assume new significance. It is the self-reflective revelation of the earth itself which, through the centuries-long sustained attention of the Buddhist community, addresses itself to the whole of the human population and its message is two-fold. While the exact style of those meditations may be totally inappropriate for the modern mentality, the subject of their concern is not. The basis which forms the common feature to all of them is organic process. Whether it be the process of breathing, the process of old age, disease and dying, or the processes of decomposition and decay, the basis is organicity. While the *Theravāda* tradition took the insight only so far, and curtailed its interpretation to the confines of its soteriology, its unremitting exposure of the phenomenal world as an organic aggregation of parts bespeaks the earth's own initial self-understanding and concern that it be accepted as such. The electron microscope of molecular biology and the equations of quantum and particle physics are merely the instruments through which the earth has extended and clarified the exact nature of its organicity to a final self-identity as one living biosphere, one organ.

The second message to contemporary human society which emerges in the earth's self-understanding through *Theravāda* Buddhist thought and *praxis* is the earth's cautionary warning of its own fragility. Repeatedly, the Buddhist tradition, having exposed the composite nature of phenomena, emphasized its correspondent impermanence. If things are not self-subsisting entities, but dependently originated and maintained by a complex of conditions, they are by that very fact, liable to disarray and cessation. The heedless extinction of its flora and fauna at the hands of

human craving is ample confirmation for the transitory reality that is earth. But in the light of *paṭiccasamuppāda* where the being of one is dependent on the being of others, and the termination of one spells the termination of others, the voice of the earth in the Buddhist insistence on the impermanence of all composite organisms, assumes dread implications that need no elaboration.

As Buddhism continued to reflect on the original intuition of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, it realized in the Mahayana phase of its development a more positive and synthetic interpretation of the formula. Paradoxically, the reductive analysis of the sensory world into a series of component elements was intended by the *Theravāda* tradition to induce a profound detachment from it. In destroying the illusion of the personal ego, it simultaneously devalued phenomenal reality as an object of possessive human desire. But having successfully done so, the *Theravāda* was unable to re-invigorate its world with a new, more creative interpretation of it.

Yet, a brief qualification is in order. For, if the *Theravāda* emphasized a reductive-analytic methodology to achieve its goal, there is evidence of a corresponding affective plane, the central intuition of which would only realize its comprehensive implications in the later *bodhisattva* ideal of cosmic compassion. Its roots however, may plainly be seen in that group of *Theravāda* meditations known as the Divine Abidings (*brahmavihāra*).

Consisting of lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity, they testify to an order of coherence and mutual resonance operative within the very composite texture of phenomena which the *Theravāda* so thoroughly identified. The object of this group of meditations is "the breaking down of the barriers" which hatred, resentment, envy, indifference, greed, and cruelty erect between oneself and all other beings. In the 52nd verse of the ninth chapter of his text, Buddhaghosa indicates the universal extensions and idealized ramifications of those four virtues, transforming one-

self even while actively projected towards, and efficaciously pervading all beings, of every category in all directions throughout the cosmos. Thus, while *Theravāda* analysis exhaustively revealed and emphasized the composite nature of phenomenal reality, it simultaneously demonstrated a vital connexity and ideal reciprocity which contained within it, as the following passage indicates, the organic spirituality which the Mahayana tradition would so powerfully elaborate.

May all beings in the eastern direction be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, and live happily. May all beings in the western direction ... northern ... tern intermediate ... northern intermediate ... southern intermediate ... downward direction ... upward ... be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, and live happily. May all breathing things ... May all creatures ... May all persons ... May all who have a personality ... May all women . . . May all men ... May all Noble Ones ... May all not Noble Ones ... May all deities ... May all human beings ... May all those in states of loss ... be free from enmity, affliction and anxiety, and live happily.²

Although explicit to it, such a view was not sufficiently fostered, and *Theravāda* thought eventually entertained a belief in a reality of ultimate value, a nirvana totally transcendent to an earthly existence of conditional processes, referred to as *saṃsāra*.

It was this cleft between nirvana and *saṃsāra*, between an unconditional nominal reality and the world of finite contingent phenomena that became the axis for a new development in Buddhist history and the final emergence of its ecological cosmology. Mahayana thought picked up where *Theravāda* analysis left off and continued to ponder the significance and the affective implications of "the together rising up of things." But before it would reach its most sublime articulation of that mystery, three advances in the areas of

Buddhist symbolism and metaphysics would contribute fresh insight, thus facilitating its final expression. Space permits only the briefest mention of each.

In his *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* or "Fundamentals on the Middle Way,"³ Nāgārjuna (c. 150-250) laid the seminal foundations for all the future schools of Mahayana Buddhism and presented human intellectual history with one of its major classics. Noting in his first chapter that the supreme teaching of the Buddha was that of *praṭītyasamūtpāda* (now in its Sanskrit form), he assumes that as the basic point of reference and the touchstone for his reasoning throughout the following 26 chapters. With incisive logic, he reveals the untenability of any invidiously polarizing position which would assert one extreme viewpoint over against its opposite. What concerns us here is his extension of earlier *Theravāda* analysis that had reduced phenomena to groupings of the five elementary constituents of matter, feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness.

Nāgārjuna merely applied the logic of dependent origination to its full implications to demonstrate that not even these elemental *skandhas* were ultimate; they too were without independent reality, they too were products of multiple contributing factors. While not strikingly apparent at first, such a deduction had crucial ramifications. According to the *Theravāda*, there were five basic "building blocks," and "the together rising up of things" was circumscribed to them. In other words, it was their innumerable combinations which lent shape and consistency to the phenomenal world, which was thus said to rise up through them. However, they themselves (the five *skandhas*) were irreducible and thus not subject to the law of *praṭītyasamūtpāda*; all other things were conditionally originated by them, but as ultimate facts they subsisted as independent entities. Nāgārjuna exposed the logical inconsistency of such a position, clearly implicating the contingent status of the *skandhas* themselves. But if things could no longer be traced to just five elements to explain

their existence, how and by what was their "rising up" sustained? Nāgārjuna's inference was as clear as his logic was acute: The universe comes into being and persists as a totality in which each and every thing in it mutually conditions and depends upon every other thing; the entire universe rises up through the mutual influence and active participation of all its parts. While this was not made explicit by Nāgārjuna himself, it was a critical advance in the theory of *pratītyasamutpāda*, extending the logic of its implications and expanding the *Theravāda* concern with organic processes to a logically grounded appreciation of the phenomenal universe as one integral organic reality.

Now, inherent to the principle of universal mutuality, of everything dependent on every other thing, is the principle of co-relativity: not only is the physical appearance and abiding presence of a thing dependently constituted by a universe of other things, but its intrinsic value and meaningful significance is likewise bestowed relative to them. Therefore, to speak of a transcendent reality without reference to the mundane is meaningless, to refer to an infinite without regard to what is finite is an empty statement; each polarity collapses since the two terms are correlative to and derivative of each other; they are dependently originated with each other. In one of the most revolutionary statements in the history of human religious thought, Nāgārjuna seized upon the *Theravāda* dichotomy between nirvana and *saṃsāra*. To oppose the former as a state of unconditional, transcendent reality to the latter as the sphere of contingent finite existence is to posit a contradiction. The notion of nirvana as an Absolute, independent of and different from *saṃsāra* as the realm of the phenomenal universe, is a logical absurdity. Since nirvana is inconceivable without *saṃsāra*, since its very notion is conditioned by and relative to it, then, according to the logic of *pratītyasamutpāda*, the Absolute "rises up with" and finds value in the phenomenal universe. Nāgārjuna presses their logical identity even further when he states in the 25th chapter of his treatise:

Saṃsāra is nothing essentially different from nirvana. Nirvana is nothing essentially different from *saṃsāra*. The realm of nirvana is the realm of *saṃsāra*. Between the two, also, there is not the slightest difference whatsoever.⁴

Never before, nor since, has such a straightforward equivalence been drawn between the infinite and the finite. Its role in the development of a Buddhist ecological philosophy and spirituality is paramount. The forthright assertion of the earth's sacrality as fully coincident with the Absolute is a singular refutation of those religious traditions that have surrendered the same earth to the savageries of technological exploitation as a mere footstool of the Almighty.

Complementing this insight of Buddhist logic was a correspondent symbolization of the universe as an embryonic reality, the *tathāgatagarbha* maturing to a full awareness of itself as the Absolute Reality or the Cosmic Body of the Buddha, the *dharmakāya*. Having asserted the identity of nirvana and *saṃsāra* through rational analysis, the Mahayana tradition assumed the imagery of an organic growth process to explain the inherent coherence between the two, despite an only apparent disparity. The representation of the universe as an active self-emergence, a self-awakening to itself as an interdependent totality, not only allowed for the possibility of different levels or stages of insight in that self-recognitive process, but it further consolidated the value of the universe not only as an organic whole, but as an integral consciousness.

This last point was metaphysically grounded and elaborated upon by the *Vijñānavadin* or "Consciousness Only" school of the Mahayana tradition. While the theory of *pratītyasamutpāda* was central to its systematic presentation, its interpretation of it was peculiarly nuanced by its thorough-going idealism. Abbreviated to its barest form, the school argued the existence of only one reality: consciousness. In its absolute mode it was referred to as *Ālayavijñāna*

or "Storehouse Consciousness" out of which it actively and continuously projects the sensible shapes and features of the empirical universe and the individual human consciousnesses which perceive that universe. Persons and things then "rise up together with" one another, are mutually influenced and conditioned by each other, and share a fundamental dependence upon the ultimate "storehouse consciousness" from which they co-originate and through which they co-exist. But while it is the primordial source and grounding principle of phenomenal existence, the *Ālayavijñāna* is itself circumscribed by it, and in a most direct way is dependent upon human consciousness. For it is only through human perception that the Absolute contemplates the richness of its own self-manifesting diversity and comes to a full self-understanding in the totality of its universal contours and forms.

Transposed to an ecological perspective, the human assumes its proper dimension, and undoubtedly it is pre-eminent. But not because of any self-derived innate superiority as *erectus*, *sapiens*, or *faber*. Its distinction rests not in any physical, rational or technological prowess over the universe, but as the faculty through which the universe in all its variety is self-disclosed as the cosmic extension of the Absolute, which, in that same process, realizes its most determinate and concrete self-awareness as the originate source and ultimate nature of that very universe. In such a cosmology, the value of the human lies in being the psychic coincidence of the phenomenal as Absolute, the Absolute as phenomenal. In the experience of enlightenment, human consciousness is the median realization in which each, the Absolute and the phenomenal, knows itself as the inherent modality of the other.

While the type of perception that has given rise to the technological consciousness of the present age is the single vision of pragmatic intentionality, Buddhism fostered a multiple-perspective awareness of reality as "the together rising up" of the Absolute, and the mutual interde-

pendencies of the phenomenal. Rather than the constricted focus of applying means to self-willed ends, and the intrusive manipulation of persons and things to attain those purposes, Buddhism assumed for human consciousness, a universal context and open horizon for the self-disclosure of the real in the totality of its relations. The school of *Hua-yen* indicated the scope and intricacies of those relations, and represents the final phase in the present development of a Buddhist ecology.

In his, *Treatise on the Golden Lion*,⁵ the seventh century Chinese patriarch, Fa-tsang (643-712) cryptically enumerated the "Six Characters" which together express the central intuition of the school. These six universality, speciality, similarity, diversity, integration and differentiation apply to every existent particularity. While preserving their individual unique identity, they reveal the reciprocal disposability of each to all the others and the dynamics of their mutual coherence as one universe. While Fa-tsang employed one of the golden lions that adorned the imperial palace where he originally lectured to exemplify these laws of differentiating identity, it is fitting in the light of our topic to call forth the earth itself as their living exemplar.

Through the character of universality, all of the elements of the planet, from the molecules and the atoms of its fiery center to the animate communities of its flora and fauna are viewed as one organic biosphere, itself a member in the innumerable galaxies that constitute the cosmos. Under the aspect of speciality, each biospheric element assumes its own proper dimension as contributing a peculiar function, an individual energy to the common life throb of the whole. Yet, this very uniqueness of each, points to a similarity: Though different with respect to function, every element shares with every other, a final denomination as the countless organs of one earth body. Slightly nuancing the aspect of speciality, the fact that every element is inimitable by all the others establishes a new level of diversity. That each member of the biosphere has a uniquely unrepeatable contribu-

tion to the health of the whole earth, again evokes the haunting implications of the Buddha's original phrase "... this not becoming, that does not become; from the ceasing of this, that ceases." To the technological mentality, confident in its ability to compensate for any loss in the natural environment by its own artificial manipulations, this assertion of the singular enrichment of each to the whole is a glaring, refutation. The fifth character of integration defines each element of the planet as an active tending-towards and leaning-upon all other elements to rise up together and maintain the one biosphere through a mutual, simultaneous collaboration which is possible precisely because each element reacts spontaneously out of its own particular frame of reference within the whole. This differentiated context out of, and within which, each element contributes to the biosphere is the sixth characteristic of phenomena, and again questions the contemporary disregard for regional integrity as the source of a variegated richness for the physical and psychic health of the planet in the face of the rapidly assimilative homogeneity of artificially contrived technological environments.

By attributing these six characteristics to every individual element within the biosphere, *Hua Yen* would encourage the modern mentality to

pierce the myopic stare of the one track vision of purposive consciousness that sees things only as means to specified ends. The reality of things interrelating with things, of things contributing to the emergence of a planetary body, sacred as the manifesting presence to and of the Absolute, that reality is infinitely more complex and whose contemplation is infinitely more transfiguring than any mere manipulatory process could ever aspire

FOOTNOTES

1. *Majjhima-Nikāya*, II.32; *Samyutta-Nikāya*, II.28.
2. Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification* (Berkeley, California: Shambhala Press, 1976), 1:335.
3. Kenneth K. Inada, ed. and trans., Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamikārikā*, (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1970).
4. *Ibid.*, 158.
5. Fa-tsang, "Treatise on the Golden Lion" in Wing-Tsit Chan, ed. and trans., ⁷ (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 409-414.