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T'IEN-T'AI BUDDHISM AND THE UNITY OF KNOWLEDGE

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Among classical religious systems in world history, few have matched the sophistication of T'ien-t'ai Buddhism in its ability to "unify knowledge": namely, to integrate and balance a diversity of religious sources and practices. Because ICUS is primarily interested in the "unity of knowledge," in this paper I shall focus on the integrating devices that T'ien-t'ai developed as a way of exploring how knowledge might be unified in our own day.

Created in China in the sixth century A.D., T'ien-t'ai was so successful that it became the earliest school of Chinese Buddhism to survive and was adopted in Japan as the most prominent state-sponsored form of Buddhism. The insights and structures developed by T'ien-t'ai served to integrate a diversity of Buddhist materials that had entered China over the previous half a millenium from various groups in India and Central Asia.

Chih-i (538-597) was the de facto founder of T'ien-t'ai as an enduring movement within Chinese Buddhism. Chih-i's

religious experience was greatly influenced by his master Hui-ssu (515-577), while his intellectual life was based on the philosophical heritage of the Perfection of Wisdom tradition which he used for analyzing and interpreting Buddhist doctrines and practices.

The Sui Dynasty (589-618) was the first to unify China after almost three centuries, and the northern emperor was very concerned to find ways to support and extend his precarious political unification. Because Chih-i was the most prominent Buddhist leader in the south, it was politically useful to ask Chih-i to show how all Buddhism is united in its teaching. Thus, it was partially through this imperial interest and sponsorship that Chih-i was stimulated to write comprehensive works unifying the Buddhist knowledge of his day. Even though the Sui Dynasty soon collapsed and it became politically unwise to espouse T'ien-t'ai under the T'ang Dynasty (618-906), the usefulness of Chih-i's ideas had attracted such a large Buddhist following that they have endured ever since as a vital part of Chinese Buddhism.

The primary preoccupation of Chih-i was with teaching the teachings of Buddhism. He was not interested in knowledge of the material world for its own sake, but was focused on the liberating knowledge called enlightenment. However, this was not separate from the factual details of ordinary existence (the place of our own enlightenment), nor with the literary details of the scriptures (the source of instructions for our enlightenment). Indeed, because of the

conflicting ideas and practices in the many different Buddhist scriptures, a major concern for Chih-i was the status of different kinds of knowledge and their relationship to each other. Specifically he was not concerned about how these materials related to each other abstractly, but with their practical role in our growth and enlightenment. Since his works are very complex, we shall only look at a few of his key ideas, beginning with his theory of the three truths, a few of his fourfold doctrines, his idea of identity in six degrees, the vows of a bodhisattva, and finally the unity of knowledge.

The Three Truths

After studying T'ien-t'ai for over fifty years, the eminent scholar SATO Tetsuei asserted that the core of the mature thought of Chih-i was his doctrine of three truths (san-ti) and three views (san-kuan).¹ The correlation of this threefold doctrine with his concepts of various fourfold teachings provides the underlying conceptual framework for Chih-i's greatest works, the Fa-hua hsuan-i (Essential Meaning of the Lotus Sutra) and the Mo-ho chih-kuan (Great Treatise on Calming and Insight).

The fullest description of Chih-i's doctrine of three truths and three views is found in the San-kuan-i² which was written in the last years of Chih-i's life. The scriptural foundation used by Chih-i was the Ying-lo ching.³ There we read that the Three Views means (1) to move from

provisional terminology to comprehend emptiness, (2) to move from emptiness (k'ung) to comprehend provisional (chia) terminology, and (3) the primary principle of the Middle Way (chung-tao) in which there is mutual illumination of the previous two truths and every moment is tranquil and serene.⁴

In quoting from this text, Chih-i deleted the word ming (terminology), but said (1) "if you view all elements (fa) as illusory deceptions or magical creations which only have names, then this is to penetrate the Highest Truth (chen-ti, Skt. paramartha)." (2) "In explaining 'the view of moving from emptiness to enter the provisional' means that if you do not abide in emptiness, then you can return to enter the Worldly Truth (shih-ti, Skt. samvrti) of illusion and magic and provisional names, and can make distinctions without obstructions. That is to say, in the former view if you know the provisional is not provisional, this destroys the provisional and enters emptiness. In the latter view, if you know that emptiness is not emptiness, this destroys emptiness and enters the provisional. The mutual destruction and the mutual functioning of emptiness and provisionality is known as 'equality'." (3) Next by seeing these two views as non-dual, one illuminates the one Real Truth (shih-ti). Both being expedient paths and both being empty, then one enters the Middle Way where there is mutual illumination of the Two Truths.⁵

I have labored this point because it is foundational to Chih-i, and yet there is controversy about how his interpretation of Three Truths relates to a passage of Nagarjuna's Mûlamadhyamakakârikâ whose Chinese text uses the same three words that Chih-i adopted for his Three Truths: namely, k'ung (emptiness), chia (provisionality), and chung-tao (middle way). When the T'ien-t'ai doctrine of three truths is discussed, attention usually focuses on how Chih-i misappropriates these three words from Mûlamadhyamakakârikâ, Chapter 24:18, which David Kalupahana has recently translated as:

We state that whatever is dependent arising, that is emptiness. That is dependent upon convention. That itself is the middle path.⁶

The generally accepted interpretation of this verse is that Nagarjuna is arguing against those who hold to the extreme views of being and nihilism. Everything that arises dependent on other things is empty of enduring being, and also is empty of non-existence. Therefore, all views are only dependent upon convention, not upon any absolutes. This avoidance of the two extremes is the middle path.⁷

Obviously this idea of the Middle Path relativizes all views, and avoids dogmatism by assuming the lack of any absolute perfection or permanence. As David Kalupahana persuasively argues, this is also the attitude of Gotama Buddha who consistently urged his disciples to avoid

absolutizing any dogma or idea. Although elsewhere Nagarjuna discusses the two truths, in this passage he is identifying dependent arising, emptiness, convention (provisionality), and the Middle Path as being the same in avoiding the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism.

When Chih-i analyzes this passage in his Mo-ho chih-kuan,⁸ he does it in the context of how the desire for enlightenment can be aroused by listening to various teachings.⁹ The analytical framework that he uses in this section is the four kinds of Four Noble Truths, which is a scheme which parallels the structure that he uses to organize all Buddhist teaching, namely, the theory of Four Doctrines. Since Chih-i's fourfold categories are interwoven with his theory of Three Truths, we need to analyze his fourfold scheme before we can fully understand how he relates emptiness and provisionality.

Fourfold Doctrines

Chih-i arranged all Buddhist teachings into four groups called the Four Doctrines (ssu-chiao): Tripitaka, Shared, Distinctive, and Complete. Although enlightenment is possible through any teaching in any of the four groups, the teachings are basically arranged from the lowest to the highest. Thus, the Tripitaka Doctrine (roughly equivalent to the Chinese agama or Pali nikâya scriptures) are for those at a lower level of understanding and with lesser capacities, ^{and} ~~Furthermore,~~ the attainments that it teaches are

seen as less than the attainments that can be reached through the other three doctrines. ^{In its turn,} ~~Furthermore~~ the Shared Doctrine encompasses and goes beyond the Tripitaka, the Distinctive encompasses both Tripitaka and Shared, and the Complete integrates all four doctrines.¹⁰

Four Kinds of Four Noble Truths

Parallel to the Four Doctrines is a fourfold analysis of the Four Noble Truths in terms of (1) arising-and-perishing, (2) neither-arising-nor-perishing, (3) the innumerable, and (4) the unconditioned. These four kinds of Four Noble Truths are four different ways of viewing existence and are arranged hierarchically like the Four Doctrines.¹¹

(1) Analysis of the Four Noble Truths in terms of arising-and-perishing involves seeing how the first two of the Four Noble Truths focus on suffering and its cause (=arising), while the last two focus on the elimination of suffering (=perishing). According to Chih-i, the first two are worldly, while the last two free one from the world [by encouraging non-attachment]. Nevertheless, they both are caught within the realm of change and difference, that is naive realism and empiricism focused on phenomena (shih). This is equivalent to the Tripitaka Doctrine.

(2) Chih-i then went to a second level by observing that if there are no permanent things that arise, none can perish, so the term "emptiness" refers to this "neither-

arising-nor-perishing." According to Chih-i, neither suffering, nor its cause, nor its extinction, nor the path have any permanent mark. They are all empty of permanent identity. This understanding is in accord with true principle (li), it is equivalent to the Shared Doctrine, and is found in the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures.

(3) The next level of analysis is called "innumerable" which refers to the many teachings and distinctions which are possible when one analyses the Four Noble Truths in terms of phenomena, but based upon an understanding of non-arising emptiness. This is identical to the Distinctive Doctrine which teaches the non-arising morality, meditation, and wisdom which is marked by no mark, and so is different from the Tripitaka Doctrine. Instead of being based on naive realism, there are innumerable Buddhist teachings based on the tathâgatagarbha.¹² Thus, it seems that Chih-i was responding to the encyclopaedic Mahayana works which gave minute detail of various realms of rebirth and consequences of ignorance and karma, even though they were based on the doctrine of emptiness.

(4) Viewing the Four Noble Truths in terms of the "unconditioned" (pu-tso) means seeing them as true reality (shih-hsiang) and as inconceivable. Here enlightenment is not separate from the passions, nor nirvana from samsara. Since there is no conceptualization, no thought, and no production, it is given the name "unconditioned". Appealing to the Srîmâlâdevî Sûtra which has a description of the Four

Noble Truth in terms of the unconditioned, Chih-i asserts that the truth of suffering is the hidden name for the tathâgathagarbha. The manifestation is called the dharmakâya.¹³

It is noteworthy that Chih-i criticizes the Srîmâlâdevî Sûtra for praising the truth of extinction (nirvana) and downgrading the other three Four Noble Truths as not manifesting the ultimate and unconditioned. Chih-i argues that for the mind aspiring for enlightenment, all four truths are ultimate and without dualistic distinctions. This approach to the Four Noble Truths is equivalent to the Complete Doctrine.¹⁴

In his Mo-ho chih-kuan Chih-i quotes the Nirvana Sûtra to support his concept of four levels, and distinguishes four stages of wisdom in terms of sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas.¹⁵ Then he quotes the Mûlamadhyamakakârikâ 24.¹⁸ and makes the following equations:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. arising-and-perishing | = dependent arising |
| 2. neither-arising-nor-perishing | = emptiness |
| 3. the innumerable | = dependent upon convention |
| 4. the unconditioned | = middle path |

The Three Views and Fourfold Teachings

In his Ssu-chiao-i, Chih-i relates the Three Views to the fourfold teachings as follows:

- (1) entering emptiness from provisional existence:

- a. through clumsy analysis (=Tripitaka)
 - b. through skillful experience of emptiness (=Shared)
- (2) entering provisional existence from emptiness
(=Distinctive)
- (3) correct view of the Middle Way (=Complete)

When explaining the source of these ideas, Chih-i says that they come from the Mûlamadhyamakakârikâ 24.18, which in turn arises from the mind, which is the inconceivable liberation of all the Buddhas. Even though this inconceivable liberation is inexpressible, it can be expressed because of the causes and conditions of the listeners. Thus, one can preach this verse of the Mûlamadhyamakakârikâ using the four siddhântas in order to help beings who have different capacities.¹⁶

This is a crucial admission since it reveals why Chih-i feels justified in offering a variety of interpretations of verse 24.18 so that sometimes he says it teaches Three Truths, at other times the Four Doctrines or the Four Kinds of Four Noble Truths, and sometimes he even agrees with modern scholars when he argues that in the highest understanding that all the elements are identical! Thus, from an enlightened point of view, which Chih-i calls the Complete Doctrine (=the unconditioned = the Middle Way), all Three Truths are the same:

If you say emptiness is identical to
provisionality is identical to the middle, then

although there are three, at the same time there is one; although there is one, at the same time there are three. There is no mutual exclusion.

All three elements are empty because they are all inexpressible. All three are provisional because there are only words. All three are the Middle because they are true suchness (shih-hsiang).

Merely by using emptiness as a name makes it identical to provisionality and the middle. Being enlightened to emptiness is identical to being enlightened to provisionality and the middle. The others are also like this.

You should know that hearing a single dharma gives rise to all varieties of interpretations; it inspires all varieties of vows; and it is identical to all varieties of ways to arouse a mind dedicated to enlightenment.¹⁷

This is the highest way of understanding the Three Views and verse 24.18 for Chih-i, and is from the point of view of the "unconditioned". Even though Chih-i arrives at an interpretation which equates the various elements (dependent arising = emptiness = convention = middle path), it is for quite different reasons than the scholarly reconstruction which sees Nagarjuna as attacking the two extremes of eternalism and annihilation. Chih-i considers this position, but rejects it as an inadequate view of the

Middle Way which for him involves not just dependence^e on conditions and the emptying of all things, but a positive affirmation of Buddha nature, tathâgata-garbha, and so on.¹⁸

Harmonizing Differences: the Four Siddhântas

At the beginning of his Fa-hua hsüan-i (The Essential Teaching of the Lotus Sutra), Chih-i has a section on the four siddhântas entitled "harmonizing differences".¹⁹ The role model that Chih-i follows is a similar section at the beginning of the Ta-chih-tu lun (Mahâ-prajñâ-pâramitâ-sastra) attributed to Nagarjuna.²⁰ There we read that

because the Buddha wanted to teach the supreme form of truth (pâramârthika siddhânta laksana), he taught the Prajñâ-pâramitâ Sûtra. There are four truths:

1. worldly truth
2. truth for each individual
3. truth which is therapeutic
4. the supreme truth

Contained in these four truths are all the twelve categories of scriptures and the collection of 84,000 teachings. All these are true and without mutual contradiction.²¹

In his discussion of these kinds of truth, Chih-i argues that they are designed for people with different capacities of understanding, and that although the meaning is the same, in terms of the levels they are different. As

might be expected, he then correlates the four siddhântas with his four kinds of Four Noble Truths.²² In particular, the "innumerable" kind correlates with the therapeutic, and therefore justifies all kinds of distinctions in order to cure people of defilements.

Finally, according to the Ta-chih-tu-lun the four truths can be reduced to the two truths: that is, conventional truths and the supreme truth. All conventional truths are non-substantial, so that "all the various teachings and all the various truths can be destroyed, except for the one supreme truth".²³ Although for Chih-i everything collapses but the Complete Teaching (the unconditioned, the truth of the Middle), everything is then restored and included in this larger framework.

Implicit in the doctrine of the four siddhântas is the need to shape the teaching to the needs and capacities of the listeners, so that any particular scriptural passage may be interpreted in a variety of ways in terms of what will best benefit the spiritual growth of the listeners. This idea is made explicit for Chih-i in the Dhyana Sutra which Chih-i quotes in the Mo-ho chih-kuan:

The Buddha teaches the dharma by being accommodating in four ways (i-ssu-sui): (1) by accommodating to make beings happy, (2) by accommodating appropriately, (3) by accommodating to cure them, and (4) by accommodating in terms of the meaning.²⁴

Obviously this scripture echoes the four siddhântas mentioned earlier, and Chih-i captures the issue when he comments that this is "providing benefits by according to the capacities of beings through receptivity-and-response (kan-ying)."

You should know that when conditions arise and you are able to expound the Great Matter [the Buddha's dharma], then this is the meaning of receptivity-and-response. Thus, the names of the four kinds of accommodation (ssu-sui), the four siddhântas, and the five conditions are different, but the meaning of the ideas is the same....

The four accommodations are a benefit of the great compassionate response. The siddhântas are a universal gift of compassion....

As for the phrase "causes and conditions," sometimes the cause is in the sage and the condition in the ordinary person, and sometimes the cause is in the ordinary person and the condition in the sage. This then is the interrelationship of receptivity-and-response (tao-chiao kan-ying).²⁵

As in Mahayana writings, we can see in Chih-i a concern not just for the pure pursuit of truth, or the abstract unity of knowledge, but an active communal environment where the primary concern is the development of people in the spiritual life. The issue is less the unity of knowledge than the pragmatic issue of the integration of the

individual into the community, and the development of spiritual qualities such as calmness, insight, compassion, and freedom. Some of these different kinds of unity became expressed by Chih-i in his theory of the six kinds of identity.

Identity in Six Degrees

In the first chapter of his greatest work, the Mo-ho chih-kuan composed in 595 A.D., Chih-i presents his theory of "identity in six degrees" (liu-chi).²⁶ The Chinese term for identity, chi, is not the same as a mathematical equation sign (=), but is an unspecified term for close relationship. Literally it means "immediately then." For example, when the Heart Sutra says that "form is identical to emptiness, and emptiness is identical to form," it literally says: "there is form, then immediately empty; there is emptiness, then immediately form." Because chi does not specify the nature of this close relationship, Chih-i is free to devise his scheme of six kinds of identity.

The primary reason for discussing "identity in six degrees" is because the wonderful news of the unity of knowledge caused some problems. People who lacked confidence felt that they had no part in this unity, and those who lacked wisdom arrogantly claimed to be equal to the Buddha. Thus, it was necessary to draw distinctions...even in the midst of great unity.

1. "Identity in principle" means that each moment of thought is equal to the principle of the tathâgatha-garbha. "Every single form and every single fragrance contains all the dharmas....This is called identity in principle. This is the bodhicitta." This is identity in theory.

2. "Verbal Identity" is to believe written and spoken words about this identity, but not to be at the level of experience.

3. "Identity in contemplative practice" means to try to implement this sense of identity in life through the practice of calming and insight (chih and kuan).

4. "Semblance of identity" means that in some respects, such as inner faith and the means of livelihood, conflicts have ceased.

5. "Identity of partial realization" refers to attaining some of the spiritual stages.

6. "Ultimate identity" is the state of supreme enlightenment.

These different stages are instructive since they show that the unity of knowledge for Chih-i implied inner realization, not just abstract integration. Chih-i was a religious teacher who cloistered himself on Mount T'ien-t'ai in order to be devoted to meditative practice. Accordingly, he was primarily interested in personal spiritual unity, not just in theoretical or conceptual unity.

Four Bodhisattva Vows

Throughout his works, Chih-i makes distinctions between different teachings by using such categories as the five flavors, crude and fine, partial and complete, provisional and real, and many examples of fourfold classifications. In these arrangements, Chih-i rarely discusses right and wrong, true or false, but instead gives validity and a role to each element by placing them on a continuum. Every form of knowledge and every practice can serve some purpose, can hold some truth, and has been helpful to someone for some reason. All forms may be empty, so that truth is formless when seen in the abstract, but truth takes on form in relation to the needs and perspectives of individuals. The method for judging truth and for unifying knowledge must therefore be a web which interweaves this human dimension as well as the critique of all things as non-substantial.

The model that Chih-i offers to us has compassion as well as wisdom at its base. The quest for enlightenment leads to a concern for others. It is in this context that the unity of knowledge is not a goal in itself but an expedient device, an operational principle, since the bodhisattva must find ways in which he can relate to those in need. If their practices, needs, and ideas are totally wrong, it will be difficult to arouse in them the quest for enlightenment. For example, in the Mo-ho chih-kuan, Chih-i discusses the "four kinds of Four Noble Truths" and "identity in six degrees" in the context of his section on

the bodhicitta: namely, in seeking ways to "arouse the commitment to enlightenment."²⁷ Also in this section are the "four great bodhisattva vows."

Chih-i comments that his discussion had been orientated in two directions: upward seeking the truth (shang-ch'iu) and downward transforming others (hsia-hua), that is, both an intellectual concern to understand and a compassionate concern for others. This concern for others is a classic part of the bodhisattva's life, and a number of scriptures are famous for the heroic vows that they list. Of appeal to Chih-i was a fourfold list in both the Lotus Sutra²⁸ and the Ying-lo ching²⁹ whose basic pattern is:

Those who are unsaved, I vow to save.

Those who do not understand, I vow to cause them to understand.

Those who are unsettled, I vow to calm them.

Those who have not attained nirvana, I vow to cause them to reach nirvana.³⁰

These vows are all focused on saving others. Later in life Chih-i reformulated these vows to include two methods of saving others: namely, removal of all defilements and the learning of all teachings. This great concern for helping others leads (1) to learning about their needs and their knowledge, and (2) finding ways to relate our knowledge to theirs. I would suggest that this is the necessary motive and framework for building the "unity of knowledge."

Chih-i's revised vows are now repeated daily throughout Asia by various Buddhist sects and I recommend them to you:

Sentient beings are infinite in number, I vow to save them all.

Defilements are limitless in number, I vow to end them all.

The teachings are endless in number, I vow to learn them all.

Enlightenment is supreme, I vow to attain it.

The Unity of Knowledge

Like many religious unifiers, Chih-i is able to unify knowledge because of the special viewpoint and motivation that he brings to the materials. This becomes clear in a section of his Mo-ho chih-kuan where he discusses the topic of "returning to the underlying intent" (chih-kuei).³¹ To explain this he draws on an earlier list of three kinds of omniscience:

1. essential knowledge of all things (i-chieh-chih)
2. knowledge of the details (similarities and differences) in relation to the religious path (tao-chung-chih)
3. detailed knowledge of all things (i-chieh-chung-chih)

1. To understand the underlying intent is like water flowing to the sea, or flames flaring up to the sky: one sees the basic direction and destiny of things. It is like a wise minister who understands the hidden meaning underlying

the words of his king. This is the "essential knowledge of things." For Chih-i, this meant seeing that all things are essentially non-substantial, and it paralleled the first of his Three Truths: namely, movement from the provisional to enter emptiness. All knowledge is the same in that the more one examines any knowledge the more it tends to lose its substantiality. Thus, in terms of this underlying characteristic (of non-substantiality) one can claim to know the nature of all things. This "essential knowledge of all things" is called having the Wisdom Eye (chih-yen).

2. The second kind of knowledge is the detailed knowledge of the similarities and differences of each thing in terms of the religious path. Chih-i correlates this with the second of his Three Truths: namely, leaving emptiness in order to enter provisionality again. In this case, every kind of knowledge is accepted and used in its particularity, but only in terms of how people can be liberated by this particular knowledge. Scientific and historical knowledge is not approached totalistically, but only in terms of its beneficial capacities to help people become free (as understood in a Buddhist framework). This "detailed knowledge in terms of the religious path" is called having the Dharma Eye (fa-yen), and corresponds to the first three vows of the Four Bodhisattva Vows.

3. When omniscience and the unity of knowledge is discussed in the West, it usually implies a detailed and totalistic knowledge of all things in their particularity.

The third kind of knowledge may suggest this, but it must be understood in the Buddhist framework since Chih-i identified it with a return to the dharmakâya. Although there are various meanings for dharmakâya in Buddhist history, we can roughly summarize Chih-i's usage of the term as implying reality as seen by the enlightened, which I shall call "ultimate reality" to distinguish it from reality as seen in an ordinary, substantialist way.³² In this sense, the detailed knowledge of all things may not imply foreknowledge or factual knowledge, but a sense of intimacy and kinship with everything. Each new event or fact will be perceived not as strange or closed off, but as not separate from oneself. In that sense the enlightened are harmonized and unified with all things.

This "detailed knowledge of all things" is the middle path, the third of Chih-i's Three Truths, in which emptiness and provisionality are both dynamically included in each moment. This is called having the Buddha Eye (fo-yen), and is the unity of knowledge for those who are enlightened.

The unity of knowledge celebrated by Chih-i is not based on our usual understanding of what constitutes knowledge, and Chih-i acknowledged this when he drew upon a quotation from the Nirvana Sutra which reads: "I have established my children safely in the hidden treasury (mi-mi-tsang), and before long I also shall dwell there."³³ This "hidden treasury" is used by Chih-i to symbolize the underlying meaning which we should always return to.

If we interpret "wisdom" as "wisdom of what is immediately there" then this is not wisdom. You should know that wisdom is knowing, not knowing, and neither knowing nor not knowing.

Wisdom that is "detailed knowledge in terms of the religious path" knows thoroughly all things in terms of conventional truth (samvrti). Therefore it is called "knowledge". Having made distinctions, it returns to liberation (moksa).

Wisdom that is the "essential knowledge of all things" is to know thoroughly all things in terms of the ultimate truth (paramartha). Therefore it is called "not knowing". Having made distinctions it returns to wisdom (prajna).

Wisdom that is "detailed knowledge of all things" is to know thoroughly in terms of the Middle Way. Therefore it is called "neither knowing nor not knowing." Having made these distinctions it returns to the ultimate reality (dharmakâya).

When these "three wisdoms" are attained, the attributes are neither the same nor different. This is called "returning" (kuei). Teaching these "three wisdoms with neither the same nor different attributes" is called the "underlying intent." Both activities enter the "hidden treasury". Therefore we call them "returning to the underlying intent."³⁴

Thus, the unity of knowledge is not based on surface meanings, but involves "returning" to that level where we experience freedom, wisdom, and ultimate reality not separate from the distinctions of knowledge, but which is also not limited to these distinctions. Rather, it is a "hidden treasury" in our midst.

Reflections

From one point of view Chih-i's concern to relate various kinds of knowledge was based on an assumption of faith: namely, he believed that the Buddha had in fact taught all the different scriptures that had come into China. Accordingly, he sought to integrate all the teachings as a way of validating their truth and internal consistency, as a way of substantiating his faith.

A motivation equally as strong as the quest to validate Buddhist texts was the concern to teach and guide other people. We must assume that many people were similarly motivated, but few had the same abilities as Chih-i to develop as sophisticated and persuasive a system.

In the midst of all the categories and classifications and arrangements that he constructed or borrowed, is an underlying method that I shall call "shifting the perspective." If ideas were conflicting on one level, Chih-i was able to move to another level, or to see the two items from a different point which allowed them to be related together. Differences were not denied, but they were

balanced by new relationships, by other dimensions, and by the relativizing (emptying) of all distinctions as only provisional.

Some people resist the idea that "all religions are different paths going up the same mountain." Since cultures, concepts, practices, and communities are so different, other people argue that a better analogy would be that "all religions are different paths going up different mountains." Using Chih-i's techniques, we could acknowledge the truth of this objection, and then ask: But are all the paths going in the same direction (up)? Are the mountains related to each other in the same range? Do the mountains have the same foundation (the earth)? Are the paths designed in similar ways? What are provisions, the techniques for climbing, the tools, the preparations, etc. Thus, if looked at in detail and from different perspectives, items can take on different roles and shapes, and have the capacity to be related or integrated in a variety of ways. Based on Chih-i's approach, to seek "the unity of knowledge" does not mean that everything is consistent, and in that sense "unity" may be too strong a word. Nevertheless, Chih-i shows many ways in which all knowledge can be related and integrated, and in which we can feel a kinship with all knowledge, and to that degree gives us the security that no division is final or ultimate.

All things work together if we are enlightened and have a compassionate concern. Even short of this high goal, we

can be encouraged that some degree of unity is possible if we do not hold fast to any perspective or detail as final or exhaustive, but are flexible enough to be open to larger perspectives based on alternate kinds of relationships.

In conclusion we can see that Chih-i used many sophisticated schemes for interrelating different Buddhist texts, practices, and theories. However, underlying all his writings were two basic principles. One was the critical principle of emptiness, the insight that all knowledge and concepts are partial and relative. The second principle was the constructive motivation of compassion. While all knowledge is empty of final authority, each item of knowledge has some validity and can serve some purpose, meet some need, or carry some truth.

Chih-i expressed this dynamic perspective in the concept of the Three Truths (san-ti), which was also his primary form of religious practice: namely, the cultivation of three kinds of awareness (san-kuan). First, one must see all forms of knowledge and life as empty (k'ung) of enduring reality. This should lead to non-attachment, flexibility, and freedom. Secondly, out of compassion one should not abide in emptiness but use its insight to creatively engage the world of provisional existence (chia). Thirdly, the truth of life and the unity of knowledge lies in a balance which includes both views. Thus, Chih-i provides not only many conceptual schemes to unify knowledge (such as the four doctrines, the six degrees of identity, the five flavors,

and the four kinds of four noble truths), but also the dynamic practice of the Three Truths/Views and the Four Bodhisattva Vows which gives to the emptiness-compassion dialectic an operational strategy in order to create a truer, kinder, and more unified world.

1. Satō, Tetsuei, (Kyoto, 1978), p.430.

2. Hsu-tsang ching (hereafter abbreviated as HTC) (Hong Kong) 99:37-52.

3. The Ying-lo ching claims to have been translated in the period 376-378 A.D. However, Onō Hōdō (Busshō Kaisetsu Daijiten IX.414-415) reports that there is no record of the text in India, and it is not mentioned in China until its use by Chih-i. Thus, some scholars have questioned its authenticity, and suggested that it might have been compiled in China.

4. Taishō shinshū daizōkyō Vol. 24, p.1014, column b, line 19-21 (hereafter abbreviated as "T", followed by appropriate numbers only). Later in this scripture there is a similar set of Three Truths: (1) the truth of being (yu), (2) the truth of non-being (wu-yu), and (3) the truth of the primary principle of the Middle Way (chung-tao) (T24.1019b.22-23).

5. HTC 99.38 verso a.5-16

6. Kalupahana, David J., Nagarjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1986), p.339.

7. See ibid., pp. 340-341 and 86-89, and Hajime Nakamura, "The Middle Way and the Emptiness View," Journal of Buddhist Philosophy, I (1983), pp.81-101.

8. T46.7a.23-b.17

9. T46.6c.18 ff

10. For an overview of these Four Doctrines, see David Chappell, ed., T'ien-t'ai Buddhism: An Outline of the Fourfold Teachings (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobo, 1983).

11. The following description of the four kinds of Four Noble Truths is based on Chih-i's Mo-ho chih-kuan (T46.5b-c) and his Fa-hua hsuān-i (T33.700c-702a).

12. The description of this kind of analysis of the Four Noble Truths is here interpreted in terms of Chih-i's description of the Distinctive Doctrine in his Ssu-chiao-i (T 46.723; see Robert Rhodes "Annotated Translation," Annual Memoirs of the Otani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute 3 (1985):50-51).

13. See Alex Wayman, The ~~Srīmālādevī Sūtra~~ (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 96-98.

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14. For a classic synopsis of this doctrine, which represents Chih-i's highest religious vision, see the beginning of the Mo-ho chih-kuan (T46.1c.23-2b.23).
15. See Mo-ho chih-kuan (T46.5b.24-27).
16. See Robert Rhodes "Annotated Translation" of the Ssu-chiao-i, pp. 60-61.
17. T46.7b.12-18
18. See Mo-ho chih-kuan (T46.7a.23-b.8).
19. T33.686b-691a
20. T25.59b ff
21. T25.59b.17-22. The text goes on to say that "Since in the Buddha's teaching (dharma) there is the use of worldly truth, therefore it really exists; there is the use of truth for individuals, therefore it really exists; there is the use of therapeutic truth, therefore it really exists; and there is the use of supreme truth, therefore it really exists." (T25.59b.22-24)
22. T33.689c.22 ff
23. T25.60c.12-13
24. T46.4c.18-19
25. T46.a5-9
26. T46.10b.7-11a.17
27. T46.4a.18-11a.16
28. T 9.19b
29. T24.1013a
30. See Robert Rhodes, "The Four Extensive Vows and Four Noble Truths in T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," Annual Memoirs of the Otani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute 2 (1984): 56-57.
31. T46.20b.13-21b.8
32. I am using the term "ultimate reality" in an epistemological way as that which is known ultimately after illusions are eradicated, and not as an ontological or metaphysical term referring to an unchanging or transcendent absolute.
33. Mo-ho chih-kuan (T46.20c.1-2) quoting from the Nirvana Sutra (T16.616b).
34. Mo-ho chih-kuan (T46.20c.21-29).

ABBREVIATIONS

NOTE: References to Buddhist scriptures are to the Taishô shinshû daizôkyô 85 volumes (Tokyo: 1924-1931), which is abbreviated as "T" followed by the volume number, page number, column number, and line number.

A second scriptural collection is the Hsü Tsang Ching 150 volumes (Hong Kong reprint of the Manji Zôku zôkyô), which is abbreviated as "HTC" followed by the volume and page number.