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CHRISTIANITY AND THE ENCOUNTER OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS¹

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All mankind is now about to face a global age. This does not simply mean that whole world is now totally covered and integrated by the rapidly advancing universality of technology, such as jet airplanes, various means of instant communication and so forth. It also means the people of the world, as individuals and as nations, politically, and economically, act, react and interact just as one group. Almost no part of the globe is free from being involved in the world-wide waves of unity, tension, opposition and conflict. However, I think, what is most significant and decisive for the destiny of mankind in this regard is the encounter of the world religions which is, in a scale and depth as never experienced before, taking place underneath or entangled with the complex process of the political, economic and social integration of the world. How openly and profoundly, under the present intensive situation, the encounter or dialogue between the world religions will be carried out in the search for a new spiritual horizon, is vital to the future of mankind. The global age will produce dissension as well as unity, and will elevate as well as destroy mankind. As a real basis of the global age a new spiritual horizon is needed which can open up the innermost depth of human religiosity and on which all nations can display their spiritual and cultural creativity without being dehumanized and deindividualized by the world's sociological complexity or by technological conformity.

At this critical point in history, the appearance of Paul Tillich's book, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, is most welcome and highly significant, for the book can be taken as the result of a frontal inquiry into the above-mentioned problem by one of the most outstanding Christian theologians and philosophers of religion today. In this book the inquiry into the problem has been made from the Christian point of view, but with the discerning insight that "the main characteristic of the present

¹ Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963. pp. 97.

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encounter of the world religions is their encounter with the quasi-religions of our time." (p. 5) In this context the author presents penetrating observations, a dynamic point of view, and a new insight for the task of religion. Thus he expects, as expressed in the preface of the book, "critical thought not only with respect to the relation of Christianity to the world religions but also with respect to its own nature." The following is intended not simply as a review of his work but rather as a response to his hope by a Buddhist who, being critical as well as sympathetic with his approach, has the same concern as the author about this subject and who likewise has the intention especially to promote a dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism from the side of Buddhism.

Tillich's position and his characterization of the present religious situation.

In the first chapter "A View of the Present Situation : Religions, Quasi-Religions, and their Encounter," the author first defines his own position in dealing with the present religious situation as an "observing participant," a position fusing the standpoint of an outside observer and of an inside participant. He then, in the light of his now well known definition of religion, that is, "the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern," describes the main characteristic of the present encounter of the world religions as "their encounter with the quasi-religions of our time." His position as an "observing participant" and his characterization of the present encounter of the world religions are, I think, closely connected with each other in his inner thinking.

It is a necessary and invaluable insight to find the main characteristic of the present encounter of the world religions not merely in the nature of their mutual encounter but in their encounter with the quasi-religions of today. Tillich rightly says, "Even the mutual relations of the religions proper are decisively influenced by the encounter of each of them with secularism and one or more of the quasi-religions which are based upon secularism." I too have pointed out in my paper which appeared in *Japanese Religions* that the problem of the encounter of the world religions should be taken in the context of the issue between religion and irreligion or anti-religion¹. With Tillich I believe that such a broad perspective covering secularism or the so-called irreligious forces is now absolutely necessary to properly understand the present-day encounter of the world religions. What is, however, different between Tillich and myself in this regard is

¹ See *Japanese Religions*, "Buddhism and Christianity as a Problem of Today." Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 13-15.

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that whereas Tillich emphasizes the quasi-religions I emphasize the anti-religious forces as the other part of that encounter of the world religions apart from which their mutual relations can not properly and adequately be understood. My so-called antireligious forces are not always other than Tillich's so-called quasi-religions. In so far as we follow Tillich's definition of religion, some anti-religious forces, because of their religious elements, should be likewise regarded as quasi-religions. My point is, however, that some forms of secularism as an unneglectable factor in a study of the encounter between religions proper should be taken in terms of their anti-religious character rather than in terms of their quasi-religious nature. By the term "anti-religious," I particularly mean any form of quasi-religion which, besides its common character of elevating a preliminary concern to ultimacy, negates, in principle, religion *proper*. The conspicuous examples of quasi-religions today are, in Tillich's view, nationalism (and its Fascist radicalization), socialism (and its Communist radicalization) and liberal humanism. In them nation, social order and humanity, though all finite and transitory, are often, especially in their radical forms, elevated to an ultimate concern. "Quasi," according to Tillich, indicates a genuine similarity, not intended, but based on points of identity, while "pseudo" indicates an intended but deceptive similarity. (p. 5) In giving such a panorama of the present religious situation, Tillich seems to take the encounter of the world religions with the quasi-religions today as an historic- or cultural-religious event and not necessarily as an existential encounter at the risk of his own faith.

This may be a natural consequence of his position as an "observing participant." I believe, however, that in the present religious situation, if any religious person takes the matter existentially enough, he cannot remain an observing participant, but should be or can not help being a self-staking participant, because the most acute and serious character of the encounter of the world religions is to be found in their encounter with the anti-religious forces of our time rather than with the quasi-religions of today. A follower of religion today is now exposed to the attack of the anti-religious forces which, unlike the quasi-religions, consciously deny the *raison d'être* of religion from some philosophical base. Scientism, Marxism, and Nihilism in Nietzsche's sense may be mentioned as conspicuous examples. In the book now under review, scientism as the technological invasion of the traditional cultures and religions, and Marxism in the form of Communism are taken into account. However, in so far as they are considered as quasi-religions with secularism as their base, their religion-negating aspect (negating religion with a philosophical principle) is over-

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looked. Again, in this book there can be found no reference to nihilism which, in my view, is the most radical form of a religion-negating standpoint, the overcoming of which is the *sine qua non* for the establishment of the *raison d'être* of religion today. It is of course important and significant to characterize the present encounter of the world religions as their encounter with the quasi-religions of our time, taking Fascism, Communism and liberal humanism as the conspicuous examples. We should, however, notice that some forms of secularism have taken on the character of anti-religions rather than quasi-religions. Scientism and Marxism are, to my mind, examples of anti-religions, while liberal humanism, though rightly regarded as a quasi-religion, can not necessarily be considered an anti-religious force. When we take such forms of secularism as scientism, Marxism and so forth as quasi-religions, we come to take the encounter of religion proper with these secularisms not necessarily as an existential problem, but rather as a historic-cultural phenomenon. However, when we take these forms of secularism as anti-religious forces (as they are in reality) the encounter of religions proper with them becomes, for us religious persons, an existential problem, a problem upon which one stakes the stand or fall of one's faith. In the former case, the necessary significance of the present encounter between religions, i.e., the encounter in the face of the attack of anti-religious forces, is not understood internally enough. Only in the latter case, i.e., through the awareness of the religions proper being attacked by the contemporary anti-religious forces, can the *total* experience of the holy as such be opened up and thereby the *raison d'être* of religion be demonstrated beyond anti-religious principles. The present situation demands, in my view, that the dialogue between religions proper be carried out with unceasing reference to the anti-religious forces and their religion-negating principles. Thus, we today can not and should not be observing participants but deeply existential self-risking participants.

The Kingdom of God and Nirvana.

In his approach to a dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism, Tillich is much fairer and more perceptive than any other Christian theologian, past or present. He clearly denies that Christianity is the absolute religion, and duly considers Buddhism as a living religion which stands in polar tension to Christianity. The method which he adopts in this regard is a dynamic typology. In the method of dynamic typology the places of both Christianity and Buddhism are determined, as the contrasting poles

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within the whole of man's religious existence or man's experience of the holy. The polar element of Christianity is, in Tillich's view, the social-ethical element or the experience of the holy as it ought to be, while the polar element of Buddhism is the mystical element or the experience of the holy as being. (p. 58) From this position, Tillich develops a dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism by contrasting the *Kingdom of God* and *Nirvana* in terms of their *telos* or controlling symbols. He considers the ontological principles behind these symbols to be *participation* and *identity*, the ethical consequences deriving from these ontological principles to be *agape* and *compassion* and, finally, their resultant attitudes toward history to be on the one hand *revolutionary* and, on the other, *detached*. His approach is penetrating and quite provocative. However, his characterization of Nirvana in terms of identity, compassion, and detachment as Buddhist principles in contrast with the Christian equivalents is not entirely free from a Christian coloration.

As for the formulation of the *telos* of the two religions as the starting point of the discussion, Tillich uses the following *telos*-formulas: "in Christianity the *telos* of *everyone* and everything united in the Kingdom of God; in Buddhism the *telos* of *everything* and everyone fulfilled in the Nirvana." (p. 64) The italics of "*everyone*" which, in the *telos*-formula of Christianity, precedes "*everything*," and "*everything*" which, in the *telos*-formula of Buddhism, precedes "*everyone*" seem to me to imply that in the Christian symbol of the Kingdom of God man is taken as superior to things in their unity, thus the symbol being personal; while in the Buddhist idea of the Nirvana the thing holds priority to man in their fulfillment, thereby the symbol being transpersonal. This supposed implication seems to be supported by his discussion on participation versus identity, *agape* versus compassion and so forth. If I am not wrong in this respect, I should say that Tillich misses the important aspect of the dialectical character of Nirvana.

It is true that, as seen in such well known phrases of Buddhist Scriptures as, "All sentient beings altogether have the Buddha-nature" or "All the trees, herbs and lands attain Buddhahood," Buddhism often emphasizes the fulfillment of *things* without mentioning man. Again, it is true in a sense that Buddhism does not give a special or superior position to man over against other living and non-living things with regard to his nature and salvation; while Christianity, as the Genesis story shows, assigns man the task of ruling over all other creatures and ascribes to him alone the *imago dei* through which he, unlike other creatures, can directly respond to the Words of God. But how is the fulfillment of things understood to take

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place in Buddhism? Does it take place as a sheer objective happening which precedes, or occurs apart from, man's realization? No. The fulfillment of things may take place only when, and at the same moment, the fulfillment of a man who is related with them takes place. Without the fulfillment of man and his realization of it the fulfillment of things is simply out of the question. Therefore, the Nirvana in which everything and everyone are fulfilled is not a *state* objectively observable—Tillich calls Nirvana "the state of transtemporal blessedness" (p. 68)—but is *Enlightenment* as such or the subjective *Realization* in which everything and everyone are respectively realized as they are. In other words, Nirvana is nothing but man's Realization of his ex-istential True Self as the ultimate ground both of his ordinary self and the world opposed to it. Accordingly, Nirvana obtains only through a man's realization, the Realization of No-ego. In this sense, Buddhism, too, ascribes to man a prominence over other beings. Accordingly, Nirvana is not simply transpersonal but also, at once, personal. Then, why does the Buddhist emphasize the fulfillment of *everything*?

In Buddhism, *samsara*, life-death transmigration, as the fundamental problem of man, is understood to be fully eliminated only when it is taken as a problem of more universal nature than that of man's life and death, i.e., when it is taken as the problem of generation and extinction which is common to all living beings, or, more basically, as the problem of being-nonbeing, that is, the problem of transiency which is common to all beings, living or non-living. This means that in Buddhism man's life-death problem, though fundamental to man, is wrestled with and eliminated, not only as the life-death problem on the human dimension, but also as the generation-extinction problem or, in the last analysis, as the being-nonbeing problem on the dimension of ontological nature. Unless the transiency as such which is common to all beings is overcome at the root of man's existence, his problem of life and death cannot be properly solved. This is the reason Buddhism emphasizes the fulfillment of *everything* in Nirvana. However, the being-nonbeing problem, the problem of transiency, though common to all beings, including man, is realized as such and sought to be eliminated only by man, who has a self-consciousness. Thus, Buddhism emphasizes the necessity of practice and enlightenment while one, who may transmigrate through other forms of life, exists as a man.

In short, Buddhist Nirvana is the Realization of man's transpersonal True Self in which, and in which alone, everything and everyone, including himself, are respectively and equally fulfilled as such in their particularity. This involves the following two points: first, in Nirvana everything and

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everyone are equal and return, through man's Realization, to the Oneness as the ontological ground beyond their differentiation ; second, in Nirvana everything and everyone are respectively and distinctively fulfilled, being more clearly distinguished from each other than elsewhere. This dialectical character of Nirvana is possible because Nirvana is not an objectively observable state but is man's Realization of the Ultimate Ground of both subject and object, of both the self and the world. Mahayana Buddhism severely criticizes a oneness of everything without discrimination as a false equality or a false sameness. Sheer equality as the negation of differentiation can not, of course, be called true equality. Again, equality in oneness as the ultimate ground, e.g., *to hen*, God, *esse ipsum*, or whatever it may be named, if it is *substantial*, can never be real equality, because even equality in this sense is still involved with, and thereby is limited by, a differentiation, the differentiation between the substantial oneness and things which are taken as equal in it. Only in Oneness which is *non-substantial* and in which, thereby, everything is thoroughly fulfilled without eliminating its differentiation can real equality take place. This real and dynamic equality is, in Buddhism, usually expressed as "Differentiation as it is is equality; equality as it is is differentiation." This is nothing but the living structure of Nirvana as the Realization of Oneness which is non-substantial, which is the negation of substantial oneness as the negation of differentiation. This dialectical structure of equality can obtain existentially in terms of Nirvana because Nirvana is not a state but is Realization, Realization to, and Realization of, non-substantial Oneness.

This leads us to another emphasis of Mahayana Buddhism concerning Nirvana. Throughout its long history, Mahayana Buddhism has always emphasized "Do not abide in Nirvana" as well as "Do not abide in samsara." If one abides in so-called Nirvana by transcending samsara, it must be said that one is not yet free from attachment, attachment to Nirvana, being confined by the discrimination between Nirvana and samsara, and that one is still selfishly concerned with his own salvation, forgetting the suffering of others in samsara. On the basis of the idea of Bodhisattva, Mahayana Buddhism thus criticizes and rejects Nirvana as the transcendence of samsara and teaches the true Nirvana to be the returning to samsara by negating or transcending "Nirvana as the transcendence of samsara." Therefore, Nirvana in the Mahayana sense, while transcending samara, is nothing but the realization of samsara really as samsara, no more, no less, through the complete returning to samsara itself. This is why, in Mahayana Buddhism, it is often said of the true Nirvana that, "Samsara-as-it-is is Nirvana." This paradoxical statement is again based on the dialectical character of the

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true Nirvana which is, logically speaking, the negation of negation (that is, absolute affirmation) or the transcendence of transcendence (that is, absolute immanence). True Nirvana is, according to Mahayana Buddhism, the real source of both *prajñā* (Wisdom) and *karuṇā* (Mercy), because it is entirely free from discrimination, thereby making the differentiation of everything clear, and because it is unselfishly concerned with the salvation of all others in samsara through one's own returning to samsara.

I am afraid that I have spent too much time in expounding the Buddhist idea of Nirvana. It is, however, basically necessary to clarify the meaning of Nirvana in order to review Tillich's "Christian-Buddhist Conversation" and to promote, in the right direction, a dialogue between the two religions. In Mahayana Buddhism, criticism against the oneness of everything beyond differentiation as a false equality and the rejection of Nirvana as the transcendence of samsara are key points by which Mahayana Buddhism distinguishes itself from Theravada Buddhism. These points have, however, often been overlooked by western scholars. In the light of the meaning of Nirvana as briefly elucidated above, the reader may come to see that Tillich's discussions on Nirvana, identity, compassion, and detachment in Buddhism do not necessarily represent their real meanings, and thus do not strike the right chord of "a Christian-Buddhist conversation," although his undertaking of a "conversation" should be highly appreciated.

Personal and transpersonal, participation and identity.

Because of the limitation of space, I must confine myself to taking up only the following several points of his "Christian-Buddhist Conversation." (1) Referring to Kingdom of God and Nirvana, Tillich says, "The Ultimate in Christianity is symbolized in personal categories, the Ultimate in Buddhism in transpersonal categories, for example, 'absolute non-being'." (p. 65f.) This is a view based on the Christian category of the 'personal' or 'personality.' Nirvana or absolute non-being as the Ultimate in Buddhism is certainly not personal but transpersonal. However, it is transpersonal not in the sense of "non-personal" as the counter concept of "personal" but in the sense that, being beyond the distinction between man and nature, the personal and the non-personal, it is able to let both the personal and the non-personal fulfill their respective natures. Even the *esse ipsum*, being itself, of the classical Christian doctrine of God, though transpersonal, is not so in the same sense as the Buddhist Nirvana. God as being itself is beyond the contrast of essential and existential being, of finitude and in-

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finitude,¹ and, in a sense, of being and non-being. God as being itself, however, unlike Nirvana as absolute *Mu* (the English equivalents, non-being or nothingness, do not sufficiently convey the original meaning whose logical structure is "absolute negation, i.e., the negation of negation, is absolute affirmation") does not thoroughly transcend the contrast of being to the extent that by its transcendence both being and non-being are totally made to work through total acceptance. It does not really reach the dialectical point of the double characteristic described as creative and abysmal,² in the relation of all beings to the problem of being and non-being. *Esse ipsum* as the transpersonal is not the transpersonal which makes nature (the non-personal) as well as man (the personal) equally fulfill their respective natures through the realization of absolute *Mu*.

In this connection, finally, let me raise a question. When the *Ultimate*, being beyond the contrast of essential and existential being, of finitude and infinity, and of being and non-being, is understood not as the Absolute *Mu* (Nothingness) but *esse ipsum* or being itself, is not the *Ultimate* still somewhat objectified? Is not the *Ultimate* founded on an unconsciously posited, hidden, last presupposition? If so, is it not that the *Ultimate* in that sense is not the true *Ultimate*?

(2) As the ontological principles lying behind the symbols of the Kingdom of God and Nirvana, Tillich takes up "participation" and "identity." He says, "One participates, as an individual being, in the Kingdom of God. One is identical with everything that is in Nirvana." (p. 68) For Tillich individualization and participation are interdependent in a polar tension. "No individual exists without participation, and no personal being exists without communal being."³ In the Kingdom of God both individualization and participation reach their ultimate form in the polarity. This is the basis of Biblical personalism and Christian ethics.

However, is not the real polar element of individualization not participation but identity? Participation, however dialectical its character may be, can not be essentially relieved of its "partial" or "relative" nature. It is indeed true that without an encounter with and participation in another individual, no individual exists and realizes itself as an individual. Individualization through participation, however, can not be complete individualization because of the "partial" or "relative" nature of *participation*, although such a fundamentally relational character of the person as com-

¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I. (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 236, 237.

² *Ibid.*, p. 237.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

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munion can well be established by individualization through participation. In Christianity, according to Tillich, "God is the principle of participation as well as the principle of individualization."¹ Participation as the polar principle of individualization is necessary in Christianity because God is substantial "being-itself," and not non-substantial "absolute *Mu*" (non-being or nothingness). However, cannot the principle of individualization be completely and thoroughly fulfilled not through the principle of participation as "being-itself" but through the principle of identity as "absolute *Mu*"—Nirvana? Identity as an ontological principle of absolute *Mu* is neither identity as the sheer negation of individuality nor identity in oneness as the ultimate, *substantial*, ground such as God, *esse ipsum, substantia* (Spinoza) or Indifference (Schelling)—just as equality in Nirvana is neither equality as the mere negation of differentiation nor equality in oneness as the ultimate, *substantial*, ground. Identity as an ontological principle of Nirvana is, accordingly, not identity with oneness which is substantial, but, identity with absolute Nothingness. Thus, identity in this sense, unlike identity with substantial oneness in which, because of the elimination of differentiation, individualization cannot completely be fulfilled, involves in itself total differentiation, and this through individualization. This may be well understood if the reader recalls that Nirvana is, as discussed before, not an objectively observable state but one's Realization in which everything and everyone, including oneself, are respectively and equally realized as they are. In Nirvana identity itself is individualization.

From this viewpoint, the Christian answer given to a Buddhist priest, "Only if each person has a substance of his own is community possible, for community presupposes separation. You, Buddhist friends, have identity, but not community" (p. 75) compels me to raise the following questions: Are not both community and separation in Christian understanding incomplete in so far as the self as well as God are understood as substantial? Is not the dialectical nature of the Christian understanding of community and separation really not dialectical, thus not reaching the core of ultimate reality? Buddhist communion takes place as the communion of the "Realizer of Nirvana" with everything and everyone in the topos of the absolute *Mu* in which everything and everyone are *respectively absolute*, being just as they are, and thus *absolutely relative*.

(3) Let me, in this connection, refer to the Buddhist rock garden which Tillich speaks of as "a quite conspicuous expression of the principle of identity" but, unfortunately, with some misunderstanding. He describes a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

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statement he heard concerning the rock garden as follows: "These expressively arranged rocks are both here and, at the same time, everywhere in the universe in a kind of mystical omnipresence, and their particular existence here and now is not significant." (p. 70) Buddhists more correctly would say that "these expressively arranged rocks are both here and, at the same time, everywhere in the universe" not in a kind of mystical omnipresence but in Śūnyatā (Emptiness) which is another expression of Nirvana. The empty garden covered by white sand expresses Śūnyatā, identity with absolute *Mu*. True Śūnyatā, however, just like true Nirvana, is by no means sheer emptiness, i. e., emptiness as the privation or negation of things which are. True Śūnyatā, being the negation of sheer emptiness as well as sheer fullness, is an active and creative Emptiness which, just because of being itself empty, lets everything and everyone be and work respectively in their particularity. It may be helpful here to mention that Śūnyatā, just like Nirvana, is not a state but is Realization. The several rocks with different shapes and characters which are placed here and there on the white sand are nothing but the self-expression of the true Śūnyatā which lets everything stand and work. Each rock is not simply something with a particular form but, *equally* and *respectively*, the self-expression, through the taking form, of the true Śūnyatā, that is, the True Self which is beyond every form. It can properly be said that "these expressively arranged rocks are both here and, at the same time, everywhere in the universe" because they are just here and now in the empty garden both as they are and, at the same time, as the self-expression of true Śūnyatā which is beyond time and space. If "their particular existence here and now is not significant," the white sand garden would express a dead emptiness, which Mahayana Buddhism, especially Zen, severely rejects as a false equality or an annihilatory nothingness. The very existence of these rocks in the empty garden, equally and respectively, shows the real profoundness, the creative profoundness of True Self which embraces, as the Realization of the absolute *Mu*, everything and everyone in their identity and individualization.

In short, the Buddhist rock garden is not a product of nature mysticism, to say nothing of theistic mysticism, but the product of the creative expression of the realization of Śūnyatā as one's True Self. A visitor may be strongly impressed by it because he, in looking at it, is drawn into that Śūnyatā which is expressed in, and as, a rock garden, which Śūnyatā, even though not yet consciously realized by the visitor, is nevertheless the root-source of his existence, i. e., his True Self.

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Agape and compassion, and others.

(4) In his "Christian-Buddhist Conversation," Tillich, along the basic line of his understanding as mentioned before, further discusses the matter of *agape* and *compassion*, one as the Christian the other as the Buddhist ethical principle of man's relation to man and to society, and the matter of the *revolutionary* nature of Christianity and the *detached* character of Buddhism in their attitudes toward history. It may be, I now hope, understood without a detailed discussion that his understanding of Buddhist compassion and the Buddhist "detached" attitude toward history does not quite hit the mark. In this regard, let me raise several questions with short comments.

Is the will to transform the individual as well as the social structure absolutely necessary in a religion's attitude to man, to society and to history? Is the prophetic quest for justice an indispensable element in religious activity as regards the human situation? Is the only justifiable way for a religion to react to the human, social and historic reality, necessarily to be based on the will to transform with a revolutionary force? Does not, and did not, the very will to transform or the very prophetic quest for justice, even though being based on *agape*, cause, after all, against its original intention, a new and incessant struggle in human history and fall itself into a "false endlessness" (in Japanese, *aku mugen*: in German, *schlechte Unendlichkeit*)? Is there not an optical illusion in Christian eschatology?¹ Does not the Christian will to transform, however much it may spring from *agape*, in the last analysis approach and try to transform the other one or the social and historic structure, not from within but somewhat from without, in so far as *agape* is, in its nature, the movement from the higher to the lower? And thereby does it not produce inevitably a new conflict as well as an improvement?

"Compassion is," Tillich says, "a state in which he who does not suffer under his own conditions may suffer by identification with another who suffers. He neither accepts the other one in terms of 'in spite of,' nor does he try to transform him, but he suffers his suffering through identification." (p. 71) In contrast with this understanding, in Buddhist compassion or *mahākaruṇā* (Great Mercy), he who, (to the extent that he becomes identical with the absolute *Mu* through the death of his ego), "does not suffer" *just because of* his own profound suffering, suffers with another who suffers *through the fundamental identification not simply with the other but with*

¹ See Keiji Nishitani, *Shūkyō to wa Nanika* ("What is Religion?") (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1961), pp. 234, 247, 255.

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the absolute Mu or Nirvana which the other must also, in his original nature, return to and realize. He does not, in any sense, accept the other in so far as the other, in his egoistic attachment, does not yet return to and realize the absolute *Mu*. At the same time, however, on the basis of the realization of the absolute *Mu* as the principle of "differentiation as it is equality" he totally accepts the other *just because* the other, in his egoistic attachment, does not yet return to and realize the absolute *Mu*. In Buddhist compassion one accepts the other not "in spite of" but "just because of" his selfishness, completely deepening and transcending the in-spite-of position through one's realization of the absolute *Mu* in which everyone, including oneself, as well as everything are equally and respectively made to work from the very ground of their existence.

It may well be said that the *in-spite-of* character of the Christian faith by means of prophetic criticism and the "will to transform" based upon divine justice, functions as a militant element (as expressed in the terms of "church militant" and "church triumphant") in the realm of human society and history, whereas the *just-because-of* nature of Buddhist realization, by dissolving and regenerating personal and collective *karma*, functions as a stabilizing element running beneath all social and historical levels. The in-spite-of character of the Christian faith is apt, I am afraid, to increase as well as decrease tension among people, to cause a new dissension as well as a great unity, thus falling into a false endlessness (*schlechte Unendlichkeit*). On the other hand, there is always the risk, in the just-because-of nature of Buddhist realization which accepts everything indiscriminately, even social and historic evil, that one's attitude towards the world will be, because of a false sameness, indifferent.

As Tillich points out, it is notable that "prophetic" religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and especially Islam, for the most part resisted and are resisting the invasion of Communism in the West while such Eastern "mystical" religions as Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism allow the invasion of Communism in a great part of the Orient without displaying sufficient resistance to it. The encounter of religion with Communism is unquestionably an important problem of today. The Communist infiltration of China and other parts of the East is no doubt partly the fault of the distorted form of Oriental religions, especially Buddhism with its just-because-of nature.

As a more fundamental religious question, however, I believe it must be asked if the only legitimate way for a religion to react to secularism is for it to directly resist attacks and challenges on the same level that secularism works. Simply because they lack the form of resistance taken by Christianity should Buddhism and other Eastern religions be immediately judged

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as totally powerless to transform the sociological and psychological structure of man in any way? What, after all, should religion's attitude be toward secularism as such? This question leads us to a final point in the review of Tillich's "Christian Buddhist Conversation," that is, the understanding of the nature of the "Holy" in these two religions. This problem is also closely connected with the last chapter of the book now under review, "Christianity Judging Itself in the Light of Its Encounter with the World Religions," especially its essential point: Christian criteria of judging Christianity and religion in general. Space, however, does not allow me to go into that at this time, and the present review article must end here.