

BUDDHISM AND MORAL WORLD-ORDER*

WE, the various peoples, have fostered among ourselves not only material but also cultural exchange to a fairly large extent, yet we still lack inner understanding and confidence in each other as men. The difference of nationality and creed as well as of rank and class within a nation still hinders common thinking and feeling. The affirmation and accentuation of individuality and idiosyncrasies should not be permitted to obscure the consciousness of our common origin. Unfortunately, nearly every nation fears others, and every creed distrusts the others. It is tragic to see how this fear of one nation for another renders both unhappy. Neither of them is able to recognise that their mutual anxiety is based on one and the same reason. In like manner, he who has reached something high and beautiful through the unfoldment of his personality strives more to obtain rulership and power over others than to develop that which he has attained. He forgets that in this way he cheats himself out of that which he has already won, and at the same time hinders the voluntary participation of others. The mistaking of culture itself for its bearers is the cause of the tragedy of the modern civilised world. He who would serve the higher and more beautiful must for its sake be modest. In Buddhism it is a difficult yet important virtue to rejoice at the property of another as at your own without envy, as well as to divide your own with others without a thought of ownership. There are naturally differences in capabilities and progress among individuals. But if one turns his glance to such a relative difference, he loses his capacity for the Highest. The consciousness of one's own nothingness

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before the Highest is ever lacking among men. It is often believed that one may identify oneself with the Highest, that one may take possession of it for oneself. But it is rather the Absolute which is able to influence man and to make itself known to him. One often divides the one God by appropriating him for oneself and one's own affairs. General reflection and sympathy can spring from only a selfless negative common consciousness of oneself before the Highest. The "Cosmic Consciousness" must also be rooted in this negative consciousness. It is the great task of our growing Union to contribute to the development of this consciousness.

At the instance of our esteemed Prof. Otto, I decided to speak on this theme. I confine myself to a brief exposition of the Buddhist view of the problem on the basis of the Canonical Writings. I hope that you will understand the basic view from which we Japanese Buddhists build and are to build still further the idea of world-order, and that I may in this manner contribute my quota to the success of the future work of the Association.

I shall explain then: (1) How Buddhism conceives this world and the reason of its existence, and how it judges the world; (2) Which world it recognises as the ideal, the Real World, and by what conduct it believes it possible to reach this world; (3) What attitude we should assume with regard to the two worlds.

First: The world from which Buddhism starts is naturally that in which we daily live, wishing, feeling, suffering. The well-known doctrine of the Twelve Causal Links of Gautama Buddha proclaims his insight into the origin and continued existence of this world. This causal chain of twelve links is traceable in its essentials to three chief motives, namely: Nescience, wrongdoing, and suffering. Whenever we do evil in consequence of our original ignorance, misery and sorrow follow us as inevitable retribution. Ensnared by misery and sorrow, nescience becomes ever deeper and more involved. In this endless circle we are ever drawn deeper into the maelström.

Corresponding to this process of our life, the unhappy world develops before us. It is true that a common karma runs through these giddy paths, but it is modified in divers ways by various conditions of the individual. Then the world which we perceive differs as the individual karma differs. Blinded by this individual karma, one cannot recognise at all that which we have in common. In reality, this earthly world consists of "worlds of different births." Every one lives in a parcelled-off world of his own, and suffers and rejoices quite differently from his fellow-beings. There is "no common accord either in fortune or misfortune." Either some one envies another, or he arraigns him. Who is then to blame for this unhappy fate? "No one but thyself; thou who art the author of thine own world." And if some one who performs now only good and righteous deeds should be maltreated by others, even then he is not to consider the others really wrong or evil. For, according to the Buddhistic point of view, the moral law of causation is absolute and without exception, and he who finds others arrayed against him should seek definite causes therefor in his own past. The idea that one can undergo evil without housing a reason for it within himself is rejected in Buddhism as a pagan delusion which denies the moral law of causation. Every man has himself to blame if evil befalls him. According to the Buddhist view, one can never judge another his antagonist or enemy, or betrayer and feel himself more upright than the other. It is a noteworthy fact that Gautama Buddha called Devadatta (who had tried by several plans to murder him) his good teacher and believed that he would at some time in the future become Buddha, and that they would work together for the enlightenment and salvation of the world. Yes, it should be quite immaterial to us whether others treat us well or ill. "For the venomous serpent transforms the purest water into poison by drinking; the cow, on the other hand, converts even the impure water which she drinks into nourishing milk." This recognition of absolute individual responsibility is the

fundamental principle of Buddhism, through which the Buddhistic conversion is effected.

This doctrine is sometimes confounded with solipsism, but it is in reality its opposite, and rests on the Buddha's experience of omni-unity. Through the recognition of individual responsibility, one can see within himself all that he formerly saw outside, and can recognise the common karma. When one has once recognised the common karma, he can no longer accuse others and set himself in opposition to them. According to Buddhism, the relation between Good and Evil is not an outer opposition which gives rise to a struggle between the two. He who posits the Good as the polar opposite of Evil is still in error, and is not yet free from egoism. True Good should comprehend Evil within itself. The allegory of the relation between light and darkness, water and ice is ubiquitous in Buddhist scriptures. For this reason, Buddhism teaches first instead of the struggle for Good the calm endurance of Evil. An unerring endurance of Evil is only possible, however, where something positive exists. And he who possesses this is thereby liberated from Evil. What is this positive? Are we to create it ourselves?

In order to answer this question, I go naturally to the second point, i.e., to the positive idea of the Real World of Buddhism. The Buddhist Real World is the so-called Jōdo, the "World of Purity." It was constituted by the Buddha in eternity. Man can in no manner create this world, not even with the aid of the Buddha. The Bodhisattva who has clearly grasped the previously mentioned first element of Buddhist conversion finds through the wisdom of omni-unity this Real World everywhere before him.

Then: What is the nature of this Real World? I should like to give you a descriptive sketch of it according to the *Amitayussutropadesa* (short commentary on the *Amitayus-sutra*) by Vasubandhu (third century). It consists in the absolutely pure virtue of Amida Buddha which is fundamentally different

from human virtue. His Enlightenment and Teaching which cannot be locked up rule and penetrate all, so that one is instructed also by trees and grasses, wind and water. Their denizens are "of one birth from the Wisdom of the Buddha." "They nourish themselves on thoughtfulness (*Dhyāna*), free from suffering and passion." This world receives "all beings without distinction of their capabilities and nature, as all streams empty into one sea." (For further details, see *Amitayus-sutra*, Volume II). How can one attain this world then? And what does one do in this world? This question leads me to the third point, namely, our position with regard to the two worlds.

So when the mature Bodhisattva once sees this Real World before him, he directs all his efforts to "being born in this blissful Land with all his fellow-beings, inasmuch as he gives himself and his fellow-beings without reserve to the Buddha of Infinite Light." In this pure devotion his wish for the Land of Bliss becomes wholly free from self-interest. He wants it only for purity's sake. His deed has no longer anything to do with the erring world directly. The earthly world, however much it may be improved, remains afterwards as before earthly. And even the wish to improve this world is at bottom somehow tainted with self-interest. As long as one cannot entirely renounce the earthly world as a field of endeavour, just so long is one bound to it. This striving for the amelioration of the world often gives rise to hatred and contention. Man has a tendency to use this idea as a protection and a weapon for himself rather than to follow it selflessly. According to my point of view, there can be no way to realise the Real World unless all forsake the erring world to be born in the World of Reality. So, "when the Bodhisattva recognises the truth, he understands true sacrifice and the passing to that world. Through this knowledge he perceives clearly the condition of the suffering beings in the three impure worlds, and in consequence of the perception of their false condition, he is filled

with genuine compassion and pity." Now he cannot enter the Real World unless he saves the suffering beings in the erring world. Until he has made all beings identical with himself, he cannot cross over. Therefore he enters the erring world unconditionally in order that he may lead it with him into the Real World. But if you long for the Pure Land for the sake of mere happiness, you cannot follow him. He must show them the pure will from the Supreme Bodhi (discernment or insight into Truth). For this purpose, he supplements his charity with immovable resolve, and enters the three erring worlds. Now what are his deeds? No contention, no opposition, no abuse, no reproach, for he knows at the beginning that the others are a part of himself, and at the same time that such deeds tarnish the wish for the real Good,—but he practises only the four comprehensive deeds, namely: Unselfish sharing with others of one's own material and intellectual treasures; secondly, meekness which is free from adulation as it is from disdain; thirdly, beneficent deeds which he will perform in various ways in order that his fellow-beings may have leisure to contemplate the Good; and, fourthly, to become like men in order that he may become intimate with them. With these deeds he strives to imbue them with pure endeavour for the Real World. When he has perfected these deeds, all beings of the impure worlds will be born in the Real World as a matter of course. If they do not grasp true will, he feels it as his own fault. So he remains always in this troubled world in order to perform the four deeds mentioned above. But these deeds are only the consequence and development of of the one, pure, self-sacrificing, praising deed of the Real World, as Vasubandhu and Donran have established it. According to Shinran, our inner reformer, it should be "purposeless purpose."

To sum up as clearly as possible, in Buddhism there is no moral world-order attained by man, but only through the Eternal Buddha. Man is to enter, and can enter only the

world constituted by the Buddha. We must have a universally valid idea clearly before us as an inexhaustible source from which we cause all our deeds and labours to proceed. But wherever the most important is lacking, there all is lacking. We can only realise that with which our soul is already filled. We should first live in the Real World and participate in its bliss. All deeds should flow spontaneously from this bliss. Nearly all are suffering from spiritual aridity these days. They long for the fruit-bringing spiritual rain. I close my talk with the resigned words of Shinran: "I am constrained, unfortunately, to differentiate the good deed of the way of the Pure World, that is, of the man who feels himself to be nothing, from the good deed of the saints, that is, of those who consider themselves towering above their fellows. The latter deed is performed when one has compassion for others of his own will, and saves them. But to my great regret, I am hardly capable of doing this. The good deed of the former, on the other hand, consists in saving one's fellow-beings fundamentally through the absolute Excellence of the Buddha by attaining Buddhahood through exclusive devotion to the Eternal Buddha. However great may be the kindness and love which a man such as I may feel toward his fellow-beings, yet it does not extend as far as it should, and will eventually fail to reach the goal. So I believe that absolute devotion to the Buddha is the only lasting salvation for others as for me."

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