

## THE VOID

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Buddhism was an offshoot of the Hindu branch of the Indo-European tradition. The Buddha was a prince whose father protected from seeing the suffering of the world. When riding in a carriage, the young Siddhartha accidentally saw examples of senility, sickness and death, and that changed his life. He left his palace and began wandering with the Ascetics of the forest, attempting to understand the reason for suffering in the world. So we can see that the young Buddha went from one extreme to the other -- from ignorance of suffering in the world to self-imposed suffering in the pursuit of knowledge in the Hindu tradition. In that tradition, the path of knowledge was through identification of the self with the cosmic self -- with the Being or *Sat* that was supposed to be the basis of everything within the Indo-European tradition. The Buddha went from teacher to teacher attempting to obtain, through asceticisms, deep knowledge of the nature of existence. From one teacher he learned to reach the state of “nothing whatsoever,” and then from another he learned to reach another state of “neither notions nor

non-notions.” But both of these states, he realized, were still conditioned. He then went on to practice extreme asceticism until one day he realized that this was not taking him toward the goal of the release from suffering. Thus, he began eating, left his followers and sought out the Bodhi tree. Under the Bodhi tree he sat and resolved not to move until he reached supreme enlightenment. Mara, or illusory hinderence rose up to engulf him, but he stood firm in his attention until the illusory hinderences subsided, and he reached enlightenment through the non-experience of non-conceptual emptiness which is itself empty. The Buddha at that point realized that everything was essenceless and that Sat or Being was an illusion. He produced in himself the antidote to that illusion which was emptiness. Emptiness is the cure for the disease of the Indo-European worldview based on Being. It is the homeopathic remedy that in gross form produces the same symptoms as illusion, but in subtle forms causes the cessation of illusion, production. When one appropriates the still point of the churning world within oneself and centers oneself on that empty center of the cyclone of illusion production and self-cancellation, then one becomes free of the chains of desire that is the root of all illusions. The Buddha sat beside the Tree of the world and found there the empty center of the world and placed himself within that still center, realizing that he himself was empty also. At that moment he became enlightened

and realized that the whole world was based on dependent origination where everything arose together with everything dependent on everything else, and that was what allowed the pivot of emptiness to be defined. That pivot of emptiness was identical with the whole of dependently arising existence within the world, which defined that pivot. By realizing emptiness at the heart of the world the buddha defined for the first time within the Indo-European worldview the two truths: worldly convention and ultimate meaning. The realization of emptiness is the same as ultimate meaning because meaning pours out of the empty heart of the world into the world. Everything else within the world are merely worldly conventions that are relative in their truth value. Where dependent origination and emptiness are identified, we see that the two truths are always seen as radically distinguished. This is the conceptual structure postulated by Madhyamika. Buddhism allows emptiness to be indicated from within the Indo-European worldview. We need to appropriate that structure ourselves as a means of understanding how the Western branch of the Indo-European worldview can appropriate emptiness and thus realize its own limits as the Hindu branch of the Indo-European worldview did previously.

To this purpose we will use one particular exposition of Madhyamika philosophy given by Gadhin Nagao<sup>1</sup>.

Many other expositions may have been chosen which perhaps might be considered more correct by others. Our intent here is merely to open up the dialog between Buddhism and the Western tradition, and this particular study has the merit of being a very complete exposition that will allow us to introduce the subjects of interest which may be explored further by the reader through other sources on Buddhism. Our point is only to establish the bridge to emptiness. Once established, it opens up a realm of almost infinite exploration of the various and subtle comprehensions of emptiness that were produced in the long history of Buddhism.

However, our point here is somewhat different than just wanting to explain emptiness within the context of Madhyamika Buddhism. Instead, we wish to put forth the proposition that Buddhism is tainted by its emanation from the Indo-European tradition and that emptiness is distorted by that origin. So we will endeavor to differentiate Emptiness, however subtle from the Void as it appears in Chinese philosophy. The Void is the same as Emptiness without the distortion that occurs because of the origins of emptiness in the Indo-European tradition. The argument goes something like this. Emptiness is the non-conceptual non-experiential still center of the vortex of cancellation of the house of Being. But by the very

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1. *The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy* (SUNY 1989)

fact that it is the house of Baal that defines the window through which death (Mot) enters, that window carries with it a taint or distortion that plays itself out in Buddhism even as it moves on to China and Japan which are cultures fundamentally without Being infesting their languages. Now this taint appears in terms of the nihilistic oppositions by which Emptiness is framed in the Buddhist tradition. Those nihilist oppositions are highly refined intellectual conceptual structures by which non-conceptual non-experiential emptiness is indicated. These were perfected to the highest degree by Madhyamika Buddhism which restrained itself from positive explication of emptiness but presented the fundamental departure for Mahayana Buddhism in a thorough going critique of naive Hinayana systems that still believed in substances in one form or another. In Madhyamika Buddhism, the position of the other was taken as the starting point for the display of contradictions that indicated emptiness. The positive aspects of this philosophy were only displayed in the process of cancelling the naive position of the other. These positive aspects revolved around two propositions that allowed emptiness to be indicated in any argument. The first proposition is that emptiness is identical with dependent origination. The second proposition is that ultimate meaning that is realized through emptiness is radically different from worldly convention. The radical

identity of the one hand, and the radical differentiation on the other hand, allowed the Madhyamikian philosophers to indicate emptiness beginning with whatever assertions their opponents offered. This is because everything in the world indicates emptiness, and wherever you start, you can find a way, if you have skillful means, to indicate the ineffable based on any starting point of a thing, being, entity, relation or state of affairs. They showed great skill in these dialectical arguments that were designed to lead their opponents to the realization of emptiness. However, they were operating within a nihilistic landscape, and within that landscape they had to construct a vehicle that had nihilistic attributes in order to approach what was beyond nihilism. Thus, the vehicle by which nihilism was escaped had to become enmeshed in nihilism itself. The fact that it was only a vehicle to be thrown away once enlightenment was achieved did not escape the consequence that the concept of emptiness was distorted by the vehicle through which it was approached.

To begin, let us go back and realize that Truth, Reality, Identity and Metaphor are all parts of the concept of Being. Only Existence, introduced by the Muslim philosophers, escapes the taint of Being. Thus, in Buddhism when it is said that Emptiness IS dependent co-arising, there is a problem. That problem is with the idea of identity. Identity is part of Being. If we use it to

connect emptiness with dependent co-arising, we have introduced Being between the two images of emptiness and thus skewed the vision of emptiness we have obtained. Now our understanding of this “identity” is that dependent co-arising is the way the world manifests around the center of the vortex of cancellation that is its dual which is empty. Thus, for us the IS indicates duality, not identity in the sense of tautology or metaphor. The whole world is full of myriad beings that all dependently co-arise. That is what manifestation is. There is nothing behind that dependent co-arising as a substrata of Being from which beings emanate as the Hindu’s believed there was. There was no cause behind the arising, but that arising is a manifestation of pure spontaneity in which everything is interdependent as it manifests only dependent on everything else manifesting at the same time. That arising together and mutual dependence of everything on everything else was only possible because no one thing had an essence of its own beyond its difference from everything else arising simultaneously. This theory makes what manifests as bracketed phenomenologically identical with illusions. The whole world is rendered illusory by this conceit, and that illusory quality of all things allows them to continuously indicate emptiness. Emptiness is the stillness in the center of the vortex of overwhelming illusion in which all the phenomena once reduced to the same level are seen as

groundless and ultimately empty. Emptiness is the dual of everything that dependently co-arises. Throughout that duality their sameness is realized. But if we say that they are identical, then we suddenly encounter the problem that in order to state the identity of emptiness and dependent co-arising of illusory things, that we need Being. This is a major problem with Buddhist ontology that was never completely resolved.

But while Madhyamika attempts to thematize dependent co-arisen being, it remains primarily a philosophy of emptiness and non-being. As a philosophy of emptiness, its salient features are refutation and negation. The reasoning of Nagarjuna in his *Stanzas on the Middle* is consistently aimed at refutation. That which is negated and declared to be empty is selfhood, that is, *svabhava*, “own-being.” In the invocational verse at the beginning of *The Stanzas on the Middle*, the eight negations of “no-arising, no passing away[; no eternal, no terminable; no one, no many;] no going forth, no coming back, [~~etc.~~]” are articulated because it is in denying essence to things and in affirming their non-being that true reality becomes manifest. *The Stanzas on the Middle* are permeated with “a hundred negations and a thousand denials,” and negation is indeed the principal feature of Madhyamika.<sup>2</sup>



The eight negations allow us to define the still point around which dependent co-arising occurs. Dependent co-arising phenomena obviously exhibit all the aspects that the eight negations deny. By denying these aspects, our gaze is forced to look toward the still point of emptiness that is indicated by them. Through the duality, we recognize that the duals are the Same, *not* identical. Identity forces on us a radical tautology that turns out to be nihilistic in form. Or it forces on us an unacceptable metaphorical association. Or it says that in truth or in reality these apparently very different things are the same. Notice how the denials above are said to make *true reality* manifest. All of the usage of the four implicit aspects of Being (truth, reality, identity, metaphor) cause Buddhist philosophy to teeter on the edge of falling back into an affirmation of Being in another form or under another name.

Dependent co-arising is, at its core, the overflowing of meanings, tendencies, non-nihilistic distinctions and natural kinds from out of emptiness. These effervescences within the matrix of interpenetration with all their subtlty are the basis of the world which we build up though intersubjective agreement and social construction and which we finally inform with all the attributes of Being. Because each thing is dependent on

everything else that co-arises, there is instead of an attribute of essence to individual things, the opposite attribution of absolute otherness where everything else determines each existent thing. This is really a nihilistic reversal which highlights the still point around which that reversal occurs. You can think of it this way. The still point is the anti-essence of the entire worldview within which myriad things dependently co-arise. It represents the hypothecations of the absolute otherness of everything determining everything else. That absolute otherness is the nihilistic extreme opposite of the postulation of essences for each thing in existence. There is one anti-essence of absolute otherness instead of many essences. This absolute otherness allows emptiness to be seen as radically other than worldly convention. At the same time, the anti-essence of absolute otherness allows dependent co-arising within the world to be discovered to be the Same as emptiness. A pivot is established around which the world turns -- an empty center of the hurricane of manifestation. This radical otherness is a distortion of the Void. It brings the fundamental problem of radical transformation along with it out of the Indo-European worldview to become the central tenant of Buddhism. The achievement of enlightenment, the realization of emptiness as a non-conceptual non-experiential introduction to non-duality, is seen as a revolutionary discontinuous transformation. Thus all the

discontinuities that are produced by the Indo-European tradition due to the operations of the fragments of Being are rolled up into one major discontinuity within the experience of the seeker of enlightenment through the Buddhist path. This discontinuity between the enlightened and the mundane worlds is a trace of the discontinuities within the Indo-European tradition which appear due to the nihilistic overestrangement of opposites from each other. Most of the history of Buddhism is spent dealing with this discontinuity which stems from the nihilistic way the concepts of Buddhist philosophy are related based on the heritage from the Indo-European tradition based on Being. In Chinese philosophy, the concept of Void does not suffer from this radical estrangement and alienation of emptiness from the conventional world. So we postulate that the concept of the Void as postulated by Chinese philosophy is more pure and untainted by Indo-European antecedents. Thus, we posit a spectrum of indications of emptiness. It stretches from the crudest type of emptiness which is merely denial of essence and clinging to non-being. As such, it still participates in the Greimas square of Being, Non-Being, Appearances and Nothingness. In fact, we can see naive emptiness as the identification of the contradictories of Non-Being and Appearances. Appearances are the dependently co-arising, and by denying their essences, naive emptiness postulates Non-

Being as fundamental instead of Being. As such, it is still participating in the Parmedian structure of the House of Being by taking the path that is denied by the Goddess without a name. We note that Goddess told Parmenides the way the Gods saw existence as a frozen spacetime block that they can enter at will. Parmenides attempts to get men to look at existence in the way that the gods look at it. Men naturally see things as process. Thus, by adopting static frozen Being, men are trying to take the viewpoint of the gods and thus become alienated from their own natural vision of the world as embedded in flowing time. The men die and the gods are immortal. Thus, for the gods there is the frozen block of spacetime, but for men what is frozen is dead. For the men the world is experienced in terms of process, but for the gods time is essentially nothingness -- the radically other through which the frozen static block of spacetime becomes itself. Thus, we see that the viewpoints on the Greimas square of Being are the viewpoints of the mortals and immortals. The distinction between heaven and earth is, in some sense, the distinction between four dimensional spacetime and the flow of time in space as experienced by humans. Thus, the door of Parmenides that stands within the heavens is the representation of the fourfold of heaven, earth, immortals and mortals. The naive Buddhists merely switch from one axis of contradiction to the other. They take the path of non-being by

identifying non-being with appearances. This causes the other axis of contradiction which is the fourfold to collapse. In this way, they set up an opposition between Being and Nothingness interpreted as nihilism and claim to take the middle path between these two extremes within the house of Being. Madhyamikan Buddhism is more thorough in its denials and more sophisticated in its conceptualization so that it actually can locate minimal emptiness beyond all worldly convention which is indicated by the collapse and cancellation of the entire house of Being. But as we move through more and more sophisticated concepts of emptiness within Buddhism, we note that they never give up their nihilistic extreme formulations, and thus are always tainted by their origins in the Indo-European worldview, even when they have migrated to China. However, the original concept of the Void as enunciated in the Te Tao Ching and other basic Taoist writings is not tainted by this extremity of formulation. We see this in the continual identification of contradictories in Buddhist intellectual formulations. This is a means of driving thought toward supra-rational realization of non-duality. It is the display of skillful means. But what in the end we realize is that the Void does not need such skillful means for its indication outside the Indo-European tradition. The very display of highly sophisticated intellectual acrobatics is an Indo-European characteristic -- a display of yang splendor

which is opposite the dark and deep closed yin of ignorance in the Indo-European tradition. Thus, we want to transition up the spectrum of indications of emptiness toward the least distorted apprehensions of the Void searching for the original source that has no taint of nihilistic formulation.

The foundational standpoint of Madhyamika is that dependent co-arising is identical with emptiness, that this identity is the middle path of suchness. Here lie the origins of awakening, deliverance, and salvation. In China, the term chi (character), is used to express the identity of dependent co-arising and emptiness as suchness. In general, the word chi means unity of absolute contradictory things, a synthesis of contradictory notions, like one and many, self and other. Life and death are brought together in such an identity. In Buddhism, one instant (ksana) doesn't only simply denote the smallest unit of time, but is also used to signify this synthetic identity of life and death. All phenomenal beings are "destroyed from instant to instant."

If this identity is understood as an idealistic or a teleological, that is, a materialistic synthesis, the Madhyamika meaning of identity is lost. There is a synthesis of opposites in both Hegel's idealism and Marx's teleological materialism, where the

logic of world history is depicted in terms of a dialectical synthesis. But these syntheses take no note of emptiness. No matter how profound the processes involved, they are unable to escape birth-death cycle and to transcend the dependently co-arising world. There is no truly absolute contradiction in them and no truly absolute synthesis of opposites.

The term chi implies a transcending of the realm of world history and denotes unity in a transhistorical realm. The Madhyamika notion of identity does not occur within the birth-death cycle of dependent co-arising but as a co-arising of emptiness. In other words, the very framework of such dependent co-arising must be eradicated. This identity is between reason and what is beyond reason; it transcends any reasoning that might encompass both identity and opposition. But is such an identity really possible? To be sure, it is inconceivable within the limits of history or logic in that it transcends the form of logic and cannot be reached by reasoning. This is why is [sic, it] has been thought to be attainable only through direct insight in quiet meditation. The Diamond-Cutter Scripture clearly teaches that the realization of the identity of dependent co-arising and emptiness is a matter of direct insight when it

says that “this understanding arises when one has no abiding point.”

But if we regard such insight only as something that lies beyond reasoning and is attained through direct insight, it no longer takes place in the world as a worldly cultural reality involving history, society, and reason. It must be kept within the realm of logical reasoning. If it were sufficient to take such insight into the identity of dependent co-arising and emptiness as an entirely unmediated matter of direct insight, one could scarcely recognize any conceptual development in Eastern thought. The Prajnaparamita phrase itself, “there arises this understanding,” could not have occurred. The Madhyamika standpoint of the identity of emptiness and dependent co-arising is located in a reflection within the realm of reason of what lies beyond reason. If this were not the case, there would be no reason for later Madhyamika thinkers to have exerted such effort to resurrect conventional discourse. But in fact it was through their efforts that Madhyamika was recognized as a logical procedure, a point we will return to later.<sup>3</sup>

This quote makes clear that “identity” of emptiness and dependent co-arising is not the identity that operates

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3. Gadjin Nagao *The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy*; page 17-18



within the realm of Being. We are given an indication of the supra-rational. That indication becomes ever more sophisticated within the Mahayana tradition. But however sophisticated it becomes, what is really at stake is no different from what the Chinese previously indicated by the Void -- all the indications are toward non-duality. Chinese formulations generally tend to be less nihilistically constructed and also less sophisticated. Buddhist indications of emptiness are well hewn and finely crafted, whereas Chinese original indications are crude to rough hewn in their formulations.

What we want to get back to is a view of existence and Void only. No intermediate realm of Being intrudes itself between these two projected as a fantasy by ideation. Things flow into existence in their subtle forms as meanings, tendencies, non-nihilistic distinctions, and kinds from the Void. We need emptiness as a concept to locate the Void if it has first been obscured by the veil of Being. But if there is no veil of Being, then we do not need sophisticated formulations of emptiness to indicate the Void to us. These sophisticated constructs are more likely than not to throw us off the scent. The nihilistic extreme conceptual constructs that indicate the non-conceptual non-experiential supra-rational merely get in our way of apprehending the rough hewn Void directly as non-duality. We follow Lo Ch'in-shun in his book K'un-

chih chi (Knowledge Painfully Acquired)<sup>4</sup> in his neo-confucianist critique of Buddhism to obtain this point. The point is important because it makes us realize how deep the influence of the Indo-European worldview actually is. Even when we find the exit from the worldview, we are followed by the taint of that heritage in the formulation of that escape route even across cultures as Buddhism translates into the milieu of China from that of India. The effects of worldviews, especially the Indo-European one, is subtle and persistent. So getting out is not as easy as walking through a door; the perfume clings to us in spite of all our efforts. We are more sophisticated than to think we can walk out the front door of our worldview. But even when we dive deep to find the emptiness at its heart, we are followed by the nihilistic conceptual conventions even as we attempt to escape into emptiness. We recognize that all of Buddhist philosophy is a vast nihilistic construct which identifies contradictory opposites in order to force reason to view the non-dualistic supra-rational nature of all things as “suchness” or “thusness.” But soon we realize that all forms of emptiness, no matter how sophisticated, are merely surrogates for the Void which existed outside the Indo-European tradition entirely and can be unearthed untainted in rough hewn indications of Taoism. Thus, we must apprehend the Void and seek to locate it as that from

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4. (NY: Columbia U.P. 1987)

which all existent things arise and into which all existent things vanish. All existent things are completely suffused by the Void. Having located the Void, the apparatus of Emptiness is unnecessary. The yang splendor of the transcendental absolute other is not needed to be contrast with the closed yin of worldly convention. Instead, within the rolling over of opposites themselves, the Void can be apprehended as the cancellation of all opposites within creation.

### Chapter 6

The valley spirit never dies;

We call it the mysterious female.

The gates of the mysterious female --

These we call the roots of Heaven and Earth.

Subtle yet everlasting! It seems to exist.

In being used, it is not exhausted.<sup>5</sup>

The spirit of the valley is the inner wellsprings of the Void. Out of it, as a cornucopia, the myriad things emerge to move through their life-cycles. The Taoists likened it to the giving birth of the woman. They had a simple direct understanding of the Void and did not need endless intellectual subtlety such as that displayed in

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5. Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-Wang-tui Texts.  
Tr. R. G. Hendricks (NY: Ballantine Books 1989) p. 189

Buddhism to locate it. Out of the Void come the opposites, so it is the root or source of all opposites like Heaven and Earth. Things arise from it in subtle form -- as tendencies, kinds, non-nihilistic distinctions and meanings. These subtleties endlessly pour from the Void, and they are only obscured if there is repression and distancing. The Void is what makes everything useful, and by being used it makes life worth living. It is neg-entropic in that usage of the Void never exhausts its endless resources.

We need to keep in mind the Void as we work through Emptiness to attempt to attain and understand it. The subtle and sophisticated formulations of Emptiness are crafted and subtly hewn through their interaction with the Indo-European worldview. What we need to work toward is the rough hewn formulations of the Void employed by the Taoists who did not need intellectual craftiness in order to approach the Void.

Therefore the Sage dwells in nonactive affairs and practices the wordless teaching.

The ten thousand things arise, but he does not begin them;

He acts on their behalf, but he does not make them dependent;

He accomplishes his tasks, but he doesn't dwell on them;

It is only because he does not dwell on them, that they therefore do not leave him.<sup>6</sup>

The Sage stands back and allows the myriad things to arise from the Void without repressing that arising or managing their lives or intervening in their demise. He does not have a sophisticated intellectual apparatus to do this, but merely does it naturally once he has grasped the nature of the Void. Where the Indo-European worldview attempts to manage via Dynamic Clinging, the Sage releases things to be themselves. Buddhism, with its highly developed intellectual apparatus, practices Dynamic Clinging in relation to the Void. It develops a series of schools that all claim to improve on each other. Each one has a more and more subtle understanding of Emptiness. This way of acting toward existence is taken from the Indo-European worldview and refined by Buddhism in order to offer the antidote to the subtle clinging and craving of Being. However, even though Being is no longer the goal, the behavior associated with Dynamic Clinging remains. This manifested in the dialectic of schools and counter schools that though they affirmed each other rather than denied each other as in normal Indo-European philosophy still manifested the

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6. page 190 from Chapter 2

tremendous energy that is produced by the Nihilistic form that separated Yang Splendor from Closed Yin. In the case of Buddhism, Worldly Convention was the Closed Yin State, and Ultimate meaning in all its approximations was the Yang Splendor state. Taoism remains in the rolling over of opposites and attempts to avoid the nihilistic conditions of Yang Splendor or Closed Yin. Taoism attempts to keep the extremes from arising in the first place that leads to those unbalanced conditioned. In the case of Buddhism, the unbalanced condition leads to the progressive refinement of the formulations of Emptiness. Emptiness becomes the Asymptote of an endless regress of schools and intellectual formulations. But if the nihilistic approach to the Void was never refined, then we could apprehend it directly via the rough hewn formulations of Taoism.

When everyone in the world knows the beautiful  
as beautiful, ugliness comes into being;

When everyone knows the good, the not good  
comes to be.

The mutual production of being and nonbeing,

The mutual completion of difficult and easy,

The mutual formation of long and short,

The mutual filling of high and low,

The mutual harmony of tone and voice,  
The mutual following of front and back --  
These all are constants.<sup>7</sup>

We can say the same for Ultimate Meaning and Worldly Convention. They mutually entail each other. But Ultimate Meaning is an extreme of Yang Splendor that arises opposite Worldly Convention. If you know Ultimate Meaning as Yang Splendor, you must know Worldly Convention as its opposite. This duality of things is a constant. Worldly convention is the reification of dependent co-arising. Ultimate Meaning is the reification of Emptiness. But we know that Emptiness IS dependent co-arising. So that ultimately the whole superstructure of nihilistic ideas collapses. The goal of Buddhism is to keep the superstructure from collapsing as long as possible. That occurs through the development of more and more sophisticated intellectual formulations of indications of emptiness and its intertwining with worldly convention. And this is essentially the dynamic of Dynamic Clinging. Except in this case the dynamic is expended on attempting to refine the indication of emptiness rather than the grasping of Being and beings. Thus, Buddhism inverts the dynamism of the Indo-European worldview, but it does not transform it into

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7. page 190; Chapter 2

another dynamism. So that in Buddhism, in some ways we are seeing the pure form of Dynamic Clinging without the taint of what is being clung on to. Of course, all that effort is put into indications of Emptiness, but the individuals who are attaining Emptiness must CEASE the behavior of dynamic clinging in order to arrive. So we might say that Buddhism is using skillful means of weaning adepts off of Dynamic Clinging by transforming clinging to things through Being to clinging to Emptiness which then can be easily shown to not exist. When the rug is pulled out from under them, they fall straight into the Void.

Worldly convention and ultimate meaning each encompass the entire world. This implies that the world is not double layered, as if it were composed of one worldly conventional layer and another ultimately meaningful layer. Once one has attained awakening, the whole or the world affirmed as conventional is identified with the world of ultimate meaning. In its being-in-the-world, however, worldly convention contrasts with ultimate meaning.

Fairly early in the development of Buddhist doctrine, a similar contrast was drawn between being-to-its-limit and being-as-such, both of which describe the same world in its entirety. “Being-to-its-limit” (yavadbhavikata) parallels



what we have been speaking of as worldly convention, while “being-as-such” (yathavadbhavikata) corresponds to ultimate meaning.

Being-to-its-limit denotes the all-inclusive totality of all beings; it applies to everything temporal, spatial, calculable, or measurable. It has affinities with such terms as the unlimited, the inexhaustible, and the immeasurable. Bodhisattva practice is not simply a matter of arriving at a final truth that marks the end of the Buddha path, since it cannot dispense with an all-inclusive, universal understanding (sarvajnatva) that surveys all the areas of worldly, conventional understanding. Throughout the history of Buddhism, there have been persons who set their hearts on a model of holiness (arhat) in which cessation amounts to reducing the body to ashes and obliterating all consciousness. In the bodhisattva career, one must go beyond such sanctity to immerse oneself once again in the actual world of everyday experience. The wisdom of a bodhisattva is to merely an inner realization. The “five learnings” to be cultivated include not only inner meditation, but also such secular studies as grammar, the arts, mathematics, medicine, and logic. Buddhist learning is not limited to religious doctrine, but stresses the need to engage oneself in science and

the arts. The wisdom necessary for bodhisattva practice extends across a broad, unlimited horizon to the limit of being. Concrete and practical knowledge is required of the bodhisattva, a wide-ranging wisdom which, while exhausting being-to-its-limit, is at the same time secular and conventional.

Being-as-such is suchness and parallels the wisdom of ultimate meaning. In contrast to the quantitatively unlimited and broad purview of being-to-its-limit, this wisdom is a qualitative understanding of the world just as it is. Its insight into truth plunges perpendicularly into the original nature of all things in a direct and unmediated manner. Thus, while conventional being-to-its-limit denotes the broad expanse (udara) of wisdom and insight, ultimately meaningful being-as-such points to their depths (gambhira). Worldly conventional is described in the Buddhist texts as blunt (audarika), while ultimately meaning is spoken of as sharp and incisive (suksma).<sup>8</sup>

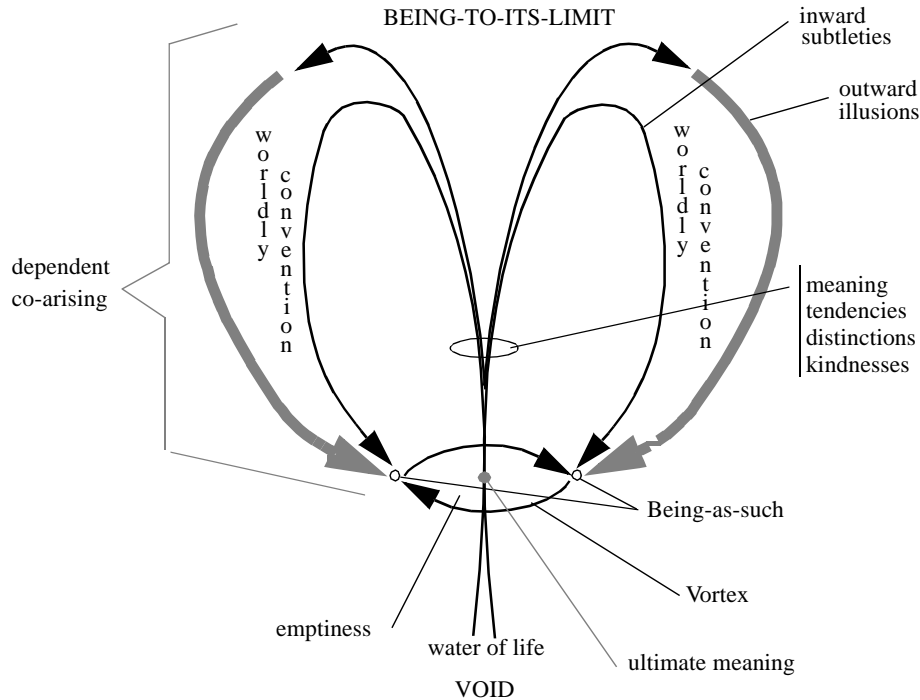
We will appropriate these two terms: being-to-its-limit and being-as-such in order to describe the dynamism we see between emptiness and dependent co-arising in relation to worldly convention and ultimate meaning.

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8. Gadjin Nagao, *The foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy*, page 33-4

This will be done with the help of a diagram.

FIGURE 185



The water of life springs from the Void. Emptiness is actually an asymptotic limit of refinement that stands as a nihilistic opposite to dependent co-arising. These two are duals and are identified through the participation of Being within the conceptual framework in a hidden way. Ultimate Meaning and Worldly Convention are also nihilistic opposites, but they are completely disconnected, standing opposite the identity of emptiness and dependent co-arising. The connection and disconnection of these sets of opposites has the same effect as the Gremias square of Being and its images. It

produces a conceptual field of differences which allows the indication of emptiness to occur by forcing the person thinking about emptiness to enter a supra-rational awareness beyond duality. As the water of life moves through the emptiness at the center of the vortex of illusion, it becomes the spark of ultimate meaning. After it has moved through the still center, it continues to unfold until it differentiates into meaning, tendencies, distinctions and kindnesses. These continue to unfold into the inward and outward aspects of the world. The outward aspects are the illusions of things outside while the inward aspects are illusions of psychological states. These unfold to the limit of being which contains all the endless variety of beings, entities, states, relations, objects, etc. At that limit, the world begins to collapse back toward emptiness in a swirling vortex around the still center of emptiness. Being-as-such is the borderline between the still center and the raging vortex. This diagram shows the subtle difference between ultimate meaning and being-as-such, and also the difference between worldly convention and being-to-its-limit. It is clear that these are different, though Nagao attempts to collapse the two terms together. Worldly convention does not operate at its limits. Limits are rare events normally avoided. Ultimate meaning is not suchness. Ultimate meaning in its ultimacy cannot be but unified, whereas suchness contains all the myriad differences that

phenomenal reality implies that make it such as it is. Ultimate meaning must be thought as the center of the empty vortex, whereas being-as-such must be the point of contact between the still center and the vortex of illusion. In this way of looking at the world, there is a bracketing of objective and subjective differences so that illusions are not differentiated from things that are designated as real. All the illusions “real” or “unreal” appear as part of dependent co-arising which is reified into worldly convention just as emptiness is reified into ultimate meaning by looking at it as unified. Emptiness is taken to the extreme and transformed into being-as-such by looking at it as differentiated. Worldly convention is taken to the extreme and transformed into being-to-its-limit by looking at its totality. We see that the totality of being-to-its-limits balances the unity of ultimate meaning in this model. The differentiation of being-as-such balances the homogeneity of worldly convention. Between these two the identity of Emptiness and dependent co-arising acts as a balance. If it is seen as having identity through Being, then a fundamental contradiction occurs. If it is seen as having duality which does not have to act through Being, then the contradiction dissipates because harmony through the other is achieved effortlessly. The self is empty and it achieves harmony through the harmonization of the other because the self is merely a mirror to existence. If the other is put in

harmony, then that automatically harmonizes the self very deeply -- much more deeply than directly acting on the self alone to achieve harmony as is common in the Hindu tradition. The identity between emptiness and dependent co-arising is the fulcrum between the pearl of unity and the coral stone of totality. If that identity is conceptual, then we fall back into Being in its hidden form within the framework that indicates emptiness. But if that identity is non-conceptual, then we realize the emptiness of emptiness. The emptiness of emptiness is the non-experience of a non-concept or the non-conceptualization of a non-experience. It goes beyond the rational to realize that the cognition is empty as well as the concept. With that realization one is flung into the non-dual Void.

The Chinese term for ultimate meaning sheng-i (...) is a literal translation of the Sanskrit term paramartha, where parama (ultimate) corresponds to sheng (...) and artha (meaning) to i (...). In contrast the Chinese term for worldly convention shih-su (...) is an interpretative, not a literal, translation. The failure of the Chinese to present a literal translation and the many problems this entails may be due to the fact that the Sanskrit texts have two spellings for worldly convention, samvrti and samvrtti. Samvrti derives from the root vr, “to cover, hide, obstruct,” thus suggesting

that samvrti-satya is covered or hidden truth (satya). But samvrtti derives from the root vrt, “to exist, arise, come about, activate,” thus suggesting that samvrtti-satya is truth that comes about within the world. The difference between the two, consisting only in a single letter, could be merely the result of an error in copying, or a variant peculiar to given manuscripts (we have the example of the term sattva (sentient being) often being reduced to satva in some manuscripts, without implying any change in meaning).

But here the difference is more significant and seems to have occasioned some perplexity to the Chinese translators who, in rendering it as “worldly convention,” reflect neither Sanskrit etymology. Furthermore, the Indian pandits with their feel for words would hardly have overlooked the presence or absence of a letter that changes the root meaning of a term. As conscious as they were of root meanings, the Indians could scarcely have intended the Chinese meaning of “worldly convention.” Consequently, we cannot make use of the Chinese term in attempting to grasp the meaning intended by the Sanskrit. How did the Chinese arrive at this translation?

In de la Vallee Poussin’s revised edition of Candrakirti’s Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way

the spelling of samvrti is used throughout, both in Nagarjunas's stanzas and in Candrakirti's commentary. Candrakirti gives three etymologies for the term sanvrti. First, "samvrti means a pervasive occlusion" (samantad varanam samvrtih). In this sense, samvrti is nothing more than a universal clouding over and occlusion of truth. This is the most strict etymological reading, defining samvrti from its underlying elements of sam and varanam. It also has clear doctrinal implications, since the consistent Madhyamika understanding of samvrti in all the literature as far back as Candrakirti's Introduction to the Middle is that its basic meaning is "a universal occlusion," the clouding over of primal ignorance, basic misunderstanding (ajnana) without any insight into reality. Even when described as understanding, it is incapable of freeing one from primal ignorance and always arises together with it. In the face of ultimately meaningful truth, such basic misunderstanding and primal ignorance always remain, in the final analysis, falsifiable. As vr implies, samvrti shields and hides true reality behind the conventions of common worldlings. Candrakirti's "pervasive occlusion" denotes an obstacle precisely to true understanding.



Since this clouded and occluded understanding is enmeshed in the dependant co-arising birth-death cycle, it cannot be wisdom's insight into the emptiness of all things. Accordingly, Candrakirti's second etymology of samvrti has the term means "mutually dependent being" (paraspara-sambhavana, paraspara-samasraya). The notion of mutual dependency (paraspara-apeksa), generally used to define dependent co-arising, is here applied to samvrti. In contrast to what is empty, non-existent, and undifferentiated, the worldly and conventional always exists in mutual dependence within a world of manifold being. This multiplicity and differentiation is nothing other than the discrimination of self from others, of subject from object, whence "names" are engendered and languages developed.

It follows that the third etymology of samvrti is "symbolic and social discourse" (samketo lokavyavaharah). Symbolic (samketa) here refers to the expression of worldly conventions through conceptual and verbal signs. It is because of these conventional symbols that one produces "descriptions of such things as subjects and objects, the knower and the known." Social discourse (vyavahara) refers to the uses of language according to the dictates of social

custom. It is synonymous with descriptive speech and discourse.

Thus, samvrti is described in a threefold etymology as “basic misunderstanding, mutual dependency, and symbolic discourse.” The most fundamental of these is basic misunderstanding, the clouding and occluding of primal ignorance. Mutual dependent arising and discriminative judgemental discourse are elemental forms of worldly convention derived from basic misunderstanding.<sup>9</sup>

This difference in the meaning of Worldly Convention that arises in the Sanskrit is very important. Notice the difference arises by the presence or absence of a single letter. It is the difference between the root “vr” and “vrt” which changes the meaning from occlusion to arising. In the root that means occlusion, the “t” is missing. At this etymological point we can see a fundamental operation occurring within the Indo-European worldview. This worldview believes in letter-magic -- the manipulation of the runes which are the basic form of magic of Varuna. Here a letter is taken away which makes existence into something occluded or hiding. We see here the fundamental notion that arises naturally within the Indo-European worldview that manifestation is simultaneously

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9. Nagao page 39-40.

hiding. That manifestation is defective, missing a letter, and must be made whole again by the realization of the truth. Here we see that in the etymology of worldly convention we have embedded the fundamental assumption of the defective nature of existence that must be perfected by human action. It is this assumption that deflects emptiness from the realization of the Void. In the Void, one realizes that arising is not defective. The outlook that sees the defect and calls for sacrifice -- in order to gain perfected vision in the Buddhist case -- is a fundamental Indo-European assumption propagated within Buddhism. Going on to see worldly convention as dependent co-arising and language only propagates this assumption that colors the way Buddhism looks at the world. In its eyes language is defective, so we must resort to silence to express ultimate truth. In its eyes dependent co-arising as extreme other dependence is the only antidote for the substantive view of the self. Thus, we get even in the opposite view that has an aversion to Being a persistence of the fundamental idea of the flawed nature of existence and how arising is simultaneously occlusion in relation to the emptiness which is the center of the vortex of the arising. Extreme darkening and ignorance is balanced against extreme light of the realization of ultimate meaning as the sameness of emptiness and dependent arising. If words are truly empty, then they all point toward emptiness without

sinking into silence. If dependent arising is truly empty, then all beings point toward the emptiness that I am. Extremes are necessary in Buddhist formulations that indicate emptiness because they operate in the nihilistic landscape of the Indo-European tradition. In that landscape, they exist as skillful means of indicating emptiness which blend in and are camouflaged by looking like all the other nihilistic formulations of ideas that abound there. However, once we have realized the nature of what is pointed to, we no longer need the means of indication. Once we see the moon, then the finger that indicates it is no longer needed. The assumption of the defective nature of arising takes us to the perfected arising of interpenetration. Interpenetration -- tathagata gharba -- is the sameness of ultimate meaning and being-as-such in the model we presented -- is the sameness of worldly convention and being-to-its-limit. They are the belonging together in unity and differentiation of emptiness as dependent co-arising.

When the model that has been presented collapses together, we get the positive embodiment advocated by the Yogacarians that is opposite the negative characterization presented by the Madhyamikans. This positive image of the unity of worldly convention and ultimate meaning is based on the structure of Atman that had been developed traditionally by the Hindus. It was

modified to be used as a vehicle for indicating the positive meaning of the sameness of emptiness and dependent co-arising. “Gharba” has three meanings: “gharba which is enveloped (samgrhita), gharba which is hidden, and gharba which is enveloping.”<sup>10</sup>

Based on these three meanings, according to the sastra, all beings can be considered to be Tathagata-gharba: first, because they are included in Tathata (the “thusness” which is the nature of the Buddhas), second, because Tathagata is not manifest in beings, but is concealed in them; and third, because all qualities of the Buddha (...) are present in every sentient being, albeit in potential, or embryonic state.<sup>11</sup>

Notice here that the defective nature of existence is transformed into the concealment of Buddhahood within them. Notice also that the image is both of the encompassed and the encompassing. Thus it operates at least at the level of the modality of engulfing of Wild Being. But it is both engulfing and engulfed at the same time and thus is at least one higher level of logical typing. The totality of being-to-its-limit is the encompassing, and the unity of ultimate meaning as the axis of the center of the vortex that defines emptiness is the encompassed. The capacity for super-rational non-dual belonging

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10. pg 53 *Existence and Enlightenment in the Lankavatara-sutra* by Florin G. Sutton.

11. pg 53 *Existence and Enlightenment in the Lankavatara-sutra* by Florin G. Sutton

together of these two moments is what is hidden between these extremes. Unlike the Atman that the tathagata gharba is patterned from, the latter concept was specifically designed as a stepping stone toward truth to be abandoned once the positive aspect of emptiness was realized. Tathagata gharba is not posited as an ontological construct, but it serves as the basis of understanding emptiness qua dependent co-arising as interpenetration. We can see it as the collapse of our model presented above into non-differentiation where totality and unity belong together. That is where suchness and the conventional intermingle as a single reversibility of encompassing-encompassed that still bears the mark of imperfection only here as the presence in potential of perfection. It is one step away from realizing the belonging together of the Void and all existent things.

The Buddha was born from the side of Maya, his mother, as she leaned against a tall sal tree. Prior to that she dreamed of a white elephant with six tusks which had entered her womb. Before he was born, it is said that he appeared within the womb like the moon through clouds. The name of his mother means illusion or “dependent existence.” She died soon after the birth. Here we see the myth of the relation between the encompassing and the encompassed of the being played out where the gharba

(seed) of the Buddha appeared within the gharba (womb) of his mother illusion. He entered the womb as a regal white elephant. Within the womb he sat in the pose of meditation and could be seen through its translucent walls. He left the womb without causing pain by an alternate route from the normal one as his mother stood leaning against a tree. This story stands opposed to the armies of Mara (hinderance and death) that attempted to deter the Buddha from achieving enlightenment as he sat against the Bodhi tree. When the armies left, Mara said that Buddha had no proof that illusion had been defeated. The Buddha simply touched the earth which moved to signify that it was his witness. Buddha was delivered from the female aspect of illusion to defeat the male aspect of illusion.

In the middle of the night, Siddhartha began to observe his own former lives, the lives of others, and then the entire spacetime continuum concentrated in an extensionless eternal point. He saw the universality of suffering (duhkha), the pain of cyclic existence, in which beings trap themselves in ignorance and desire, like an animal walking around in a circle in a cage. Cutting the circle at the right point would bring liberation: he relinquished desire (attachment), desirelessness (aversion), and indifference (mixed attachment / aversion), and, as dawn broke upon him, cried,

“Now is birth and death finished! The ridge-pole  
of that house built over many lives is broken!”<sup>12</sup>

Buddha came into his last existence as a royal elephant. He entered into Maya and was born. In his austerities he reached the state of “nothing whatsoever” and then the realm of “Neither Notions nor Non-notions” which are beyond the infinity of space and the infinity of consciousness. He relinquished desire or desirelessness which correspond to the notions or non-notions, and he relinquished indifference that corresponds to the realm of nothing whatsoever. This structure is the embodiment of the nihilistic opposites. Indifference is the ephemeron which stands opposite the holon which is described by Indian logic as something, then nothing, then both something and nothing, and finally neither something nor nothing. This is as far as Indian logic can take one toward the description of the holoidal. By giving up these opposites which are opposite indifference, Buddha cast himself into the realm of emptiness which is the still center of the vortex of nihilistic illusion self-cancelling. The ridge pole of the house is the axis in the center of the vortex of emptiness, i.e. ultimate meaning to being-to-its-limit. When the ridge pole collapses, the tent falls. The tent is the structure of nihilistic opposites by which emptiness is indicated. The collapsing is the production

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12. Roger J. Corless *The Vision of Buddhism* (NY: Paragon House; 1989)



of the Tathagata gharba -- the womb/essence/seed of thusness coming. As womb, it is all of dependent co-arising which is reified into the conventional world. As essence, it is the center of the empty vortex of illusion which is ultimate meaning. As seed, it is upwelling of the water of life within the void. The thusness is the edge of chaos where the vortex of illusion swirls around the empty eye of the hurricane of mara/maya. (The difference between maya and mara is again one letter.) The coming is the action of the Karma in a cycle that causes the world to appear to move in endless cycles of eternal return of the Same. This endless cycle is the cage of the restless souls that move by perfuming from one instant of the created universe past the total destruction of the universe to the next instant in which the universe is created anew. Opposite it stands complete cessation or Nirvana, the nihilistic opposite of the endless restlessness of the world.

There was a series of questions that the Buddha refused to answer affirmatively or negatively:

Is the world eternal or not?

Is the world finite or infinite?

Is the body and soul identical or not?

Does the saint exist after death or not?

Does the saint both exist and not exist after death?

Does the saint neither exist nor not exist after death?<sup>13</sup>

In other words, the Buddha refused to answer antinomic questions such as those that Kant shows to be unprovable either way by pure reason. These questions are not just considered as antinomies, but in the form of Indian logic that suggests that there may be intermediate states or states that are not touched by the way the question is framed. The Buddha seeks the middle way by rejecting all these possibilities, saying that it is not knowledge that is useful for seeking enlightenment. This is because everything that can be elucidated in any of the four forms of truth in Indian logic belongs in the conventional world instead of at the still point of emptiness which is its opposite. By refusing to take a position, the Buddha is pointing to emptiness. The nihilistic formulation of the conceptual structure that indicates emptiness (desire/desirelessness//indifference) combined with the modes of truth from Indian logic allow the ridge pole of the tent which has as its axis ultimate meaning. This is set up so that the tent then can collapse, and the seeker will be pushed into the non-dual state. It happens in an instant like when an archer releases his arrow and the bow twangs. There is no path into emptiness. There is only

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13. Questions Which Tend Not to Edification in World of the Buddha; L. Stryk; page144

the instant transformation when the tent of the conventional world collapses or the arrow is released into the center of emptiness. The arrow shoots toward the Void. The collapsed tent sinks into the Void. We can throw away the formulation of nihilist opposites once we have reached the target and realized the goal. We have finally been delivered out of the Western worldview when we realize that minimal emptiness is only a means of arriving at the Void which is untainted by any trace of Being or its antidote emptiness. Both the disease and the antidote disappear in this homeopathic treatment.

## Chapter 29

For those who would like to take control of the world and act on it --

I see that with this they simply will not succeed.

The world is a sacred vessel;

It is not something that can be acted upon.

Those who act on it destroy it;

Those who hold on to it lose it.

With things -- some go forward, others follow;

Some are hot, others submissive and weak;

Some rise up while others fall down.

Therefore the Sage:

Rejects the extreme, the excessive, and the extravagant.<sup>14</sup>

It is strange to think that the Buddhist ideal attempts to act on the world though its reduction to emptiness that belongs together with dependent co-arising. It is wondrous to think of Buddhism as extreme, excessive and extravagant. We tend to think of only the Western worldview in those terms. However, if we look deeply into it, we see that Buddhism perpetuates the nihilistic forms born in the Indo-European worldview that it attempts to use to open up an escape from the terrible excesses of that self-destructive approach to existence. It uses the conceptual formulations born within the Indo-European worldview in order to make that worldview aware of its own limits and thus open up a window in the house of Baal. Death enters through that window as the thing that breaks all holds on things. We escape through that window into the Void. But what we realize is that we do not need to carry the window with us. Once we have entered the Void, we no longer need the window, and we no longer need the concept of the collapsed Atman -- the tathagata gharba which allows us to view the belonging together of emptiness and dependent co-arising as interpenetration.

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14. page 244 Te Tao Ching.

## Chapter 16

Take emptiness to the limit;

Maintain tranquility in the center.

The ten thousand things -- side-by-side they arise;

And by this I see their return.

Things come forth in great numbers;

Each one returns to its root.

This is called tranquility.

“Tranquility” -- This means to return to your fate.

To return to your fate is to be constant;

To know the constant is to be wise.

Not to know the constant is to be reckless and wild;

If you're reckless and wild, your actions will lead to misfortune.

To know the constant is to be all-embracing;

To be all-embracing is to be impartial;

To be impartial is to be kingly;

To be kingly is to be like Heaven;

To be like Heaven is to be one with the Tao;

If you're one with the Tao, to the end of your days  
you'll suffer no harm.<sup>15</sup>

Take emptiness to the limit but maintain tranquility at the center. This seems to indicate the kind of fusion of contradictory states that Buddhism attempts to embody in its states of mind that are encountered only in silence in meditation called samadhi. We can almost read into these words being-to-its-limit and being-as-such. Within the Void everything is seen as returning to its roots or source. Buddhist practice is merely one of the myriad things that arise as a means to return to the source. Buddhist practice is the primary means for Indo-Europeans to return to their source and achieve tranquility by realizing their fate and attaining constancy. At its pennicle this is an entry into a samadhi that gives us access to the interpenetration of all things and prevents us from doing more wrong because we finally realize that to harm others is to harm ourselves.

The nature of the samadhi, as well as its ability to reveal a truth normally hidden from us, is indicated by the name, which is figurative and meant to indicate its nature. It is said in the Avataminsaka Sutra and several other scriptures that when the surface of the great ocean is completely still, unruffled by the wind, all things

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15. page 68

can be revealed as images on its surface. One text says, “It is just as when the wind blows, waves arise in the great ocean, but when the wind stops, the water becomes clear and still, and there is not a single image which is not revealed on its surface.” Another text says that the forms of the Ashras dwelling in the sky are all revealed in its surface. It is a simile for this particular samadhi because when the activities of the “normally” functioning mind are stilled, like the waves in the ocean, then all things are revealed to the meditator in brilliant clarity. Since in order to perceive the identity and interdependence of everything demands an extremely radical disruption of the normal categorizing, conceptualizing, symbolizing mechanisms of the human mind, obviously the sagara-mudra samadhi is understood to be an exceptionally profound state of meditation. I have translated the Sanskrit name (hai-in san-mei, in Chinese) as “the samadhi which is like the images in the ocean,” or “samadhi which is like the impressions in the ocean,” in conformity with the simile. Mudra is sometimes translated as “seal,” which is inaccurate in this context because of the connotations it has in some Indian and Tibetan forms of Buddhism.

Thus the Hay-yen teaching derives, according to Fa-tsang, from the Buddha's samadhi. However, the samadhi also belongs to the Bodhisattva of advanced states for his own activities, which are those of a Buddha, must grow out of his own vision, in sagara-mudra samadhi, of a universe of identical things interpenetrating infinitely. This is why the Hua-yen vision is not available to most of us, who rely for information on sources of knowledge which Buddhism criticizes as erroneous and conducive to anxiety and turmoil. If we wish to share the Hau-yen vision, we need only cultivate the samadhi which is like the images of the ocean. That means to become Buddha-like.<sup>16</sup>

This is the image of the collapsed tent of the conventional world. It spreads out on the ground of emptiness and dissolves into that emptiness so that the two together become a Void. We see fish that swim in the depths of that ocean and birds that fly above it in the ocean of air. When the karmic wind ceases blowing, then the surface becomes still. At that point the birds see their reflection in the surface of the water and the shadowy images of the fish below. At that point the fish see their reflection in the surface of the water from underneath and shadowy images of the birds above. Each sees their reflections

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16. page 74, *Hau-Yen: The Jeweled Net of Indra*, Francis Cook.



mingled with the shadows of the other caught within the surface of the still ocean.

Either the birds can see the fish or the fish can see the birds. Except for rare occasions, the fish do not enter the realm of the birds or vice versa. The opposites are always apart. But on each side there are shadows and reflections. The shadows and the reflections are the components of the vision of each that are complementary opposites that can cause cancellation of that view of the surface. Cancellation in this case would be the realization that the shadows and the reflections are illusory opposites, and that ultimately the fish and the birds are one even though they never meet. They, in fact, become one inside the partially translucent, partially reflective surface. The surface of the ocean is the Jabrut, the single source, the Apeiron. When it is visible, the opposites vanish. Through this surface we enter the gate which takes us beyond the Void.

When we enter the surface, the world does not vanish. In fact, we experience no change whatsoever. This is because we are already swimming in that Void which is interlaced throughout all our experience. We are like those fish or birds in that we are already swimming in the Void among the swarms of the myriad things that issue from it and return to it. These swarms, in our case men

and our opposites jinn, do not actually reside on the two sides of the surface of the Jabrut. Instead, we are both reflections moving within that surface which is made up of angelic light. Both the jinn, the angels and ourselves as men are part of the cognizant light of different intensities that interpenetrate within the diamond surface of the still ocean. We are part of the overflowing bounty from beyond the Void, only seeming to arise to take form beyond it on one side or the other.

So when Zarathustra in Nietzsche's image of the only known Indo-European prophet returns to the sea and gazes into its depths, he fears what he sees there -- that we all may have to requite for the forgotten wrongs of our race on this earth. But instead, we see that through the stilling of the sea, we find the escape from the Indo-European worldview by first locating minimal emptiness and appreciating more and more subtle formulations of it until we escape from formulations completely into the Void that is purified of any taint of any scent of the Indo-European disease of Dynamic Clinging. And through this process we become ready to hear once again Zarathustra's message to us. It was the same as he had for the people of his time who he warned of the Druj and showed how to worship the One God who is a Wise Lord. His people all became, through the turmoil of history, the Druj and lost his message. They even lost the message of

Jesus who was given a book like Muhammad, the Ingele, but has been obliterated from the face of the earth by the Mithraic Christians who perverted his teaching. So the appropriation of the heritage of prophecy of the Jews did no good. These prophetic teachings were similarly distorted. Only the heritage of the prophet Muhammad has not been subverted (may Allah preserve it always). And so our only way to regain the lost teaching of the gnostic Jesus beyond the image of Christ and the prophecy of Zarathustra beyond dualistic Persian religion that stems from the worship of Mithra/Varuna as the enemies of Indra is to enter by the door of Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The teachings of all the Prophets about what lies beyond the Void is the same. Only the ways of life they brought to form out of the Void differ. Their difference is the only true difference because as the Prophet Muhammad said, "Kufr is one system." We have been exploring the evolution of one particular branch of the Kafir's way of looking at reality -- the Indo-European. It is only by looking hard at it and realizing that that is who We are that it will ever be genuinely possible to appropriate the prophetic teachings of Muhammad and give them a form that polishes what is good of the West and purifies it of the terror and destruction directed at all the peoples of the earth that emanates from it. We note that the way out is also the way in. The way out of the Indo-European worldview

into other self-aware worldviews like the Buddhist and Chinese which make it possible to appreciate the true significance of Islam, is the way for Islam to enter and purify the Western worldview as it has entered and purified so many others. In the end, we find we do not need to leave. We only need to make welcome a truly wonderful guest who will bring light into a way of life that has been dark and darkening the world too long.

Many people who were very violent and ruthless in their ignorance at the time of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, were accepted into Islam and purified, becoming excellent examples of the Muhammadan way.

Welcome, Oh Prophet of Allah, to our abode! Oh, Allah please purify us.

**Publisher:**

## **Apeiron Press**

PO Box 4402,  
Garden Grove, California  
92842-4402

714-638-1210  
palmer@exo.com  
palmer@think.net  
palmer@netcom.com  
Thinknet BBS 714-638-0876

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Draft #3 940629

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Manuscript

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This book was typeset using Framemaker document publishing software by the author.

**Publication Data:**

Library of Congress  
Cataloging in Publication Data

Palmer, Kent Duane  
(aka Abd al-Alim al-Ashari)

THE FRAGMENTATION OF BEING AND  
THE PATH BEYOND THE VOID:  
Speculations in an Emergent Onto-mythology

Bibliography (tbd)  
Includes Index (tbd)

1. Philosophy-- Ontology
2. Sociology -- Theory
3. Mythology -- Indo-european

I. Title

[XXX000.X00 199x]  
9x-xxxxx  
ISBN 0-xxx-xxxxxx-x

**Keywords:**

Being, Ontology, Sociological Theory, Indo-  
european Mythology, Plato's Laws, Emergence,  
Technology, Worldview, City Form

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## THE VOID

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