

THE NATURAL LAW IN THE BUDDHIST TRADITION

(The Buddhist View of the World)

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IN Japan soon after the war, I chanced to speak with one of the judges of the War Crimes Tribunal then in session in Toyko. He asked me about the Buddhist view regarding the ultimate authority of ethical laws. When I asked him what he meant by "authority," he replied that in Christianity ethical laws are considered as issuing from God and therefore the violators of morality are sinners against God. He further stated that if we did not derive our ethical values from God, they would have no authority, no compelling power over human affairs.

This argument struck me as rather strange, for I had thought moral laws were just as binding even when we regarded them as human-made. Inasmuch as our human society cannot exist without some system of regulations, moral or political, economic or juridical, they are all to be observed by the individual members who compose such a community. The question is not whether such regulations are human-made or God-made. As long as they are laws they ought to be binding on us, and we ought not to think of going against them in any way. For if we did, that would surely endanger the very existence of the community. Whatever we may argue about politics or economics, the moral laws being more fundamental, we cannot disregard them and live at peace with our neighbors. If we want to live at all, we have to observe them by all means.

The ultimate source of moral values is in human nature itself.

Being a Christian, my judge-friend was not convinced by my presentation. But this talk made me think anew of the Buddhist point of view in regard to morality and especially of the Buddhist view of the world generally.

In Christianity there are the Ten Commandments as given by God, while in Buddhism the five or ten or more precepts (*'sila*) were given by Buddha to his followers as principles of conduct. And they observe them not necessarily because they are Buddha's injunctions but because they have accepted them out of their free will, firmly believing that they are conducive to the general welfare of humanity as well as to the preservation of their human dignity. No external authority drives them to the moral course of life. It is their own moral judgment that makes them accept the Precepts and the Buddhist community which they have chosen to join because of their spiritual significance.

As regards the first moral injunction "not to kill,"—this is observed by everybody belonging to any civilized community. One who violates it is not only legally punished as a civil criminal, but is also morally condemned as inhumanly-minded. The Christian would go further and pronounce this man as sinning against God, as a violator of the divine commandment. To the Buddhist mind the murderous deed is not connected with the authority of any outside agent who commands us to do this or that, or not to do this or that. Man has a certain innate feeling, according to Buddhism, which makes him refrain from committing deeds of violence. The innate feeling is rooted in

human nature equally shared by all sentient beings who live in group-life.

In the *Dhammapada* (verses 129 and 139) we read:

“All shrink from violence,
 All fear death.
 Putting oneself in another’s position,
 One should neither kill nor cause to kill.
 All shrink from violence,
 To all life is dear.
 Putting oneself in another’s position,
 One should neither kill nor cause to kill.”

This is an appeal to the fellow-feeling natural to all humanity. Buddhism does not think it necessary to trace this feeling to an external source.

In the world of sentient beings other than human, that is, in the animal and the vegetable kingdom, not to mention the physical world, deeds of mutual destruction go on without calling out any sense of compassion among those actually concerned. It is only with us humans that this mutual affectability takes place because we have become conscious of the common ground out of which we rise. And this common ground, we notice, extends not only among human beings themselves, but beyond that, even into the field of non-sentient beings. We often hesitate to destroy animals or insects, even poisonous ones, as well as plants. Buddhists would even offer pious prayers for the spiritual welfare, whatever that may mean, of those destroyed, and sometimes perform some special religious rituals for slaughtered live-stock, for weeded-out morning glories, and for those human beings who had consented

to have their bodies submitted to medical studies. This human consciousness of the common ground underlying all beings who are constituent units of the *Dharmadhātu*¹ is really the basis of our moral values.

It is this human consciousness that makes the author of the *Dhammapada* (v. 5) declare:

“Hatreds never cease by hatred in this world.
By love² alone they cease.
This is an eternal law.”

This eternal law grows out of the eternal ground where we all stand. Indeed, we can stand nowhere else. If we did come from somewhere else, there would be no such laws that could be called eternal.

It is also our consciousness of this eternal ground that establishes the inevitableness of *karmic* relationships:

“Not in the sky, nor in mid-ocean,
Nor in entering a mountain cave,
Is found that place on earth,
Where abiding one may escape from the
consequences of an evil deed.”³

¹ This Sanskrit term may be taken as meaning the universe generally, but in some Buddhist *sūtras* it means a world revealed to the enlightened minds such as those of the Bodhisattvas. It is not outside the world in which we common mortals find ourselves to be living, nor is it one superimposed upon ours. It is no other than this world of ours, but one generally hidden to those whose eyes do not penetrate beyond the world of sense-intellect. The *Dharmadhātu* (*hokkai* in Japanese and *fa-chieh* in Chinese) is in one sense this material world and at the same time the spiritual world. This will become clearer as we go on.

² “Hatred” is *vera* in Pali and “love,” *avera*, that is “no-hatred.” *Vera* sometimes is better rendered “enmity” or “hostility” and *avera* “friendliness” or “kindness.”

³ *The Dhammapada*, 127.

Not only the consequences of an evil deed but also those of a good deed follow us wherever we may be.

Deeds are bad when they go against the general welfare of the community. By this it is meant that bad deeds are always ego-centered; they grow out of selfishness, they tend to sacrifice the general welfare to the interest of the individual. Good deeds, on the other hand, grow straight out of the common good and go back to it. That is to say, the general stock of goodness increases that much by each individual deed of goodness. Buddhists are ever reminded of cutting asunder the bondage of birth-and-death, for this bondage is that which separates one individual from another, making him imagine that an individual as such is everything. He thus altogether forgets that the individual is an individual because of the ground on which he stands and that when he is detached from this ground he ceases really to be an individual and turns into a non-entity and to this non-entity, his misguided way of thinking makes him cling with all his might as if it were the last reality. He is now a constant victim of greed, anger, and folly—the three deadly poisons affecting the human mind. Such a one would never keep the ground in good condition and on such the ground never fails to avenge itself. But this avenging is really his own doing. As far as the ground itself is concerned, as the *Dhammapada* announces (v. 223), it goes on “conquering anger by no-anger, evil by good, the greedy by giving, liars by truth.” For this is the way the ground works out its laws of *karmic* relationship. We must realize, however, that evil ever threatens to cloud the good, and against this we must be on constant watch.

II

The question now is: What is this ground from which we all rise and which operates its own laws with no outside interference?

Buddhism has no God corresponding to the Biblical Creator of the world. According to Buddhists, the world has never been created by any outside agent. It has always been here in all its multitudinosity; it has no beginning, no ending. It is self-operative and self-regulating. The world is its own originator, preserver, and destroyer, if these can be predicated of it.

According to the *Dhammapada* (v. 1):

“Mind precedes all, mind is leader, and all is mind-made.”

“To precede” may suggest time-sequence, but in this case there is no idea of priority in time. “To precede” here simply means “rooted in,” that is to say, all things in existence are rooted in the mind (*manas*).⁴ They follow the Mind as it moves on; they are all formed in the Mind. We must, however, remember that Buddhism does not postulate the Mind as something in existence beside or beyond or within the plurality of things as we see them before us.

⁴ *Manas* and *citta* are synonyms and interchangeable in many cases. Earlier Buddhists do not seem to have made a clear distinction between the two terms. Generally speaking, *manas* is the principle of discrimination whereas *citta* is synthetic and represents an integrating principle. In the Yogacara system, *manas* is placed between the *ālaya-vijñāna* and the other six *vijñānas*. The *ālaya* is a reservoir where all experiences are preserved in the form of seeds, which do not germinate and grow up to full-sized actualities until *manas* reflects on them and projects them through the six *vijñānas*. *Manas* is thus the most significantly active effect-producing agent in the system of the *vijñānas* as held by this psychological school. *Citta* is sometimes identified with the *ālaya*, but in fact *citta* includes both the *ālaya* and *manas* and is used in the later Manayana texts more metaphysically than psychologically. When *citta* has a metaphysical sense, the capitalized Mind is used for it.

The Mind is intuited as identical with these. Buddhism is neither Pantheism nor Transcendentalism.

When the Mind moves, there is the functioning of the law:

“If with an impure mind a man speaks or acts,
Then pain follows him even as the wheel
follows the hoof of the ox.
If with a pure mind a man speaks or acts,
Then happiness follows him even as the shadow
that never leaves him.”

Dhammapada, 1, 2.

The Mind moves! No human thought can fathom the reason why. We simply see it move, and the movement translates itself into infinite multiplicities of relative minds, each one of which acts freely and yet in conformity with laws called by Buddhists *karmic* relationship. One such law is that good deeds increase happiness cosmic as well as individual.

When the Mind is seen as particularized we have the *Dharmadhātu*, which we may regard as corresponding to what Christians call creation. The *Dharmadhātu* is the Mind's creation. The Mind is the *Dharmadhātu*, and the *Dharmadhātu* is the Mind. They are one and the same reality, distinguished only from the human point of view—one as its particularized aspect and the other in its state of self-identity. In one⁵ of the most important and

⁵ The *sutra* is known in Japanese as *Kegon-gyo*, *Hua-yen* in Chinese, and in Sanskrit as either the *Avatamsaka* or *Gandavyūha*. This is in fact a collection of *sutras*, of which there are three Chinese translations. They have never been translated into any of the European languages, except the one treating of the “Ten Stages of Boḍhisattvahood.” But this will not be intelligible to most readers unless they are well acquainted with the background of the thought here expressed in a most elaborate and complicated style.

thought-provoking *sutras* belonging to the Mahayana school, we have this: "Buddha, Mind, and all beings are one." All beings are the constituent elements of the *Dharmadhātu*.

In the expression *Dharmadhātu*, especially as it is used by the later Buddhists, it is very difficult to find a good English term for *dharma*. *Dhatu* may be rendered "realm" or "world," whatever its original meaning might have been. *Dharma* generally means "norm," "principle," "teaching," "an object," "reality," "an idea," "a concept," etc. *Dharma* of *dharmadhātu* is a "particularized object," and the *Dharmadhātu* will mean "the realm of individualized objects," that is, the world or universe as we generally understand it with all its particularizations.

On the other hand, when *dharma* is understood in the sense of ultimate reality, the *Dharmadhātu* will mean a ground or field where reality reveals itself infinitely differentiated. But Reality is not to be considered hiding somewhere outside or inside the ground or field. Buddhists in their interpretation of Reality are quite explicitly and unmistakably against entertaining a monistic or dualistic or pantheistic or pluralistic view of existence.

Fa-tsang, or Hozo in Japanese, who was one of the greatest thinkers in the history of Chinese Buddhism, indeed of Chinese thought, characterizes *Dharma* when it is used in the sense of Reality or the Absolute in the following words:⁶

Dharma (*fa* in Chinese) is empty like space, has nothing that can limit it, and is altogether beyond

⁶ In his Commentary on the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (fascicle 1).

the sense. It is a great ocean of transcendental wisdom (*prajñā*). None can sound its depths, as it is not to be subsumed in any categories of thought. The mystery unfathomable—how can names and words define its limits? It is unqualified simplicity—how can one reach its source by looking at appearance? It, however, subjects itself to conditions in every possible way. Making itself manifest in forms and words, it fills the *Dharmadhātu*.

While differentiating itself into subject and object, they (subject and object) are of one taste; no trace is visible between seer and the seen; absolute aloneness prevails. While substance and functions are distinguishable, they refuse limitations and are inter-fused one with another in a wonderful way. There are no images (or individual forms) to take hold of, and yet they are revealed as when the sun rises on the Valley of Yang. There are no words to which one can listen, and yet they are heard roaring as when the huge waves dash themselves against the towering ridges. . . .

The *Dharmadhātu* may thus be understood by human intelligence as manifesting itself in two aspects as the world of Reality and as a world of individual realities. Buddhism, however, being a religion, is not particularly interested in a philosophic or scientific interpretation of the world. "Being a religion" means that Buddhism is more concerned with enlightening human beings as regards their situation, their nature, their destiny, their significance. For this reason, Buddhist thought naturally turns toward a personal and not an impersonal interpretation of the *Dharmadhātu*. The *Dharmadhātu* then is for Buddhists not only one living Buddha, called Vairo-

cana⁷ Buddha, but is the habitat for innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

III

The relationship between Vairocana Buddha and other Buddhas innumerable beyond human measurement is nowhere definitely given in any *sutras*. A summary survey shows that there is nothing definite about it, and that when any priority or superiority is given some one, for one reason or another, one of them will turn up as a kind of leader and others will all come to help him in his work. But as is natural with us human beings in this world of patience (*sahāloka*), Sākyamuni Buddha plays a predominant role in most of the Buddhist *sutras*, especially as one who gives us all the information concerning other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in other quarters of the universe. The names of those other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are not given except in some specified cases. The *sutras* generally indiscriminately refer to "all the Buddhas" and "all the Bodhisattvas" coming to join the earthly assemblage under the leadership of Sākyamuni Buddha. But this Sākyamuni Buddha in the Mahayana *sutras* is not a historical Buddha as is the one in the earlier schools of Buddhism; he is beyond our human way of computation, logical or otherwise.

To give an example, I cull passages from the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, where a Buddha is characterized in the following fashion, and no doubt Sākyamuni Buddha of the Mahayana shares this qualification. In the chapter "On the Unthinkabilities of Buddhahood" we have this:

⁷ *Vairocana* means "the great shining one." *C* is to be pronounced like *ch* in *church*.

The *Dharmadhātu* is inhabited by Buddhas of these characteristics:

- (1) All the Buddhas here are endowed with physical bodies of purity altogether surpassing anything of this world (*lokadhatu*);
- (2) Their eyesight which knows no obstruction whatever, is beyond all measurement, as it sees into all *dharma*s in their aspect of purity and oneness;
- (3) The hearing power of all the Buddhas, which knows no obstruction whatever, is beyond all measurement, as it discriminates every voice uttered by all beings;
- (4) The olfactory sense of all the Buddhas, which enters into all the immeasurabilities of the *Dharmadhātu*, is of the utmost purity, and being in possession of all the wonderful powers of Buddhahood, reaches the other side of the stream of birth-and-death;
- (5) The tongue of all the Buddhas, broad and long, is beyond all measurements, and the most exquisite voices that come out of it reverberate over the entire *Dharmadhātu*;
- (6) The body of all the Buddhas moves in such a way altogether incomprehensible, as the Tathagata-body reveals itself to all beings in accordance with their aspirations;
- (7) The mind-power of all the Buddhas functions beyond all the measurabilities of the *Dharmadhātu* and is not hindered in any way by their time-limitations, always retaining the purity and indestructibility of the *Dharmakāya*;
- (8) The teachings given out by all the Buddhas are conducive to an unobstructed emancipation beyond

all calculation and reveal all the wonderful inexhaustible powers;

(9) All the Buddhas establish in full array their Buddha-countries all over the worlds in an incomprehensible manner in response to all beings;

(10) All the Buddhas have fulfilled in immeasurable and incalculable ways all the Bodhisattva-works, all the vows of the most excellent character, all the wonderful powers of self-mastery, and are enlightened in all the right doctrines given by all the Buddhas.

The *Dharmadhātu* is the field where all these incomprehensible wonders are performed by all the Buddhas. And these Buddhas are further recorded to be able to accomplish all the following ten "unthinkables:"

(1) As they sit cross-legged in meditation, they are seen to be filling up all the worlds in the ten quarters;

(2) When they utter one word it is seen that this elucidates all the teachings of the Buddha;

(3) As one beam of light emanates from them, it is seen as illuminating all the worlds;

(4) Their one body is seen as revealing itself in infinitudes of bodies;

(5) While they have not moved from the seat they manifest themselves all over the worlds;

(6) As they make one decision, this is seen as being carried through all their works without the least impediment;

(7) They fill in one thought-instant⁸ all the worlds

⁸ This is for the Sanskrit *eka-citta-kṣana*, but it is suggested that "one consciousness-instant" might be better.

to their utmost ends;

(9) They make visible in one thought-instant all the Buddhas of the past, of the future, and of the present;

(10) While actively engaged in teaching all beings, the Buddhas are never seen leaving their *samādhi* of eternal tranquillity and non-dualism.

There is no end to these tales of wonders the Buddha performs in the *Dharmadhātu*; the *Avatamsaka* is filled with them. But we must not forget that the Buddha is not a miracle-worker just for the sake of miracles. He always has in mind the chief objective of his career in the world, which is to help all beings attain the supreme enlightenment and actually see the *Dharmadhātu* in its true perspective. The Mahayana *sutras* are never tired of emphasizing this principle of work cherished by all the Buddhas in their inmost heart. The *sutras* tell us that it is the event of the greatest possible significance to all beings that a Buddha come among us. His infinitely compassionate heart is ever with us, and out of it he proposes to himself vows of prayers (*pranidhāna*) by which he will lead every being, non-sentient as well as sentient, to cross the stream of birth-and-death.

Let me add another wonder the Buddha executes. But before doing this, I must make the readers acquainted with a little of Buddhist terminology, especially of the *Avatamsaka* (*Kegon*). The *sutra* makes so much reference to the hair (*roma* or *romakūpa*), or hair-tip, or hair-hole which is a pore of the skin. This represents the smallest part of the human body or Buddha-body, an atom or a monad or a *paramānu* in it may be regarded as cor-

responding to a hair-tip or a hair-hole (*romakūpa*) of the Buddha-body. And as each atom is in itself a *Dharmadhātu*, each hair-tip of the Buddha-body is an abode for the whole Buddha-body. Not only this, but at each tip of hair on every Buddha-body is found another Buddha-body, and this goes on infinitely. In physical terms this means: each atom contains within itself an infinite number of atoms, and each one of these atoms in turn contains within itself another infinite number of atoms, and this goes on infinitely. In Buddhist cosmology, each atom, together with the infinitely smaller and smaller atoms in it represents a Buddha. Thus, macrocosmically as well as microcosmically, the *Dharmadhātu* is filled with Buddhas. In every whatever direction a man may turn, he comes upon a Buddha face to face. Nay, he himself is a mass of Buddhas; he is carrying them on every tip of hair over his body, not only externally but internally.

There is a story illustrating this idea of universal, or rather, ubiquitous Buddha. There was an old woman when the earthly Buddha was still walking among us. She hated him so much that she tried to avoid meeting him on every possible occasion. But somehow, he appeared before her. As a last resort she covered her face with her hands not to see him, but behold, the Buddha invaded her eyes from between her fingers.

IV

With this preliminary note, the reader may understand what follows: Every world filling up this *Dharmadhātu* which extends to the limitless limits of the emptiness of space, the Buddha measures with the tip of a hair. Wherever this hair-tip touches there he manifests his transfor-

mation-bodies (*nirmānakāya*) at every thought-instant, equal in number to atoms composing all the Buddha-lands which are beyond calculation. This act of manifestation continues to the end of eternity.

Each transformation-body has heads equal in number to atoms composing all the Buddha-lands which are beyond calculation, and each of these heads has tongues equal in number to atoms composing all the Buddha-lands, which are beyond calculation.

Each of these tongues emits sounds equal in number to atoms composing all the Buddha-lands, which are beyond calculation, and each of these sounds preaches *sūtras* equal in number to atoms composing all the Buddha-lands which are beyond calculation.

Each of these *sūtras* preaches Buddha doctrines equal in number to atoms in all the Buddha-lands, which are beyond calculation. Each of these doctrines gives out phrases and tastes equal in number to atoms composing all the Buddha-lands which are beyond calculation.

Further, each of these doctrines gives out phrases and tastes, each differing as it is given out, through *kalpas* equal in number to atoms composing all the Buddha-lands, which are beyond calculation, and the voices reach the furthest limits of the *Dharmadhātu*, leaving no beings who fail to hear them.

The Tathāgata is thus seen revolving all the time the Wheel of *Dharma* till the end of eternity, and his voice suffers no change, no interruption, no exhaustion. This is one of his wonderful energies.

While in this wise the Buddha works on in the *Dharmadhātu*, the *Dharmadhātu* itself exhibits these qualities:

- (1) All *dharmas* have no intentionality and yet they show motivation and intelligence pure in character;
- (2) All *dharmas* have no substance of their own and yet they give rise to wisdom native to the *Dharma-kāya*;
- (3) All *dharmas* are non-dualistic and yet they are capable of enlightenment enabling them to know all things;
- (4) All *dharmas* are free from selfhood and thingness and yet they give rise to the wisdom of saving all beings;
- (5) All *dharmas* have no fixed form and yet they give rise to the knowledge whereby differentiation of form is recognized;
- (6) All *dharmas* know no coming-to-existence, no destruction, and yet they give rise to the knowledge whereby their existence and destruction are recognized;
- (7) All *dharmas* have no creator and yet they produce the knowledge whereby *karmic* relationship is made possible;
- (8) All *dharmas* are beyond words, and yet they produce the knowledge whereby they lend themselves to be expressed in words;
- (9) All *dharmas* are neither pure nor defiled and yet they give rise to the knowledge whereby the pure is discriminated from the defiled;
- (10) All *dharmas* are not subject to birth-and-death, and yet they give rise to the knowledge whereby causal relationship is made possible.

In a word—these qualities ascribed to “all *dharmas*” constituting the *Dharmadhātu* are characteristic of the

Mahayana view of the world. According to it, "all *dharma*s" remain in reality in a state of suchness (*tathatā*) or emptiness (*sūnyatā*) where no change, no becoming of any kind takes place. "All *dharma*s," therefore, are devoid of any teleological intentionality; no purposefulness or human motivation is to be ascribed to this existence of *Dharmadhātu*. But the mystery which comes out of the Buddha's incomprehensibility wisdom (*jñāna*) is that our human intellect contrives to establish a world of *karmic* relationship or a network of causes and effects infinitely complicated and intertwining. This intertwining and interfusing complexity is such that when a hair is picked up we perceive at its tip the whole system of three thousand chiliocosms in all its particularization, revealing itself, so that when one thought-instant is caught up from the eternal flow of becoming it is seen that all the past and all the future evolve out of it in either direction, backward or forward. In other words, an absolute "now" is an infinite fountain-head from which rises not only all the historical drama of the past but all the possible scenes to be enacted in the future.

This also applies to space. When the Buddha gets into a state of meditation in the western quarter of *Dharmadhātu*, he is seen to be rising from it in the eastern quarter. For this reason, Buddhists declare that Sāykamuni Buddha's enlightenment took place aeons ago and not necessarily under the Bodhi-tree by the River Nairanjanā twenty-five centuries ago, and that he is still seen and heard at this very moment preaching to the great congregation of Bodhisattvas and Srāvakas and other beings on the peak of Mount Vulture. The *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* Sutra takes this up as its theme and the philosophy of Tendai (*tien-tai*

in Chinese) elaborates on it.

The *Gandavyūha Sutra*⁹ illustrates the Buddhist conception of the *Dharmadhātu* by means of a sacred Tower called "*Vairocana-vyūha-alamkāra-garbha-mahākūtā-gara*" where Bodhisattva Maitreya has his residence. Sudhana, the young seeker of truth, visits this sacred Tower and Maitreya introduces the pilgrim into its secrets. Maitreya opens the door by snapping his fingers, and as soon as Maitreya and the pilgrim are inside, the door closes by itself.

The interiors of the Tower are broad and expanding as the emptiness of space and decorated with all sorts of furnishings, each one of which is made of precious stones and metals. The sutra gives a detailed description of them in a most elaborate style which will be tedious here to reproduce. Attracting our attention inside the Tower are an infinite number of towers of similar construction and with similar furnishings, yet each one of these towers is as wide and far-extending as the main Tower. They are, however, clearly and distinctly separated from one another, though each looks as if it were an exact reflection of the other. There is no confusion, no obstruction whatever, among all these similarly-looking towers in infinite numbers.

⁹ The *Gandavyūha Sutra* as we have it today forms the last volume of the *Avatamsaka*. It tells the story of a young pilgrim called Sudhana who visits fifty-three teachers, human and non-human, of both sexes. Sometimes the title *Gandavyūha* is given to the whole collection of sutras known as *Kegon* in Japanese and *Hua-yen* in Chinese. Both *avatamsaka* and *gandavyūha* in Sanskrit may be translated as *kegon* meaning "*floral decoration*." No English translation exists of this sutra-collection as a whole, except the chapter on "The Ten Stages of Bodhisattvahood" from the original Sanskrit. But I do not think the reader can learn much from this version without being fully equipped with knowledge of the Mahayana teaching.

While Sudhana was surveying one area filled with all these wonders he noticed that in this one area were seen all other areas reflected and that each one of them in turn reflected another, individually and collectively. These reflections were intermingled and interfused in an inexpressible manner and yet there was no disorderliness, no confusion, no mutual interference. All in one and one in all—yet each holding its distinct individuality.

After seeing all these wonders actually presented to Sudhana's senses in a manner which might be called visionally, or poetically, or mystically, or symbolically, or spiritually, or in whichever way one may feel like designating it, according to the position most appealing to that particular personality, Sudhana was told by Maitreya: "O my good noble-minded son, this is the way with the Dharma-nature (or Reality), and this is the way the Bodhisattva regards all *dharmas*, as appearances accumulated and manifested and sustained by the *jñāna* of the Bodhisattva. They are not complete in themselves, they are like a dream, like a vision, like a shadow or an image."

According to the Buddhist way of viewing the world as we read in the *sutras* quoted here, "all *dharmas*" take their rise from the Tathagata's or Buddha's *adhīsthānavasa* or *pūrvapranidhāna*, both of which may be freely translated as Buddha's will power, which is absolutely free, as nothing can limit its workings. This power may well be compared to the biblical God who at the beginning of the world uttered "Let there be light, and the whole creation came out of this will-power on the part of the creator. Just as the world is sustained by the will of this God, Buddhists ascribe all the wonders and free displays presented to the sight of Sudhana in Maitreya's Tower to the will-power of

the Tathagata who here betrays no teleological intentionalties. The *Dharmadhātu* in itself is not all complete (*aparinishpanna*), in the sense that it is not self-supporting, has no reality of its own, is like a dream, and is *Māyā*. But we must not forget that "all *dharma*s," all things, with all their incompleteness or perfectibility, are really here before our sense-intellect and are governed by laws of *karmic* relationship or an infinite series of causal linkings.

Now, Sudhana asks Maitreya, "Where do all these wonders, all these inconceivable manifestations I was permitted to witness, ultimately go?" The question is tantamount to asking about the whither of the *Dharmadhātu* or the destiny of the universe. But we must remember that the question is not from the physical or scientific or philosophical point of view. Buddhists are concerned with spiritual enlightenment and emancipation, and whatever questions they would ask about this existence as it presents itself to our sense-intellect come out of their spiritual concern and are desired to be solved on that plane. They start from premises not at all in keeping with our intellectual or rationalistic hypotheses. All the answers given by Maitreya to his inquirer are to be understood with this in mind.

"Where does this *Dharmadhātu* pass to?"

Maitreya answered, "It goes where it comes from."

"Where does it come from?"

"It comes from the Bodhisattva's *jñāna*-power and abides in it. There is no-going-away anywhere; there is no following-after; there is no accumulation, no

grouping-together, no piling-up, no standing anywhere in a field or in space.

"It is like the dragon-king who pours rain down: the rains do not come from his mind; nor are they accumulated anywhere; nor are they illusive. It is out of his will-power (*cetana-vasa*), out of his dragon-nature, that rains are poured down in infinite quantity. O my good noble-minded son, so it is with these furnishings of the Tower: they are neither inside nor outside, yet they are manifested to your view because of the Bodhisattva's will-power and your worthy receptivity.

"It is like the magician's conjuring up a world of visions: they do not come from anywhere, they do not pass away anywhere, they show no sign of moving away, all because of magical charm. So with these furnishings of the Tower: they do not go anywhere, they have not been accumulated from anywhere to make themselves visible.

"It is because of the Bodhisattva's unthinkable *jñāna*-power which works out these Maya phenomena; it because of the Bodhisattva's original vow-power (*pūrva-pranidhāna-bala*) whose miraculous self-regulating activities are added to the *jñāna*-power, sustaining it, activating it, inspiring it."

Sudhana now proceeds to ask the Bodhisattva Maitreya regarding the original abode he comes from. Maitreya answers:

"O my good noble-minded son, the Bodhisattva comes from nowhere and departs for nowhere; the Bodhisattva comes from the unmoved, where there

is no abiding, no settling; the Bodhisattva comes from where there is no disappearance, no coming-into-existence; he comes from where there is no staying, no being transferred; no moving, no rising; no vision, no appearance; no karma, no fruition, no birth, no death; no eternal continuity, no interruption."

But, Maitreya continues, the Bodhisattva makes his appearance here on account of his great compassionate heart, his great friendly spirit, for he wishes to save all beings from their sufferings. For this purpose he has disciplined himself in all deeds of purity; he has made great vows in the past to carry out his all-loving decision to be a good friend to all beings. Yet his exertions are characterized by non-exertion, purposelessness, non-selectiveness.

This was the way Maitreya characterized himself, and he may be taken as a typical representative of his class designated as Bodhisattvas, that is, those who are destined to be Buddhas—and therefore they are no other than ourselves. And what we must not forget here is the fact that the Bodhisattvas as such have their own *gocara* or *vishaya* or life-field which does not belong to this world of relativities and rationalization. For this reason, the *Dharmadhātu*, where they live, cannot be predicated with anything we see around us by means of the sense-intellect. As soon as we get into Maitreya's Tower, which is the symbolization of the spiritual macrocosm, we encounter an entirely different atmosphere, far removed from this world. But, of course, this does not mean that the Bodhisattva's world is spatially separated from the *sahāloka* of ours.

VI

To sum up, the Buddhist world-picture presents something distinctly its own, which can be recapitulated as follows:

(1) It has no creator in the sense that the world came into existence at a time when there had never been any before—and this by means of an external agency.

(2) The Buddhist world consists of an infinite number of macrocosms and also microcosms. The world extends beyond all limits in time as well as in space. For this reason, to say that the whole cosmos stands comfortably at the tip of a hair is not an absurdity. Nor is it irrational to state that one thought-instant contains eternity in itself.

(3) The *Dharmadhātu* is a self-regulating community. No outside laws are imposed upon it. Offenders punish themselves. A deed, good or bad, brings its own results, and there is no need for a “judge” who looks after human affairs and makes men dread his judgments. *Attanā ’va katam pāpam, attanā sankilissati, attanā akatam pāpam, attanā ’va visujjhati.*¹⁰

(4) The *Dharmadhātu* is not subject to change, it remains forever serene and undisturbed in any sense; but because of the *pranidhāna*-power of the Buddha or Bodhisattva it manifests a world of becoming where we have all kinds of opposites: good and bad, pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, truth and falsehood, etc., etc. Though they are māyā-like existences when seen from the point of

¹⁰ The *Dhammapada*, 165. By self alone is evil done, by self is one defiled; by self is evil left undone, by self alone is one purified.

view of the Mind itself, they are real as they are.

(5) The *Dharmadhātu* and the Mind (*Citta*) and the Buddha—these three concepts are names for one Reality. The *Dharmadhātu* is the Buddha or Vairocana Buddha in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* when it is personalized; it is the Mind when metaphysically viewed.

(6) The Mind has two aspects when it is considered from our relative standpoint: *prajñā* and *karunā*. *Prajñā* may be translated as transcendental knowledge and *karunā* as compassionate heart. But we must remember that all these translations do not do full justice to the original terms.

(7) Because of *prajñā*, we have self-awareness and because of *karunā* this world of particulars. *Prajñā* and *karunā* in terms of our relative mind complement each other. Because of these we go to hell and at the same time we are reborn in the land of purity and happiness.

(8) According to the Buddhist picture of the world, there is a physical world, a moral world, and a spiritual world. The value and meaning of the world is understood only when one has an insight into the spirituality of things. It is the latter that gives sense and intelligibility to the other two worlds. We cannot reach the spirit by means of moralization and intellectualization. The spirit reveals itself only when these means are exhausted—declare themselves to be altogether helpless. And it is only when this is done that the intellect works out its proper functions, and morals find their proper place to occupy in our lives.

(9) For morality to transcend itself, that is, to raise

itself to the level of spirituality, it is necessary to have something added to it. This something cannot grow out of morality itself, for it has to destroy itself, which is a contradiction. According to Buddhism, this something comes from the Buddha's "original vow" (*pūrvā-pranidhāna*), which asserts itself through "sincerity" and "deep-mindedness." "Sincerity" and "deep-mindedness," which are practically the same thing are the reflection of the *pranidhāna* in our relative minds. Without this acting of the Buddha-mind in ourselves there would be no raising of ourselves to the realm of Bodhisattvas. The raising is really what is designated by a philosopher as "an existential leap."

