

Tian tai and hua yan theology religion



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- The Influence and Status in the History of Chinese Buddhism

Buddhism was introduced to China every bit early as 217 BC, and came into full bloom during the Sui and Tang dynasties which is termed by bookmans as The Golden Age. Sectarian Buddhism is a dramatic development of this period. Actually, Numberss of different religious orders had already arisen in India within both the Mahayana and Hinayana long earlier Buddhism being introduced into China. Many of these religious orders were transplanted to China and underwent assorted amplifications and alterations. Furthermore, a few religious orders of chiefly localized Chinese beginning grew up ; however, their disciples normally claim their links with India. (Blofeld 1948, 121) Harmonizing to Chen, the outgrowth of these religious orders was the consequence of the Chinese response to Buddhism. It indicated how the Chinese Buddhists took over certain indispensable Buddhist rules and reshaped them to accommodate the Chinese disposition, although some of them are non survived today. Therefore, these religious orders were non any longer Indian systems being imported into China but de facto schools of Chinese Buddhism. (Chen 1964, 297)

Chinese Buddhists during the Sui and Tang dynasties continually received direct inspiration from India. And with the aid of new interlingual renditions of Bibles and the reaching of Indian Buddhist missionaries, they created their ain religious orders and systems, after sorting the traditions and philosophical inclinations from the North and the South within China in earlier periods. (Jan Yuan-hua 1966, 4-5) In this historical and spiritual context, from the ulterior half of the 6th century till the 8th century, the Tian-

tai religious order and the vinaya religious order, Hua-yan were formed, severally.

Tian-tai religious order and Hua-yan religious order can be viewed as two of the most philosophically of import schools in Chinese Buddhism, or in the words of T'ai Hsu, two of " eight gems united in a individual decoration. " (Blofeld 1948, 121) These two religious orders have similar dogma and nomenclature in some ways, but ultimately their metaphysical positions are rather contrary to each other, as one bookman Liu argues. (JeeLoo Liu) This paper therefore tries to compare these two religious orders in many ways to uncover the similarities and differences they shared in their philosophies.

Cardinal Texts

The Tian-tai religious order was founded by Zhi-yi (538-597) . Its name was from the mountain Tiantai in Zhejiang state where Zhi-yi established its chief temple. Like many other Chinese Buddhists in his clip, Zhi-yi was burdened with the multiplicity of Buddhist Bibles of diverse periods and beginnings. He developed a syncretism on historical rules, by putting up a philosophy of the degrees of Buddhist instructions, with each degree matching to a period in Buddha ' s life and to the kind of disciples he was talking to in that period.

Zhi-yi ' s talks were recorded by his disciple Kuang-ting (561-632) . His talks were chiefly concerned with the Bible of the Lotus Sutra, abruptly for " the Sutra of the Lotus Blossom of the Subtle Dharma " , which was the nucleus Buddhist text endorsed by this religious order. The Lotus Sutra teaches that the historical sakyamuni was but an earthly manifestation of the ageless Buddha. Harmonizing to Chen, the most of import of these talks comprise

the undermentioned three great plants of the religious order. The first is Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsuan-i (Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra) in 20 chapters. This was systematic study of the Buddha ' s instructions with the Lotus Sutra. The 2nd is Miao-fa lien-hua ching wen-chu (Textual Commentary on the Lotus Sutra) in 20 chapters, and the 3rd is Mo-ho chih-kuan (Great Concentration and Insight) in 20 chapters. (Chen 1964, 304-305)

Hua-yan Buddhism derived its name from the Hua-yan Sutra, sanskrit rubric of which is Avatamsaka, translated as " The Flower Ornament Scripture " (by Thomas Cleary) or as " The Flowery Splendor Scripture (by Wing-tsit Chan) . " Although Hua-yan religious order can be traced back to the Ti-lun group who were active during the Northern Qi (550-577) and Northern Zhou (557-581) dynasties (Chen 1964, 297) , the initiation of this religious order was traditionally attributed to a series of so called five " patriarchs " . The first laminitis was a Chinese Buddhist Du-shun (557-640) , and the 2nd patriarch is Zhi-yan (602-668) who studied with Du-shun. But, it is good acknowledged that the existent laminitis of Hua-yan religious order is its 3rd patriarch, Fa-zang (643-712) . It was he who introduced the division of " the kingdom of Principle " and " the Realm of Things " , which was continually developed by Hua-yan ' s 4th patriarch Cheng-guan (738-839?) into the specifying the thesis for Hua-yan Buddhism-the " four Dharma kingdom. " (JeeLoo Liu)

There was a fable about this Avatamska sutra which was preached by the Blessed one instantly after his enlightenment. Because the contents of the sutra were so profound and abstruse, the audience was unable to grok their

philosophical branchings. As a consequence, the Buddha decided to alter tactics and to prophesy, alternatively, the more simple Hinayana sutras. This Avatamsaka sutra became the footing of the Hua-yan religious order in China. There is no Indian opposite number of this religious order.

Harmonizing to Chen, there exist three Chinese interlingual renditions of this sutra: a) by Buddhahadra in 60 chapters made during the period 418-420 ; B) by Sikshananda in 80 chapters during 695-704, and degree Celsiuss) by Prajna in 40 chapters during 795-810. The last is basically a interlingual rendition of the Gandavyula, or the portion of the whole sutra which describes the journey of the young person Sudhana in prosecuting truth.

(Chen 1964, 313)

Main Teachings

By and large talking, the Tian-tai religious order classifies the Mahayana philosophies and postulates that there is no cardinal hostility between the different religious orders or even between Mahayana and Hinayana.

However, the Hua-yan religious order classifies the Mahayana philosophies and analyses the nature of being in conformance with the basic construct of emptiness. (Blofeld 1948, 124-125) Besides, harmonizing to Liu, the metaphysic of Tian-tai is compatible with commonsense pragmatism, while Hua-yan ' s metaphysics is closer to a signifier of subjective idealism which straight opposes commonsensible pragmatism. (JeeLoo Liu)

As we mentioned above, with more and more Buddhist sutras and Bibles went into China, till the Tang dynasty, Chinese Buddhists had began to confront immense volume of literature and instructions, diverse philosophies and thoughts. How one person could sermonise so many discourses during

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his life-time, or how one could explicate the legion contradictions and doctrinal differences taught in the Bibles? On the footing of pattern get downing from the ulterior portion of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534) of set uping, sorting and systematising the tremendous mass of sutras that had been translated into Chinese, one possible solution at that clip was to split the Buddha ' s instructions into chronological periods. (Chen 1964, 305) To sort of the Buddhism Sutras and instructions was the common composite and formidable undertaking for both Tian-tai and Hua-yan religious orders.

Similarities in Classification of the Sutras and Teachings. Zhi-yi acquitted himself of this mammoth undertaking excellently, thanks to he was a literary mastermind and familiar with the whole cannon. Zhi-yi formulated a system to split the periods of Buddha ' s instructions. The system was comprised of encyclopedic inside informations and scholarship to fulfill the Buddhist pedants demands of the clip. The system can be summarized as " the five periods and the eight instructions " . The five periods point to the division harmonizing to chronology, and eight instructions refer to the division harmonizing to method and nature. The five periods are: Hua-yan or Avatamsaka (Garland) , A-han or Agama (Scriptures) , Fang-teng or Vaipulya (Broad and equal, simple Mahayana) , Ta-pan-jo or Mahaprajnaparamita (Perfection of Wisdom) and Fa-hua nieh-p'an, Saddharma (Lotus-sutra) and Mahaparinirvana (Great Decease) (Chen 1964, 305)

The theory of above five periods showed its effort to synthesise chronologically the maestro ' s instructions. However, serious and sagacious audience might happen that the Buddha sometimes preached the

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instructions of the five periods at the same time. In order to decide this contingent accident, Hua-yan religious order formulated the eight philosophies: four harmonizing to the methods of learning and four harmonizing to the nature of the learning itself. The first one-fourth consisted of: a) abrupt or sudden philosophy ; B) gradual philosophy ; degree Celsius) secret philosophy ; vitamin D) indeterminate philosophy. The division harmonizing to the nature of the philosophy includes: a) Pitaka philosophy or the Hinayana instruction intended for the sravakas and pratyekabuddhas ; B) common philosophy, the learning common to both Hinayana and simple Mahayana ; degree Celsius) particular philosophy, preached particularly for the Bodhisattva merely ; vitamin D) unit of ammunition or perfect philosophy, which teaches the in-between way of common designation, that one component contains all elements. (Chen 1964, 308-309)

In contrast to the Tian-tai, the Hua-yan besides has its own categorization of the Buddha ' s instructions harmonizing to their nature. Whereas the Tian-tai ' s quadruple division of pitaka, common, particular and perfect we mentioned above, the Hua-yan adds the 5th categorization, sudden. Actually, the Hua-yan categorization is superior to that of the Tian-tai, because when Zhi-yi made his categorization, the religious orders such as the Hua-yan, Chan, and Fa-xiang had not arisen. Therefore, Zhi-yi ' s strategy was not yet complete since it did not include all the religious orders of Chinese Buddhism. The Hua-yan categorization corrects Zhi-yi ' s lack with its quintuple division: a) the instruction of the sravakas or listeners, which refers to the Hinayana instructions as found in the agamas, which deny the being of single but admit the being of the elements or

Dharma ; b) the simple philosophy of the Great Vehicle, which teaches that all things, holding come into being by causing, have no self-nature and are hence empty ; degree Celsius) the concluding philosophy of the Great Vehicle, which asserts that although there is merely emptiness and that all the Dharma are illusive in nature, there is besides the fact of illusive being ; vitamin D) the disconnected philosophy of the Great Vehicle, in which enlightenment is attained at one time, there is no demand for analyzing the Bibles or practising spiritual subject ; e) the unit of ammunition philosophy of the Great Vehicle, which teaches that ten thousand things of the phenomenal universe represent the absolute head or the thing-in-itself, so that the all is the 1, the one is the all. (Chen 1964, 318-319)

In my position, both religious orders ' categorization of Buddhism harmonizing to periods and nature represents a colossal effort to convey some order and system out of the mass of contradictory thoughts, an enterprise to understand the development of Buddhist thought from its beginnings to its mature development. Putting it in another manner, we may see their strategy as a categorization of the cardinal metaphysical jobs of Buddhism, and an advanced reading of Indian Buddhist philosophies in the visible radiation of autochthonal Chinese presuppositions.

Differences in Other Doctrines Such as the Truth, Absolute Mind, and Noumenon and Phenomena etc.

The Tian-tai religious order propagated that all component things are temporary. There exists a true province or thing-in-itself which is realizable through and manifested in phenomena. There does not be noumenon

besides phenomenon ; the phenomenon itself is noumenon. The Tian-tai religious order established the treble truth: nothingness, temporariness and mean, to avoid believing in footings of a duality, noumenon versus phenomenon. Based on this philosophy of truth, all things have on independent world of their ain ; so they are said to be empty. This emptiness is sometimes called the truth of interrupting through subjective semblances. Though a thing is empty, it does bask impermanent being as phenomenon, this is called the truth of impermanent being or the truth of constitution. The synthesis of emptiness and phenomenal being, of catholicity and specialness, is called the truth of the mean or center. These three truths of the Tian-tai religious order emphasize the thought of entirety and common designation ; the whole and its parts are indistinguishable. (Chen 1964, 311)

The basic instruction of the Huan-yen religious order focuses around the theory of causing by the cosmopolitan rule or the dharmadhatu. Harmonizing to this, all the Dharma in the existence arose at the same time ; in other words, it is the creative activity of the existence by the universe itself. The Hua-yan Teachs that all these Dharmas are empty. This emptiness has two aspects-the inactive facet, as rule or thing-in-itself, and the dynamic facet, as phenomenon. From this the sect returns to its basic places: foremost, that rule and phenomenon are interfused unimpededly with each other, and the 2nd, that all phenomena are reciprocally identified with one another. (Chen 1964, 316-317)

Hua-yan ' s 3rd patriarch Fa-zang composed an essay on the Golden Lion in 704, when he was summoned into the castle to explicate the Hua-yan-sutra

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for the Empress Wu Zetian. In this essay gold is symbolized as the thing-in-itself Li or rule, while the king of beasts as shih or phenomenon. Li or rule has no signifier of its ain ; it may presume any shih or signifier that conditions assign to it. The first point stressed in the essay is, harmonizing to his theory, all phenomena are manifestations of Li or thing-in-itself. So, each person phenomenon embracings every other phenomenon. The 2nd point concerns li and shih, the relationship between thing-in-itself and phenomenon. Harmonizing to Fa-zang, the gold and king of beasts exist at the same time, each one inclusive of the other. This means that every event or thing in the phenomenal universe represents the thing-in-itself wholly and absolutely. In such a state of affairs, every phenomenon is a manifestation of the thing-in-itself ; therefore the 1 is the many, the many is the 1. However, each phenomenon remains in its ain place, distinguishable and dissimilar from the thing-in-itself. Another philosophy of Hua-yan we may necessitate to touch is that no Dharma can be independently, for each one possesses the sextuple nature immanently-generalness and forte, similarity and diverseness, integrating and decomposition. (Chen 1964, 316-317) Sum uping the above philosophies, we may easy make the decision that the prototype of Hua-yan idea consists of the followers: there is a universe of Li or ultimate rule and a universe of shih or phenomena, which are absolutely interfused with each other. At the same clip each person phenomenon is besides unimpededly identified with every other phenomenon. A totalitarian system is therefore established, with everything taking to one point, the Buddha, in the centre.

The designation of phenomena with the absolute is farther demonstrated by the Tian-tai philosophy of the absolute head. This absolute head embraces the existence in its entirety. All things in the universe depend on this head for their being. This absolute head originally contains two natures, one pure and the other impure for all times. Its pure nature is responsible for properties of the Buddha, while its impure nature is responsible for the countless things in the phenomenal universe. What 's more, Tian-tai religious order follows that all things ' position of things in the existence as being big or little, long or short, are due to semblance, which can merely be destroyed by religious cultivation. This cultivation consists of chih, concentration, and kuan, penetration.

Hua-yan differed from other Mahayana schools such as the Tian-tai in one of important regard. The latter concentrated its attention on the relationship between the thing-in-itself and phenomenon, whereas the former elucidated the relationship between one phenomenon and the other. It maintained that since all phenomena are manifestations of the one changeless thing-in-itself, they are in perfect harmoniousness with one another, like the different moving ripples of the same H₂O. From the spiritual point of view everything in the existence, animate and inanimate, are all representations of same supreme head, and can execute the work of the Blessed One. This is why the religious order is called the perfect instruction of the Buddha. (Chen 1964, 313) Liu further argues that Tian-tai 's metaphysics is compatible with commonsense pragmatism, while Hua-yan 's metaphysics is closer to a signifier of subjective idealism which straight opposes commonsensible pragmatism. (JeeLoo Liu)

The Influence and Status in the History of Chinese Buddhism

On one manus, Tian-tai Buddhism, though its ritual, its iconography, and its psychological regimen are of Indian Buddhist beginning, is distinctively Chinese in several respects. It reflects the perennial Chinese attempt to accommodate divergent position, itself possibly a contemplation of the high rating assigned by the Chinese to harmony in human personal business.

(Wright 1959, 79-80) As Blofeld early points, Tian-tai religious order is one of the most of import in China and originated in an effort to accommodate whatever appears conflicting in the assorted sutras. (Blofeld 1948, 165)

The Tian-tai dogmas have been by and large regarded as among the finest merchandises of the Buddhist philosophical development in China. They are called the concluding and circular philosophies of Buddhism-final because they synthesize all the utmost and nonreversible philosophies of the other schools, and unit of ammunition because the school assures cosmopolitan redemption by confirming the presence of the Buddha-nature in all animate existences and because it employs all possible agencies to redemption.

(Chen 1964, 313) Tian-tai ' s theory that everything is a manifestation of the absolute head leads logically to the place by the 9th patriarch of the school, chan-jan (711-782) , who held that the nature of Buddha is to be found even in inanimate tinkles such as mountains, rivers, or the tiniest atom of dust.

On the other manus, Hua-yan religious order is by and large considered most modern Nipponese and Chinese bookmans as the most theoretical and systematic presentation of Buddhist thoughts among the assorted Buddhist

schools that appeared in China during the Sui and Tang period. Furthermore, its philosophical and spiritual instructions played an important function in the spiritual history of East Asia. Chinese Chan Buddhism was deeply influenced by it. Historical papers show that Tsung-mi, the 5th patriarch of the Hua-yan religious order, besides occupies an outstanding place in the history of Chan. During the Song (960-1279) , the Hua-yan metaphysics were wholly assimilated by the Chan Buddhism. (Buswell 1993, 233) Hua-yan sect strongly resembles Whitehead ' s procedure doctrine, and has strong deductions for modern doctrine and faith. Hua-yan is besides a cosmic ecology, which views all being as an organic integrity, so it has an obvious entreaty to the modern person, both pupils and layperson. (Cook 1977, foreword)

In decision, the Tian-tai and Hua-yan shared many similarities and differences in footings of their Cardinal texts, chief instructions and influence and position in the history of Chinese Buddhism, when confronting common challenges that sectarian Buddhism stunningly developed during the Sui and Tang periods.