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Yung-ming's Syncretism of Pure Land and Ch'an

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The interaction of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism has been of interest to some scholars, but their attention has mainly centered on their antithetical rather than harmonious relationship.[1] This paper will be concerned with Ch'an-Pure Land syncretism. This is a unique feature of Chinese Buddhism, especially in the post-T'ang era, but one that has been neglected by modern scholarship.

Although the practice Ch'an meditation and *nien-fo*[a] (Buddha-recitation; Japanese: *nembutsu*) together started early in the history of Chinese Buddhism,[2] it was not until the early Sung Dynasty that Ch'an-Pure Land syncretism became a dominant movement. The instrumental figure in the promotion and popularization of this movement was Yung-ming Yen-shou[b] (904-975), an enlightened Ch'an monk and a Pure Land practitioner.[3] He was one of the greatest syncretists China ever produced. Before him, of course, there already existed syncretic thought, especially that attempting the reconciliation of Ch'an and doctrinal Buddhism (*chiao*).[4] However, it was Yung-ming who synthesized all systems of Buddhist thought in theory, and more importantly, united all approaches of Buddhist disciplines in practice. This paper will investigate his Pure Land ideology and the doctrinal rationale for his syncretism.

I. Ideology

Yung-ming's soteriology and Pure Land ideology were mainly set forth in his *Wan-shan tung-kuei chi*[c] (Myriad Virtues

Return to the Same Source), which demonstrated his syncretic spirit, especially with regard to diverse religious practices. In this work, Yung-ming maintained that not only *nien-fo* and Ch'an meditation, but also all other forms of practice (*wan-shan*, myriad of virtues) were conducive to achieving the final goal of enlightenment (*t'ung-kuei*, literally meaning "same destination"). Nevertheless, Ch'an and *nien-fo* were the main practices among myriad virtues.

The famous "fourfold summary" (*ssu-liao chien*)[d] of Ch'an and Pure Land, which was attributed to Yung-ming, illustrates his attitude toward the joint practice of Ch'an and *nien-fo*:[5]

> With Ch'an but no Pure Land, nine out of ten people will go astray.
> When death comes suddenly, they must accept it in an instant.
>
> With Pure Land but no Ch'an, ten thousand out of ten thousand people will achieve birth [in the Pure Land].
>
> If one can see Amitābha face to face, why worry about not attaining enlightenment?
>
> With both Ch'an and Pure Land, it is like a tiger who has grown horns.
> One will be a teacher for mankind in this life, and a Buddhist patriarch in the next.
>
> With neither Ch'an nor Pure Land, it is like falling on an iron bed with bronze posters [i.e., one of the hells].
>
> For endless *kalpas* one will find nothing to rely on.[6]

Coming from a Ch'an background and adhering strongly to Hua-yen philosophy, Yung-ming based his Pure Land thought more on these two schools than on the orthodox Pure Land teachings. The concept of "one Mind" was essential to Yung-ming's philosophy of Pure Land and his view of the Pure Land was termed "Mind-only Pure Land" (*wei-tsin ching-t'u*),[e] in contrast to the "*chih-fang li-tsiang*".[7,f] The "*chih-fang li-tsiang*" which means pointing to the West—the location of the Pure Land—and setting up in the mind the presence of Buddha Amitābha, recognizes the objective and physical reality of the

Pure Land. The "Mind-only Pure Land," on the other hand, notes that the Pure Land is a projection of the Mind, that is, the Pure Land is Mind alone. Like most Ch'an masters who strongly believed that Mind is Buddha, Yung-ming naturally did not hold a realistic conception of the Pure Land conceived of as an external object. According to Yung-ming, the understanding of the Mahāyāna doctrine of Mind-only is fundamental for the proper attitude toward Pure Land Buddhism. Thus he said, "If one knows the Mind, one is born into the Pure Land of Mind-only; but if attached to external circumstances, one will fall into the circumstances with which one happens to be associated."[8] Yung-ming supported his idealistic perception of the Pure Land by scriptural citations. One often-quoted passage was from the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*, which says, "If one desires to purify the Buddha-land, one should first purify one's Mind; if the Mind is purified, the Buddha-land is also purified."[9] The implication is that the PureLand is created from one's true pure Mind.

According to the doctrine of Mind-only, just as the Pure Land is the manifestation of Mind, so the manifestation of the Buddha is nothing but an emanation from the Mind. If the Buddha is created from one's Mind, are there any other *buddhas* besides the Mind-Buddha? If not, the view is nihilistic. To answer this question, Yung-ming says,

> Because the self-nature pervades everywhere, one perceives other *buddhas* to be none other than the self-Buddha. The forms of self and other *buddhas* are not non-existing, for both are [manifestations of] one's Mind. Sentient beings are like the molds which shape forms. When the mold is removed, one sees the self-Buddha and other *buddhas*. Why is it that other *buddhas* are none other than self-Buddha? It is because [other *buddhas* are] molded from one's Mind. Nevertheless, other *buddhas* should not be denied.[10]

Here Yung-ming employs an analogy from the *Pao-tsuang lun*.[g] A man makes molds of different shapes, and casts the smelted gold into different objects. Although the smelted gold comes out in various forms, actually it is neither form nor non-form. Yet it is manifested in forms. The practice of *nien-fo* is also like this. The smelted gold is likened to the *dharmakāya* of the

Tathāgata, and the molds to the minds of sentient beings. When the *dharmakāya* is "cast" into the molds of the minds of sentient beings, it manifests various forms according to the minds of beings. However, the *dharmakāya* is neither form nor non-form. Why is it non-form? It has no fixed form, because it is manifested from the Mind and thus has no substance of its own. Why is it not non-form? It appears in forms, for it is brought forth from the combinations of conditions; thus it is not devoid of an illusory form. In other words, from the deluded mind, sentient beings see the existence of other *buddhas*; from the enlightened mind, they realize the identity of themselves with the Buddha.

An imaginary interlocuter raises a question, "If there is no Buddha outside the Mind and the Buddha seen is nothing but the Mind, why does Pure Land School teach that the transformation body of the Buddha appears to welcome beings into the Pure Land?"[11] To this Yung-ming answers,

> The *dharmakāya* of the Tathāgata is originally without production and extinction. It is the transformation body (*nirmāṇakāya*) of the Buddha, which comes from the true Body (*dharmakāya*) of the Buddha, and appears to greet the deluded beings. Because the transformation body is just the true body which corresponds to Suchness, it is neither coming nor going, and yet it responds according to the minds of sentient beings. Again, because the transformation body is the true body, we say it has no going. On the other hand, the transformation body is transformed from the true body; [we see] it appear as coming and going. In other words, it is not coming yet coming, and invisible yet visible. That it is not coming yet coming is similar to the reflection of moon on the water, and that it is invisible yet visible is similar to the sudden appearance of the moving clouds.[12]

What Yung-ming is explaining is that the true body (*dharmakāya*) is immutable, yet it manifests its mutability in transformed form. Would this not then prove that there are actually *buddhas* outside the Mind? Yung-ming answers this question,

> The virtue of the original vow of the compassionate Tathāgata, which serves as a powerful helping seed, causes sentient beings who hold affinity with the Buddha to recite the Buddha's name, practice contemplation, and accumu-

> late blessings, wisdom and myriad virtues. Because of the power of these virtues which serves as a condition, one's Mind draws the response of the Buddha's greeting. The body of the Buddha is eternally tranquil without coming or going. It is the cognitive minds of sentient beings, depending on the supreme power of the virtue of the Buddha's original vow, that manifest the coming and going. This is similar to the images reflected in the mirror and activities in a dream. The images in the mirror are neither inside nor outside; the activities in the dream are neither existing nor non-existing.[13]

Interpreting *nein-fo* in the light of idealism, Yung-ming gives it a new meaning. To Yung-ming, *nien-fo* means to leave behind all thoughts. When no thoughts arise, the Mind gives rise to neither discrimination, names, obstruction, desire, nor attainment. Thus, when one reaches the state of no-thought and no-word, the true practice of *nien-fo samādhi* is realized. To explain it, Yung-ming quotes the *Chih-kuan,*

> When practicing *nien-fo samādhi*, the practitioner should ask himself if it is the Mind or the body that attains the [vision of the] Buddha. The Buddha cannot be attained from the Mind, nor from the body. The physical form of the Buddha is not attained through the Mind and the Mind of Buddha is not attained through form. Why is that? [When talking about] the Mind, there is no Buddha-mind [to be attained], and [when talking about] form, there is no Buddha-form [to be attained].[14]

Then when and how does one see the Buddha? When one sees the true form of all *dharmas*, one sees the Buddha. What is the true form of all *dharmas*? It is nothing other than absolute *śūnyatā*. An analogy is drawn between the seeing of the Buddha and the story of three men who, after having heard the fame of three beautiful prostitutes in Vaiśālī, thought of them day and night, and had sexual intercourse with them in a dream. After awakening from the dream, they knew that they had not gone anywhere, yet the thing they wished for was realized. Hence they came to realize that all *dharmas* arose from one's thoughts and thus were empty of substance. The practice of *nien-fo* is also like this. The Buddha is neither coming nor going, yet there are manifesta-

tions of his coming and going due to one's intensive thinking of the Buddha.

If "outside the Buddha there is no Mind; outside the Mind, there is no Buddha," why then is the practice of *nien-fo* taught in Pure Land Buddhism? Yung-ming answers,

> The practice of *nien-fo* is taught for those who do not believe one's Mind is the Buddha and thus seek for the Buddha outside [of the Mind]. Those of medium and inferior faculties are expediently taught to concentrate their scattered thoughts on the physical features of the Buddha. Relying on the external in order to manifest the internal, one will be able gradually to awaken to One-mind. But those of superior faculties are taught to contemplate the true form of the body of the Buddha.[15]

This passage indicates that in spite of the spiritualized and internalized conception of Pure Land, Yung-ming also advocated the easily accessible and tangible approach of Buddha recitation, and the longing for birth in the Pure Land, which relies on the external form. Thus in the *Wan-shan t'ung-kuei chi*, Yung-ming mentions two approaches to the practice of *nien-fo*. One approach is called *ting-hsin*[h] (mind of concentration), which is to practice *nien-fo* with concentrated mind and will result in birth in a superior category in the Pure Land. The other is to practice *nien-fo* with *chuan-hsin*[i] (single mindfulness), which combines the recitation of the Buddha's name with the cultivation of myriad good deeds, and will lead to birth in an inferior category.[16] The first approach refers to the meditative *nien-fo* which is meant for those with high spiritual endowment, while the second one refers to the invocative *nien-fo* which is prescribed for those of less spiritual capability. Although Yung-ming understood that theoretically the Buddha as well as the Pure Land were nothing but the Mind, he also realized that there was a wide diversity of people's capabilities, and that there was also a gap between theory and practice. That is, even if some people might be able to reach the spiritual maturity of understanding that the Mind is the Buddha and the Pure Land, the fact is that they are not really *buddhas* yet. Thus, the gap between intellectual understanding and actualizing makes the practice necessary. Furthermore, according to Yung-ming, there are those who

might believe in the teaching of no-birth, but if their power is insufficient, their insight shallow and their minds distracted, or if they still have strong habitual attachments to phenomena, they should seek birth in the Buddha-land where, supported by that superior environment, they can easily achieve the power of patience and practice the *bodhisattva* way.

In Yung-ming's conception of Pure Land faith, the Pure Land itself is not the goal but the means, for it provides a favorable environment for cultivation. And the purpose of cultivation in the Pure Land is closely related to the idea of returning to the world for *bodhisattva* practices. Yung-ming quotes the *Wang-shen lun*[j] (*Treatise on Birth in the Pure Land*) to make this point:

> Those who are able to roam in hell with ease are those who have obtained "patience of no-birth" after birth in the Pure Land and have then returned to the realm of birth and death (*saṃsāra*) in order to teach those in hell. For the sake of saving suffering sentient beings, one must seek birth in the Pure Land.[17]

In summary, Yung-ming's Pure Land thought is made up of three insights. First of all, in theory, he bases his Pure Land practice on the light of Ch'an understanding and the Mind theory of Hua-yen, Fa-hsiang, and Ch'an. To Yung-ming, the *nien-fo* practice is a training for internal realization. In other words, the Pure Land should be understood as the pure basis of one's own mind and Amitābha as no different from the self-body.[k] This view of the Pure Land and Amitābha is taken from the persepctive of the "ultimate truth," and is consistent with the Mahāyāna doctrine of Buddha-nature. Secondly, in practice, Yung-ming understands the abilities of ordinary men too well to exclude the external focus—that is, the easy practice of the Buddha recitation and the physical existence of another land where one could enjoy the extraordinary environment and practice the *Dharma*. This view is based on the "conventional truth." It is Yung-ming's compassion for less spiritually capable people that leads him to advocate this egalitarian approach to human liberation. Thirdly, to Yung-ming, the internal and external approaches, i.e., the theory and practice, are not contradictory, because of the doctrine of non-duality of the two truths (i.e., the Middle Way). Thus he says,

> Whatever the Buddha teaches is not separate from the two truths. When the ultimate truth governs the conventional truth, there is nothing that is not true, and when the conventional truth is mingled with the ultimate truth, all *dharmas* become apparent as they really are. A *sūtra* says, "One must perfect all *dharmas*, and yet leave behind the notion of the reality of all *dharmas*." "To perfect all *dharmas*" means to perfect all *dharmas* from the perspective of conventional truth, while "to leave behind all *dharmas*" means that ultimate truth is without form.[18]

This is to say that knowing the identity of the Buddha and one's self does not prevent one from performing the *nien-fo* exercise, and that realizing the Pure Land as none other than one's mind does not prevent one from seeking birth in the Pure Land.

II. Yung-ming's Ch'an-Pure Land Syncretism

After discussing Yung-ming's ideology of Pure Land Buddhism, we now turn to his Ch'an-Pure Land syncretism. There are three factors which led to Yung-ming's advocacy of the joint practice of Ch'an and Pure Land. The first was his non-sectarian attitude toward all systems of Buddhist thought in general, and Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism in particular. This syncretic ideology was consistent with the traditional Chinese philosophy of harmony.

The second factor was the strong antagonism, prevailing at the time of Yung-ming, between Ch'an and Pure Land. Ch'an practitioners denigrated Pure Land believers as simple-minded seekers of the external instead of the true self, whereas the Pure Land followers criticized Ch'an monks as arrogant and undisciplined. Yung-ming saw the harm caused by the extremely unconventional (anti-scriptural and anti-ritual) attitude cherished by some Ch'an followers, which often led them to indulge in "wild Ch'an" in which they utilized various fanatic and eccentric gimmicks to demonstrate their understanding of Ch'an. Some even went so far as to ignore all disciplines and disregard totally the accepted codes of morality on the pretext of practicing non-attachment. To Yung-ming, the application of the "wild Ch'an" was dangerous if the person applying it had no genuine insight but only superficial understanding. Thus Yung-ming incorpo-

rated *nien-fo* practice, as well as other disciplines,[19] into Ch'an so as to counteract the one-sided practice of Ch'an.

The third factor that led to Yung-ming's Ch'an-Pure Land syncretism was the socio-political situation during his time. It was a very turbulent era, in which the suffering populace cried out for salvation. Ch'an meditation was too difficult and demanding for the masses, but when Ch'an was accompanied by *nien-fo*, it became an accessible, effective and egalitarian approach, for it suited people of high and low spiritual endowment.

Although in the syncretic mind of Yung-ming, there is no theoretical and practical contradiction in the joint exercise of Ch'an and *nien-fo*, traditionally Ch'an and *nien-fo* are radically different. Therefore, let us first examine how these two distinctive types of Buddhist experience differ from each other, and how Yung-ming syncretized them.

A. "Other-power" Versus "Self-power"

One of the most obvious differences between Ch'an and Pure Land lies in the "self-power"-oriented salvation of Ch'an versus "other-power"-oriented salvation of the Pure Land. The following quotations from Shan-tao and Hui-neng, which are representative of the devotional Pure Land and the intuitionally experiential Ch'an respectively, demonstrate well their perceptions on the approach to salvation. Shan-tao, the systematizer of the Pure Land teaching, says,

> Buddha Amitābha through his forty-eight vows takes in sentient beings who by harboring no doubt and worry and relying on the saving power of the Buddha's vows, are certain to attain birth [in the Pure Land].[20]

On the other hand, in response to a question regarding the attainment of birth in the Pure Land, Hui-neng says,

> The deluded person concentrates on Buddha and wishes to be born in the other land; the awakened person makes pure his own mind. . .If only the mind has no impurity, the Western Land is not far. If the mind gives rise to impurity, even though you invoke the Buddha and seek to be reborn [in the West], it will be difficult to reach. . . . If you awaken to the sudden *Dharma* of

> birthlessness, you will see the Western Land in an instant. If you do not awaken to the Sudden Teaching of Mahāyāna, even if you concentrate on the Buddha and seek to be reborn, the road will be long. How can you hope to reach it?[21]

From the above quotations, we see a sharp distinction between these two kinds of Buddhist soteriology: the "path of Pure Land" based on the other-power from the grace of the Buddha, and the "path of the sages" based on good works and religious exercises such as meditation, scholarship, ascetic disciplines—generally any attempt to realize enlightenment by one's own efforts.

Traditionally, the notion of "other-power" denotes the absolute surrendering of oneself to the saving power of the Buddha. But what does "other-power" really mean and to what extent can one rely on it? Is there absolute "other-power"? In other words, is the working of "other-power" possible without some sort of response from "self-power"? Let us first examine how "other-power" has been interpreted in the context of Chinese Buddhism. In the *Ten Questions Concerning the Pure Land* (*Ching-t'u-shih-yi lun*[1]), Chih-I is quoted as defining "other-power" as follows:

> "Other-power" means that if one believes that the power of the compassionate vow of Buddha Amitābha takes to himself all sentient beings who are mindful of him, then one is enabled to generate the mind of *bodhi*, practice *nien-fo samādhi*, detest the body which is within the three worlds, and practice giving, morality, and merit. And if within each of these various practices, [the merit is] transferred [to others], and if one vows to be born in the Pure Land of Amitābha by relying on the power of the Buddha's vows, one's nature and the Buddha's response will be in mutual accord, and one will be born [in the Pure Land].[22]

In this definition of "other-power," obviously it is the faith in the saving power of the Buddha which generates the *bodhi*-mind as well as other practices. But it is through "other-power" accompanied by "self-power" that "one's nature and the Buddha's response are in mutual accord," and this harmony actualizes birth in the Pure Land. Hence, the "other-power" is not the exclusive factor leading to the Pure Land. If this interpretation

sounds unorthodox, let us examine some interpretations from the orthodox Pure Land masters. T'an-luan defines the two powers—self and other—this way:

> I regard "other-power" as the helping condition.[m] How could it be otherwise? Now, I shall set forth again a metaphor of self-power and other-power.
>
> [Self-power] is like a person who, because he is afraid of the three evil *gatis*, keeps the precepts; because he keeps them, he is able to practice *samādhi*; because of *samādhi*, he is able to exercise supernatural power; because of the supernatural power, he is able to traverse the four corners of the world.
>
> Then, again [other-power is] like an inferior person,[n] who cannot even mount on a donkey [with his own strength]; yet if he accompanies the flight of a *cakravartin* (Universal King), he can then traverse the four corners of the world without hindrance.[23]

T'an-luan illustrates the "other-power" method of salvation through the analogy of a weak man going everywhere in the world by relying on the power of the *cakravartin*, yet still he calls the "other-power" a "helping condition" in the sense that "other-power" is not the exclusive condition. Just as the power of the *cakravartin* is of no avail if the person has no desire for travel, so the saving power of the Buddha cannot function if men do not send out the "corresponding power," which can be in the forms of austere discipline, desire for birth in the Pure Land, *nien-fo* practice or even simply "faith and faith alone." Otherwise, motivated by infinite compassion, the Buddha would have liberated all beings long ago through his saving power alone. Hence, in the context of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, three factors or conditions usually are necessary for assurance of birth: faith, vow and practcie—although the practice here does not necessarily refer to the traditional Buddhist disciplines of *śīla, samādhi* and *prajñā*. Nevertheless, "other-power" in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism never means total abandoning of one's own spiritual effort. As long as some sort of self-effort, whether in the form of vocative *nien-fo* or simply faith alone, is required to correspond with the "other-power," it seems that the gap between these two seemingly contradictory approaches can be bridged.

It is in this notion of self-powered *nien-fo* that Yung-ming

and other syncretists find the simultaneous practices of self-power-oriented Pure Land and other-power-oriented Ch'an meditation possible.

B. Nien-fo *Versus Meditation*

The other main difference between the Pure Land and Ch'an, which is closely related to the notion of "self-power"/ "other-power" polarity, is the devotional *nien-fo* practice of the Pure Land and the rigorous meditation of Ch'an. Psychologically, there are four approaches to *nien-fo*.[24] The first is to think of the Buddha as fully enlightened and thus to take him as a model to follow for one's moral training. The second is to call upon the name, since the name itself contains innumerable merits. This form of *nien-fo* is based on the belief in the mystery of the name and the sound of pronouncing it. The third form of *nien-fo* is to call upon the Buddha's name as the saving power and last resort for liberating beings from the worldly sufferings. The psychological impact of this type of *nien-fo* is so powerful that the Pure Land devotees believe that only one calling of the Buddha with much intensity at the time of death will warrant a response from the saving power of the Buddha and thus assure one's birth in the Pure Land.

It is in the fourth type of *nien-fo* that Yung-ming found some common ground between the devotional *nien-fo* and the intuitive Ch'an meditation. This form may be termed *Wei-hsin nien-fo*[o] (Mind-only *nien-fo*) or *I-hsin nien-fo*[p] (One-mind *nien-fo*). Yung-ming defines it as follows:

> The Mind-only *nien-fo* means contemplating that the Mind pervades all *dharmas*. After realizing that the phenomenal is created by the Mind and that Mind itself is the Buddha, then whatever one thinks of is nothing but the Buddha. The *Pratyutpanna Sūtra* says, "For example, a man is delighted to see seven kinds of jewel and his relatives in his dream, but after waking up, he is unable to find their whereabouts." The Mind-only *nien-fo* is also like this, because it is made from the Mind. It is existing and at the same time empty; therefore, [the Buddha] neither comes nor goes away. Because [the form of *nien-fo* is] unreal like an illusion, one should get rid of the notion of the Mind and the Buddha. But on the other hand, because the illusory form of *nien-fo* exists,

> one should not get rid of the thought of the Mind and the Buddha. When emptiness and existence are mutually unobstructive, there is neither coming nor going [of the Buddha], yet this does not prevent one from universally seeing [the Buddha]. Seeing is no-seeing. This complies with the principle of the Middle Way.[25]

Based on the doctrine of Mind-only, the Mind-only *nien-fo* then turns *nien-fo* from being dualistic and devotional to being monistic and speculative. It is a kind of *nien-fo* carried out with "one-mind undisturbed" (*i hsin pu luan*)[q]. When one dwells on the name of Amitābha in continuous and uninterrupted succession, one creates a state of consciousness similar to that derived from deep meditation. This is why the *Fo-tsang-ching* defines *nien-fo* the following way, "*Nien-fo* means leaving behind all thoughts. When no thought arises, the mind gives rise to no discrimination, names, hindrance, desire, grasping or discernment."[26] However, this samādhic state of consciousness is different from merely hypnotic trance, for in the *nien-fo* consciousness, a true self shines out, and the cognizing subject is united with the cognized object. This "One-mind" is thus the link between Ch'an meditation and *nien-fo*, for this "One-mind *nien-fo*" is nothing but the "seeing into one's own nature" of the Ch'an school. Although devotional Pure Land followers might disagree with this Ch'anistic interpretation of *nien-fo*, this does not mean that *nien-fo* and Ch'an meditation cannot be reconciled.

C. The Non-Duality of the Two Truths

Another key philosophical principle used by Yung-ming to rationalize the unification of *nien-fo* with Ch'an meditation and, in fact, all Buddhist practices, is the doctrine of the non-duality of any dichotomy, based on the doctrine of One Mind.

Yung-ming sees the One-Mind in its two aspects: the true Mind, representing *li*, and the rational cogitating mind, representing *shih*. The former is the Mind's essence (*t'i*), while the latter is its function (*yuan*). Although there are two minds in terms of essence and function, there is only one Mind. Applying the same principle of the non-duality of essence and function, Yung-ming expounds the non-duality of the two truths, or broadly speaking, the non-duality of all polarities.

Ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*) refers to the unconditioned, ineffable wisdom, *prajñā*, which is the realization of the emptiness of all realities. Conventional truth (*saṃvṛti-satya*), the domain of compassion and expediency, pertains to the phenomenal world of everyday life. Our deluded and dualistic mind makes a distinction between the non-differentiable absolute from the differentiable empirical world. However, Mahāyāna Buddhism does not stop at the differentiation of these two truths. The gist of the two truths theory lies in the Middle Way: the nondifferentiation of the twofold truth through the realization of emptiness. That is to say, when one realizes that all existing things are empty of self-nature, because of dependent co-arising, then a Mahāyāna conception of religious life can be positively applied.

The reason that Yung-ming emphatically advocated the teaching of non-duality was to refute those who clung to ultimate truth and were not able to move back into the sphere of conventional truth. They rejected the validity of conventional truth under the pretext that "all forms were empty," and according to their thinking, since all religious practices are characterized by form, they should be rejected. Yung-ming argued that only when an individual could move from "form" to "emptiness" and back from "emptiness" to "form" did he have true understanding of the two truths and complete fulfillment of religious experience. This was so because a religious practice without a base in the ultimate truth of *śūnyatā* only accrues worldly virtures, whereas a religious realization lacking constructive application of that realization in the empirical world is nothing but a dry, cold and irrelevant experience.

To demonstrate further the non-duality and complementarity of Ch'an and Pure Land, Yung-ming lists ten pairs of non-dual and complementary polarities as doctrinal proofs. They are:

1. *Li-shih wu-ai*[r]: the non-obstruction between the absolute and the phenomenon,
2. *Chuan-shih shuang-hsing*[s]: The simultaneous exercise of the provisional and the true,
3. *Erh-t'i ping-ch'eng*[t]: the compatability of the two truths,
4. *Tsing-hsiang jeng-chi*[u]: the interpenetration of nature and characteristics,

5. *T'i-yung tsu-tsai*[v]: the free interaction of essence and function,
6. *Kung-yu hsiang-ch'eng*[w]: the mutual complementarity of emptiness and existence,
7. *Cheng-chu chien-hsui*[x]: the simulataneous cultivation of the primary and auxiliary practices,
8. *Tung-yi yi-chi*[y]: the one-realm of the same and the different,
9. *Hsiu-hsing pu-erh*[z]: the non-duality of the acquired and natural, and
10. *Yin-kuo wu-ch'a*[aa]: the non-differentiation of cause and effect.[26]

The first of these ten pairs is regarded as the "general" (*tsung*[ab]) and the others are "particular" (*pei*[ac]). Because of his Hua-yen orientation, Yung-ming adopted the familiar theme of the harmonious identity of the absolute (*li*) and the phenomenal (*shih*) from the Hua-yen philosophy as the foundation of his syncretism. He says,

> If one wishes simultaneously to cultivate various practices, one must completely follow *li* and *shih*. When *li* and *shih*, within which the Way is contained, are non-obstructive, one can benefit both oneself and others, perfecting compassion for beings who are of the same nature as oneself.[27]

Li, synonymous with ultimate truth, refers to the all-inclusive principle, which is interpreted as the universal one-mind, or as emptiness. The realm of *li* (*dharmadhātu*), a realm beyond conceptualization, denotes the immanent reality (*tathatā*) that upholds all *dharmas*. *Shih*, belonging to the conventional truth, means distinct and different things, objects or events in the phenomenal world. Superficially, the realms of *li* and *shih* seem to be two opposite domains. Ultimately, they are inseparable and interdependent. In the Mahāyāna theory of non-duality, and particularly, in the Hua-yen philosophy of totality, the world of events (*shih*) is taken as the manifestation of the realm of the principle (*li*), and the realm of principle as the testimony of the manifested realm of events. One depends on the other for its existence and function.

We have thus seen how Yung-ming syncretized the heterogeneous movements of Ch'an meditation and Pure Land *nien-fo*. One point should be noted here. In Indian and even in early Chinese Buddhism, *dhyāna* and *buddhānusmṛti* were not antithetical at all.[28] As indicated in many *sūtras*, such as the

Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra,[29] *buddhānusmaraṇa* or *nien-fo samādhi* was achieved through meditation. It is in later times in China that they diverged so much that they seemed irreconcilable. In a way, we may say that Yung-ming's syncretism was a revival of this old tradition.

In summary, Yung-ming's Ch'an-Pure Land syncretism involves four aspects: (1) In the light of idealism, Yung-ming interprets Pure Land as "Mind-only Pure Land", (2) Yung-ming explains away the contradiction between self-power and other-power by refuting the possibility of salvation through the reliance on other-power solely, (3) Yung-ming finds the common ground between *nien-fo* and Ch'an meditation in the theory of One-Mind *nien-fo*, and (4) Yung-ming builds his syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism on the Mahāyāna doctrine of non-duality of any polarity. The purpose of Yung-ming's syncretism of these two practices was to show that, basically and ultimately, not only do they not contradict each other, but also that the dual practice of both ensures salvation. Whether Yung-ming's argument is sound or not is another question, but the fact is that Ch'an-Pure Land syncretism has dominated Chinese Buddhism ever since Sung Dynasty.

NOTES

1. See Paul Ingram, "The Zen Critique of Pure Land Buddhism." *Journal of American Religion*, vol. 41, June, 1973, pp. 184-200, and Winston King, "A Zen Critique-Interpretation of Pure Land Practice and Experience." *Asian Religions*: 1971 (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania: The American Academy of Religion), pp. 45-65.

2. Huei-yuan (334-416), the first Patriarch of the Pure Land School, advocated meditative *nien-fo*, a practice of Buddha-invocation based on meditation. The *nien-fo* Ch'an had become popular in early Ch'an School.

3. Yung-ming was recognized as the third Patriarch of the Fa-yen sect of Ch'an School and also the sixth Patriarch of the Pure Land School.

4. Tsung-mi was the most distinguished representative of Ch'an-chiao syncretism. Yung-ming was much influenced by his thought.

5. This "fourfold summary" shows a strong sentiment toward the joint practice of Ch'an and Pure Land, which was basically Yung-ming's attitude, but was first cited in the *Ching-t'u chih-kuei chi* (The collection of the instruction on the Pure Land Buddhism) by Ta-yo, several centuries after Yung-ming. Judging from the fact that most of Yung-ming's works are rather repetitive,

it is quite unlikely that this passage was left out of all his works, if he ever said it. Secondly, although it was true that Yung-ming was a vigorous practitioner of both Ch'an and Pure Land, he wasn't so narrow-minded and sectarian as to condemn any one to hell who did not practice Ch'an and Pure Land. The reason that the "fourfold summary" was attributed to him was simply because he was the most prominent advocate of Ch'an-Pure Land syncretism. Nevertheless, even if this "fourfold summary" was not Yung-ming's saying, the attribution to him would indicate his strong advocacy of this movement.

6. The English translation with minor change is cited from Chung-fang Yu, *The Revival of Buddhism in China*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 52.

7. This term was employed by Shan-tao in his *Kuan-ching Shu* to explain the necessity of the conception of the Pure Land as an actual physical existence. He said, "The method of contemplation is to concentrate on the direction and form [of the Pure Land]. The concept of no-form and no-thought is not articulated. The Tathāgata is aware that people at the age of "Final *Dharma*" cannot even attain concentration on the external form, how much less no-form." (T.37, p. 267b).

8. T.48, p. 966c.

9. T.14, p. 538c.

10. T.48, p. 505a.

11. T.48, p. 505c.

12. Ibid.

13. T.48, pp. 505c-506a.

14. T.48, p. 506b.

15. T.48, p. 506a.

16. T.48, p. 966c.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. According to the *Chih-chueh ch'an-shih tsu-hsing-lu*, Yung-ming engaged himself daily in one hundred and eight practices, including recitation of scriptures and *dhāraṇīs*, performance of repentance, releasing lives (*fang-sheng*), etc.

20. T.47, p. 271b.

21. T.48, p. 341b. The English translation is cited from Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, pp. 157-158.

22. T.47, p. 79a. For a discussion and an English translation of the *Ching-t'u shih-yi lun*, see Leo Pruden, "A Short Essay on the Pure Land," *Eastern Buddhist*, new series, vol. 8, no. 1, 1975, pp. 74-95.

23. T.40, p. 844a.

24. See D.T. Suzuki. "Zen and Jodo: Two Types of Buddhist Experience," *Eastern Buddhist* 3 (1924-25), pp. 102-105.

25. T.48, p. 967a-b.

26. T.48, p. 506a.

27. T.48, p. 992a.

28. There are three branches of the Pure Land School in Chinese Buddhism. The earliest is called the "Hui-yuan Branch," originated by Hui-yuan (337-427), the first patriarch of Pure Land School. His *nien-fo* was a combination of *dhyāna* and *buddhānusmṛti*.

29. For a study of the *sūtra*, see Paul M. Harrison, "*Buddhānusmṛti* in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthitas-samādhi-sūtra*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 6 (1978), pp. 35-57.

a. 念佛
b. 永明延壽
c. 萬善同歸集
d. 四料簡
e. 唯心淨土
f. 指方立相
g. 寶藏論
h. 定心
i. 專心
j. 往生論
k. 唯心淨土，己身彌陀
l. 淨土十疑論
m. 助緣
n. 淨土
o. 唯心念佛
p. 一心念佛
q. 一心不亂
r. 理事無礙
s. 權實双行
t. 二諦並陳
u. 性相融即
v. 体用自在
w. 空有相成
x. 正助兼修
y. 同異一際
z. 修性不二
aa. 因果無差
ab. 總
ac. 別