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The Four Levels of *Pratītya-samutpāda* According to the *Fa-hua hsüan i*

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I.

The historical status of the Mādhyamika school in China and Japan, like its famous doctrine of the middle way, is not easy to grasp.[1] On the one hand, of course, all the major traditions of East Asian Buddhism claim Nāgārjuna as a patriarch and claim to embrace his *madhyamaka* teaching; on the other hand, except for a few scholastics of medieval China and early Japan, none of the East Asiatic traditions have identified themselves directly with the Mādhyamika school or made the works of its founder—let alone of its later representatives, of whom they were largely ignorant—the primary textual basis of their systems. The *Madhyamaka-kārikās,* which modern scholarship has made so famous in the West, may have been basic reading for most well-educated Buddhists, but it rarely attracted prolonged attention, and it is probably fair to say that most who read it did so less in search of ultimate answers than in preparation for what were considered more sublime expressions of the Mahāyāna.

Already in the fifth century, even as the *Kārikās* and other early treatises of the major Indian schools were becoming available in China, scholars there were turning their attention to the question of the relationship among these schools; and by the sixth and seventh centuries, when the country was learning the new literature of the Yogācāra, they were creating their own original syntheses of the Indic materials. While the content of these new systems inevitably owed much to the imported *śāstra* literature, their structure was often built on indigenous interpretative categories—like substance and function (*t'i yung*), prin-

ciple and phenomena (*li shih*), sudden and gradual (*tun chien*), and the like; and while they could not fail to take into account the famous *prajñā-pāramitā* doctrine of emptiness and its explication in Mādhyamika, they were more inspired by certain *sūtras* of particular popularity in China, especially those—like the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka, Mahāparinirvāṇa,* and *Avataṃsaka* —that expressed a positive interpretation of the absolute, as *aśūnya,* as the *dharma-kāya,* and *tathāgata-garbha,* and so on, and that offered hope of a single great vehicle, or *ekayāna,* in which all forms of Buddhism could be resolved. The so-called Three Treatise (*San lun*) school of Chi-tsang, supposed to represent East Asian Mādhyamika, was itself such a synthetic system.

Of these new Chinese systems, none was more characteristic of the age nor more influential than that of the great sixth-century T'ien-t'ai scholar Chih-i (538-597). Inspired as it was by the *Lotus Sūtra,* none was more committed to the higher Buddhism of the one vehicle. Yet probably none was more sympathetic to (what its author took to be) the insights of Nāgārjuna's middle way. In what follows, I want to explore some features of this system — in particular its famous schema of doctrinal classification (*p'an chiao*) — to give a sense of how it sought to incorporate the teachings of the middle way into its vision of the one vehicle. Rather than try here to discuss the schema in the abstract, I shall focus on a single concrete example — a core sample, as it were — of how Chih-i's system actually functioned in the analysis of a specific Buddhist doctrine; I shall then go on to make one or two more general observations about the principles at work in the example.

II.

The doctrine I want to use for this sample is the famous Buddhist teaching of *pratītya-samutpāda,* or conditioned origination, especially as this is expressed in the classical formula of the twelvefold chain of causation. Few doctrines are more venerable or more centrally placed in Buddhist tradition than the *dvadaśāṅga-pratītya-samutpāda.* It was, after all, supposed to be the insight into the truth of this chain that most occupied the Buddha himself as he sat on the *bodhi-maṇḍa;* and the *sūtras*

sometimes said that to see this truth was itself to see the *dharma* and to see the Buddha.[2] Nāgārjuna himself, though of course his arguments for emptiness are based more on the general principle of relativity than on the specific cause and effect relationships of the twelvefold chain, nevertheless seems to have taken the ancient formula of the chain quite seriously and devoted several discussions to it.[3] Yet, for all this, probably few doctrines would seem less immediately susceptible to interpretation as an expression of the sort of supreme Mahāyāna envisioned by Chih-i. Buddhist contemplative tradition had regularly consigned the investigation of the twelvefold *pratītya-samutpāda* — along with mindfulness of breathing, reflections on impurity, and the like — to the lowly, preliminary meditations intended as antidotes to unwholesome states.[4] Indian commentators on Nāgārjuna (including Piṅgala, whom Chih-i read) had tended to dismiss his discussion of the chain as merely conventional (*saṃvṛti*) teaching, intended for the edification of the *śrāvaka*.[5] No less than the *Lotus Sūtra* itself (at least in Kumārajīva's version) identified the doctrine as a teaching intended for the relatively unsophisticated understanding of the *pratyeka-buddha*.[6] Hence it is crucial to Chih-i's vision of the intellectual and ethical coherence of the one great vehicle that he be able to show why this doctrine was so central to the tradition and how, despite appearances to the contrary, it could function even at the highest levels of the religion.

Chih-i's extensive corpus contains quite a few discussions of *pratītya-samutpāda*, many of which reflect traditional ways of handling the twelvefold chain. In his influential organization of contemplative technique, for example, he treats meditation on conditioned origination as one of the five techniques for generating wholesome states (*shan ken*);[7] like the *Lotus Sūtra*, he associates the twelvefold chain with the *pratyeka-buddha-yāna*.[8] Yet he also has a more exalted reading of the chain that extends its significance across the entire range of the *buddha-dharma*, from the basic teachings of the Hīnayāna through the supreme, perfect enlightenment of the Buddha himself. For my purposes here, the most important example of such a reading occurs in the *Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsüan i*, his extended commentary on the "dark import," or deeper meaning, of Kumārajīva's version of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*. The work is largely organized

around a detailed analysis of the theoretical implications of the Chinese title of the *sūtra*. In its second fascicle, in the context of his discussion of the first word of the title, Chih-i distinguishes six objects of Buddhist wisdom (*ching-miao*), as the second of which he takes up the doctrine of *pratītya-samutpāda*.[9]

Chih-i divides his interpretation of *pratītya-samutpāda* into four categories, or levels, of understanding, to which he assigns the following rather unwieldy names: (1) conceivable origination and cessation (*ssu-i sheng mieh*), (2) conceivable non-origination and non-cessation (*ssu-i wu-sheng wu-mieh*), (3) inconceivable origination and cessation (*pu-ssu-i sheng-mieh*), and (4) inconceivable non-origination and non-cessation (*pu-ssu-i wu-sheng wu-mieh*). As the names suggest, the four are arranged in two groups of two: first, *pratītya-samutpāda* is divided into the conceivable and inconceivable; then, each of these is sub-divided into origination and cessation and non-origination and non-cessation.

The hermeneutical categories of the conceivable (*cintyā*), or what can be grasped by the reason, and its opposite (*acintyā*) are common, of course, not only throughout Chih-i's writings but in Buddhism in general. This epistemological dichotomy is identified by Chih-i here with what is more properly a religious or moral distinction between the mundane (*chieh-nei; laukika*) and transmundane (*chieh-wai; lokottara*). These terms derive from the traditional Buddhist distinction between the state of those dominated by the defilements (*yu-lou; sāsrava*) and the pristine state of the *ārya*, who has attained the *anāsrava* stages. Thus, Chih-i's analysis of *pratītya-samutpāda* begins with a distinction between two spheres of application or understanding of the doctrine—that of the defiled world of ordinary experience, and that of the immaculate world of the advanced adept.[10]

Each of these spheres is again divided into two, according to two ways of treating them—in terms of origination (*utpāda*) and cessation (*nirodha*), and in terms of non-origination and non-cessation. These two kinds of treatment, says Chih-i, are intended for those of dull (*tun*) and acute (*li*) faculties respectively. Though he does not elaborate the point here, a reference near the end of his discussion to the terms "phenomena" (*shih*) and "principle" (*li*) indicates that he also identifies the two with these metaphysical notions, commonly used in T'ien-t'ai and other Chinese exegesis for the Buddhist categories of *saṃvṛti-*

satya (*su ti*), or conventional truth, and *paramārtha-satya* (*chen ti*), or ultimate truth.[11] Thus, both the mundane and transmundane spheres can be discussed for the dull in the more easily understood terms of the phenomena that comprise them, and for the acute in the more subtle terms of the principle that underlies such phenomena. These identifications, then, allow Chih-i to treat *pratītya-samutpāda* on four levels of discourse: (1) mundane phenomena, (2) mundane principle, (3) transmundane phenomena, and (4) transmundane principle; and we can expect a relationship among the four such that (1) is to (2) as (3) is to (4). As we shall see, this relationship is central to the T'ien-t'ai *p'an chiao* system.

III.

Well over half of Chih-i's discussion of *pratītya-samutpāda* is concerned with his first level of understanding, that of conceivable origination and cessation. Since this represents what he considers the lowest understanding, the space devoted to it might seem somewhat surprising, and one might have expected him to move quickly on to the higher and more sublime realms of interpretation. In fact, however, the attention paid here to the details of the basic teaching appears quite characteristic of Chih-i's approach. Elsewhere in his writings as well, it is precisely the lower teachings that seem to receive the most detailed and thorough treatment, while the higher understanding is often passed over quite quickly. In one sense, of course, this imbalance may be inevitable, since the lowest level is usually, as here, concerned with the more detailed scholastic teachings of the *ābhidhārmikas;* but it is also suggestive of the importance Chih-i placed on a firm grounding in the basic doctrines of Buddhism and a measure of the conservative, classical approach he took to the religious life. This approach gives to his teaching a strong sense of what the Chinese like to call "gradualness" (*chien*) as opposed to the flashier "sudden" (*tun*) style that is often held up as more characteristic of East Asian Buddhism.

The section on the first level of *pratītya-samutpāda* is composed of two parts: a general explanation and a discussion of some additional considerations. The former provides a basic

definition of the doctrine and identifies it as the characteristic understanding of casuality that distinguishes Buddhism from the theories of the non-Buddhists.

> This [teaching of *pratītya-samutpāda*] differs from that of the infidels (*wai-tao*). They falsely maintain that phenomena originate from *Īśvara*, or from nature (*shih-hsing; prakṛti,*) or from atoms (*wei-ch'en; aṇu*), or from male and female, or without cause. These various false theories do not accord with the principle of the way (*tao-li*). But this correct [doctrine of] *pratītya-samutpāda* differs from such false notions. It holds simply that ignorance (*avidyā*) in the past produces in the perverted mind (*tien-tao hsin; viparyasta-citta*) the predispositions (*saṃskāra*), which bring forth in the present the fruit of suffering in the six destinies in different ways according to [whether one's *karma* is] good or evil.[12]

On the basis of the *Smṛtyupasthāna-sūtra,* Chih-i draws an analogy between the first three members of the twelvefold chain—*avidyā, saṃskāra,* and *vijñāna*—and a painter, his paint and his picture: the ignorant mind is like a painter, using the various shades of good and evil *karma* to produce the rebirth consciousness (*pratisandhi-vijñāna*) in the six destinies.[13] He then summarizes the first level by saying that the chain revolves through the three times like a wheel, the members arising and ceasing again and again in moment after moment—hence, the designation "twelvefold *pratītya-samutpāda* of origination and cessation."

In the rather lengthy section devoted to additional considerations, Chih-i takes up several traditional technical topics on the twelvefold chain that we find in the *abhidharma* literature, including various approaches to the distinctions between dependent production (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpanna*), the division of the twelve members into the three times (*san shih*) and their application to the maturation of the individual, the simultaneous occurrence of the twelve in a single moment, the cause and effect of the first and last members respectively, the members occurring in each of the three *loka* (*san chieh*), and so on.[14]

IV.

The second section deals with the *pratītya-samutpāda* of conceivable non-origination and non-cessation, intended for those of acute faculties. In sharp contrast to the preceding, it is very brief and direct, stating simply that all members of the twelvefold chain are like empty space (*hsü-k'ung*), like an apparition (*huan-hua*) and therefore ungraspable (*pu-k'e-te*). Chih-i does not bother to give here any arguments for the emptiness of conditioned entities but merely cites the *Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra* to the effect that *avidyā* does not exist of itself but only in dependence on deluded ideas (*wang hsiang; vikalpa*), or false thinking (*pu-shan ssu-wei; ayoniśo-manaskāra*).[15] Thus, he leaves it to the reader to supply the major premise—i.e., that dependently existing entities are empty—and the conclusion—that, therefore, *avidyā* is empty. He then covers the remainder of the chain by pointing out—as the popular simile has it—that, just as the magician produces elephants, horses, necklaces, and people, which the deluded take to be real, so *avidyā* magically produces the *karma* of the six destinies. Finally, by means of another well-known simile, Chih-i explains the religious significance of non-origination and non-extinction: "When one realizes that the vine [he has taken for a snake] is not a snake, fear of it will not originate, and not originating, it will not cease. This is called the twelvefold *pratītya-samutpāda* of conceivable non-origination and non-cessation."[16]

V.

The third section, that dealing with the *pratītya-samutpāda* of inconceivable origination and cessation, is perhaps the most interesting and difficult. This level of interpretation is said to refute the "lesser" (*hsiao*) understanding and reveal the "greater" (*ta*), teaching the transmundane *dharma* for the sake of those of both dull and acute faculties. The discussion here concerns the *cittamātra* teaching that the mind is the cause of all *dharmas*. This teaching is introduced by a quotation from the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, which employs the same painting simile we have seen in the first section: "The mind is like a painter producing the various

five *skandhas*. Throughout all worlds, there is nothing not produced from the mind."[17] In explicating what it means for the mind to produce phenomena, Chih-i first cites two conflicting views of the *ālaya-vijñāna:* "Some say that the *ālaya* producing all *dharmas* is the true consciousness (*chen shih*); others say that the *ālaya* producing all *dharmas* is the 'unsinking' consciousness (*wu-mo shih*) that is neutral (*wu-chi; avyākṛta*) and ignorant."[18] Neither Chih-i nor his famous commentator Chan-jan identifies here the proponents of these two views, but the text does refer us to another discussion of them in the author's *Mo-ho chih-kuan,* from which it would appear that he assigns them respectively to the so-called Ti-lun and She-lun schools—i.e., the sixth century Chinese exegetical traditions emphasizing, in the former case, Vasubandhu's commentary to the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* (*Shih ti ching lun*) and, in the latter, the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* (*She ta-sheng lun*). In the same discussion, Chih-i rejects the views of both schools, arguing in effect that the former mistakenly identifies *citta* with the ultimate *dharmatā,* while the latter fails to account for any relationship between the two.[19] The problem, he says in our text, comes from attachment to the reality of the *svabhāva* (*hsing*), which leads to a *satkāryavāda* understanding of casuality akin to the Sāṃkhya theory of the evolution of the world from *prakṛti* (*ming-ch'u*)—an understanding we have already seen Chih-i reject in the first section.

Having thus dismissed these two views, Chih-i goes on to state what he holds to be the correct understanding of the Buddhist teaching that the mind produces the *dharmas.*

> Not by themselves, not by another, not by both, and not without cause [do the *dharmas* arise.] According to these four propositions, [the production of the *dharmas* by the mind] is inconceivable. Yet given the conditions of the four *siddhānta,* [*pratītya-samutpāda*] can still be explained.[20]

Here Chih-i employs the opening verse of the *Kārikās* to establish that the occurrence of *dharmas* is inconceivable—i.e., that they have only provisional reality and in their own nature are ungraspable.[21] Their occurrence, he says, is like the arising of images in a dream: though we say that the dream produces images, the nature of the dream itself cannot be grasped; simi-

larly, though we say that *avidyā* produces the other members of the twelvefold chain, the status of *avidyā* itself cannot be grasped by any of the four propositions (*ssu chü; catuṣkoṭi*).[22] Nevertheless, in accordance with the four *siddhānta* (*ssu hsi-t'an*), or heuristic methods of the Buddha's teaching, we can still discuss the arising of *saṃskāra* and the rest of the twelvefold chain from the mind of *avidyā*.[23]

With this reminder that the teaching of transmundane phenomenal *pratītya-samutpāda* is established only as a device for the sake of the practitioner, Chih-i proceeds to a consideration of the actual content of this teaching as it applies to those advanced *bodhisattvas* of the *anāsrava-dhātu*, who, although freed from the mundane realm of the *kleśas*, still transmigrate in the *manomayakāya* (*i-sheng shen*). Here he relies on the *Ratnagotravibhāga* doctrine of the four spiritual obstacles to ultimate liberation—conditions (*yüan; pratyaya*), causes (*yin; hetu*), origination (*sheng; utpāda*), and cessation (*mieh; nirodha*)—to draw out the higher significances of the twelvefold chain.[24]

> "Conditions" refers to *avidyā;* ["cause"] to *saṃskāra;* "origination" to *nāma-rūpa* and the rest of the five [present effects]; (the three members, *tṛṣṇā, upādān,* and *bhava,* are to be understood as above;) "cessation" to *jāti* and *jarā-maraṇam.* These twelve are numerically the same as those of the mundane [*pratītya-samutpāda*], but their meaning is very different.[25]

Chih-i then uses the traditional division of the twelvefold chain into *kleśa, karma* and *vastu* (or *duḥkha*) to show the relationship between its members and the *Ratnagotravibhāga's* doctrine of the four higher inverted views (*tien-tao; viparyāsa*) — impurity (*pu-ching; aśuddhi*), selflessness (*wu-wo; anātman*), suffering (*k'u duḥkha*), and impermanence (*wu-ch'ang; anitya*)—that still characterize the understanding of even the advanced *bodhisattva:* the *kleśa* of condition (i.e., *avidyā,* etc.) prevents the realization of purity; the *karma* of cause (i.e., *saṃskāra,* etc.), the realization of selfhood; the *vastu* of origination (i.e., *vijñāna,* etc.), the realization of bliss; [the *vastu* of] cessation (i.e., *jarā-maraṇam*), the realization of permanence.[26]

VI.

Finally, our text briefly considers the fourth and highest level of *pratītya-samutpāda,* that of inconceivable non-origination and non-cessation. Here Chih-i quotes the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* to the effect that the twelvefold *pratītya-samutpāda* is itself the buddha-nature (*fo-hsing*).[27] The identification is worked out by means of correspondences between the three divisions of the twelvefold chain—into *kleśa, karma* and *vastu*—and the three aspects, or causes, under which the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* treats the buddha-nature—the cause of apprehension (*liao yin*), the cause of conditions (*yüan yin*), and the cause proper (*cheng yin*)—i.e., the intellectual, ethical, and metaphysical causes identified with *bodhi, mokṣa,* and *dharma-kāya* respectively.[28] Thus, the *kleśa* members (i.e., *vijñāna, tṛṣṇā* and *upādāna*) are associated with *bodhi;* the *karma* members (*saṃskāra* and *bhava*) with *mokṣa;* and the remaining, the *vastu* members, with *dharma-kāya.* On the basis of these correspondences, the three divisions of the chain are further identified with the four *guṇas* (*ssu te*) of *nirvāṇa* taught in the same *sūtra.* The argument runs somewhat as follows: the *kleśas* are themselves *bodhi; bodhi* is by definition free from defilement; hence, the *kleśas* are themselves the ultimate purity (*ching; śuddhi*) or *nirvāṇa.* In like fashion, *karma* is identified with the ultimate self (*wo; ātman*) of *nirvāṇa,* and *vastu* with the bliss (*lo; sukha*) and permanence (*ch'ang; nitya*).[29]

VII.

In the sections immediately following his analysis of the four levels of *pratītya-samutpāda,* Chih-i goes on, in a pattern typical of his exegetical methods, to make several general points about the character and significance of this analysis. In a section on "distinguishing the coarse and subtle" (*p'an ts'u miao*), he makes explicit its hierarchial structure, pointing out that, while there are no levels in the object (*ching*) of *pratītya-samutpāda* itself, there are more or less profound understandings of the object, which, like the famous *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* simile of the refinement of milk, progress from the "coarse" to the "subtle." From the perspective of the fourth level, corresponding to the ultimate

reality (*shih*) of the middle way taught in the one vehicle of the *Lotus Sūtra,* all three of the lower levels are "coarse" because merely expedient (*ch'üan*).[30]

The succeeding section, on "opening the coarse to reveal the subtle" (*k'ai ts'u hsien miao*), reminds us of another, rather different implication of the one vehicle: that the classification of the lower teachings as coarse is itself based on a coarse understanding. Chih-i here quotes the line from the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the Buddha says, "My *dharma* is subtle (*miao*) and difficult to understand." Since all three of the lower teachings are part of the *buddha-dharma,* the argument goes, it follows that even they (insofar as they are the expression of the Buddha's miraculous *upāya*) are subtle and inconceivable.[31]

In his last section, on "discerning the mind" (*kuan hsin*), Chih-i points out the religious implications of his analysis: to discern one moment of ignorance (*wu-ming*) is itself enlightenment (*ming*). Each moment of thought contains all twelve members of the chain, and, since these members are ultimately the four virtues of *nirvāṇa,* to discern them is itself to discern inherent permanence, bliss, selfhood, and purity. In such discernment, the mind constantly abides in the womb of the *āryas* (*sheng t'ai*), from which it is destined to emerge into full enlightenment.[32]

VIII.

Such, in outline, is Chih-i's multi-faceted account of the twelvefold chain. His basic notion that the doctrine of *pratītya-samutpāda* could be thus distributed over several levels of interpretation is by no means without precedent: the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* itself, for example—one of Chih-i's favorite scriptures and the one he cites as authority for his final section—has its own four-tiered division of the doctrine, associated with the four types of Buddhist adept: *śrāvaka, pratyeka-buddha, bodhisattva,* and *buddha;*[33] similarly, the *Ta-chih-tu lun,* which East Asian tradition attributes to Nāgārjuna, and which regularly provides the source for so much of Chih-i's material, identifies three types of twelvefold chain: for the *pṛthagjana,* for those on the two vehicles and *bodhisattvas* not yet established in emptiness (*anutpattika-*

dharma-kṣānti), and for the advanced *bodhisattva*.[34] Such scriptural precedents no doubt provided inspiration for the treatment of *pratītya-samutpāda* in our passage, but the structure of this treatment remains Chih-i's own and clearly reflects the particular principles of his larger project to bring the whole of Buddhism into a single coherent system. Here I want to add just a few words about those principles as they relate to the status of the middle way.

In recent years, there has been some debate about the exact nature of Chih-i's classification system and its relation to the doctrinal schemas through which it was taught by later T'ien-t'ai tradition,[35] but there is no doubt that the most original and important feature of that system is the doctrine—of the so-called "four teachings" (*hua-fa ssu chiao*)—that divides the *buddha-dharma* into "*piṭaka*" (*tsang*), "common" (*t'ung*), "distinct" (*pieh*), and "complete" (*yüan*). Put very briefly and schematically, the first corresponds to the Hīnayāna teaching on *dharmas*, intended for *śrāvaka* and *pratyeka-buddha* vehicles, the second to the basic Mahāyāna teaching of *śūnyatā* that leads onto the *bodhisattva-yāna*, the third to the advanced Mahāyāna teaching of *citta-mātra* that is "distinctive" of the *bodhisattva-yāna*, and the last to the "complete," perfect understanding of the Buddha that both transcends and unifies all the other teachings. It should be immediately obvious that such a fourfold division stands behind our *pratītya-samutpāda* passage; and, in fact, though he does not make the connection in our text, later on in the same work, Chih-i explicitly assigns his four levels of interpretation to the four teachings.[36]

While we may (or may not) want to applaud Chih-i's ingenuity in bringing *pratītya-samutpāda* into accord with his own system, so far removed in time, space, and spirit from the ancient Buddhist formula of the twelve *nidāna*, for the T'ien-t'ai master himself, this success must have seemed only a natural elaboration of the passage on dependent origination by Nāgārjuna that is supposed to have provided the metaphysical basis for the system. This is the verse, *Madhyamaka-kārikās* 24:18, in which, according to Kumārajīva's translation, it is said,

> Phenomena produced by causes and conditions,
> We declare to be empty;

Again, they are called provisional names,
Or, again, they are what is meant by the middle way.[37]

A particular understanding of this famous passage (the only one, as far as I know, in which the *Kārikās* actually uses the term *madhyama-pratipat*) is said to have provided the inspiration for the teachings of the First Patriarch of T'ien-t'ai, Hui-wen (fl. ca. 550), and to have been handed down to his disciple, Hui-ssu (515-577), by whom it was transmitted to Chih-i. The understanding in question is formulated by the T'ien-t'ai teachers as their characteristic doctrine of the three truths (*san ti*). This doctrine understands Nāgārjuna's verse to be describing conditioned phenomena in terms of three levels of truth: the empty (*k'ung; śūnyatā*), the provisional (*chia; prajñapti*), and the middle (*chung; madhyama*). Very briefly put, the three truths can be expressed somewhat as follows: conditioned *dharmas*, when understood on the first level, are empty of *svabhāva;* on the second level, this emptiness is seen not as the total negation of the *dharmas* but as the affirmation of their conditionality, or "provisionally" real status; on the third level, the two categories of the empty and provisional are understood to be nondifferent—or, put in other terms, the ultimate truth about the *dharmas* is understood to lie in a middle ground, free from the extremes of the empty and provisional.

What is most immediately striking and most peculiar about this reading of Nāgārjuna's verse is that it seems to isolate his famous teaching of *śūnyatā* as but one pole, set off from both the conditioned phenomena of the first line and the provisionally established phenomena of the third, an extreme that is itself to be overcome, or resolved, by his middle way. Such an understanding of emptiness, quite common in East Asian exegesis, is well expressed in the other formula by which Chih-i most frequently discusses the movement among the three truths. This is adopted from the *P'u-sa ying-lo ching,* an important *sūtra* generally thought to have been written in China in the fifth century, which explains the relationships among the three truths in terms of (1) entering the empty from the provisional (*ts'ung chia ju k'ung*), (2) entering the provisional from the empty (*ts'ung k'ung ju chia*), and (3) the ultimate middle way (*chung-tao ti-i i*).[38]

Though at first glance it appears here that the empty and

the provisional are merely two opposing poles, Chih-i tends to read the "provisional" of the first line in the *Sūtra* formula as corresponding to the conditioned phenomena in the first line of Nāgārjuna's verse; hence he gives the formula a strongly dialectical character, such that it moves through four "moments"—from the thesis of *dharmas,* to the antithesis of *śūnyatā,* through a higher synthesis of the two in *prajñapti,* to the final synthesis (of emptiness and the provisional) in *madhyama.* Clearly, *śūnyatā* is the crucial "moment" in this dialectic, the higher "principle," as Chih-i calls it in our example, that leads both into and beyond the transmundane phenomena of the Mahāyāna. As such, it is not merely the opposite of the *dharmas* but, like the provisional, must function on two levels: first, in opposition to the *dharmas* as their mere negation; and second, as the higher negation of the opposition that accounts for the ultimate unity of the two poles. Whether or not Nāgārjuna himself would still recognize himself in this dialectical interpretation of his verse, it is probably possible to read it as an interesting extension of his reminder that emptiness is also empty of *svabhāva.*[39]

IX.

There is one final feature of Chih-i's *pratītya-samutpāda* teaching to which I should like to call attention in closing. If the metaphysical levels we have seen here are supposed to be supplied by Nāgārjuna's verse, the logic of these levels and the religious significance attached to them seem to come from what strikes me as an extremely interesting coalescence in Chih-i's thought of two ancient Buddhist formulae. The first is the well-known rhetorical device of the *catuṣkoṭi* or "four propositions." This device, through which the speaker is thought to exhaust all meaningful positions on a topic, was of course much appreciated by Nāgārjuna, and in fact we have seen his use of it quoted in our example to establish the merely provisional nature of *citta-mātra.* As in this case, Nāgārjuna tends to use the formula to negative ends, as a means to the refutation of others' views.[40] Chih-i, however, also has a more positive, more metaphysical reading of the four propositions that assigns to each member a

level of truth exactly corresponding to our four levels of *pratītya-samutpāda.* Though he does not invoke the formula in our passage, the relationship is made explicit elsewhere in his writing, where each of the teachings is assigned a basic metaphysical proposition, such that the *piṭaka* asserts being (*yu*); the common teaching, emptiness (*k'ung*, here obviously equivalent to non-being [*wu*]); the distinct asserts both; and the perfect, neither.[41]

In recent years, the *catuṣkoṭi* has occupied a number of commentators, who have been particularly disturbed by the third and fourth members, which seem to conflict with the laws of non-contradition and of the excluded middle respectively.[42] It may well be that it was his own awareness of such logical conflicts that led Chih-i to assign these two members to the realm of the "inconceivable." Yet, whatever we may say of other uses of the formula, Chih-i's actual application of it to his four teachings clearly resolves these difficulties. The apparent contradiction of the third proposition disappears in the distinction, central to his "distinct" teaching, between *paramārtha* and *saṃvṛti* realms of discourse—a distinction we have seen reflected in Chih-i's assertion that, while the mind itself cannot be ultimately established, it can still be treated for heuristic purposes as the cause of phenomena. The "distinct" teaching here is precisely that form of Buddhism that seeks to "straddle" the two realms of discourse, for the sake of the advanced *bodhisattva,* who, though already established in emptiness, still needs to cultivate the higher *dharmas* of the transmundane path. The fourth proposition, according to Chih-i, does indeed transcend the two-valued logic presupposed by the law of the excluded middle; it does so on the basis of the "complete" teaching of the *buddha* vehicle, which specifically posits a higher "middle" ground to which the predicates "being" and "emptiness" do not apply.

As interesting as Chih-i's hierarchical reading of the *catuṣkoṭi* may be in itself, perhaps more striking is the way in which he is able, once the formula is read in this way, to lay its logical pattern over the seemingly quite unrelated spiritual hierarchy depicted by the traditional Buddhist model of the *mārga.* In this overlay, as should be apparent from our example, the assertion of being, characteristic of the first level of teaching, is associated with the *laukika* path; its denial, with the insight into emptiness that leads one to the *lokottara* plane; the higher affirmation of

both being and its denial then guides the *bodhisattva* along the upper *bhūmis* of the *bhāvanā-mārga*; and the still higher negation of both leaves him at the ultimate middle way of the *aśaikṣa* path of the Buddha.[43]

In this kind of overlay, then, the spiritual development of each individual adept on the stages of the *mārga* is but an instance in microcosm of the development of Buddhism itself—a case, as it were, of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny. Or to put the matter from the other side, the kind of analysis of the levels of Buddhist doctrine that we have seen in our example of *pratītya-samutpāda* envisions (if I may be allowed this confusion of ancient tongues) a sort of "meta-*mārga*," in which both the formal relationships of the various conflicting Buddhist doctrines and the concrete historical development of the disparate Buddhist doctrinal literature recapitulate the inherent metaphysical and spiritual structure of the one great vehicle on which each individual Buddhist must make his way to the final goal of Buddhahood promised by the *Lotus Sūtra*.

NOTES

1. A version of this paper was originally presented to the panel on "Middleism: Nāgārjuna and His Successors," Fifteenth Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1986. I should like to express my thanks to Profs. Roger Jackson and José Cabezón for comments offered at that reading.

2. E.g., *Mahā-saṃnipāta-sūtra* (*Ta-chi ching*, T.397:13a15–16).

3. E.g., in chapter 26 of his *Madhyamaka-kārikās* (*Chung lun*, T.1564:36b–c); and in his *Pratītya-samutpāda-hṛdaya-kārikās* (*Yin-yüan hsin lun*; see T.1651–1654). For an excellent study of Nāgārjuna's treatment of the chain in the latter, see Kajiyama Yūichi, "Chūkan ha no jūni shi engi kaishaku," *Bukkyō shisō shi* 3 (1980), 90–146.

4. Especially in the common schema of the five *śamatha* contemplations known as the *wu ting-hsin kuan*, among which meditation on *pratītya-samutpāda* is recommended as an antidote to *moha*. A discussion of these practices can be found in Ōminami Ryūshō, "Go teishin kan to go mon zen," in Sekiguchi Shindai, *Bukkyō no jissen genri* (1977), 71–90.

5. *Chung lun*, T.1564:36b18; similarly, Bhāvaviveka's *Prajñā-pradīpa-vṛtti* (*Pan-jo teng lun shih*, T.1566:131b13).

6. T.262:3c23–24. Here, as elsewhere in the literature, the *dvadaśāṅga-pratītya-samutpāda* is set in contrast to the four *āryan* truths, taught for the *śrāvakas*, and the six *pāramitās*, intended for the *bodhisattvas*. For a general

treatment of some of the various interpretations given the twelvefold chain in the Mahāyāna literature, see Mitsukawa Toyoki, "Daijō butten ni mirareru jūni engi," in *Engi no kenkyū, Bukkyōgaku kenkyū (toku-shū)* 39–40 (1985), 19–49.

7. See, e.g., his popular *Hsiao chih-kuan*, T.1915:469c10ff. The five correspond to the *wu ting-hsin kuan*.

8. E.g., in his *Tz'u-ti ch'an men*, T.1916:480c15.

9. T.1716:698b29ff. This section has recently been translated by Paul Swanson, in his "The Two Truths Controversy in China and Chih-i's Threefold Truth Concept" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1985), 530–561; translations appearing herein below are my own. The other five objects discussed by Chih-i in this section are the ten "suchnesses" (*shih ju*) of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the four [*āryan*] truths (*ssu ti*), the two truths (*erh ti*), the three truths (*san ti*), and the one truth (*i ti*).

10. In technical T'ien-t'ai parlance, *chieh-nei* refers to all states within the three worlds (*san chieh*), prior to the elimination of the so-called *chien-ssu* afflictions (i.,e., the *darśana-heya* and *bhāvanā-heya kleśāvaraṇa*, as distinguished from the two types of *jñeyāvaraṇa* that Chih-i calls *ch'en-sha* and *wu-ming*).

11. E.g., at 700a17.

12. 698c6–11. All the views of the infidels here, with the exception of "father and mother" (*fu mu*), appear in Piṅgala's list of false doctrines corrected by the teaching of *pratītya-samutpāda, Chung lun*, T.1564:1b18ff.

13. Paraphrase of *Nien-ch'u ching*, T.721:135a17.

14. 698c28–699b28. For a discussion of some of Chih-i's material in this section, see Nitta Masaaki, "Chūgoku Tendai ni okeru inga no shisō," in Bukkyō Shisō Kenkyūkai, ed., *Bukkyō shisō 3: Inga* (1978), 253–272.

15. After *Chin kuang-ming ching*, T.663:340b15, with some omissions; for the literature on this notion that the twelvefold chain depends on false thinking, see Mitsukawa, *op cit.*, 35–44.

16. 699c7–8.

17. After *Hua-yen ching*, T.278:465c:26–27.

18. 699c14–16. The term *wu-mo* here comes from one traditional interpretation of *ālaya* as *alaya*, "not sinking."

19. *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, T.1911:54a23–b6. The argument of this passage would seem to be that, if, following (what Chih-i takes to be) the Ti-lun position, we identify the source of phenomena with *dharmatā*, which is neither subject nor object, then we cannot explain in what sense it is *citta* that produces phenomena; on the other hand, if, following the (reputed) She-lun position, we identify this source with an *ālaya* distinct from *dharmatā*, we cannot explain the relationship between the *dharmas* and the *dharma* nature.

20. 699c20–22.

21. *Chung lun*, T.1564:2b6.

22. Chih-i applies the *catuṣkoṭi* to the dream in the *Mo-ho-chih-kuan* (T.1911:54b8ff), to show that the dream cannot be understood as arising from the mind of the dreamer, the condition of sleep, both or neither. The dream, in this analogy, is to the mind as the *ālaya* is to *dharmatā*..

23. And see the parallel passage at *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, T.1911:54c7. The four *siddhānta* here derive from the *Ta-chih-tu lun* (T.1509:59b18ff), in which

it is said that the Buddha uses four types of teaching: the worldly (*shih-chien*), to encourage practice; the individual (*wei-jen*), to promote virtue; the antidotal (*tui-ch'i*), to counteract evil; and the cardinal meaning (*ti-i i*), to bring about enlightenment. The *Fa-hua hsüan i* (686bff) discusses the four at some length, interpreting them according to ten different aspects and relating them to the four *āryan* truths, the four levels of practitioner, and so on. For discussion of these relationships, see Kawakatsu Mamoru, "Shi shitan gi to kyōsō ron," in Sekiguchi, *Bukkyō no jissen genri*, 303–318.

24. For the *Ratnagotravibhāga* teaching (of which Chih-i's passage here is an abbreviation), see *Chiu-ching i-sheng pao-hsing lun*, T.1611:830a28ff. Chih-i's discussion is marred by the fact that throughout he consistently substitutes *hsiang* ("mark") for the *śāstra*'s *yin-hsiang*.

25. 700a4–7 (the parenthetical clause here is Chih-i's). The relationships being established in this passage depend upon the common organization of the twelvefold chain into three divisions (*san tao* or *san lun*) distributed over the three times. (This tripartite division, found in the *Mahāvibhāṣa*, *Abhidharmakośa*, etc., is also employed by Nāgārjuna in his *Pratītya-samutpāda-hṛdaya*.) Chih-i's schema here can be shown as follows:

		PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
pratyāya:	*kleśa:*	1) *avidyā*	8) *tṛṣṇā*	
			9) *upādāna*	
hetu:	*karma:*	2) *saṃskāra*	10) *bhava*	
utpāda:	*vastu:*		3) *vijñāna*	
			4) *nāma-rūpa*	
			5) *ṣaḍāyatana*	
			6) *sparśa*	
			7) *vedanā*	
nirodha:				11) *jāti*
				12) *jarā-maraṇam*

26. 700a7–16; paraphrasing the *Śāstra* at T.1611:830b13ff.

27. *Ta-pan nieh-p'an ching*, T.374:524b7.

28. For this teaching, see T.374:530aff.

29. 700a16–27. The *guṇas* here are, of course, the four original *viparyāsas*. The relationships among the members of these lists can be shown as follows:

liao yin:	*bodhi:*	*kleśa:*	*śuddhi:*	1) *avidyā*
				8) *tṛṣṇā*
				9) *upādāna*
yüan yin:	*mokṣa:*	*karma:*	*ātman:*	2) *saṃskāra*
				10) *bhava*
cheng yin:	*dharma-kāya:*	*vastu:*	*sukha:*	3) *vijñāna*
				4) *nāma-rūpa*
				5) *ṣaḍāyatana*
				6) *sparśa*
				7) *vedanā*
				11) *jāti*
			nitya:	12) *jarā-maraṇam*

30. 700a27ff.

31. 700b22ff; the *Lotus Sūtra* line occurs at T.262:6c19.

32. 700c5ff.

33. T.374:524b2. The *Sūtra* goes on here to identify the twelvefold chain with the Buddha-nature, with *paramārtha-śūnyatā*, with the middle way, Buddhahood, and *nirvāṇa*.

34. T.1509:a27ff.

35. The arguments have been brought together in Sekiguchi, *Tendai kyōgaku no kenkyū* (1978).

36. 709b; and see Chan-jan's sub-commentary, *Hsüan i shih-chien*, T.1717:848b26, c11, etc. In the T'ien-t'ai system, the second teaching is "common" to all three vehicles, in the sense that all realize *śūnyatā*—the two vehicles, through what is called "analytic emptiness" (*hsi-k'ung*); the *bodhisattva*, through "essential emptiness" (*t'i-k'ung*).

37. T.1564:33b11.

38. T.1485:1014b19–21.

39. E.g., at *Kārikās* 12:10–11, 8:8. Chih-i's notion here that Nāgārjuna's middle way corresponds to the higher, self-negating function of emptiness reflects the sort of statements one finds in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*: e.g., "The Buddha-nature is called emptiness in its cardinal meaning (*ti-i i k'ung; paramārtha-śūnyatā*). This emptiness is called wisdom (*chih-hui*). The emptiness spoken of here consists in not seeing either emptiness or non-emptiness (*pu-k'ung*). . . . To see everything as empty and not to see it as non-empty is not what is called the middle way." (374:524b12ff) A general discussion of the Chinese notion of the middle way as a third, higher truth appeared some years ago in the pages of this journal, in Whalen Lai, "Non-duality of the Two Truths in Sinitic Mādhyamika: Origin of the Third Truth," 2:2 (1979), 45–65. For more specific comparison of the T'ien-t'ai and Indian interpretations of *Kārikās* 24:18, see Nakamura Hajime, "Chūdō to kūkan," in *Yuki kyōju shōju kinen: Bukkyō shisō shi ronshū* (1964), 139–180.

40. The closest study of Nāgārjuna's uses of the *catuṣkoṭi* in the *Kārikās* has been done by Tachikawa Musashi; see, e.g., his recent *Kū no kōzō: Chūron no ronri* (1986).

41. E.g., in *Ssu-chiao i*, T.1929:73a. This sort of hiararchic reading of the *catuṣkoṭi* in the *Kārikās* is not without its Indian parallels. Candrakīrti, for example, uses it to explicate verse 18:8, the only passage in which Nāgārjuna himself employs the four propositions in an affirmative sense to claim that the Buddha teaches that everything is real (*shih; tathya*), not real (*fei shih; na tathya*), both and neither. The first, says Candrakīrti, is intended to impress the worldly with the Buddha's complete knowledge of the world; the second, to cure the believer of his belief in realism; the third, to distinguish the ordinary and enlightened views; the last, to free the advanced practitioner from the final traces of the *āvaraṇas*. (*Prasannapadā* 370–371)

42. While the logic of the *catuṣkoṭi* has been discussed by Robinson, Jayatilleke, etc., perhaps the clearest statement of the basic logical problems was given by Frits Staal, in *Exploring Mysticism* (1975); for a discussion of the actual implications of the schema in Mahāyāna literature (and additional bibliography on the topic), see David Ruegg, "The Uses of the Four Propositions of the *Catuṣkoṭi* and the Problem of the Description of Reality in Mahāyāna

Buddhism," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 5:1–2, (9–12/1977), 1–71.

43. In Chih-i's standard terminology, the second member of the *catuṣkoṭi* corresponds to the wisdom eye (*hui yen*) of the two vehicles that attains *sarvajñatā* (*i-ch'ieh chih*); the third member represents the *dharma* eye (*fa yen*) of the *bodhisattva* that achieves *mārga-jñatā* (*tao chung chih*); and the last is the omniscient *buddha* eye (*fo yen*) that has realized *sarvākāra-jñatā* (*i-ch'ieh chung chih*).

Glossary

A. Names and Terms

ch'ang 常
Chan-jan 湛然
cheng yin 正因
ch'en-sha 塵沙
chen shih 眞識
chen ti 眞諦
chia 假
chieh-nei 界內
chieh-wai 界外
chien-ssu 見思
chih-hui 智慧
Chih-i 智顗
ching 淨
ching 境
ching-miao 境妙
Chi-tsang 吉藏
ch'üan 權
chung 中
chung tao ti-i i 中道第一義
erh ti 二諦
fa yen 法眼
fei shih 非實
fo-hsing 佛性
fo yen 佛眼
fu mu 父母
hsiang 相
hsiao ta 小大
hsi-k'ung 析空
hsing 性
hsü-k'ung 虛空
hua-fa ssu chiao 化法四教
huan-hua 幻化
Hui-ssu 慧思
Hui-wen 慧文
hui yen 慧眼
i-ch'ieh chih 一切智
i-ch'ieh chung chih 一切種智
i-sheng shen 一生身
i ti 一諦
k'ai ts'u hsien miao 開麁顯妙
k'u 苦
kuan hsin 觀心
k'ung 空
liao yin 了因
li shih 理事
lo 樂
miao 妙
mieh 滅
ming 明
ming-ch'u 冥初
p'an chiao 判教
p'an ts'u miao 判麁妙
pieh 別
pu-ching 不淨
pu-k'e-te 不可得
pu-k'ung 不空
pu-shan ssu-wei 不善思惟
pu-ssu-i sheng-mieh 不思議生滅
pu-ssu-i wu-sheng wu-mieh 不思議無生無滅

san chieh 三界
san lun 三輪
San lun 三論
san shih 三世
san tao 三道
san ti 三諦
shan ken 善根
She-lun 攝論
sheng 生
sheng t'ai 聖胎
shih 實
shih-chien 世間
shih-hsing 世性
shih ju 十如
ssu chü 四句
ssu hsi-t'an 四悉檀
ssu-i sheng mieh 思議生滅
ssu-i wu-sheng wu-mieh 思議無生無滅
ssu ti 四諦
su ti 俗諦
tao chung chih 道種智
tao-li 道理
T'ien-t'ai 天台
tien-tao 顛倒
tien-tao hsin 顛倒心
ti-i i 第一義
ti-i i kung 第一義空
t'i-k'ung 體空
Ti-lun 地論
t'i yung 體用
tsang 藏
ts'ung chia ju k'ung 從假入空
ts'ung k'ung ju chia 從空入假
tui-ch'i 對治
tun chien 頓漸
t'ung 通
tun li 鈍利
wai-tao 外道
wang hsiang 妄想
wei-ch'en 微塵
wei-jen 為人
wo 我
wu 無
wu-ch'ang 無常
wu-chi 無記
wu-ming 無明
wu-mo shih 無次識
wu ting-hsin kuan 五停心觀
wu-wo 無我
yin 因
yin-hsiang 因相
yu 有
yüan 緣
yüan 圓
yüan yin 緣因
yu-lou 有漏

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Chin kuang-ming ching 金光明経
Chiu-ching i-sheng pao-hsing lun 究竟一乗宝性論
Chung lun 中論
Engi no kenkyū 縁起の研究, *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* (tokushū) 仏教学 研究特集
Fa-hua hsüan i 法華玄義
Hsiao chih-kuan 小止観
Hsüan i shih-chien 玄義釈籤
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Kajiyama Yūichi 梶山雄一, "Chūkan ha no jūni shi engi kaishaku" 中観派の十二支縁起解釈
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Miao-fa lien-hua ching hsüan i 妙法蓮華経玄義
Mitsukawa Toyoki 光川豊芸, "Daijō butten ni mirareru jūni engi" 大乗仏典にみられる十二縁起
Mo-ho chih-kuan 摩訶止観
Nakamura Hajime 中村元, "Chūdō to kūkan" 中道と空観
Nien-ch'u ching 念処経
Nitta Masaaki 新田雅章, "Chūgoku Tendai ni okeru inga no shisō" 中国天台における因果の思想
Ōminami Ryūshō 大南龍昇, "Go teishin kan to go mon zen" 五停心観と五門禅
Pan-jo teng lun shih 般若灯論釈
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Sekiguchi Shindai, *Tendai kyōgaku no kenkyū* 天台教学の研究
She ta-sheng lun 摂大乗論
Shih ti ching lun 十地経論
Ssu-chiao i 四教義
Ta-chi ching 大集経
Tachikawa Musashi 立川武蔵, *Kū no kōzō: Chūron no ronri* 空の構造 中論の論理
Ta-chih-tu lun 大智度論
Ta-pan nieh-p'an ching 大般涅槃経

Tz'u-ti ch'an men 次第禪門
Yin-yüan hsin lun 因緣心論
Yuki kyōju shōju kinen: Bukkyō shisō shi ronshū 結城教授頌寿記念仏教思想史論集