

The Idea of Symbiosis and Harmony in Buddhism: From the Perspective of the *Lotus Sutra*'s Philosophy in the Chinese Tiantai Buddhism

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1. Introduction

WHEN using the terms “symbiosis” and “harmony,” we bear in mind a harmonious and symbiotic relationship between a self and its object. This relationship can be seen from the following two aspects: one aspect is harmonious coexistence among people, and the other congruent symbiosis between humans and the environment. The former aspect signifies a peaceful coexistence with various “other people” who have different backgrounds from one’s self in terms of ideology, culture, religion, ethnicity, and suchlike. The latter aspect refers to a harmonious coexistence with the greater “others,” that is, the environment which encircles human beings.

This paper mainly focuses on the former aspect, which is the symbiotic relationship among people who have different backgrounds, and discusses how Buddhism can contribute to the issue of symbiosis and harmonization through examining its philosophy. In particular, for our examination of Buddhism, this discussion will focus on the Chinese Tiantai understanding of the *Lotus Sutra* and its philosophical development that was systematized by Tiantai Zhiyi (538–597).

The *Lotus Sutra* is an early Mahayana Buddhist text, which is considered to have been established sometime between the first century BCE to the second century CE in ancient India and to have been transmitted to China through Central Asia. Throughout history, while the *Lotus Sutra* was translated into various languages, one of its Chinese translations, *Miaofa lianhua jing* (hereafter the *Lotus Sutra*) by Kumarajiva (344–413 or 350–409), has been well received in China and widely transmitted into East Asian countries, such as Korea and Japan. Centering on this Chinese translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, Tiantai Zhiyi, who was active during the Chen and Sui periods in China, established the foundation of Buddhist philosophy for the Chinese Tiantai school. His understanding of the *Lotus Sutra* has influenced the East Asian Buddhist communities to a great extent.

In principle, Zhiyi finds “*zhufa-shixiang* (the true aspect of all phenomena),” a conceptual term expounded in the *Lotus Sutra*, as the fundamental truth of the text. I believe that Zhiyi’s view of this concept provides us with the key to considering Buddhist ideas of harmony and symbiosis.

Zhiyi philosophically applies the concept “*zhufa-shixiang*” into “*zhongdao-shixiang* (the true aspect of the Middle Way)” and “*sandi-yuanrong* (perfectly integrated threefold truth)” along with pragmatic theories including “*yuandun-zhiguan* (perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation)” and “*yinian-sanqian* (three thousand realms in a single thought).” Through the aspect of the idea of harmony and symbiosis, his pragmatic philosophy of “three thousand realms in a single thought” contains the concepts, such as “*shijie-huju* (the mutual possession of the ten-dharmas-realms)” and “*guotu-shijian* (a realm of the environment),” as they distinctively signify the characteristics of symbiosis and harmony. Thus, this discussion will seek the possibility that Buddhism, in particular, the *Lotus Sutra*, can contribute to the pressing issue of symbiosis and harmony through examining Zhiyi’s philosophy relating to the aforementioned theories that he has developed based on the *Lotus Sutra*.

2. The True Aspect of All Phenomena As the Fundamental Truth of the *Lotus Sutra*

In his treatise, the *Fahua xuanyi* (*Fundamental Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*: a compilation of Zhiyi’s lectures on the *Lotus Sutra* compiled by his disciple Zhanan Guanding 561–632), Zhiyi intends to systematically clarify the philosophy of the *Lotus Sutra* by analyzing the sutra through the following five categories: 1) *ming* (name: interpretation of the title of the sutra), 2) *ti* (essence: the fundamental truth of the sutra), 3) *zong* (gist: practices and the resultant rewards described in the sutra), 4) *yong* (function: the function that the sutra works for saving the people), and 5) *jiao* (teaching: the status of the sutra among various of Shakyamuni Buddha’s teachings). Among these classifications, it is the second, “*ti* (essence),” that Zhiyi utilizes to analyze and to clarify the fundamental truth of the *Lotus Sutra*. Therefore, I would like to shed light on Zhiyi’s understanding of the fundamental truth of the *Lotus Sutra* through examining his description about the “essence” in his *Fahua xuanyi*.

According to the first half of Volume One in the *Fahua xuanyi*, Zhiyi explains “*jingti*, the essence of the sutra” of the *Lotus Sutra* as follows:

All things, such as good and evil, ordinary beings and sages, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas, are nothing but *faxing* (dharma nature, that is, the true nature of all phenomena). *Shixiang* (the true aspect) itself is exactly what the proper “essence” (of the *Lotus Sutra*) is about.¹

This passage discusses that all things or phenomena, including good and evil, ordinary beings and sages, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas, are encompassed by the true nature, that is, dharma nature, and the dharma nature, which is itself *shixiang*, the true aspect, is the “essence” of the *Lotus Sutra*.

The second chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* expounds “the true aspect of all phenomena,” which Zhiyi stipulates as *ti*, the essence of the *Lotus Sutra*, as follows: “Because what the Buddha has achieved is the rarest and most difficult-to-understand Law. The true entity (that is, aspect) of all phenomena can only be understood and shared between Buddhas. This reality consists of the appearance, nature, entity, power, influence, inherent cause, relation, latent effect, manifest effect, and their consistency from beginning to end.”² According to this description, although what the Buddha achieved in enlightenment is “the true aspect of all phenomena,” it is so difficult that it can only be understood and shared among the Buddhas.

After the *Fahua xuanyi* stipulates the true aspect of all phenomena to be *ti*, the essence, it points out that the texts, such as the chapter of “Tathagata’s Life Span” in the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Commentary on Dasabhumika-sutra*, and the *Madhyamaka-karika*, also describe the “essence” as “*shixiang*, the true aspect,” as well. For example, Zhiyi interprets a citation from the chapter of “Tathagata’s Life Span” in the *Lotus Sutra* as follows:

Therefore, the chapter of Tathagata’s Life Span (in the *Lotus Sutra*) reads that (the way in which the Buddha sees) is not like (the way that) those who belong to the three realms (of the desire, form, and non-form see), neither like the way of *ru* (the unified), nor *yi* (the manifold).³ That is to say, those who belong to the three realms see these realms as the realms of the manifold; those who are of the two vehicles see the three realms as the realms of the unified; bodhisattvas see them as the realms of both the unified and the manifold; and Buddhas see them as the realms of neither the manifold nor the unified and illuminate both the unified and the manifold. Now, [I] consider the Buddha’s perspective [to the three realms] to be the proper “essence” of the true aspect.⁴

This passage of the chapter of “Tathagata’s Life Span” in the *Lotus Sutra* cited in the *Fahua xuanyi* describes how the Buddha sees the worldly realms, in which all sentient beings transmigrate, as a reason why the Buddha expounds the words of truth. Using the concept of the “non-unified or non-manifold” shown in the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Fahua xuanyi* clarifies that the perceptions to see the three realms, which are the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of non-form, are different among people, depending on the categories they belong to, including those who belong to the three realms (in other words, the beings of the six paths), those who belong to the two vehicles, bodhisattvas, and the Buddhas. And, the text claims that the Buddha’s perception itself is the “proper essence of the true aspect.”

While in the Sanskrit text of the *Lotus Sutra*, “*ru*” and “*yi*” correspond to “*tathā*—suchness,” and “*anyathā*—a different way,” respectively, in the *Fahua xuanyi*, these two terms are used as symmetric concepts in that “*ru*” signifies uniformity and equity and “*yi*” signifies difference and variance.⁵ According to the explanation of the *Fahua xuanyi*, sentient beings who transmigrate the six paths perceive the world to be “manifold”; sages, such as *sravaka* and *pratyekabuddha*, “unified”; bodhisattvas “both unified and manifold”; and the Buddhas “neither unified nor manifold.” The different perceptions among the “manifold,” “unified,” “both manifold and unified,” and “neither manifold nor unified,” reflect the distinction of the seer’s religious state. The state that perceives the world to be “neither manifold nor unified,” which is equal to the “proper essence of true aspect,” is unobtainable unless one reaches the state of Buddhahood, which is the final goal of the Buddhist practice.⁶

While these differences of perception, such as “the manifold,” “the unified,” “both the manifold and unified,” and “neither the manifold nor unified,” are four categorizations based on pairing the concepts of “manifold” and “unified” in the *Fahua xuanyi*, the similarly related subject is also explained in Zhiyi’s other treatise, *Mohezhi guan*, which was, like the *Fahua xuanyi*, compiled by his disciple, Guanding. The *Mohezhi guan* uses the terms “*you*, existence,” “*kong*, emptiness,” “*jia*, provisional,” and “*zhongdao*, the Middle Way,” which respectively correspond to the four different perceptions of the *Fahua xuanyi*.⁷

According to the description of the *Mohezhi guan*, the religious state of a person is decided by how the person perceives all phenomena. That is, if one perceives all phenomena as “existence,” as if things permanently exist as fixed existences, then he belongs to those who transmigrate the delusional world of the six paths. Those who perceive them as

“emptiness,” which sees that things have no fixed or substantial nature, are considered to be sages of *sravaka* and *pratyekabuddha*. On the other side, those who perceive them as “provisional,” which is a perception that sees things conditionally arising without a fixed substantial nature, belong to the bodhisattvas. Finally, those who perceive all the phenomena as “the Middle Way,” which sees things in an integrated manner that never leans toward either extreme, are called Buddhas. This definition is a thought to identify the religious state of “self” based on his or her perception toward “others” that are surrounding “self.”

Those in the six paths see that all phenomena possess a fixed and substantial nature, and conceptualize “the manifold” among various phenomena. Those of the two vehicles, who are Buddhist sages, observe all phenomena as something that has no fixed substantial nature, which is “emptiness,” because they see these things arise through cause and condition. In this perception, the discriminatory nature of the “the manifold” is transformed based on the idea of “the unified” as all phenomena are considered or seen to be “empty.” Though, according to Zhiyi, extreme perception of “emptiness” causes attachment to “being empty” itself, and could result in an extreme position that perceives “emptiness” itself as a fixed existence. On the other hand, bodhisattvas see no fixed or substantial nature in all phenomena; at the same time, they also see that all phenomena provisionally exist dependently co-arising based on causes and causations. By doing so, it is said that although their bodies are non-existent, they are able to appear themselves with their bodies or they are able to teach emptiness to people while there is no such observable thing as emptiness. In this way, both “the manifold” and “the unified” are apparent simultaneously. Nevertheless, even bodhisattvas, if lopsidedly inclining to “being provisional,” come to have attachment to “the provisional,” as well. At this point, what is sought is the truth that integrates these two extremes, “emptiness” and “provisional,” in a higher dimension. That is, it is “the Middle Way,” a state in which the Buddha perceives the world. In this state, instead of utilizing the polarized distinctions, such as “the manifold” and “the unified,” “the Middle Way” is used to demonstrate the true aspect of all phenomena.

As seen above, these two categorizations by Zhiyi, in fact, correspond to each other. That is, one category uses classification terms, such as “the manifold,” “the unified,” “both manifold and unified,” and “neither manifold nor unified;” and the other uses terms including “existence,” “emptiness,” “provisional,” and “the Middle Way.” Therefore, “neither unified nor manifold,” which is stipulated as the “proper essence of true aspect” in the *Lotus Sutra*, corresponds to “the Law of the true aspect of

the Middle Way," a state which transcends the discriminative and confrontational thinking patterns, and which is obtained through perceiving all phenomena as they are. Zhiyi conceives "the true aspect of all phenomena" as the true aspect of the world perceived by the Buddhas, that is, the Middle Way, also called the true aspect of the Middle Way, which transcends discriminative and confrontational thinking patterns.

Furthermore, Zhiyi applies "the true aspect of the Middle Way" into the philosophy of perfect integration. In Tiantai Buddhist terms, the three manners of perception, which see the true aspect of all phenomena as "emptiness," "provisional," and "the Middle," are called "the truth of emptiness," "the truth of the provisional," and "the truth of the middle," respectively. In turn, when focusing on "a seer" who perceives the true aspect of phenomena, these three manners are considered to be "contemplation on emptiness," "contemplation on the provisional," and "contemplation on the Middle," respectively. Zhiyi names a gradual cultivation method as "the gradual threefold contemplation" that achieves the three truths in a gradual way starting from "contemplation on emptiness," through "that on provisional," to "that on the middle." Zhiyi calls the aspect of truths that are obtained through gradual cultivation as "the distinct and progressive threefold truths." On the other hand, in "*yuanjiao*, the perfect teaching," which is represented by the *Lotus Sutra*, these three truths are not obtained by the gradual approach, but are simultaneously perceived in a single moment of the mind. This approach is called "the threefold contemplation in a single thought." The truths that are obtained through this simultaneous approach are called "the threefold truth of perfect integration." This aspect provides the worldview that the true aspect of all phenomena is stipulated in a way that each of the three truths, "emptiness," "provisional," and "the middle," is mutually possessed and integrated with the others without any obstructions.

In sum, Zhiyi considers the "essence" of the *Lotus Sutra* to be "the true aspect of all phenomena," and based on that finding, he develops perfectly integrated ideas, such as "the true aspect of the Middle Way" and "the threefold truth of perfect integration." He elaborates his thought through the process of critical distinguishing and categorization among Buddhist truths, which are taught in various sutras. Zhiyi, by completing the critical thinking process, establishes the ideal state of Buddhahood for which all Buddhists should be aiming, a state which transcends all the discriminatory and confrontational thinking patterns, and which perceives all phenomena as they are. It can be said that being

a Buddha refers to the realization that transforms himself or herself into the most ideal character. While many other Mahayana sutras theoretically admit a potentiality of becoming a Buddha in every single individual, it is Zhiyi who demonstrates the very method to achieve one's own perfection as a Buddha through contemplating on all phenomena as they are.

3. Perfect-and-Sudden Cessation-and-Contemplation— The Idea of Symbiosis and Harmony found in a Pragmatic Philosophy

As mentioned above, Zhiyi finds the perfectly integrated thoughts, such as “the true aspect of the Middle Way” and “the perfectly integrated threefold truth” in the concept of “the true aspect of all phenomena” in the *Lotus Sutra*, and he demonstrates the aspect of truth that is the perception of the Buddha, which perceives the true aspect among all phenomena by discerning them as they are, and which transcends any discriminatory and conflicting thinking patterns. At the same time, Zhiyi demonstrates the pragmatic philosophy as “the threefold contemplation at a single thought,” in which one can simultaneously perceive three truths at a single moment of the mind as a method to perceive the truth in “*yuanjiao*, the perfect teaching.” “The threefold contemplation at a single thought” is explained as “the perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation” in Zhiyi’s *Mohezhi guan*.

In the introduction of the first volume of the *Mohezhi guan*, which was written by Guanding, there is an explanation about this “perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation” as follows:

The perfect-and-sudden [method of practicing cessation-and-contemplation] involves taking the true aspects [of reality] as the object from the very beginning. Whatever is made to be the object [of contemplation], it is the Middle; there is nothing that is not truly real. [When one attains the state of contemplation wherein] reality itself is fixed as the object [of contemplation], and thoughts are integrated with reality itself, [then one realizes that] there is not a single color or scent that is not the Middle Way. It is the same for the realm of the individual, the realm of the Buddhas, and the world at large. All [phenomena experienced through] the aggregates (*skandha*) and senses (*ayatana*)⁸ are thusness; therefore there is no [substantial] suffering that needs to be removed. Since ignorance and the exhausting dust [of passionate afflictions] are indivisible with *bodhi*-wisdom, there is no

origin [of suffering; i.e., craving] to be severed. Since the extreme [dualities] and false [views] are [indivisible with] the Middle and what is right, there is no path to be cultivated. Since [this cyclic world of] samsara is [indivisible with] nirvana, there is no extinguishing [of craving] to be realized. Since suffering and its causes do not exist [substantially], there is no mundane world [to be transcended]; since the path and the extinction [of craving] do not exist [substantially], there is no transcendent world [to be gained]. There is purely the single true aspect [of reality-as-it-is]; there are no separate things outside this true aspect. For things in themselves (*dharmata*) to be quiescent is called “cessation”; to be quiescent yet ever luminous is called “contemplation.” Though earlier and later [stages] are spoken of, they are neither two nor separate. This is called perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation.⁹

“The perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation” is a pragmatic theory to directly contemplate on “the true aspect of the Middle Way” immediately from the beginning, instead of gradually achieving the truth. When this contemplating practice is perfected, then one can achieve the Buddha’s harmonious and integrated state that allows him or her to see any differences among various phenomena dispersed as he states, “there is not a single color or scent that is not the Middle Way.”

This state of Buddhahood attained through “the perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation” signifies a state of the true aspect that harmonizes various differences among phenomena, which include manifold differences possessed among human beings, let alone differentia between humans and environmental realms. From the modern perspective, it is important to consider that the significance of the Buddhist practice which aims for the state of Buddhahood is not only that in which a practitioner can achieve the ideal state, but also that in which the practitioner can actively engage himself in order to actualize the ideal world from the perspective of the Buddha. The world wherein all beings harmoniously coexist would be the ideal from even our modern perspective. This is the very point that Buddhists can contribute to modern society. It can be interpreted to mean that the Buddhists are entrusted with making a contribution to transcend the discriminations and antagonisms caused by the existing differences in modern society, such as ethnicity, culture, and religion, and to actively participate in the creation of a world where everyone can coexist and thrive harmoniously.

“The perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation,” as well as “the

threefold contemplation in a single thought,” is based on a principle of “three thousand realms in a single mind.” The following description, found in the *Mohezhi-guan*, is an explanation of this principle:

The mind possesses ten-dharma-realms, [which include hell beings, hungry ghosts, animal beings, asura, human beings, heavenly beings, *sravaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, bodhisattva, and the Buddha], and each of the ten-dharma-realms also encompasses the ten-dharma-realms. In total, there are a hundred-dharma-realms. Because each [dharma] realm has thirty-kinds of worlds, each of the hundred-dharma-realms holds three thousand kinds of realms. These three thousand [realms], in fact, are encompassed by the mind in a single moment. If there is no mind, then there is nothing; yet, if there is the mind, even in an instant, then, it possesses the three thousand [realms].¹⁰

This explanation of “the perfect-and-sudden cession-and-contemplation” describes the way that a practitioner discerns his or her own mind to perceive “the true aspect of all phenomena” and, by doing so, approaches the Buddha’s true realm that transcends discriminatory thoughts. The citation above is well known as a stipulation of the principle of “the three thousand realms in a single mind” by the later Tiantai school. “A single mind” refers to a thought at an instant¹¹ and the number, “three thousand,” means hundred-dharma-realms times thirty-kinds of worlds. Here, the term “world” in this context means “distinction,” so that, the term “three thousand” signifies manifold classifications of all phenomena that are deduced by the three major categories, “the ten-dharma-realms,” “the ten-suchnesses,” and “the three-worlds.”

According to the *Mohezhi-guan*, each single dharma-realm mutually contains the ten-dharma-realms. This theory is called “the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms.” Consequently, it becomes the “hundred-dharma-realms.” At the same time, each single dharma-realm possesses thirty-kind-worlds, which means “the three-worlds” times “the ten-suchnesses”; as a result, it claims that these are, in total, three thousand kinds of worlds.

“The ten-dharma-realms” refers to the ten kinds of beings who belong to the ten different realms, respectively; that is, hell beings, hungry ghosts, animal beings, asura, human beings, heavenly beings, *sravaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, bodhisattva, and the Buddha. “The three-worlds” means the three distinctions of the world based on the teaching of the *Dazhidulun*, including “a world of the five components,” “a world of sentient beings,” and “a world of environment.”¹² “A world of the five

components” refers to the five components, such as form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness, which constitute each sentient being; “a world of sentient beings” means a world of beings who are provisionally constituted by the five components; and “a world of environment” signifies a world wherein sentient beings reside.

“The ten-suchnesses” indicate the ten ways of existence found in each sentient being, which are based on the teaching of the second chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, that reads: “This reality consists of the appearance, nature, entity, power, influence, inherent cause, relation, latent effect, manifest effect, and their consistency from beginning to end.”¹³ Nevertheless, the number, “three thousand” itself does not have a particular significance. The *Mohezhi-guan*, rather, intends to exhaustively express a vastness of the amount of existences, which show manifold distinctions, through emphasizing the number “three thousand.”

What is notable here is that this principle of “three thousand realms in a single mind” is itself the one that Buddhists can offer as a principle of symbiosis, especially with regard to its aspect that the entire beings, which are signified as “three thousand,” are, in fact, encompassed by one’s own mind in an instant.

For example, the *Mohezhi-guan* discusses “a world of environment” in a way that describes how the beings of each dharma-realm reside, respectively.¹⁴ Then, it states, “Because each environment in which the ten kinds of beings reside, respectively, is different, it is called the world of environment. These thirty-kinds of worlds are created by the mind.”¹⁵

What this description indicates is that the thirty-worlds, that is, the three-worlds, such as, “a world of the five components,” “a world of sentient beings,” and “a world of environment,” times the ten-dharma-realms, is all created by the mind of an individual. As the ten-dharma-realms refer to all kinds of beings, their worlds mean every kind of world. Thus, it can be said that, while there are various ethnicities, ideologies, religions, and others which exist in our world, according to this principle, all the differences of the world are to be internalized and to be integrated into one’s own mind.

For this point, we should investigate further through the perspectives of the theory of “the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms,” which is the most important element of “three thousand realms in a single mind.”

As mentioned above, “the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms” means that each single dharma-realm possesses the ten-dharma-realms, and the ten-dharma-realms is a classification based on the Buddhist world-view that divides various beings into ten different

categories, such as hell beings, hungry ghosts, among others. This categorization also extends to spatial categorization, that is, worlds where these ten different categories of beings reside, respectively.

The significance of this theory, in particular, for human beings as one of the ten-dharma-realms, is that the ideal of Mahayana Buddhism, that is, all sentient beings have potentiality to attain enlightenment, is demonstrated more clearly than ever in this context. That is, the point that all beings, as well as the worlds in which they reside, are encompassed into a practitioner's own mind means that the Buddhas and their world are also integrated into his or her own mind, and this is the very provision that demonstrates the theoretical basis for human beings to attain enlightenment.

From the aspect of symbiosis and harmony, the significance of the theory of "the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms" is to comprehend all existences in relation to and coalescent with one's own mind through utilizing the category of the ten realms. This means to internalize "others," that is, all beings who are different from oneself, into one's self. As mentioned previously, the section explaining "the world of environment" in the *Mohezhiqian* states that there are differences in locus for each being among the ten-dharma-realms to reside. However, through the theory of "the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms," these beings of the ten-dharma-realms, as well as their worlds, are not understood as "others" existing outside of oneself, but are comprehended as the ten different kinds of inner-states that are encompassed in one's own mind, instead.

Because of the theory, this claim is not a mere symbolical or metaphorical discourse, either, but an approachable method for practitioners to cultivate. That is, we can discuss this theory from the pragmatic aspect, an aspect to actualize the state of Buddhahood that embodies Buddhist truth and its world within one's own mind. In this aspect, actualizing the state of Buddhahood does not refer to eliminating the other existences of the nine-dharma-realms from one's own mind, but rather it refers to simultaneously encompassing the existences of the other nine-dharma-realms in one's own mind.

While the state of Buddhahood personifies enlightenment, the other nine-dharma-realms signify delusion. In Buddhism, mental function that afflicts the body and mind of sentient beings is called *klesa*, that is, defilements, and by the karmic cause of these defilements, sentient beings experience suffering. Buddhism in general also claims that through gradually eliminating each defilement one after another, one can attain liberation and enlightenment. Thus, it can be said that the Buddha

is a being who removes all the defilements while beings of the nine-dharma-realms are ones who still remain in the delusive state. However, the theory of “the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms” demonstrates that the state of Buddhahood exists within the mind of each being of the ten-dharma-realms. At the same time, within the mind of the Buddha, the delusive beings in the nine-dharma-realms simultaneously coexist.

Zhiyi’s theory of “the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms” provides us with a method to remedy defilements in one’s own mind and to achieve the state of Buddhahood through discerning his or her own mind. However, this does not mean that all defilements are extinct in the enlightened state which one can achieve by Buddhist cultivations, but it does mean that these defilements, too, are to coexist as an integral part of the state of Buddhahood. This point, in which all the various beings of manifold states are encompassed in the state of Buddhahood, in turn, comes to be a theoretical basis in which the beings in the Buddhahood state are able to actively exert influence upon the other beings of the nine-dharma-realms. In terms of the aspect of both enlightenment and delusion, it is not that only either one of these two exists, but that both complement each other as an integral whole. As such, one could not embody the truth in Buddhism without harmonizing with non-Buddhist existences.

In sum, it is possible to say that the theory of “the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms” is a philosophy of harmonization, which accepts and discerns the manifold differences of all existences within one’s own mind, and which harmoniously transcends these differences, while keeping them as they are, through internalizing them into one’s own mind. In other words, in terms of harmoniously overcoming differences which are found among the ten kinds of existences in the “ten-dharma-realms,” the philosophy of “the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms” can be understood as one expression of “the true aspect of all phenomena,” a philosophy that articulates the true aspect found among all the distinctions in multitudinous phenomena, and that inspires to transcend discriminatory and confrontational thinking patterns in order for us to harmoniously coexist.

The method, which Zhiyi applies in order to symbiotically internalize all existences into one’s own mind, is for practitioners to cultivate exhaustive contemplation on their own minds, the mind which is the closest to each practitioner. That is, based on Zhiyi’s Buddhist philosophy, symbiosis and harmony in Buddhist terms are, ultimately, not to make external approaches to the world or the environment outside

oneself, but to discern that every existence is integral with the state of Buddhahood of one's own mind. It can be only achieved by exhaustive contemplation on the mind to actualize one's own Buddhahood.

As previously discussed, Zhiyi's theory of "the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms" demonstrates the understanding that one's own mind encompasses entire beings and their locus. Meanwhile there are multiplex value-systems based on various thoughts, religions, and cultures in the real world where we are living. The pressing issue we are facing with respect to harmonious coexistence is how we deal with the "others" that are different from "self." In this regard, the theory of "the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms" provides us with the key understanding that the "others" are no longer alienated from "self"; rather, the "others" are firmly connected and integral parts of one's own mind.

4. Conclusion

As examined above, Zhiyi considers the concept of "the true aspect of all phenomena" to be the fundamental truth of the *Lotus Sutra* and develops his religious theory of "the true aspect of the Middle Way" and "the perfect and integrated threefold truth" based on the truth. Also, as his pragmatic philosophy, he develops "perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation," which is also called "the three thousand realms in a single mind."

Viewing Zhiyi's thought through the perspective of symbiosis and harmonization, the state of Buddhahood, which is attained through the cultivation of "the perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation," actualizes harmonious co-existence with all beings and transcends not only the differences from "others" appearing among people, but also the distinction from the surrounding environment, which is the greater "others." This state illuminates the world of "the true aspect of all phenomena," which harmonizes every single phenomenon.

Also, the theory of "the mutual possession of the ten-dharma-realms," which Zhiyi emphasizes, is a theory based of the cultivation of "perfect-and-sudden cessation-and-contemplation." This theory indicates the philosophy that observes "others," various beings of manifold states who have different thoughts, cultures, religions, among others, as an integral part of one's own "self." This perspective provides us with the Buddhist contribution in respect to its approach toward symbiosis and harmonization.¹⁶

In the real world, there are a multitude of differences caused by the

divergence of ethnicity, culture, religion, ideology, economic circumstance, and so forth, as such multi-dimensional value-systems have been formed based on these distinctions. Buddhism itself is one of these constituents. But, what matters here is its orientation toward harmonious co-existence that is shown in “the true aspect of all phenomena,” as a perspective from the aspect of the Buddha, an enlightened being.

Based on Zhiyi’s idea, this Buddha’s¹⁷ world-view thoroughly contemplates a world wherein multi-dimensional value-systems exist as an issue of one’s own mind, and, in turn, discerns the state of Buddhahood equally existing within the mind of each individual. Thus, every single phenomenon is understood as a being integral with the state of Buddhahood. This approach toward symbiosis and harmony based on this transformation of the mind exhibits the critical significance and contribution of Buddhism to the modern world.

Notes

¹ T. no.1716, 33. 682b25–26.

² T. no.262, 9. 5c10–13. English translation, Watson 1993: 24.

³ T. no.262, 9. 42c12–16.

⁴ T. no.1716, 33. 682b26–c1.

⁵ Kanno 2011: 229–230.

⁶ Zhiyi also shows that “the true aspect of all phenomena” is the “essence” of the various Mahayana sutras. However, he, at the same time, makes a sharp distinction among these various truths, “essences,” that Buddhist practitioners can achieve by following these Mahayana sutras. And, by doing so, he exhibits “the true aspect of all phenomena” in the *Lotus Sutra* as the primal truth. This means that Zhiyi does not consider that all thoughts are simply equal or they indiscriminately co-exist.

⁷ T. no.1911, 46. 52b23–c4.

⁸ Both the (five) aggregates and (twelve) senses are constituents of the real world. The aggregates are form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness. The senses comprise the six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) and their corresponding six objects (color and form, sound, odor, taste, and phenomena).

⁹ T. no.1911, 46. 1c23–2a2. English translation, Swanson: 21–22.

¹⁰ T. no.1911, 46. 54a5–9.

¹¹ The *Mohezhiqian* discusses “a single mind” as follows: “Also, a sutra says that there are six-hundred-arising and perishing in a single mind, and a master of the Chengshi school said that there are sixty-moments in a single mind.” (T. no.1911, 46. 27c23–25) “Some said that a single mind includes sixty-moments, other said three-hundred-million-moments. A moment never stays. Each mind is transient.” (T. no.1911, 46. 32b4–5)

¹² For example, “There are three worlds: a world of the five components,” “a world of sentient beings,” and “a world of environment.” (T. no.1509, 25. 546b29–c2)

¹³ T. no.262, 9. 5c11–13. Watson 1993: 24.

¹⁴ T. no.1911, 46. 53a1–10.

¹⁵ T. no.1911, 46. 53a9–10.

¹⁶ What we need to make a note of is that, as Zhiyi was active during the Chen and Sui periods in China, there should be historical conditions within his thought system. From the modern aspect, it is difficult to consider him to be entirely an advocate of symbiosis in a modern sense; rather, in a way, he can be said to be a self-justified advocate for symbiosis. There is a problematic issue in that the theory which attempts to actualize a harmonious world through the concept of unification and integration could be inverted to be that which has a totalitarian tendency. Also, Zhiyi himself does not claim the concept that all beings indiscriminately coexist without any pre-condition.

However, the state of the Buddhahood which Zhiyi aims for is the religious status that is applicable to any times regardless of historical conditions, a status that transcends discriminatory and confrontational thinking patterns. This perspective provides a fundamental position for Buddhists in modern times, that shed light on the issue relating to symbiosis and harmonization.

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