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CHUNG-YUAN CHANG^a

Ch'an Buddhism: Logical and Illogical

THIS PAPER PRESENTS two diametrically opposed approaches to Ch'an Buddhism. One of these approaches was originally put forward by Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh^b (665-713), the other by Kiangsi Tao-i^c (709-788). The former turned to logical analysis, in the Middle Way,^d or Mādhyamika, tradition in his search for ultimate reality, while the latter abandoned logic and adopted instead a non-rational, or illogical approach to reveal man's primordial intuition. Born as he was in the seventh century, Yung-chia became deeply involved in the dialectic concept of the double truth as maintained by the San-lun School,^{e 1} and the doctrine of the three-fold truth identified as one,^f held by the T'ien-t'ai School.^{g 2} In his logical analysis Yung-chia formulated an intricately fine network of thought, which demonstrated how far logic, in its extremity, could go. On the other hand, Kiangsi Tao-i, more popularly known as Ma-tsu, was the founder of all the most unconventional practices of Ch'an which were used to break through the rigid network of logic and thereby uncover one's creative intuition. A comparison of these two methods will demonstrate why the Ch'an Buddhists after the eighth century discarded logical manipulation, along with metaphysical speculation, and adopted instead a seemingly nonsensical, non-rational means of reaching the source of man's creative potential.

¹ The San-lun School, or *Sanron* in Japanese, is translated as the Three Treatises School. The three treatises upon which this school based its philosophy were: (a) The *Mādhyamika Sāstra*, or *Chung-lun* (the Middle Way), (b) The *Dvādaśanikāya-sāstra*, or *Po-lun* (the Twelve Gates), (c) *The Sata-sāstra*, or *Shih-Erh-min-lun* (the Hundred Verses). The first two treatises are by Nāgārjuna. The third is by his disciple, Āryadeva. All three were translated into Chinese by Kumarajīva (344-413). These three texts are devoted to the doctrine of the Middle Way.

² The T'ien-t'ai School, or *Tendai* in Japanese, was founded by Chih-i, who attempted to establish an eclectic school of Chinese Buddhism. He classified the entire teaching of the Buddha according to periods, methods, and the specific nature of the teaching. T'ien-t'ai philosophy embraces many aspects of Buddhist thought, but its main contribution is the Threefold Truth Identified as One.

I

Yung-chia's teaching is directed toward the achievement of *prajñā*^b (intuition, wisdom). He says: "If you ask me what school of philosophy I adhere to, I would say that it is the teaching of the Great Prajñā."³ Prajñā refers to ultimate reality, of which nothing may be predicated. The realization of this ultimate reality, however, may be suggested in Yung-chia's own words: "What clear seeing! Yet there is nothing to see. Neither a man nor a Buddha."⁴ One may wonder, as later Ch'an Masters did, what it was that he saw so clearly, since there was nothing to see. The answer here is that the primordial intuition is described as self-realization, or the highest inner consciousness, conscious of itself. Ontologically, ultimate reality is *śūnyatā*,¹ the Absolute Void. But *prajñā* and *śūnyatā* cannot be considered apart from one another. *Prajñā* is, in fact, *śūnyatā*, and *śūnyatā* is *prajñā*.

Since the highest inner consciousness is the Absolute Void, it is reached through the negation of things, of man, even of Buddha. Yung-chia's approach to Ch'an fundamentally follows the doctrine of manifold negation implicit in this method. The idea of incessant denial as contained in the eight-fold negation¹ of the San-lun School serves as a basic principle of his teachings. In the San-lun School, however, there is also another path to *śūnyatā*. This consists of freedom from the "four alternatives."^k These four alternatives are: (1) being, (2) non-being, (3) both being and non-being, and (4) neither being nor non-being. The first two are the primary alternatives; the second two, as is apparent, are derived from them.

In his *Collected Works*^{1 5} Yung-chia explains the importance of freedom from the four alternatives. He says: "When mind is either being or non-being, it falls into the trap of affirmation. When mind is neither being nor non-being, it falls into the trap of negation." Either affirmation, or negation, then, is a "trap" from which one must free oneself in order to reach *śūnyatā*.

Based upon the dialectic of the Middle Way, Chi-tsang^m (549-623), the great philosopher of the San-lun School, had developed an even more refined approach, called the double truth on three levels.ⁿ The double truth consists of a common truth and a higher truth. On the first level, when the common truth is denied, it becomes a higher truth. Chi-tsang said that common people see things as really existent and know nothing about their non-

³ Yung-chia, *Cheng Tao Ko or Odes on Enlightenment; Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, No. 2014, Vol. 48 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōki, 1924-32), p. 396.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Yung-chia Chi, or Collected Works of Yung-chia; Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, No. 2013, Vol. 48 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōki, 1924-32), p. 391. (Hereafter referred to as *Collected Works of Yung-chia*.)

existence. The Buddhists said that all things are non-existent. On the first level non-existence, or non-being, which is a denial of existence or being, is the higher truth. On the second level both being and non-being are the common truth. The denial of this, *neither* being nor non-being, is the higher truth. On the third level, according to Chi-tsang, both being and non-being, and neither being nor non-being is the common truth. The higher truth of this is: both not being and not non-being, and neither not being nor not non-being.⁶

When Yung-chia defined the mind he said: "It is neither being nor non-being, and simultaneously it is neither not being nor not non-being." This corresponds to the higher truth of the third level as it was set forth by Chi-tsang. Yung-chia applies the third level of the dialectic as a means of reaching ultimate reality. He explains thus: "If you are attached to being and non-being, you will become one-sided, because you will not understand that the form of being is not the reality of being, and that the form of non-being is not the true non-being."⁷ Here he maintains that the assertion of either being or non-being is not adequate; and the negation of both non-being and not non-being is also wrong. One cannot approach Ch'an one-sidedly, because Ch'an takes no sides. Instead, the dialectic must be applied until the absolute reality of the third level is reached. At this point, as Yung-chia illustrates from his own experience: "Not only are the means of expression destroyed, but the roots of mental activity itself are cut out."⁸ When one reaches such a state, according to Yung-chia, one achieves Ch'an.

Yung-chia was influenced not only by the San-lun School, as his teaching is deeply involved in T'ien-t'ai philosophy as well. He studied Buddhism with Tso-ch'i Fa-lang (673-754),^{p 9} under T'ien-kung Hui-wei,^{q 10} and became well versed in all of the basic principles of the T'ien-t'ai School. One of

⁶ Chi-tsang, *Erh-ti Chang* or *Essay on the Double Truth; Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, No. 1854, Vol. 45 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōki, 1924-32), pp. 77-115.

The Double Truth on Three Levels may be schematized as follows:

Common Truth	Higher Truth
(1) being	(1) non-being
(2) both being and non-being	(2) neither being nor non-being
(3) both being and non-being and neither being nor non-being	(3) Both not being and not non-being and Neither not being nor not non-being

⁷ *Collected Works of Yung-chia*, p. 393.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ According to *Fu Tsu Tung Chi*, or *General Records of Buddhas and Patriarchs; Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, No. 2035, chuan 7 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōki, 1924-32), p. 187, T'ien-kung Hui-wei was the seventh Patriarch of the T'ien-t'ai School.

¹⁰ According to the same source, chuan 7, p. 188, Tso-ch'i Fa-lang was the Eighth Patriarch of the T'ien-t'ai School.

the most essential contributions of T'ien-t'ai to Buddhist philosophy is the theory of the threefold truth identified as one. The threefold truth embodies the real, the unreal, and the middle. The real refers to the Void, which nullifies all differentiated elements. The unreal refers to the common truth, through which all differentiated elements are established. The middle does not denote a position between the two—rather, it transcends both the real and the unreal and simultaneously embraces both.

The T'ien-t'ai School, as we have seen, set forth the threefold truth identified as one, and then taught a threefold contemplation^r through which to achieve this understanding. From the threefold contemplation one gains three kinds of "eyes": the wisdom-eye,^s the dharma-eye,^t and the Buddha-eye.^u Yung-chia comments on this: "All the thousands of manifestations vary from one another, and to that which sees these differentiations the name of dharma-eye is given. Silence never varies, and that which sees this is called the wisdom-eye. When one is free from both non-differentiated reality, and differentiated materiality, one has attained the vision of the Buddha-eye. Therefore the three truths are identified as one. Thus the ultimate reality of things is absolutely pure."¹¹ This clearly identifies Yung-chia's application of T'ien-t'ai metaphysical structure to his search for the ultimate reality of Ch'an.

Yung-chia adapted T'ien-t'ai philosophy to his own teachings, but he was by no means limited to these principles. To be sure, he accepted what T'ien-t'ai called the "perfect mutual solution among the three aspects of truth—the real, the unreal, and the middle." This is commonly stated in the formula: "Three are one; one is three."^v Yung-chia, however, goes on to negate this concept. He says:

When one searches out the ultimate in all its subtlety, it is neither three nor one. Thus, the three which is not three is called three; and the one which is not one is called one. When three is derived from one, it is not the real three, so how can it be called three? When one is derived from three, it is not the real one, so how can it be called one? When one is not one, it is not necessarily three, nor is the three that is not three necessarily one. However, you cannot deny the existence of one, even though one cannot exist without three; nor can three be denied even though three cannot exist without one. The one that does not exist is originally not three. The three that does not exist is originally not one. Both one and three are originally non-existent, and even this nothingness is non-existent. The non-existence of nothingness is the primal nothingness, and so it is the ultimate in all its subtlety.¹²

¹¹ *Collected Works of Yung-chia*, p. 391.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 392.

Yung-chia's purpose here is to negate in every possible way the established relationship between the three and the one, and ultimately their very existence. Here it must be understood that he is not in any way criticizing the T'ien-t'ai doctrine but is actually carrying it to its logical extreme. If he were simply to accept it without at once denying it, this would be one-sided. His acceptance and simultaneous denial of this principle is the real Mādhyamika approach, leading to what the T'ien-t'ai School called *chên-k'ung miao-yu*,^w or "real void and subtle reality."

According to Yung-chia, when we say that something is real it is not a relative reality. When we say that it is void, it is not a relative void. What is real is void, what is void is real. This identification of the void and the real is achieved by the absolute mind, which is free of all dichotomy. It is the emergence of constant consciousness which is conscious of itself. And yet it is not different from the ordinary mind. Ch'an Master Ta-ning Tao-kuan^x of the eleventh century has this to say: "No-thought is the source. No-abiding is the ground. Subtle reality is the action. The real void is the substance. Therefore we may say that everywhere on the earth the real void abides. All things in the universe are activities of the subtle reality."

Ta-ning Tao-kuan further explains: "Who is capable of embracing this? The four seasons follow each other in succession. The sun and the moon shine constantly. Truth suffers no fundamental alteration, and the *Tao* is not confined to a single place. Therefore free yourself to yield to whatever happens to you. Rise and fall with it. Here you may be simultaneously a common man and a sage."¹³

When the real void is the substance, and the subtle reality is in action, one pursues ordinary daily activities—and at the same time transcends them. One thus embraces both freedom and wisdom. Yung-chia says: "When wisdom emerges, freedom is achieved. Yet in this freedom there is nothing from which to be free. When this freedom is achieved wisdom is produced. Yet in this production of wisdom nothing is produced."¹⁴ Here we see a true synthesis of T'ien-t'ai and Ch'an in Yung-chia's teachings.

In point of fact, the teachings of Hui-ssu^y (514-577) and Chih-i^z (531-597), the founders of the T'ien-t'ai School, are recorded in *The Transmission of the Lamp*,^{aa} chuan 27. *The Lamp* is the prime sourcebook of Ch'an, and the fact that Hui-ssu and Chih-i's teachings are recorded there side by side with other Ch'an masters shows how close the early philosophy of

¹³ *Hsü Chuan Teng Fu*, or *Supplement of the Transmission of the Lamp*; *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, No. 2077, Vol. 51 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōki, 1924-32), p. 508.

¹⁴ *Collected Works of Yung-chia*, p. 391.

T'ien-t'ai was to Ch'an. The late Dr. Daisetz T. Suzuki^{ab} is on record as saying: "In my view the Tendai (T'ien-t'ai) is a variation of Ch'an, and its first promulgators may justly be classed as Ch'an Masters, though not of the pedigree to which belong Shih-t'ou,^{ac} Yüeh-shan,^{ad} Ma-tsu,^{ae} Lin-chi^{af} etc."¹⁵

II

While Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh (655-713) followed a logical process adopted from the San-lun and T'ien-t'ai Schools, Kiangsi Tao-i, or Ma-tsu (709-788), initiated an approach to self-knowledge quite different from the dialectic process. Ma-tsu's teachings aimed at revealing the ultimate reality itself through direct intuition, in an instantaneous act of self-realization that dispersed all confusion. Ma-tsu set forth the doctrine of *p'ing ch'ang hsin*,^{ag} or "ordinary mind." This is a doctrine which seeks revelation through everyday thoughts and commonplace activities. Here we have it in Ma-tsu's words:

Ordinary mind does not function with intentional action but is free from right and wrong, taking in and giving up, permanence and impermanence, sainthood and commonness.

All our daily activities—walking, standing, sitting, lying down—all response to situations as they arise, our dealings with things as they come and go—all this is Tao.¹⁶

Ordinary mind, then, is pure self-consciousness, or pure intuition, free from any dichotomy, negation, or affirmation. It is not merely a concept derived from a logical process, but it is activity itself. *Prajñā* cannot be considered as an abstract idea, or anything static, but is dynamic and concrete. It is that most fundamental ground from which all mental activities are coordinately manifested. Its invisible power of unification and coordination vivifies the unlimited and unbiased potentialities of creativity in man and in the universe. The ordinary mind, therefore, is not at all ordinary. It represents the attainment of the unattainable, which is far beyond the grasp of the dialectic of negation and affirmation. Yet it is at the same time no more than the thing as it is—"suchness." The thing as it is is its ultimate reality. Any idea about the thing is not the thing itself. In order to come to this realization, no gradual transition of the mind, no conceptual means, are of use. All we can

¹⁵ Daisetz T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, first series (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 203.

¹⁶ *Chuan-teng Lu*, or *Records of the Transmission of the Lamp*, chuan 28, Ch'ang-chou, T'ien-ning Szu, 1919, p. 96a.

do is leap over the immense chasm that lies before us. This existential leap requires no deliberate efforts, and no elaborate process of logic. All it needs is to be immediately free from any attachment, directly and spontaneously.

When the lay disciple P'ang-yün^{ah} first came to seek the truth from Ma-tsu he asked the Master: "Who is he who does not associate with ten thousand things?" The Master replied: "I will not tell you until you are able to swallow all the water in the West River in one gulp." Why, we ask in turn, does the Master not answer his disciple straightforwardly instead of presenting him with further perplexities? We may put it as follows: When the ever-increasing mental strain of the questioner reaches its peak it culminates in his enlightenment. The Japanese term for this is *satori*. The help that the Master renders to his disciples is not in the form of logical, or rational, analysis. It comes rather in the form of the most illogical and paradoxical puzzles, known as *kung-an*.^{ai} Perhaps another example of the *kung-an* will help us to understand this type of seemingly illogical instruction.

Once a monk asked Ma-tsu: "Beyond the four alternatives and hundred-fold negation, will you please tell me directly the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West?" Ma-tsu replied: "I am very tired today and cannot tell you. Go and ask Chih-ts'ang."^{aj} The monk went to Chih-ts'ang as he had been directed, and asked: "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West?" Chih-ts'ang answered: "I have a headache today and cannot tell you. Why don't you go to Huai-hai^{ak} and ask him?" The monk went to Huai-hai and asked his question and Huai-hai replied that he knew nothing about it, that he couldn't answer the question. The monk then returned to the Master, Ma-tsu, and reported the whole affair, whereupon the Master remarked: "Ts'ang's hair is white and Hai's is black."¹⁷

What does Ma-tsu's answer have to do with Bodhidharma coming from the West? Or why does the Master not answer him in the first place instead of sending him on a wild goose chase? Or, after the poor monk finally returned, why does not the Master release the disciple's mental tension by giving him some more logically satisfying answer? The four alternatives and the hundredfold negation refer to traditional means of reaching *śūnyatā*. But the monk asked for instruction beyond these dialectics. Ma-tsu attempts to free him by sending him away with no immediate answer to increase his perplexity. Finally, when the monk returns he confounds him with a completely irrelevant statement. Ma-tsu knows that *śūnyatā* can only be reached through the monk's own self-consciousness emerging from a state of extreme per-

¹⁷ Chih Yüeh Lu, or *Records of Pointing at the Moon*, chuan 5 (T'ai-peh: Far East Book Co., 1959), p. 4a.

plexity. All that Ma-tsu has done, together with the two brother monks, is to push his disciple into a well of despair because he knows that at the very bottom lies enlightenment. When confusion and frustration reach their utmost limits pure consciousness emerges.

Pure consciousness emerges of itself and gives no intervening moment for conceptual analysis. It has been likened to a flash of lightning or to the spark of two flintstones struck together. When intellectual inquiry fails to bring us to this enlightenment other means must be used. Ma-tsu used this method of the *kung-an* and many other devices to awaken his disciples, notably that of crying "Ho!"¹⁸ at the significant moment, striking, or various other gestures. On the surface such bizarre behavior would seem to have nothing whatsoever to do with metaphysics. But the Master's gesture, arising as it does from his own inner reality, opens his disciple to the experience of primordial intuition. The Master had to be aware of his disciple's progress so that he could apply the appropriate means at precisely the right time, the very moment.

When Ma-tsu perceived that his disciple Po-chang^{am} was ready for total enlightenment Ma-tsu uttered a thunderous "Ho!" which did, in fact, open Po-chang's mind. The "Ho!" method was continued by Ma-tsu's followers such as Huang-po Hsi-yün,^{an} Mu-chou Tao-tsung,^{ao} and Lin-chi I-hsüan.^{ap} Lin-chi is particularly noted for his refinement of "Ho!" into four types of application. Sometimes "Ho!" was like a piercing sword, sometimes it was like a lion squatting before you, sometimes it was used as a sounding rod to test the depth of the learner's experience, and sometimes it was used without any of these more special applications.¹⁸

Another method that Ma-tsu originated was that of the "strike."^{aq} A monk asked Ma-tsu: "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West?" Ma-tsu immediately struck him, saying: "If I do not strike you people all over the country will laugh at me!" Ma-tsu's remark here should not be interpreted literally. His real meaning is not contained in the overt sense of the statement. The blow which he dealt the monk was meant to transmit pure consciousness. In this case the strike takes the place of the teachings of the *prajñāpāramitā* texts.^{ar} Subsequently it became a popular practice among the later masters. The most noted expert on "strike-teaching" was Tê-shan Hsüan-chien.^{as} Once he came to the assembly hall and said: "If you say a word you will get thirty blows. If you do not say a word you will get the same thirty blows anyway."¹⁹ Lin-chi had been enlightened by

¹⁸ *Chen-chou Lin-chi Hui-chao Ch'an an-chih Yü-lü*, or *The Dialogues of Ch'an Master Lin-chi Hui-chao of Chen-chao*; *Taishō Shinshū Datsōkyō*, No. 1985, Vol. 47 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōki, 1924-32), p. 504.

¹⁹ *Records of Pointing at the Moon*, chuan 15, p. 10b.

Huang-po by the application of such means. Lin-chi went to ask the meaning of Buddhism from his Master, Huang-po, three times. On each of these occasions he received a blow for an answer. Finally, with the help of Ta-yü,^{at} he realized the meaning of these blows and was suddenly awakened.

There are, in fact, an infinite variety of means to reveal primordial intuition, and, accordingly, the response to the significant question also varies infinitely. Here are a few examples from Ma-tsu's disciples. Once Lu Hsüan,^{au} Governor of Hsüan-chou,^{av} felt that he did not understand what Seng-chao^{aw} (394-414) meant when he said that all things share the same root and that consequently right and wrong are one and the same. His Master, Nan-ch'üan P'u-yüan,^{ax} a disciple of Ma-tsu, pointed to a peony blossom in the courtyard and said: "Governor, when people of the day see these blossoms, it is just like seeing them in a dream."²⁰ A comment in the *Blue Cliff Records*^{ay} says that this vivid kind of teaching is like pushing a man off a ten-thousand-foot cliff—he loses his life immediately. But to "lose one's life" here means to drop one's burden of ignorance and to enter into the new world of enlightenment. Nan-ch'üan's *kung-an* was discussed in the *Blue Cliff Records* but it was a matter of puzzlement to later Ch'an students. We have a story which illustrates this. Once when Fa-ch'ang I-yü^{az} and his head monk were repairing a flower stand in the garden, they conversed in this fashion:

MASTER FA-CH'ANG: "How do you understand Nan-ch'üan's remark that the people of the day saw the peony blossoms as if in a dream?"

HEAD MONK: "Nan-ch'üan simply spoke of the non-existence of flowers."

FA-CH'ANG: "Your answer shows that you are still held captive by Nan-ch'üan."

HEAD MONK: "Then what did Nan-ch'üan really mean?"

FA-CH'ANG: "Pass me a brick."

The head monk passed a brick to the Master but he still did not understand that this was the Master's answer and so he repeated his question. At this Fa-ch'ang sighed, saying: "The ancient Buddha passed away long ago."

What Master Fa-ch'ang meant here was that an answer could be found by the head monk within his own inner experience. It was not something that could be verbalized. He led the monk to the edge of the "ten-thousand-foot cliff" and then answered him in a way which would push him off. In this case, however, the monk was not ready for the great fall.

During the period when Ma-tsu's teachings flourished there were a number of lay Buddhists who attained to great fame and whose words are worthy

²⁰ *The Transmission of the Lamp*, chuan 8, p. 9a, b.

of perusal. Two figures of the Early T'ang period are especially noteworthy. These are Wang Wei^{ba} (699-759) and P'ang Yün (?-811). Wang Wei was a poet-painter in whose works we find a splendid reflection of a profound inner awareness. He is known, indeed, rather for his lyric poetry than for his achievements in Ch'an, but his mastery of the latter, although not so widely known, was remarkable. His inscription for the Sixth Patriarch's biographical account begins with the following lines which indicate the depths of his intuitive understanding of Ch'an :

When nothing remains to give up
 One has indeed reached the Source.
 When there is no void abiding
 Then does one abide within the ground of the void.
 Beyond non-action and action
 One flows with creation
 And puts the Absolute in action.
 As for the hundred doctrines,
 There is nothing to be gained in them;
 But one's embrace of the ten thousand things
 Is utterly inexhaustible.

It is also a matter of particular interest that Wang Wei used a form of the *kung-an* in his poetry. Here is an example in the last two lines of a verse entitled "Reply to the Court Valet Chang".^{bb}

You ask me to explain the reason for failure or success.
 The fisherman's song goes deep into the river.

This, in fact, may well be the earliest use of *kung-an* in Chinese poetry.

P'ang Yün lived a few decades later than Wang Wei. As we have mentioned previously, he studied under Ma-tsu and commented as follows on Ma-tsu's doctrine of the "ordinary mind":

My daily activity is nothing other than harmony
 with myself;
 When each thing I do is without taking or rejecting,
 There is no contradiction anywhere.
 For whom is the honor of red and purple robes?
 The summit of the inner being is never touched
 by the dust of the world.
 Supernatural power and wonderful functioning are found
 In the carrying of water and chopping of wood.²¹

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26b.

The carrying of water and the chopping of wood—therein lies the *Tao*. The statement is a familiar one in Ch'an literature. The truth of *Tao*, however, is inexpressible. Therefore, when Shih-t'ou Hsi-chien^{bd} asked P'ang Yün: "What is daily activity?" P'ang Yün answered: "When you ask about daily activity I cannot even open my mouth."²² Daily activity is the unity of one's inner reality, free from contradictions and beyond intellectual disputation.

The dialogues between P'ang Yün and his daughter Ling-chao^{be} are recorded in the *Records of Pointing at the Moon*.^{bt} We find here still another type of illogical response.

P'ANG YÜN: "What do you say to the ancients' statement that the teachings of the Patriarchs are right on the tops of the flowering plants?"

LING-CHAO: "What sort of old fellow are you to utter such words!"

P'ANG YÜN: "What should I say?"

LING-CHAO: "The teachings of the Patriarchs are right on the tops of the flowering plants."

When the father heard this he was very well pleased. This type of *kung-an*, which repeats the questioner's own words, was often used by later Ch'an masters. One instance involves Fa-yen Wên-i^{bs} and Hsiu-shan Chü^{bh}:

FA-YEN: "An ancient saying goes, 'If there is any slightest differentiation it will cause a great separation between Heaven and Earth.' How do you interpret this?"

HSIU-SHAN CHÜ: "If there is any slightest differentiation it will cause a great separation between Heaven and Earth."

FA-YEN: "If you approach Ch'an like this you are hopeless."

HSIU-SHAN CHÜ: "What would you say?"

FA-YEN: "If there is any slightest differentiation it will cause a great separation between Heaven and Earth."

As we can readily see, these exchanges have absolutely no logical structure. What they aim at is the invisible mutual resolution of inner experience—primordial intuition. Rejection of an answer does not necessarily imply that the answer is incorrect in any intellectual sense. Rather, the purpose is to reveal the depths of the inner experience, to free one from the bondage of logic and discursive thinking.

III

We have presented the approaches of Yung-chia and Ma-tsu as representative of the logical and illogical teaching, respectively, of Ch'an. Yung-chia died in 713, the same year the Hui-neng,^{bi} the Sixth Patriarch, died.

²² *Ibid.*

At that time Ma-tsu was only four years old. Ch'an study at that time was in many ways still primitive. Many of its pioneer thinkers were still deeply involved in the entanglements of metaphysics and logical exposition. Although Yung-chia's aim, in his own words, was "to destroy the means of expression and cut out the roots of mental activity," he remains quite dependent upon such "means of expression" and his mental activity grew deeper and deeper, of its kind, and was hardly to be cut out. Later masters were able to experience directly absolute freedom primarily because they set up no means of expression to destroy and had no roots of mental activity to cut out. Yung-chia moved in the framework of a fixed logic from which he was never entirely able to free himself. In other words, he was preoccupied with dichotomizing concepts of affirmation and negation. Ma-tsu adopted a completely different approach. He used his startling and graphic irrationalities instead of setting up elaborate logical formulas and destroying them. In his dialogues, the power of paradox opens up an impassable chasm over which one must leap beyond logic.

Once Chao-chou,²³ grandson-in-dharma of Ma-tsu, was asked what he would say to a man who possessed nothing. Chao-chou replied: "Throw it away!"²³ If a man has nothing what can he throw away? The paradox completely confounds our intellectual faculty.

Lin-chi, another dharma descendant of Ma-tsu, once said to his assembly: "A man is on the highway, yet he has not left his home. Another man, who has left his home, is not on the highway. Which of these two should be respected?"²⁴ Lin-chi's question cannot be answered logically. His disciples thus were urged to the very edge of the chasm and impelled to leap over. In Ch'an history we have many such famous statements which have repeatedly served as vehicles for the leap, such as: "You are not allowed to travel at night, but you must arrive before daybreak." "The bridge flows, the water does not." "Let the poor farmer's cow be taken away and the hungry man's food be snatched from him." These *kung-an* were all used at various occasions to open new areas of vision and to perpetuate the teaching of the primordial intuition as originated by Ma-tsu.

Yung-chia, as we have seen, carried logical analysis to the very brink of the chasm, but it fell short of making the final leap. For Yung-chia himself, perhaps, the method was adequate because he was an extraordinarily intuitive genius, endowed with an inherent capacity for enlightenment. His logical approach, however, had its limitations. Logic, after all, cannot be non-logic—

²³ Chao-chou *Ch'an-shih Yü-lü*, or *The Dialogues of Ch'an Master Chao-chou* (Kamakura: Matsugaoka Library, 1963), p. 64b.

²⁴ Lin-chi Lu, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

and this was the effort he was engaged in. Of all the Ch'an masters recorded in *The Transmission of the Lamp*, Yung-chia is the only one who advocated a logical process for the attainment of enlightenment. Yung-chia's teaching easily falls into the trap of intellectual complexity and confusion, instead of enlightenment, but his exhaustive exposition of Middle Way logic paved the way for the development of subsequent non-logical means in the teaching of Ch'an.

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|------------|------------|
| a 張鍾元 | af 臨濟 |
| b 永嘉玄覺 | ag 平常心 |
| c 江西道一 | ah 龐蘊 |
| d 中道 | ai 公案 |
| e 三論宗 | aj 智藏 |
| f 三諦一境 | ak 懷海 |
| g 天台宗 | al 喝 |
| h 般若 | am 百丈懷海 |
| i 空 | an 黃檗希運 |
| j 八不中道 | ao 睦州道蹤 |
| k 絕四句 | ap 臨濟義玄 |
| l 永嘉集 | aq 棒 |
| m 吉藏 | ar 般若波羅蜜多 |
| n 三重二諦 | as 德山宣鑿 |
| o 言語道斷心行處滅 | at 大愚 |
| p 左溪法朗 | au 陸宣 |
| q 天宮慧威 | av 宣州 |
| r 三觀 | aw 僧肇 |
| s 慧眼 | ax 南泉普願 |
| t 法眼 | ay 碧岩錄 |
| u 佛眼 | az 法昌倚遇 |
| v 三即一 一即三 | ba 王維 |
| w 真空妙有 | bb 酬張少府 |
| x 大寧道寬 | bc 道 |
| y 慧思 | bd 石頭希遷 |
| z 智顛 | be 靈照 |
| aa 傳燈錄 | bf 指月錄 |
| ab 鈴木大拙 | bg 法眼文益 |
| ac 石頭 | bh 修山主(紹修) |
| ad 藥山 | bi 慧能 |
| ae 馬祖 | bj 趙州從諗 |