

Lecture 17

Perfect Teaching and the Perfect Good¹

Last time we discussed analytical discourse and non-analytical discourse¹ in order to understand the two modes of discourse. We traced the analysis of analytic philosophy upward level by level, exploring “analysis” in the broad sense. Not only does Western philosophy attach great importance to analysis, but Chinese philosophy and Indian philosophy also attach great importance to analysis. Without analysis there cannot be any affirmation or negation, nor establishment of doctrine. In this way, we can liberate the question of “analysis” from analytic philosophy (such as that found in present-day [1978] British and American philosophy), so that it will not be monopolized by it. We first keep this in mind, frequently examining it. Only in this way can we understand the special character of the *prajñā* sūtra of Buddhism, understand its non-analytical discourse, and that in speaking of Perfect Teaching [Perfect Doctrine] the Tiantai school starts from the *Lotus Sūtra*.

The *Lotus Sūtra* is of course different from the *prajñā* sūtra [Wisdom sūtra, *mahā-prajñāparamita* sutra], but it also has a non-analytical character. Men of the past understood that the *Lotus Sūtra* does not have any content, just as the *Prajñā* sūtra has no content, for since it explains nothing it naturally has no content. But they also said that the *Lotus Sūtra* is “the great nexus [*da gang* , tie, main cord] of Buddha's establishment of doctrine,”² and that the important point is to clarify “Buddha's original intent.”³ The statement “the great nexus of Buddha's establishment of doctrine” comes from the discussion of the *Lotus Sūtra* by the Tiantai school. It does not refer to what we mean by “*da gang* [outline]” today. Nowadays we often talk about “*da gang*,” meaning the essential features of a branch of knowledge. The “*da gang*” the Tiantai school was speaking of refers to the original intent of Buddha, and does not refer to the analytical discussion of any particular principle. This latter used to be called “*wang mo* 網脈 [network]” where, in addition to the main cord [*gang ling* 綱領], there are subsidiary cords. “*Wang mo*,” however, is not found in the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is the same as saying

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that it has no content. Thus if you were to open the pages of the *Lotus Sūtra* you will find, aside from the mythology, no analytically discussed principles. It is an impoverished sūtra. Very strange indeed! Why does the Tiantai school make such a threadbare sūtra the basis of its doctrine? The other great sūtras are rich in content. Why did they settle on this sūtra? This leads us to focus on the statement “The great nexus of Buddha's establishment of doctrine [如來設教大綱0].” It does not speak of all the other main and subsidiary cords because those have already been discussed in the other sūtras. The “*da gang* [great tie, great nexus]” refers to Buddha’s original intent, in other words, Buddha’s original wish and not the various analytically discussed principles generated by this wish. All those various principles have already been discussed exhaustively. In the first period, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* [*Huayan, Flowery Splendour* or *Garland Sutra*] was taught. In the second period the Hinayana sutras were taught. In the third period the *vaipulya* [*fang deng, universal*] Mahayana sūtras were taught. In the fourth period the *prajñā* sūtras were taught. Only now in the fifth period are the *Lotus* [*Fa hua*] and *Nirvāna* sūtras taught, with the *Lotus Sūtra* as the principal one, thus pointing out “Buddha’s original intent [佛之本懷].” These are the terminology of the past. Looking at them now, it is easy for us to see that the *Lotus Sūtra* is different from the other sūtras, for it is on a different level. All the others belong to analytical discourse, to the main and subsidiary cords, and have content. We say that they belong to the first order. The *Lotus Sūtra* belongs to another level, called the second order. This is our present-day terminology, which makes it very clear.

The *Prajñā* sūtra [*Maha-prajnaparamita* sutra] explains the non-disputable dharmas [*wuzheng fa*] by means of a “different, alternative door to enlightenment [*yi famen*].”⁴ It teaches nothing and establishes nothing. It is also different from those other sūtras that teach by means of analytical discourse and have something to establish. Its spirit lies in thoroughly dissolving, washing out, and digesting. But the *Prajñā* sūtra is also different from the *Lotus Sūtra*. In terms of digesting, it also belongs to the second, and not the first, order. But its second order reveals wisdom from the subjective side, reveals the Real Characteristic [*shi xiang, ultimate realness/reality*] of *prajna*-Wisdom. The *Lotus Sūtra*, on the other hand, teaches Perfect Teaching in terms of the existence of dharmas. Thus each of the two sutras has its own distinctive character, one horizontal

[cognitive, soteriological], one vertical [ontological] together constituting the Perfect Teaching that the Tiantai school speaks of. Moreover, in this horizontal and vertical, the vertical is primary. Whether a doctrine is Perfect Teaching or not is not defined by the horizontal but by the vertical. The "vertical" is the principal tie, the warp; the "horizontal" is the woof, the function.

We must first understand analytical discourse and non-analytical discourse. Then we can go further and understand that the expression of Perfect Teaching requires a special paradigm. This is a problem not found in Western philosophy. In the judging and classification of Buddha's teachings, Perfect Teaching is adjudged the highest state. But we need to separate the first order from the second order. The former expresses the content and system of dharmas and is expressed by means of analytical discourse. The latter expresses Perfect Teaching and is expressed by means of non-analytical discourse. These two means are totally different. Only in this way does the expression of Perfect Teaching become a question. This is what we talked about last time. I hope you will refer to my book *Buddha-nature and Prajñā* [*Foxing yu Bore*] and give it some thought. It uses present-day thought to explain Chinese philosophy and can advance it a step further in terms of the modes of expression and thought. It has not distorted the original meaning, nor has it made the slightest addition or subtraction. This is entirely a question of the mode of interpretation.

According to the Buddhist critique and classification of Buddha's teachings, the highest state is Perfect Teaching. In terms of philosophical thought and looking at Perfect Teaching as a philosophical question, one question related to the question of Perfect Teaching is the question of the perfect good [*yuan shan*]. In terms of the development of philosophy in the West, the question of the perfect good is probably the latest and highest question. "*Yuan shan* [the perfect good]," is what Kant calls the highest good or *summum bonum*, generally translated as "*zui gao shan* [the highest good]."⁵ If we look at both sides in parallel, in Chinese philosophy it is the question of the critique and classification of Buddha's teachings [*pan jiao*]. In Western philosophy, it is the intellectual progress of a philosophical question. Normally we cannot see this connection but merely move ahead along the lines of the development of Western philosophy, regarding this "highest good" as not very meaningful and somewhat

dispensable. Not only is it totally ignored by people today, but even Kant [1724-1804] in his day observed with regret that while ancient Greek philosophy talked about it, the Stoics talked about it, the Epicureans talked about it, people of his day didn't talk about it.⁶ For this reason Kant brought it up again and tried to solve the question. Present-day Western philosophy, whether it is British, American or European Continental philosophy, ignores it even more. Our ordinary attitude towards "the highest good" is that there seems to be, within certain confines, such a concept in the history of philosophy. As to exactly what question this concept represents, except for Kant who thought about it carefully, no one after him has paid it any attention.

To consider this problem purely from the standpoint of the progress of Western philosophy is one option. If we re-consider the process of how China absorbed Buddhism in the past and thereby gain a proper understanding of Perfect Teaching, we shall find that the question of "highest good" that appeared in the progress of Western philosophical thinking—if this is indeed a question, a meaningful question, and one that cannot be ignored—represented the highest peak of development. For the highest good and Perfect Teaching correspond to each other. If you want seriously to face and discuss the concept of "the perfect good [*yuan shan*]," (Kant was able to face it), and going a step further present this question concretely so that it becomes meaningful, then it is only through the concept of "Perfect Teaching" that you can reveal it in all its clarity. If you really understand the concept of "Perfect Teaching," then the concept of the "perfect good" will naturally stand revealed before you. In the beginning, before this occurred to me, I merely treated the highest good as a problem of Western philosophy. Later on, when I gave a clear explanation of Perfect Teaching, the concept of the perfect good was also clarified. These two questions correspond to each other and must be solved simultaneously. If we wish to use non-analytical discourse to digest analytical discourse, we can only complete it by ultimately discussing Perfect Teaching. And the development of Western philosophy will only reach completion when it reaches the perfect good. If this be the case, then the question that is generally neglected or is seen as merely belonging to a narrow sphere will become meaningful. Otherwise there will be no understanding of the progress of Western philosophical thought and no understanding of the highest good. Buddhism's critique and classification of Buddha's teachings are very

significant, and Perfect Teaching is not something that is dispensable or negligible; nor is it merely a system among systems. It was inevitable that Buddha's teachings should also ultimately take this path, and only reach completion, achieve smoothness and balance, here. This was a necessity. That is why the critique and classification of doctrine could arise at any time and was not something that was final at the first judgement. After past men made critiques, men who came after them once again made critiques, as if the perfect good must be discussed at any time, in this way reminding us of the direction that we should take.

There is a unique way in which Perfect Teaching is Perfect Teaching and which makes it different from other doctrines. If we can gain a clear understanding of this question and fix our direction, then we will know where the highest goal of the cultivation of right practice lies. The highest goal of Buddhist cultivation of right practice lies of course in becoming a Buddha. But since practitioners of Hinayana want to become a Buddha and practitioners of Mahayana also want to become a Buddha, and Mahayana contains all sorts of doctrinal paths and systems, the result is a Buddhahood that is restricted by all sorts of different systems. Then what kind of a Buddha is it that you want to become? If there is no critique of doctrines, then everyone will become the Buddha he wants to become, in which case, where will our highest goal be? That is why this question must be taken up and discussed at all times. Even if what is discussed is still the same, and the unique paradigm for expressing Perfect Teaching is still the same, it must still be discussed continually. This is what S. A. Kierkegaard [1813-55] called "to repeat is to create." Superficially it looks like repetition, but when one at any time gives it a careful and honest new interpretation, then that is creation—stimulative new thought. This sheds light on Perfect Teaching being made the pinnacle, the ultimate state, also known as "the ultimate, total revelation of truth" [*jiujing liao yi*] in the Chinese critique and classification of doctrine.

As for Western philosophy, the highest question in its entire progress from its beginnings in ancient Greece to the present day lies in this concept of the perfect good (regardless whether you are conscious of it or not, or whether you have reached it or not.) This is a concept that corresponds to the question of Perfect Teaching. In studying Western philosophy we must, with respect to the highest good, first of all face it and then

let it be thrown open. If we slight it (not being able to face it is to slight it), or, even if we can face it but treat it as merely a concept in ethics, then this question will still not be thrown open. To throw it open, we must first understand Perfect Teaching and know that Perfect Teaching is necessary, and that this path of development is inevitable. To be able to express Perfect Teaching is to indicate that all preceding doctrines are imperfect. The imperfect will naturally go towards the perfect and furthermore must go in this direction. That is inevitable. But in Western philosophy virtually no one tells us about an inevitable direction (such as the highest good). Russell [1872-1970], for instance, does not talk about the highest good. Not only does he not talk about the highest good, he does not even talk about the ordinary good. To the practitioners of analytic philosophy, there is no such concept and there is no such question. Even those who are not analytic philosophers seldom touch upon this question. Just now we mentioned that Kant lamented that ever since the ancient Greeks discussed this question no one else has discussed it; even his contemporaries in the eighteenth century did not talk about it. The eighteenth century was the apex of European philosophy, and yet it proved to be no exception. Who then would know about the inevitability of the highest good?

But in China Buddhism's critique and classification of Buddha's teachings made Perfect Teaching the highest state, adjudging the earlier Hinayana Teaching, the Common [Shared, Interpenetrating] Teaching, and the Special Teaching [*bie jiao*, Distinctive, Separate Teaching], all expedient teachings. The expedient/provisional [*quan*] is not the real [*shi*]. *Quan* and *shi* are words used as antonyms. *Quan* means expedient, not final, not the complete understanding of truth, and therefore it must necessarily develop towards the perfect and real. Going further, there is a special mode of expressing this perfect and real. Not everyone's perfect, your perfect or my perfect, will do. If we understand the unique mode of expressing Perfect Teaching, then we know that there is only one Perfect Teaching, not two or three. This is not being dogmatic. Being dogmatic is to say my perfect is perfect, not yours, which is still everyone holding on to his own idea of perfect, for we can turn it around and say that yours is perfect and not mine. That won't do. That is why we must understand the unique mode. It is like the statement in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* which says that Buddha teaches the *Prajñā* sūtras by means of distinctive doors to enlightenment. Because they are special

and different, they are non-disputable/non-contentious dharmas. There is a distinctive mode of discussing non-disputable dharmas, one that is different from the other analytical modes of discourse. If you do not understand this mode, and you are still thinking of the analytical mode, how can the non-disputable be possible? All analytical discourse is disputable. Even a system like that established by Kant, one so comprehensive and well thought out in every branch and leaf, is still disputable. Logically speaking this is inevitable. Even Kant could not claim that his system is non-disputable, that it is not open to discussion. If it were not open to discussion it would be dogmatic, like Marxism, and this would not be Perfect Teaching. Consequently we must face this unique mode by first understanding analytical discourse and non-analytical discourse, then understanding the distinctive character of the *Prajñā sūtras*, and later understanding the distinctive character of the *Lotus Sūtra*. These concepts are all absent from philosophy as it is normally understood. Not only are they absent in Western philosophy, but they are also absent from Confucianism. Therefore they merit our attention and we must never regard them as merely Buddhist mythology. If we can face the highest good squarely, and going a step further enable it to be thrown open to let all know that development in this direction is inevitable, then we can pull off the “cover” of Westerners. This is equivalent to giving them a fresh path to life. Once this happens this question will become a universal question, and whether it is Eastern or Western will be irrelevant. If that happens, it will also be an advance for Chinese philosophy.

We have said previously that people in the West do not generally pay attention to this question and that Kant was the first to face it squarely, advancing a step further from the Stoics and the Epicureans. The highest good of the ancient Greeks is actually not the highest good. Those two schools of thought only dealt each with one side of the question, the other side being swallowed up and submerged. The Stoics [who date from early 3rd cent. BCE] made virtue the center of their doctrine. Where virtue lay, there lay happiness. In this way, only the side of virtue was achieved; that of happiness was swallowed up and submerged, without an independent meaning. The highest good must contain two sides, virtue and happiness, each in a subordinating relationship, but neither one cancelling out the other. The Stoics cancelled out happiness, which Kant made the second component of the perfect good. The Epicureans [who date from 311 BCE], on the

other hand, made happiness the center of their doctrine, saying that there was virtue where there was happiness. In this way, virtue—the first component of the perfect good—lost independent meaning. Thus according to the views of these two schools of thought the phrases that express the highest good are analytical propositions. The Stoics held that as long as we analyzed the concept of virtue we could know happiness. According to Kant, however, it was not an analytic proposition. Merely analyzing the concept of virtue would not necessarily yield happiness, which is very easy to understand. The Confucians also had this idea. Heavenly rank does not necessarily give us earthly rank. Heavenly rank and earthly rank are the two components of the highest good. Mencius said: “Men of old cultivated their heavenly rank, and earthly rank followed [古之人修其天爵，而人爵從之].” (Mencius 6A.16.2.). “Men of old” being a special sphere, Mencius could conveniently speak in that way. But looking at it rationally, cultivation of heavenly rank will not necessarily be followed by earthly rank. In other words, one cannot obtain earthly rank from analyzing heavenly rank. Only the union of heavenly rank and earthly rank can give us the highest good, the perfect good. These two must belong to a synthetical relation. The Epicurean view was even more bizarre. They made happiness the determining principle of moral practice. But happiness cannot be made the principle that determines our will, in other words, cannot be made the principle of morality. But they made happiness the dominant principle, where if there was happiness there was virtue. This of course is an even greater error. People who are happy are not necessarily people of virtuous conduct, and besides, happiness cannot be made a moral principle. But they only affirmed one component, using the analytic proposition to express the highest good.

Thus, in Kant’s view, although both the Stoics and the Epicureans discussed both virtuous conduct and happiness in their treatment of the highest good, in the end both ended up with only one side. In other words, they did not understand that it was a synthetic relation, not an analytic relation. Furthermore, although it is a synthetic relation, it is not one that is equal, without principal and subordinate, but one in which virtue is primary and happiness is secondary. This is a synthetic subordination, not an analytic subordination. This is a big step forward. For Kant to reach this level in his

explanation is a considerable achievement. His analysis of the basic concepts is also very clear.

In China, Mencius also brought up this idea (of heavenly rank and earthly rank). But he did not go into a detailed analysis. Perhaps some of us will think: Kant tells us that this is a synthetic relation, that heavenly rank does not necessarily imply earthly rank. Then why did Mencius say: “Men of old cultivated their heavenly rank, and earthly rank followed”? Also, why did *The Doctrine of the Mean* say: “Great virtue will certainly get its rank, get its emolument, get its fame, and get its longevity [大德必得其位，必得其祿，必得其名，必得其壽]”? How can it say “Certainly”? Great virtue does not necessarily get longevity, for Yan Yuan [a disciple of Confucius] died young. Nor do persons of great virtue always attain rank, for Confucius, who was a sage, certainly had great virtue, but he did not attain high rank. These words are all unreliable from the modern point of view. Mencius was somewhat more polite. He added “men of old” and did not mention “certainly.” So the statement of *The Doctrine of the Mean* seems highly questionable. Of course you are free to think along these lines, but you should not be sure that your view is superior to that of the ancients, and that the statements of *The Doctrine of the Mean* and *Mencius* are meaningless. You are, however, free to bring up this viewpoint and think about it carefully. Unlike present-day philosophers, the sages of the past talked about Dao without making a careful logical analysis of what they said. Mencius's statement especially pointed at “Men of old,” such as Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhou Gong [ancient sage rulers], etc. Where these few men were concerned, it was very possible that they “cultivated their heavenly rank, and earthly rank followed.” But there was no necessity to it. So this is a synthetic relation. On the other hand, “Men of today cultivate their heavenly rank in order to court earthly rank [今之人修其天爵，以要人爵],” a situation that is completely different. “Men of old cultivated heavenly rank and earthly rank followed” has a special reference. It does not, however, preclude other possibilities. Perhaps among men of old there were those who cultivated heavenly rank but earthly rank did not follow, for he did not say “certainly.” Men of today, however, cultivate heavenly rank for the sake of seeking wealth and position. Earthly rank refers to wealth and position. But this is not bad! Although the motivation is not pure, if one can persevere in this, it isn't bad at all. But

there are those who cannot even do this. Thus “Once they have attained earthly rank they discard heavenly rank [既得人爵，而棄其天爵].” These are of course words of encouragement and caution. But we can also regard it as a question and ask:

In the statement “cultivated their heavenly rank, and earthly rank followed,” is the word “followed” really synthetic or analytic? We may take this discussion a step further in this way, and Mencius would not object to it. But even if you do this, Mencius could still say: “Men of today cultivate their heavenly rank in order to court earthly rank. As soon as they have attained earthly rank, they discard heavenly rank.” The phrase “Men of today” can always be used, not only to refer to men of that time but also to refer to the present age, and it can also refer to an endless future. That is why Kant made a great contribution by enabling us to gain a clear conceptual understanding of the problem.

Be that as it may, those specialists in Kant do not necessarily have a true understanding of this problem. Nor can they understand that our philosophical thought must inevitably develop along this direction, and that this perfect good is the highest point of development. Take Lewis White Beck as an example. Besides translating the *Critique of Practical Reason*, he also annotated the book.⁷ When referring to this question in his annotation he said that in speaking of the highest good Kant postulated the existence of God, which is basically a practical-dogmatic metaphysics.⁸ One can also say that there is a moral metaphysics in Confucianism. Kant used God’s existence to guarantee the highest good. This kind of proof is a moral proof, and generally speaking it is a “moral metaphysics.” To this metaphysics Beck added the adjective “dogmatic,” calling it a “practical (moral) dogmatic metaphysics.” Kant took this step to fulfill the goal of practical reason, but Beck regarded it as dogmatic. This was because Beck held that the highest good is not the object of practical reason.⁹ This is a problematic statement and Kant would not have acknowledged it. For Kant made it very clear that the highest good is the necessary object of our will.¹⁰ Of course Beck did not make this statement without a reason. For practical reason itself can also determine a highest good, but this highest good is from the standpoint of morality itself. In other words, to act in accordance with the categorical imperative is the highest good. (Consequently, the term “the highest good” has a split meaning and so it is best that we do not translate it in this way). If this is the case, then why must we seek the concurrence of happiness and virtue?

This kind of search has long since left morality itself; that is, it has left practical reason itself and has involved the question of happiness. This is to speak of “practical reason” in the narrow sense, where practical reason has been shrunk down. That is why Beck said that the highest good is not the object of practical reason. But Kant said very clearly that not only is it the object of practical reason, it is the necessary object, namely the necessary object of the will. The will demands it. But this search is indirect, not direct. The object of the will is the good, what Confucianism calls “loving good and hating evil [好善惡惡].” Then what is the good? Acting in accordance with the categorical imperative is the good. Disobeying it is evil. Thus good and evil are not the concept that comes first, but are determined by whether one obeys or disobeys moral laws. This is a fundamental reorientation.

When discussing morality Westerners usually begin by discussing the meaning of “good,” because they believe ethics is concerned with the “good.” For example, the English philosopher G. E. Moore [1873-1958] wrote a book, *Principia Ethica* [1903], which is concerned with analyzing the “good.” It is a very earnest book which received quite a lot of attention. But he still starts his inquiry with the idea of the “good.” The conclusion of his analysis is that the “good” cannot be defined. Since it is indefinable, then what is to be done? The only solution is to let it end inconclusively. This is typical of the British, who are very good at this sort of thing. At the time Moore wrote this book, he had read Kant without understanding him. What Kant wanted to do was to turn the question around. Why did Moore want to analyze the “good”? He wanted to gain a clear understanding of the good through analysis and then decide on our conduct. If something is good, then we should do it. This kind of attitude is questionable because he treats the “good” as coming first, deciding our conduct from the outside. This is heteronomy. So we should not treat the “good” as the idea that comes first, but must treat moral laws as coming first. Morality determines our conduct. Acting in accordance with moral laws is good; acting contrary to them is evil. This agrees exactly with the spirit of Confucianism. Beck’s “good” is “good” in this sense of the word. It does not include the highest good where virtue and happiness are in concord. This latter is added on externally. That is why he says that this is not the object of practical reason. Is this not shrunken back? But Kant said very clearly that the highest good consisting of the harmony of virtue and

happiness is the necessary object of the will. The will must demand it. We can very well say that this quest is indirect--we first determine what is good according to moral laws, then demand the harmony of virtue and happiness—but it is still the necessary object of the will. But because Kant's words are loose and general, many people do not like this idea of the “highest good.” How can virtue take happiness into consideration? Even Dong Zhongshu [179?-104 BCE] said: “Set straight what is proper without considering its gain; understand what is right without calculating its merit [正其宜不謀其利，明其道不計其功].” Lofty words indeed; what need is there for happiness? The “highest good” of this perspective is the highest good of pure virtue, not what Kant meant by the highest good. This way of describing morality can be very resounding and one can stop here. But the result will be the Stoic path, where happiness is where virtue is. When Wen Tianxiang [1236-1283, Song dynasty patriot and martyr] sacrificed his life for the sake of *ren* [humanity, humaneness] it was virtue and it was also happiness, a view that is much too tragic, and not one that can appeal to common humanity. Thus happiness is also a necessary demand of practical reason, an issue that cannot remain unexamined.

Kant, however, only said that the highest good is the necessary object of the will, without giving a clear explanation. But this is not a self-evident concept, for the average person can say: I don't want happiness. Isn't it enough that we “set straight what is proper without thinking of gain?” Kant was not clear enough on this point. When I first read it, Kant's explanation struck me as somewhat weak. His discussion of moral laws, as when he discussed the categorical imperative, was always very forceful and adequate; but when he spoke about the highest good being the necessary object of the will, he could not make one understand it thoroughly. Which is why one can always raise doubts about it.

From another aspect, in terms of the critique of doctrines, it was a necessary development for the critique to arrive at Perfect Teaching. Once Perfect Teaching was reached, it was natural for the perfect good to become clear. Before arriving at Perfect Teaching, this idea cannot become clear. In Expedient Teaching, whether Hinayana or Mahayana, this idea cannot be discussed. From the perspective of Buddhism, Expedient Teaching cannot ensure the existence of dharmas. Here the existence of dharmas does

not have necessity. But the idea of happiness rests on the existence of dharmas. The existence of dharmas is simply the existence of the actual world. It is necessary to affirm the physical life of the actual world. If the actual world cannot be guaranteed and its existence has no necessity, then where do you place happiness? Thus according to the critique of doctrine, Expedient Teaching (which is not Perfect Teaching) cannot guarantee the existence of dharmas, that is, the existence of dharmas has no necessity, and if so, then the idea of happiness has no basis and cannot be guaranteed. Then how can we seek happiness? Of course, according to morality itself, we can forego the quest for happiness. But if so, then we cannot reach the highest good. From the standpoint of the critique of doctrines, since Expedient Teaching cannot guarantee the existence of dharmas, it is imperfect. Thus it is only when Perfect Teaching is reached that the existence of dharmas has necessity. Once there is necessity to the existence of dharmas, then the problem is solved. Therefore happiness rests on the existence of dharmas, and only when there is necessity to the existence of dharmas can there be basis for happiness. To say “there is necessity” for something is to say that it is a requirement, that unless this is so one cannot become a Buddha. Otherwise, even if one becomes a Buddha it would not count, for the cultivation of virtue would still be incomplete. Therefore, if the existence of dharmas can be affirmed and one must become a Buddha over here, then virtue (the subjective intent) appears here and happiness also appears here, and the two must be united. But if the existence of dharmas cannot be guaranteed, then it cannot be certain that virtue and happiness can be united, and this would be Expedient Teaching. For example, the Tiantai school criticizes the Huayan school as “*yuan li duan jiu* [緣理斷九]” [adhering to the Noumenal [*li*, Principle/Noumenon, i.e., the pure, Tenth, Buddha-Realm] and cutting off the Nine Realms [i.e., the phenomenal world] .¹¹ In this state [of enlightenment], the Buddha Dharma-body is full of virtue, for it is entirely filled with pure non-leaking merits. But it has been cut off from the other nine dharma-realms. Since the existence of dharmas cannot be guaranteed, where can happiness be? In Buddhist terminology, happiness rests on “material dharmas [*se fa*, entities of the phenomenal world].” Since following Principle/Noumenon [*li*] requires cutting off the other nine realms, then “material dharmas” have disappeared, leaving behind only “mind”—the pure non-leaking mind of merits. “Mind” refers to the side of “virtue.” But

if there is no longer “dharma of the material world” how can one talk about happiness? Or about virtue and happiness being in accord? Thus this highest good cannot be guaranteed. The *Awakening of Faith* also talks about “Matter and mind are not two [色心不二].”¹² But in this Special Teaching, the statement “Matter and mind are not two” is a synthetic proposition, not an analytic proposition. This is not really “not two” but can be two. Thus only after the idea of Perfect Teaching is made clear can the perfect good (the highest good) have necessity. If this is the necessary path to becoming a Buddha, and under this “necessity” the existence of dharmas has necessity, then we can say: The accord of virtue and happiness is the necessary object of practical reason. Does this not make sense? But if Perfect Teaching is not reached, then the idea of the unity of virtue and happiness is only—to use Kant’s terminology—problematic and not apodeictic.¹³ Only in this way can the concept of the highest good be fully explained.

Under these circumstances, it is legitimate to introduce God as assurance, for Perfect Teaching expresses the absolutely perfect, and the absolutely perfect in the Western philosophical tradition is guaranteed by God. God guarantees the existence of dharmas because God created the world, while you and I are unable to create it. What lies within our allotted nature is virtue, and this is what Mencius meant in the statement: “If by seeking I will get it, and if by discarding I will lose it, then seeking is helpful to getting, for seeking is in myself [求則得之，捨則失之，是求有益於得也，求在我者也].” As to my virtue, how much happiness can it get? When can I get happiness? This is entirely out of my hands, and it is what Mencius meant in the statement: “When there is Dao in seeking and there is Fate in getting, then seeking is not helpful to getting, for seeking is outside of myself. [求之有道，得之有命，是求無益於得也，求在外者也.]” Therefore what I can control is only the aspect of virtue. From a practical point of view, a man who has virtue is very possibly one who does not have happiness; moreover, it appears that the greater one’s virtue, the less one’s happiness, which can easily be a source of complaint. Perhaps someone will say: Don’t worry, sooner or later you’ll get happiness. But when will this happiness come? Perhaps you will be told: Not in this life but in the next life. But where is the next life? How can I wait for it? All this shows that it is out of my hands; it lies outside my power. Then who has this power? In Western

philosophy it is pushed very naturally onto God, with the result that His existence is affirmed. This is what is called a “moral proof,” falling under “moral theology.” That is why Kant only acknowledges the possibility of moral theology and no other proof of God.¹⁴ That is quite correct. Only God can ensure an appropriate ratio between virtue and happiness or a proportionate or proper harmony. And from a practical point of view, we humans are incapable of doing this. All that lies in our power is to be conscientious in our moral conduct. As to happiness—a concept which in the past fell under “fate”--- that is out of our hands. If it lay in our hands it would not be called “fate.” Hence the statement: “When there is Dao in seeking and there is Fate in getting, then seeking is not helpful to getting.” Seeking will not necessarily help me get it. Hence the proverb: “If Fate decrees eight feet, it is difficult to seek ten [命中八尺，難求一丈],” From the standpoint of Christianity, it is most convenient and clearest if we explain it with God. Since God is the creator of the world, He of course knows how to match virtue and happiness. That is why we should not be pessimistic, for He will not treat us unjustly. As long as we follow the path of virtue, we will have happiness. As to when it will come, that should not be a concern, for God has already made plans for it. If it does not come in this life, it will certainly come in the next. That is why Kant had to assume that the soul is immortal, for otherwise there would be no next life. In this way the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are affirmed simultaneously.

But we need not subscribe to this explanation. If explained this way, we can merely say that we believe it. From the Buddhist point of view, this is conceptual play, which is why the contemporary person has no interest in such talk. But we can explain it differently. In the East, this question is best articulated by Buddhism. This is simply the question of Perfect Teaching. Perfect Teaching is capable of encompassing the Ten Dharma-realms. Clinging to the Buddha-realm and cutting off the nine other realms [*yuan li duan jiu*] still falls short of Perfect Teaching. The Ten Dharma-realms are the six realms of gods, humans, titanic demons, hell-dwellers, hungry spirits, and animals, and the four realms of hearers, solitary Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. Each realm represents a category of dharma. The Ten Dharma-realms is a general description. They can be divided further into three kinds of finite worlds, namely the finite world of countries, the finite world of sentient beings, and the finite world of the five *skandhas*

[five aggregates or constituents of the human person]. The finite world of countries refers to the geographical environment we live in. The finite world of sentient beings refers to living beings. The finite world of the five aggregates refers to form [*se* 色, matter], perception [*shou* 受], reflecting [*xiang* 想], thinking [*xing* 行], and consciousness [*shi* 識]. These three finite worlds encompass all dharmas. This “all” is not a logical, but an ontological “all,” which includes everything that God has created. There are those who say that God created only the finite world, and that there are still many worlds he did not create. But according to the Tiantai school, everything God created is included in these three kinds of finite worlds. According to Leibniz, God had many possible worlds but he chose the best possible world to give us. Besides this world, there are many possible worlds he did not create. This is the Western viewpoint, all of which, from the Buddhist point of view, is conceptual play [*xi lun*]. Where God is concerned the “possible” is irrelevant, for He is infinite. We cannot say that God can create this or that world, or that he can choose not to create. According to the Christian religion, God created the best world for us, which, if we abandon ourselves to reckless behavior, He can also destroy. Such an explanation is unacceptable because as far as God is concerned there is no such question as can or cannot. All this is senseless banter.

All that God has created is included in the Ten Dharma-realms. Under Perfect Teaching, Buddhahood is attained through the inter-fusing of the Ten Dharma-realms. Every dharma-realm holds ten dharma-realms. The Buddha Dharma-realm contains six paths [*liu dao*] of sentient beings, hearers, solitary Buddhas, and bodhisattvas. The Dharma-realm of hells also contains gods, humans, titanic demons, hungry spirits, animals, hearers, solitary Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. The ten realms fuse with one another, each realm containing ten realms, adding up to a total of one hundred dharma-realms. Each dharma-realm contains ten thus-so [*rushi*], resulting in one hundred realms and one thousand thus-so.¹⁵ Thirty different kinds of finite worlds are then matched with the one hundred Dharma-realms, and so we have the statement “In one thought-instant to survey the 3,000 worlds.”¹⁶ This simply refers to the totality of dharmas. With respect to the Buddha Dharma-realm, if one wishes to become a Buddha, one must be identified with [*ji*, 即, be, identical to] the other nine Dharma-realms. One cannot become Buddha by leaving the six paths of sentient beings, hearers, solitary

Buddhas, and bodhisattavas. According to the usual teaching, the Buddha can metamorphose into hell or hungry spirits, but he is not hell or hungry spirit. Hell and hungry spirits are merely his metamorphotic bodies [*huashen*]. Not only can he metamorphose into the bodhisattva Guanyin [Avalokiteshvara], but he can also transform himself into an elephant, lion, deities and the other eight classes of heavenly dragons, as well as boys and girls. But this kind of explanation is not Perfect Teaching. The purpose of metamorphosis is to demonstrate his supernatural powers. Depending on the need, he demonstrates or does not demonstrate his supernatural powers. This is not Perfect Teaching but Expedient Teaching. According to Perfect Teaching, not a single dharma-realm of the nine dharma-realms may be eliminated. To become a Buddha, one must simply become a Buddha right here. In this way, is not the existence of hells and the other dharma-realms guaranteed and made necessary? As to being metamorphosed, there is no necessity. If the Buddha wishes to demonstrate supernatural powers, he can assume a metamorphotic form; if not, it no longer exists. What Perfect Teaching represents is the level of God; this is the Absolute. Here, the necessity of dharmas is totally guaranteed. However, God's affairs have nothing to do with us, which is why Kant consistently asserts that the relation between virtue and happiness is a synthetic relationship. It is "synthetic" in reference to humans. The idea of the concord of virtue and happiness cannot present itself in our practical life, its possibility being guaranteed only by the existence of God. Our practical reason can only postulate; its necessity is only the necessity of the postulate. The consistency of virtue and happiness cannot present itself in our actual life, and only God can bring it about. In this way humans and God are separated. If the assurance of the consistency of virtue and happiness is assigned to God, then their relation will always be synthetic. But this is from the standpoint of us humans. If seen from the standpoint of God, of the divine eye, this relation then becomes an analytic one, for God has intellectual intuition. But God is God, quite separate from us. Since humans do not have intellectual intuition, then, in terms of human thought, the relation of virtue and happiness is a synthetic relation. If this is the case, then although this highest good is meaningful, it cannot be made completely clear.

However, if we do not place the assurance of the existence of dharmas in God but place it in the "perfect Buddha [*yuan fo*]" and thereby cancel God, then the case would be

different. For every sentient being can become a Buddha. Besides, becoming a Buddha is not only a logical possibility, it is a real possibility.

Therefore, no matter whether we can immediately become a Buddha or not, the Chan school's doctrine says that we can become a Buddha right here, and that the perfect good appears right here. But even if one did not follow the doctrine of the Chan school but instead thought along the lines of Perfect Teaching, the perfect good can still be made clear. This is different from placing the assurance in God. If assurance is placed in God's hands, then that is God's affair. If it lies in the Buddha Dharma-body, then it is our affair. Thus the consistency of happiness and virtue in Perfect Teaching is not a synthetic proposition but an analytic proposition. For the word “*ji* [is],” in “becoming a Buddha by identifying with [*ji* 即, is, identity with] the nine realms” is necessary. Normally we think of hell-dwellers, hungry spirits, and animals as miserable states. How can there be happiness there? But the perfect Buddha is a Buddha through identity with hell-dwellers, hungry spirits, and animals. Being here in hell, and with hungry spirits and animals, is virtue and it is concurrently happiness. The Buddha is not hell, and there is no happiness in hell, but when he becomes a Buddha by identifying with this Dharma-realm of hell, hell is from the Buddha's standpoint his virtue (Buddhism calls it “merit” [*gongde*]). At the same time, it is also his happiness because his merit is such through his identifying with hell. It is at this time that happiness and virtue can be in accord and this accord is an analytic accord. Thus when out of this “Matter and mind are not two” [*se xin bu er* 色心不二], it is truly not two. This “not two” is “not two” analytically and not “not two” synthetically.

In Kant's philosophy this idea is best not directly described as “the consistency of happiness and virtue,” for Kant does not say that these two are in accord. Instead he says that between the two there is a proportionate ratio. The English version uses the word proportionate and not the word consistent. It is the latter that has the meaning of “*yizhi* 一致”. As soon as one talks of “consistent” one easily thinks of an analytic relation, but that would be wrong. But in the perfect Buddha manifested by Perfect Teaching, the relation of happiness and virtue is indeed analytic.¹⁷ The perfect Buddha's Dharma-body [*fa shen*, Skt. *dharmakāya*], metamorphosis body [*hua shen*, Skt. *nirmānakāya*] and reward body [*bao shen*, Skt. *sambhogakāya*] are all three bodies united in one. The

perfect Buddha's Dharma-body is simply the Secret Treasury of Three Virtues. The three virtues are the Dharma-body, *prajñā*, and deliverance. *Prajñā* is simply intellectual intuition. Once we have reached this point, is not the consistency of happiness and virtue made very clear?

But in Buddhism there is only critique and classification of doctrine. There is no concept of the highest good. It is only when we talk about morality that we have the concept of the highest good. Buddhist doctrine stops when it arrives at Perfect Teaching. But it is necessary for Confucianism to discuss what is meant by good. The good cannot be judged in terms of the external object. That is why Confucianism speaks of human nature being good, making human nature being good its standard. That human nature is good determines the good or the not good of all things. It first of all determines our words and actions. In Kant these words and actions are viewed as objects in the broad sense; that is, they are viewed as good objects. Here Confucianism and Kant are in agreement. Kant's re-orientation made him turn in the direction of Confucianism. That is why in *Zhi Yan [Knowing the Words]* Hu Wufeng [1106-1162] quoted his father Hu Anguo in the words: "Mencius's statements on [human] nature being good are expressions of admiration. They are not arguing against [human] nature being evil [孟子道性善云者，歎美之辭，不與惡對]."¹⁸ Actually, human nature is neither good nor evil. The predicates "is good" "is evil" are both inapplicable. This is because human nature is a standard for judging whether other things are good or evil. This standard cannot be adjudged good or evil on the basis of yet another standard. It is simply the ultimate standard. That is why everything that can be described by these two predicates (such as conduct) is relative, having both good and evil. The goodness of human nature, however, is absolute. Thus it does not have a good form or an evil form. These two predicates cannot be applied to it. That is why when Wang Yangming [1472-1528] said "Without good, without evil is the mind-in-itself [無善無惡 心之體],"¹⁹ this was what he meant. That which is without good and without evil is the utmost good, and the utmost good is simply the absolute good.

According to the Buddhist critique of doctrines, Perfect Teaching is the highest pinnacle. On the question of good and evil from the Confucian standpoint, there is also a Perfect Teaching, and, moreover, its paradigm is the same, even though its content is

different, because Confucianism has a system of moral philosophy. In terms of the intellectual progress of Western philosophy, the perfect good is the highest pinnacle. According to Kant, there are two levels of legislating in all of philosophy: On the level of knowledge, it is the understanding prescribing laws for nature; on the moral level, it is the will legislating for the self. These two levels of legislating constitute the entire scope of philosophy. This also approximates what Kant calls the “cosmic concept” in philosophy. Kant said that the philosophical concept we ordinarily speak of is always a “scholastic concept.” But besides this kind of philosophical concept there is also a “cosmic concept.”²⁰ By “cosmic” he means “complete.” A complete philosophy encompasses two levels of legislating, with good as the highest goal. Thus Western philosophy is represented by this Kantian model. All the other partial, particular philosophies can be gathered into the two levels. And if the concept of the highest good is to have necessity, and is not simply an arbitrary concept, then it can only be revealed by the perfected Buddha in Perfect Teaching. This is something that cannot be revealed by Western philosophy itself.

In the section on Buddhism we have introduced a number of important questions. These are authentic philosophical questions and must be treated as such. Even if they involve language analysis, we must address the questions and solve them, and not merely engage in explicating words and phrases. For example, those who do language analysis decide what has meaning and what is meaningless, all of which are all large questions. Even though they call their own philosophy small [minor] philosophy and other philosophies large [major] philosophies, the questions they address are actually not minor. We cannot say that these are not philosophical questions. Whenever we regard something as a question, there is no such thing as large or small. If we talk about large, everything is large. Only if we do nothing but explicate words and phrases can it be called small. To do that is simply not to look at it as a philosophical question. If it is small then we cannot call it a concept [*gainian*], because this character *gai* [overall] encompasses many objects. That is why it is problematic when the analytic philosophers say that Hegel’s philosophy is meaningless. They say that only knowledge has meaning, but the sphere of knowledge is not small! I am thinking of writing a book on the highest good. That is something that occurred to me only recently. I didn’t say enough about it

in *Appearance and Thing-in-Itself* [*Xianxiang yu Wuzishen*], and didn't solve this question there. That was just a general examination of the problem. Perhaps I'll simply call the book *Yuan Shan Lun* [*On the Perfect Good*, published 1985]. I'll make it clearer this time.

Transcribed by Ming-huei Lee 李明輝

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¹ See Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu Bore* (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju 1977), Appendix, "Fenbie Shuo yu Fei Fenbie Shuo [Analytical Discourse and Non-Analytical Discourse]."

² See Zhizhe Dashi [Zhiyi], *Fahua Xuanyi* [*Hidden Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra*], juan 10 A: "You should know that this sūtra only talks about the outline of Buddha's establishment of doctrine. It does not go into the details."

³ *Fahua Xuanyi*, juan 1A: "This sūtra [*Lotus Sūtra*] now straightforwardly discards the imperfect [*burong*, not dissolved], speaking only of the perfect [*rong*, dissolved], so that all assembled here may taste the same flavor, and the original intent of Buddha's birth into this world may be conveyed."

⁴ Long Shu [Nāgārjuna], *Da zhidu lun* [*Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra*]: "Then again, in the remaining sutras Buddha speaks of the characteristics of the five aggregates [*skandhas*], impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and non-substance of the self. Because I now want to use a different method to teach the five aggregates, I will teach the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*." Here *yi famen* [different method of teaching] refers to a method to enlightenment that is "different from the analytical method". See Mou, *Foxing yu Bore*, vol. 1, ch. 1, sect. 1.

⁵ "The highest good" is "höchstes Gut" in German. Kant's discussion of the highest good appears mainly in *The Critique of Practical Reason* [*Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*], part one, book 2, "The Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason [Dialektik der reinen praktischen Vernunft]."

⁶ Kant says: "The moderns, among whom the concept of the highest good is no longer useful, or at least has become only something unimportant...." In *Critique of Practical Reason*, part 1, book 1, chapter 2.

⁷ This book is *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* by Lewis White Beck, The University of Chicago, Chicago, 1960.

⁸ See *op. cit.*, pp. 46n, 227, 245, 263n.

⁹ Beck says on p.245, *op.cit.*: "The concept of the highest good is not a practical concept at all, but a dialectal Ideal of reason."

¹⁰ Kant says: "Pursuit of the highest good is the a priori necessary object of our will and is moreover related to and inseparable from the moral law. Thus the impossibility of the highest good must prove that the moral law is wrong." *Critique of Practical Reason*, part 1, bk. 2, ch. 2, sect. 1.

¹¹ For the implications of "yuan li duan jiu jiu 緣理斷九 [following Noumenon/Principle and cutting off the Nine Realms]", see Mou, *Foxing yu Bore*, part 3, sect. 1, ch. 1-3, and Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de Zhijue yu Zhongguo Zhexue* [*Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy*] (Taipei: Zhangwu Yinshuguan, 1971), ch. 20, "Tiantai Zong zhi Yuanjiao: Cong Wuzhu Ben Li Yiqie Fa 天臺宗之圓教：從無住本立一切法" [The Perfect Teaching of the Tiantai School: Establishing All Dharmas on the Ground of Non-Attachment].

¹² *Dasheng qixin lun* [*Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*] says: "That is to say, because this Dharma-body is material body, it can appear in the material. This is to say that from the beginning matter and mind are not two. For the nature of the material is wisdom, without body and without form. Therefore it is called the Wisdom-body. And because the nature of wisdom is material, we say that the Dharma-body [*dharmakāya*] is everywhere."

¹³ There is a fine distinction between *problematic* and *possible* (or *möglich* in German), and between *apodeictic* and *necessary* (or *notwendig* in German). See Mou Zongshan, 1975, *Xianxiang yu Wuzhishen* [Appearance and Thing-in-Itself] (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1975), p. 48ff.

¹⁴ In his book *Critique of Pure Reason* [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*], in "The Transcendental Dialectic [*Die transzendente Dialektik*]", Kant discusses various proofs of God's existence produced by speculative reason (*spekulative Vernunft*), concluding that they are impossible. And therefore we have to turn to the establishment of moral theology.

¹⁵ *Fahua Jing Fangbian Pin Di Er* ["Expedient" chapter, 2, of the *Lotus Sūtra*] says: "Only Buddha and Buddha can fully understand the reality of all dharmas, which is to say that the ultimate reality of all dharmas is form as such, nature as such, body as such, power as such, function as such, cause as such, condition as such, effect as such, retribution as such, beginning and ultimate as such." These are the ten as-such. Zhiyi in his *Fahua Xuanyi*, *juan 2 A*, says: "This dharm- realm contains ten as-such, the ten dharm- realms contain one hundred as such. One dharma realm again contains nine dharma realms; thus there are one hundred dharma-realms and one thousand as-such."

¹⁶ Zhizhe Dashi [Zhi Yi] in his *Mohe Zhiguan* [*Great Calming and Contemplation*], *juan 5 A*, says: "One mind contains ten dharma realms. One dharma realm again contains ten dharma realms, [giving] one hundred dharma realms. One dharma realm contains thirty kinds of worlds and one hundred dharma realms contain three thousand kinds of worlds. These three thousand are in one thought. If there is no mind then it does not matter. But if you have a mind, then it contains three thousand."

¹⁷ Transcribers' note: Professor Mou told me: "These sentences are problematic. *Yizhi* 一致 [consistent, concordant] is not necessarily analytic.... Whether Perfect Teaching in Tiantai is analytic is also problematic. See Mou Zongsan, *Yuan Shan Lun* [*On the Perfect Good*] (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1985) ch. 6.

¹⁸ See *Zhi Yan* [*Knowing the Words*], *juan 4*, *Si Ku Quan Shu* edition. In the edition of Cheng Mingzheng 程敏政 of the Ming dynasty, after *juan 6* there is appended one *juan* of Zhu Zi's "Zhi Yan Yi Yi 知言疑義 [Problematic meanings of the *Zhi Yan*]" and an Appendix of one *juan*, while the *Yi Yi* [Problematic meanings] passage in the main text has been deleted. Thus this passage also does not appear in the main text of the Cheng edition or the affiliated Korean edition or Japanese edition, but appears in the appended "*Yi Yi*". The six-*juan* *Zhi Yan* and its one-*juan* Appendix of the *Si Ku Quan Shu* edition is taken from the *Yonglo Dadian* edition, and is the original Song dynasty version. "*Zhi Yan Yi Yi*" also appears in *Song Yuan Xue' An* [Studies on Song-Yuan Philosophers], "Wufeng Xue An [Studies on the Works of Hu Wufeng]", and *Zhu Wengong Wenji* [*Collected Writings of Zhu Wengong*], *juan 73*.

¹⁹ Wang Yangming's four-sentence teaching says: "Without good, without evil, is the mind-in-itself. Having good, having evil, is the activity of volition. Knowing good and evil in the activity of volition is *liangzhi*. Doing good, removing evil is the rectification of our actions." [Mou's translation slightly adapted.—Translator]. See Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi Lu* [*Record of the Transmission of Practice*], *juan 3*, and "Nian Pu" [Chronology] entry under ninth month, *jiaqing* sixth year.

²⁰ "Cosmic concept is *Weltbegriff* in German. "Scholastic concept" is *Schulbegriff* in German. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, "On the Transcendental Method [*transzendente Methodenlehre*]", ch. 3.