

# UNIVERSAL VALUES COMMON TO EASTERN AND WESTERN RELIGIONS

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## I. Prologue

In order to promote mutual understanding we have to make clear which are the universal values common to all mankind. Are there any universal values?

If we can find any values or principles common to East and West, they might serve as clues to understand East and West. By way of comparison we can find something common that underlies all mankind. When it is made clear, then differences also will be brought to our notice.

As a clue to solve this problem we shall first discuss whether Easterners and Westerners have ever thought of "universal norms".

## II. Universal Norms

Buddhism presupposes universal norms of human existence. However skeptical a man may be about anything, the phenomenon of skeptical thinking itself presupposes the existence of some kind of universalizable norms (*e.g.*, in the sense of language rules) although they may be difficult to grasp. Without such accepted laws (or rules) men could not engage in consecutive thinking and communication. Early Buddhists thought that in our human existence there work many universal laws and contiguous norms, which they named *dharmas* (Pâli, *dhammas*). The word *dharma* etymologically means

“that which keeps.” Gotama was called *dhamma-vâdi*, one who reasons according to the law (that is, not on the basis of the authority of the *Vedas*, or of tradition). The Buddha stated, “He who sees not the *dharma* sees not me—He who sees *dharma* sees me.”<sup>1</sup>

In a like manner Jesus remarked, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the father but by me.”<sup>2</sup> According to early Christians the law had already been given—the law of Moses. Jesus brought to it the concepts of grace and truth.<sup>3</sup> According to Paul, Christians gain knowledge of what is sinful by means of the law<sup>4</sup> and the coming of Jesus signified “the end of the law,” the justification of those who have faith.<sup>5</sup> But in these cases the significance of “law” differs with both religions. Jesus stressed a personal relationship to God, while the Buddha stressed the universal validity of his truth or *dharma*. The teaching of Christ is rather non-rational and personal, while that of the Buddha is more rationalistic. Man, in Buddha’s viewpoint, is accountable to law and not to divine will.

Buddhist *dharmas* are not rigid and strict rules. They are flexible and adaptable to places and occasions. The *Book of Discipline* officially admits that rules can be changed according to the differences of places where they are practiced. Christians have done the same for practical reasons, as is admitted by Western thinkers.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Buddha, personal relations should be brought into harmony with the universal norms. When the Buddha was about to die, he admonished his attendant Ananda that the brethren should rely upon the norms. “It may be, Ananda, that in some of you the thought may arise, ‘The word of the master is ended,

<sup>1</sup> *Itivuttaka* 92.

<sup>2</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>3</sup> John 1:17.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 3:20.

<sup>5</sup> Romans 10:4. Cf. Galatians 2:19 and 3:24.

<sup>6</sup> “By Christianity I here mean what is accounted such by all churches and sects—the maxims and precepts contained in the New Testament. These are considered sacred, and accepted as laws, by all professing Christians. Yet it is scarcely too much to say that not one Christian in a thousand guides or tests his individual conduct by reference to those laws. The standard to which he does refer it, is the custom of his nation, his class, or his religious profession” (J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 24).

we have no teacher more!' But it is not thus, that you should regard it. The Truths (Dhamma), and the Rules of the Order (*Vinaya*), which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher to you."<sup>7</sup> And further, "In whatever doctrine and discipline the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, neither in it is there found a man of true saintliness."<sup>8</sup> Jesus had also told his disciples, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."<sup>9</sup> The Buddhist motto "Rely upon the law, not on a person" has a Greek counterpart in Heraclitus, who said, "When you have listened, not to me but to the Law (*Logos*), it is wise to agree that all things are one."<sup>10</sup>

In China, Taoism viewed human life in relation to a transcendent, all-pervading Way (or Tao) which was the ultimate principle of all life. Lao-tzu said, "The Man follows the ways of Earth, the Earth follows the ways of Heaven, Heaven follows the ways of the Tao, Tao follows the ways of itself."<sup>11</sup>

Confucius, too, affirmed worldly life, but for him "this world" was not opposed to heaven. Indeed, the common term for this world was "All-under-heaven," reflecting both man's dependence on the physical heavens and the supremacy of the heavenly order in the affairs of men. For Confucius, if this order were recognized and followed, it would be possible to achieve good government and world peace. The perfectability of the individual in society, and of society through the cultivation of the individual, would bring about something very much like heaven-on-earth.<sup>12</sup> Of the more common religious view, which sees an afterlife in heaven as the end of personal salvation, Confucius would not try to speak. Heaven for him was not an afterlife, a separate sphere or state of being; it was the moral order, the ruling power in *this* world. And it is in this life that salvation, personal or social, comes about.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* 6, 1. *Digha-nikāya*, vol. II, p. 154.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 5,27. *Digha-nikāya* II, p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 21:33.

<sup>10</sup> Heraclitus, fragment 50.

<sup>11</sup> T'ang Chün-i, "Four Levels of 'Imitation of the Tao' in Laotze's Sayings," *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong*, vol. I (1968), pp. 206-207.

<sup>12</sup> De Bary, *Buddhism in Chinese Tradition*.

<sup>13</sup> T'ang Chün-i, op. cit.

In Buddhism the world "*dharma*" is often used to mean the doctrine or path of the Buddha that is the universal norm for mankind. On this point extreme similarity is noted between the assertions of Confucius and Mencius. "The master [Confucius] said, Heaven begat the power (*te*) that is in me. What have I to fear from such a one as Huan T'ui?"<sup>14</sup> Mencius reiterated the master's principle, saying "Constantly strive to be in harmony with the [divine] will and thereby get for yourself much happiness."<sup>15</sup> The Buddha affirmed that *dharma* or righteousness is the only way to welfare on earth as in heaven. On this point also there is close proximity to the assertions of Chinese thinkers. Confucius proclaimed that the will of heaven shall prevail; and Lao-tzu declared that there is no getting past the Tao. They all mean that against the rock of moral law the world's exploiters hurl themselves, eventually to their own destruction.

The western counterpart of the concept of *dharma* can be said to be *logos*, (although in the sense of "word," it occasionally corresponds with the Indian *śabda* or *vāk*). The rhythm of events in the universe or the uniformity of nature under law, which alone is permanent, was termed by Heraclitus the destiny, the order (*dike*), the reason (*logos*) of the world.<sup>16</sup>

Just as Buddha wanted to teach deliverance to all men with the idea of universal laws, Heraclitus regarded *logos* as universal in the same way. "One must follow (the universal law, namely) that which is common (to all). But although the Law is universal, the majority live as if they had understanding peculiar to themselves."<sup>17</sup>

However, universality does not contradict the need for obedience to a person who represents authority. This was evident in the practice of early Buddhists. And Heraclitus also said, "To obey the will of one man is also Law (political law, *Nomos*)."<sup>18</sup> The authority in man is based upon universal law, and not vice versa. Buddhists said from the earliest stage that "whether a Buddha appears in the world or not, law is eternally valid." Voiced in his own meta-

<sup>14</sup> *Analects* VII, 22. Huan T'ui was a Minister of War in the Sung.

<sup>15</sup> *Mencius* II, 1, 4: I, 2, 5, 6, etc.

<sup>16</sup> W. Windelband: *History of Philosophy*, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Heraclitus, fragment 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

physics, Heraclitus' conunterpart to this is: "This ordered universe (*cosmos*), which is the same for all, was not created by any one of the gods or of mankind, but it was ever and is and shall be everliving Fire, kindled in measure and quenched in measure."<sup>19</sup>

Law as the basis of human existence was explained by Buddhists as "deep, profound" (*gambhîra*), and "difficult to understand" (*duranubodha*). This compares to Heraclitus' statement, "The Law (of the universe) is as here explained; but men are always incapable of understanding it, both before they hear it, and when they have heard it for the first time. For though all things come into being in accordance with the Law, men seem as if they had never met with it."<sup>20</sup> Heraclitus warned that, "We must not act and speak like men asleep."<sup>21</sup> This statement recalls to mind a similar metaphor utilized in naming the Buddha—"the Awakened One."

In the philosophy of Plato, the idea of the Good, which is the source of all ideas, is supreme. The truly real and truly good are thought to be identical; the idea of the God is the *Logos*, the cosmic purpose. The universe is conceived by him as a logical system of ideas, an organic unity, governed by a universal purpose, *Logos*. It is the function of philosophy, by the exercise of reason, to understand the inner order and connections of the universe, and to conceive its essence by logical thought.<sup>22</sup>

Later Western philosophers who recognized a universal norm were the Stoics, who believed that law rules all. Marcus Aurelius, for example, taught that "life in harmony with the universe is what is good; and harmony with the universe is the same thing as obedience to the will of God."<sup>23</sup> Buddha accepted nearly the same harmony, but felt it could be accomplished through "conformity to *dharma*."

The *logos* doctrine of Heraclitus became a central point of the Stoic metaphysics. The Stoics asserted that all life and movement have their source in the *logos*: it is god; it contains the germs or seeds (*spermata*) of life; in it the whole *cosmos* lies potential as the plant in the seed. The entire universe forms a single, unitary, living,

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>22</sup> Frank Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, revised by Ledger Wood (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), p. 81.

<sup>23</sup> B. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 265.

connected whole, and all particular things are the determinate forms assumed by a divine primitive power which is in a state of eternal activity. An actively productive and formative power, the deity is the *logos spermatikos*, the vital principle or creative reason, which unfolds itself in the multitude of phenomena as their peculiar, particular *logoi spermatikoi*, or formative forces.<sup>24</sup>

Philo was to interpret the Stoic conception of the *Logos* as the sum total of the divine activity in the world. The *logos* is on the one hand the divine wisdom, resting within itself, the Supreme Being's rational power of production. On the other hand, *Logos* is reason coming forth from the self-subsistent image of the deity, the not yet arisen first-born son (not to be without origin as is God), the coming *second God*.<sup>25</sup>

Although the idea of "norm" may have been different with religions, schools and individual thinkers, they have been unanimous in admitting the fact that there must be some principle which might be called "universal norm" and which will provide the common basis for all values.

Then what will be the fundamental spirit that effectuates the above-mentioned norms?

In my humble opinion this must be the spirit of "benevolence" or "compassion", which is most important in keeping human relationships.

### III. Compassion and Service to Others.

True wisdom in Buddhism consists not in metaphysical sophistication but only in practical knowledge, and its exemplification is the attitude of compassion. Its field of action is one's social life. Compassion or love for one's neighbors was esteemed very highly in early Buddhism. The Sanskrit word "*maitri*" and the Pali word "*mettâ*," which are both derivatives from "*mitra*" (friend) are important words from the scriptures which are translated as "compassion." Both words literally mean "true friendliness." If the virtue of compassion as the Buddhists understood it were allowed to grow in a person, it would not occur to him to harm anyone else any mo-

<sup>24</sup> W. Windelband, *History*, pp. 180-181, 186.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

re than he would willingly harm himself. In this way the sentiment and love of ego diminish by widening the boundaries of what is regarded as one's own. By inviting everyone's self to enter into his own personality, man breaks down the barriers which separate him from others.

Early Buddhists thought the ideal form of love was already realized in maternal love: "As a mother at the risk of her life watches over her own child, so also let every one cultivate a boundless (friendly) mind towards all beings. Let him cultivate goodwill towards all the world, a boundless (friendly) mind, above and below and across, unobstructed, without hatred, without enmity. Standing, walking or sitting or lying, as long as he be awake, let him devote himself to this mind; this [way of] living they say is the best in this world."<sup>26</sup> In keeping with this belief, even enemies should be loved. Sariputta, a disciple of the Buddha, said:

Love should be felt for one's own kin,  
And so for enemies too, and the whole wide world  
Should be pervaded with a heart to love—  
This is the teaching of all the Buddhas.<sup>27</sup>

How near this is to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in which he taught, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."<sup>28</sup>

Meditation on the elements (*dharmas*) which constitute our "ego", for Buddhism, dissolves oneself as well as other people into a conglomeration of impersonal and instantaneous elements, plus a label. If there is nothing in the world except bundles of constituent elements, instantaneously perishing all the time, one might rightly conclude that ultimately there is nothing on which friendliness and compassion could work. Actually, however, this way of meditating or seeing the world abolishes the deeprooted egoism in human existence and results in natural, spontaneous compassion and love toward others. The whole world and the individuals in it become intimately and indissolubly linked, the whole human family so closely

<sup>26</sup> *Suttanipāta*, No. 8, vv. 149-151.

<sup>27</sup> *Milindapañha*, p. 394.

<sup>28</sup> Matthew 5:43-45.

knit together that each unit is dependent upon other units for growth and development. In this sense compassion and love are not a means but a result.

But compassionate, selfless love toward one's fellow man is also a means to further oneself on the path, according to Buddhism. It is the ethical attitude and action par excellence. "All actions, by which one acquires merit, are not worth the sixteenth part of friendliness (*mettâ*), which is the emancipation of mind; for friendliness radiates, shines and illumines, surpassing those actions as the emancipation of mind,—just as all the lights of the stars are not worth the sixteenth part of the moonlight, for the moonlight, surpassing them all, radiates, shines and illumines."<sup>29</sup> Love or friendliness could be called the highest virtue in Buddhism, the Buddhist "golden rule." A Buddhist equivalent of the Christian Golden Rule, nearly the same as above, is expressed in the maxim: "Do as one would be done by,"<sup>30</sup> In the Bible it is taught, "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them."<sup>31</sup> The concept of the Golden Rule is found to be a universal ideal or norm, discoverable, at least practically, in early any religious system. The Hindu epic *Mahâbhârata* also contains a version of this doctrine.<sup>32</sup> In the teaching of Mo-tsu (468-376 b.C.) universal love is based upon the idea that all human beings are of the same kind. He teaches also that one should love the father of another man as he does his own. Concerning humanity, Confucius taught, "Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you." There can be no doubt that this proverb is stated in the negative form, not once but three times,<sup>33</sup> although a negative statement does not necessarily mean a negative idea. The Chinese have always understood it to be positive.

The Confucian ideal of *Jen* is comparable to Buddhist *Maitrî* and Christian love. Love was stressed by Jews also in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.<sup>34</sup> Many have thought that Jesus condensed the whole of the New Testament into Matthew 22:37-40, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. . . This is

<sup>29</sup> *Itivuttaka*, No. 27.

<sup>30</sup> *Atthânaṃ upamaṃ katvâ*, Cf. *Sacred Books of the East*, X, pt.i, p. 36.

<sup>31</sup> Luke 6:31.

<sup>32</sup> *Mahâbhârata* XIII, 113, 9; XII, 260, 22; V, 39, 72.

<sup>33</sup> *Russell, A History of Western Philosophy*, p. 320.

<sup>34</sup> *Analecets* V, 11; XII, 2; XV, 23; *The Doctrine of the Mean* XIII.



the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

In Buddhist practice, love is accompanied by other mental attitudes. The four states are often described as the Sublime Conditions (*brahmavihâra*). They are love, sorrow at the sorrows of others, joy in the joys of others, and equanimity as regards one's own joys and sorrows.<sup>35</sup> Each of these feelings should be deliberately practiced, beginning with a single object and gradually increasing until the whole world is suffused with such kinds of feeling.

In the days of the Buddha, a sick brother was once neglected by the other inmates of a monastery. The Buddha washed him and tended him with his own hands, saying afterwards to the careless monks, who would have been eager enough to serve him, their leader, "Whosoever would wait upon me, let him wait upon the sick." He claimed oneness with humanity; so services to the sick or to the destitute were considered by him, in reality, to have been rendered to himself.<sup>36</sup> Christ also said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."<sup>37</sup>

In Buddhist literature a true friend is defined in detail. "Four are the friends who should be reckoned as sound at heart:—the helper; the friend who is the same in happiness and adversity; the friend of good counsel; the friend who sympathizes.

"On four grounds the friend who is a helper is to be reckoned as sound at heart:—he guards you when you are off your guard; he guards your property when you are off your guard; he is a refuge to you when you are afraid; when you have tasks to perform he provides a double supply [of what you may need].

"On four grounds the friend who is the same in happiness and adversity is to be reckoned as sound at heart:—he tells you his secrets; he keeps secret your secrets; in your troubles he does not forsake you; he lays down even his life for your sake.

"On four grounds the friend who declares what you need to do is to be reckoned as sound at heart:—he restrains you from doing wrong; he enjoins you to do what is right; he informs you of what you had not heard before; he reveals to you the way to heaven.

"On four grounds the friend who sympathizes is to be recko-

<sup>35</sup> *Dighâ-nikâya* II, pp. 186-187.

<sup>36</sup> *Mahāvagga* VIII, 26.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 25:40.

ned as sound at heart:—he does not rejoice over your misfortunes; he rejoices over your prosperity; he restrains anyone who is speaking ill of you; he commends anyone who is praising you.”<sup>38</sup>

The virtue of giving to others<sup>39</sup> was also highly stressed in Buddhism and it was said, “To him who gives shall virtue be increased.”<sup>40</sup> It was the Buddha’s contention that the charitable man is loved by all; his friendship is prized highly; in death his heart is at rest and full of joy, for he suffers not from repentance. The charitable man was metaphorically thought of by the Buddha as he who receives the opening flower of his reward and the fruit that ripens from it. “Hard it is to understand,” he said, “By giving away our food, we get more strength; by bestowing clothing on others, we gain more beauty; by founding abodes of purity and truth, we acquire great treasures.”<sup>41</sup> In Paul’s charge to the elders, he asserted, “In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”<sup>42</sup>

The spirit of brotherly love should be expressed in all phases of our life, according to Buddhism. One should refrain from hurting others, and put away the killing of living beings. “The cudgel and the sword he has laid aside, and ashamed of roughness, and full of mercy, he dwells compassionate, and kind to all creatures that have life.”<sup>43</sup> One should not offend other even by speech. “Our mind shall not waver. No evil speech will we utter. Tender and compassionate will we abide, loving in heart, void of malice within.”<sup>44</sup>

To nurture friendliness, one should reflect upon oneself. “Not the perversities of others not their sins of commission or omission, but his own misdeeds and negligences should a sage take notice of.”<sup>45</sup> Buddhists noted that the fault of others is easily perceived,

<sup>38</sup> *Sigâlovâda* 21-25.

<sup>39</sup> “Those who have much are often greedy; those who have little always share” (Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 27).

<sup>40</sup> *Mahâparinibbâna-suttanta* 4, 43. *Dîgha-nikâya*, vol, p. 136.

<sup>41</sup> *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-ching*, vv. 1516-1517.

<sup>42</sup> Acts 20-35.

<sup>43</sup> *Kîgha-nikâya* II, 43, vol. I, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> *Majjhima-nikâya* I, 129.

<sup>45</sup> *Dhammapada* 50.

but that of oneself is difficult to perceive. "...A man winnows his neighbor's faults like chaff, but his own fault he hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the gambler."<sup>46</sup> Confucius also lamented, "I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse himself."<sup>47</sup> To understand this as a norm of ethics in universal religions one need only read the Lord's Prayer in the New Testament.

One should also not worry about bitter and sarcastic comments by others. The Buddha gave a valuable instruction regarding this, that among men there is no one who is not blamed. "People blame him who sits silent and him who speaks, they also blame the man who preaches in the middle way."<sup>48</sup> In the Bible we find a similar saying confirming Buddha's thought. "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'"<sup>49</sup>

The meek and compassionate character at the same time firm in his own convictions was exemplified in the life of Gotama as well as Jesus. In reading the Pali scriptures one is impressed with the strong personal influence exercised by the Buddha over the hearts of his fellowmen. He was regarded as a very meek and compassionate man by others. All that he did represented ways of peace. Anger, in fact, had no place in his character and played no role in his teachings. The birth stories of the Buddha often extravagantly exalt his great compassion and renunciation.<sup>50</sup> Such descriptions might seem to be fantastic, yet their purport is characteristically altruistic.

The distinction between the Buddhists and Christian concepts of love is still of contemporary significance. Westerners, generally speaking, base the love concept on individualism,<sup>51</sup> whereas Easterners, under Buddhist and Hindu influence, tend to base love and compassion on the concept of non-duality of individuals, although Westernized Asiatics hold the Western concept, and some Western

<sup>46</sup> *Dhammapada* 252. Cf. 253.

<sup>47</sup> *Analects* V, 26.

<sup>48</sup> *Dhammapada* 227. Cf. *Fo-sho-hing-tsan-ching*, vv. 1713-1734.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 11:18-19.

<sup>50</sup> *Jâtaka*, No. 316, etc.

<sup>51</sup> "It is love and the capacity for it that distinguishes one human being from another" (Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 113).

intellectuals influenced by Eastern thought have spoken about love as Eastern thinkers have.<sup>52</sup>

#### IV. Compassion-Love Doctrine

The motif of "compassion-love" was especially emphasized in Mahâyâna Buddhism.

In India when conservative Buddhist Order (so-called Hînayâna) became a large organization with huge endowments, some of the monks no longer felt obliged to render much service to the common people. It was thought by some that the monks of conservative Buddhism were very complacent and self-righteous and that, being fond of solitude, they despised the common people. This somewhat negative view of the Buddhism of the Elders is supportable by certain interpretations of verses from the Buddhist canon, such as: "When the learned man drives away vanity by earnestness, he, the wise, climbing the terraced heights of wisdom, looks down upon the fools, serene he looks upon the toiling crowd, as one that stands on a mountain looks down upon them that stand upon the plain."<sup>53</sup>

By way of protest against this assumedly Hînayâna attitude in India, some religious leaders advocated a new form of Buddhism, which was called Mahâyâna (the Great Vehicle). These monks were in close contact with the common people and felt their needs. They

<sup>52</sup> "Love reduces them as the sun melts the iceberg in the sea. The heart and soul of all men being one, this bitterness of *His* and *Mine* ceases. His is mine. I am my brother, and my brother is me" (Emerson, "Compensation," is *Selected Writings*, p. 189).

<sup>53</sup> *Dhammapada* 28. As a similar comment, Lucretius said: "It may be sweet when on the great sea the winds trouble its waters to behold from land another's deep distress; not that it is a pleasure and delight that any should be afflicted, but because it is sweet to see from what evils you are yourself exempt. It may be sweet also to look upon the mighty struggles of war arrayed along the plains without sharing yourself in the danger. But nothing is more sweet than to hold the lofty and serene positions, well fortified by the learning of the wise, from which you may look down upon others, and see them wandering all abroad, and going astray in their search for the path of life, see the contest among them of intellect, of rivalry, of birth, the striving night and day with surpassing effort to struggle up to the summit of power, and be masters of the world. O miserable minds of men! O blinded breasts! in what darkness of life and in how great dangers is passed this term of life, whatever its duration!" (Lucretius, Book II ad init. "Suave mari magno," Munro's version, cited from T.W. Rhys Davids, *Indian Buddhism*, pp. 165-166).

vehemently attacked the complacent and self-righteous attitude of conservative Buddhists. This situation seems to be similar to the rise of Christianity against Stoicism, Epicureanism, and other ideological systems. On the other hand, just as St. Paul was opposed by Judaic conservatives, so Mahâyâna was opposed by conservative Buddhists.

In Greater Vehicle (*Mahâyâna*) Buddhism the virtue of compassion<sup>54</sup> was more heavily stressed than in Hînayâna, although Mahâyânists are quick to admit that a compassion motif was not entirely absent in Hînayâna doctrine either. But Mahâyânists claimed that compassion was a chief characteristic of Mahâyâna. "To those whose intelligence is low and whose mind is quiet the Way of Srâvaka (*Hînayâna*) is taught to have them get out of suffering. To those whose intelligence is slightly keener and clearer and who hanker for the teaching of the Interdependent Origination the Way of Pratyekabuddha (an ascetic who practices by himself) is preached. To those whose intelligence is excellent and who aspire to benefit living beings out of Great Compassion the Way of Bodhisattva (*Mahâyâna*) is taught."<sup>55</sup> "Great Compassion" was regarded as the essence of Buddhism by Mahâyânists who noted: "The Buddha-Minds is nothing but Great Compassion."<sup>56</sup>

When Buddhism was introduced into China, the Taoist term for immortals, "*chen-jen*," served as a translation of the Buddhist word "*Arhat*," "the worthy one", which is tantamount to "the fully enlightened one." "*Wu-wei*," "non-action," was used to render the Buddhist term for ultimate release, "*Nirvâna*." Because men of non-action had been praised by Taoists, early Chinese Buddhists thought this a natural phrase by which to translate the idea of the man of *Nirvâna*. When Mahâyâna teachings began to come to the

<sup>54</sup> The Sanskrit word for "compassion" is *maitrî* or *karunâ* or *dayâ*. *Maitrî* can be translated as "friendliness" also, because the word derives from the word "*mitra*" meaning "friend." The word "*karunâ*" was translated into Chinese with the word meaning "sorrow." In Sanskrit literature also, the sorrow of a lady who has no prospect of seeing her lover again is expressed with the word "*karunâ*." (*Sâhityadarpana* III, 213).

<sup>55</sup> The Chin version of the *Buddhâvatamsaka-sûtra*, vol 27; The Book of the Hua-yen Yive Teachings (Kegon Gokyo-sho) ed. by Kwanno, vol. I, p. 50 b. In the *Lotus Sûtra* a similar thought is found. (*yo vîryavantah sadâ maitracita bhaventi maintrîm iha dîrgharâtam*, Chapter 2, ed. by Wogihara and Tsuchida [Tokyo: Seigo-Kenkyukai, 1935], p. 93; cf. p. 248).

<sup>56</sup> *Amitâyurdhyâna-sûtra* (*Taisho Tripitaka*, vol. 12, p. 343 c).

fore in China, these earlier concepts of the ideal men were criticized as being aloof from and lacking compassion for the common man.

The Mahâyâna protest against Hinâyâna is somewhat akin to the change in the history of Juedo-Christian thought; both occurred at roughly the same time. It is occasionally said that Christ abrogated the Mosaic Law and stressed love, although the love motif was not entirely absent from Mosaic Law in Judaism. John especially had much effect on later christianity by simplifying Christ's doctrine to faith in God and love for one's neighbor. According to John, faith and love are awakened in man's heart by the spirit; and true love is the practical, active brotherly love which works according to the commandments of God.<sup>57</sup> Among the very early apostolic fathers love continued to hold this high position. Ignatius (flourished c. 110 A.D.), for example, perpetuated the doctrine that faith (the beginning of Christian life) and love (the culmination of same) are divine when united. Further, all other elements of a Christian life are consequences of these two. For him, love was the way drawing up to God. For Polycarp, another apostolic father, the Christian who loves his neighbor is far from sin. Whereby in later Christianity faith came to be the main requisite for man's salvation, the apostolic fathers held good works and exhibiting love for one's neighbor to also be a great aid. What seems clear at this point is that both Mahâyâna and Christianity laid greater stress on love than previous religions and philosophies and that both movements appeared in nearly the same period. The compassion of the Buddha, like that of the ideal Christian, was to be offered to everyone equally. In the Lotus Sûtra Buddha's compassion is compared with rain: "All those grasses, shrubs, and trees are vivified by the cloud that both refreshes the thirsty earth and waters the herbs. In the same way. . . I preach with ever the same voice, constantly taking enlightenment as my text. For this is equal for all; no partiality is in it, neither hatred nor affection." And again, "I recreate the whole world like a cloud shedding its water without distinction; I have the same feeling for respectable people as for the low."<sup>58</sup>

God was, of course, the ideal of compassion and love in the

<sup>57</sup> II John.

<sup>58</sup> The *Saddharmapuṇḍarîka-sûtra* V, vv. 6, 11, 21, 24. Cf. "Society, as we have constituted it, will have no place for me, has none to offer; but Nature, whose sweet rains fall on unjust and just alike, will have clefts in the rocks where I may hide, and secret valleys in whose silence I may weep undisturbed." (Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis* [London: Methuen and Co., 1905], pp. 150-151).

Christianity of this period. Indeed it is sometimes said "God is love." Clement, one of the most famous Alexandrian fathers, compared God to the physician who can help those who work with him to attain health. Those who work with God, Clement thought, are given the compassionate gift of his salvation. God's greatest compassionate act, for any Christian, would certainly be his assumption of human form for the sake of mankind's salvation. St. Paul says, "You know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."<sup>59</sup>

At least as late in time as St. Augustine, love was given a supreme place, even above belief, in the life of a Christian seeking his soul's salvation. Augustine asserted, "When it is asked whether anyone is a good man, it is not asked what he believes or hopes, but what he loves. . . He who does not love, believes in vain, even though the things which he believes are true."<sup>60</sup>

One of the illustrations of God's compassionate nature that is a great favorite among Christians of all times is the parable of the prodigal son, from the New Testament.<sup>61</sup> At nearly the same time that this parable was being recorded (first or second century A.D.) another prodigal son was being described in the Mahâyâna Buddhist scripture the Lotus Sûtra. In the Buddhist parable of the prodigal son, Buddha is represented as the good, walthy father who means well towards his sons, the human beings. As the story goes, a rich man has an only son, who roams about in foreign lands for fifty years. While the father grows richer and richer, and has become a great man, the son lives in foreign parts, poor and in reduced circumstances. At last as a beggar, he returns to his home, where his father has been yearning for him all the while. The beggar comes to the house of his father, whom, however, he does not recognize as that great man, who, like a king surrounded by his retinue, sits before his mansion. Seeing the pomp and splendor, he flees for fear that he, a ragged beggar, might be ill-treated. His father, however, recognizes him at once and sends out servants to bring the beggar in. Trembling and shaking with fear, he is dragged in and falls unconscious. Then his father commands that he be released. Gladly the beggar gets up and leaving the house, he goes to the poor section of town.

<sup>59</sup> II Corinthians 8:9.

<sup>60</sup> *Enchiridion ad Laurentium* 28.117.

<sup>61</sup> Luke 15:11-32.

Presently the rich man decides on a plan whereby he may win the confidence of his son. He sends workmen to hire him for the humblest work in his house. As time goes by, he sometimes chats with his son and gradually becomes intimate with him. In this way twenty years pass without the father making himself known. Not until the hour of his death does he call all his relatives together and announce that the beggar, who has now become a trusted servant, is his own son. Then he makes him the heir to all his wealth. Of course, the rich man is Buddha; The son who was lost and is found again represents human beings, whom Buddha, as the wise father, gradually draws to himself, and finally appoints as his fortunate heirs.<sup>62</sup>

The parable of the prodigal son was related in later India by early Vedântins such as Dravida (c. 550 A.D.), Bhartṛprapanca (c. 550 A.D.) and Sundarapândya (c. 600 A.D.), with whom the father represented the highest self (*paramâtman*) and the son the individual self (*jivâtman*).<sup>63</sup> The story was interpreted as representing the reunion of individual souls with the highest one. In a *Mahâtmya* on Kâncîpuram (i.e. a book depicting the "glory" of the holy place of Viṣṇu and recording the legends associated with his great temple), there is another version<sup>64</sup> of the prodigal son parable in even more detail than in the fragments of early Vedântists.

The ideal of compassion-love evokes an altruistic attitude. Of course, all Mahâyânists did not engage in purely altruistic deeds. But some stressed especially the altruistic spirit. For instance, Sântideva (7th century) made these vows:

By the merit which I have ever acquired,  
By good deeds, may I bring to all beings  
Relief from all their sufferings!  
I desire to serve as medicine, doctor an nurse

<sup>62</sup> Chapter IV of the *Lotus Sûtra, Sacred Books of the East*, ed. by F. Max Müller (Oxford University Press, 1879-1927), 21, p. 98f; with slight changes from M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* (University of Calcutta, 1933), vol. II, pp. 298-299.

<sup>63</sup> Mentioned in Sureśvara's *Bṛhadâraṇyakopaniṣadbhâṣyavârttika*, etc. Discussed in H. Nakamura, *Vedânta Tet. ōgaku no Hatten*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1955).

<sup>64</sup> Rudolf Otto, *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity Compared and Contrasted*, translated from the German by Frank Hugh Foster (New York: Macmillan, 1930), pp. 136-141.



To all the sick as long as their sickness lasts.  
 I desire to be a protector to those who need protection,  
 A guide to those who wander in the desert,  
 And a ship, a landing-stage and a bridge  
 To those who seek the shore..  
 A lamp to those who need a lamp,  
 A couch to those who need a couch,  
 A slave to all beings who need a slave."<sup>65</sup>

and:

"I must destroy others' suffering, for it hurts like one's own pain;  
 I must do good to others, as they are beings like myself."<sup>66</sup>

Sântideva's poems are often compared to *The Imitation of Christ*, traditionally ascribed to Thomas a Kempis. The latter work praises love, saying that there is nothing sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing better in heaven nor in earth; that love feels no burden and takes account of no labor. However, whereas it is said that this book bears the mark of the distrust of scholasticism spread by the modern school of devotion (*devotio-moderna*),<sup>67</sup> Sântideva still, at least to some extent, adhered to traditional scholarship.<sup>68</sup>

As an interesting parallel to this, love came to be emphasized in China even among anti-Buddhist scholars. For Neo-Confucianists the natural affections constitute the basis of human relations. The perfection of virtue—humanity or benevolence—which Neo Confucianists like Ch'eng Hao (1032-85) and Chu Hsi (1130-1200) raised to the level of a cosmic principle, was often defined as "love" (*ai*).<sup>69</sup>

It is often reported that Buddhism has softened the rough warrior races of Tibet and Mongolia, and nearly effaced all traces of their original brutality. In Japan also, according to statistics, cases of murder or assault are relatively rare in districts where Buddhist influence is strong.

<sup>65</sup> *Bodhicaryāvatāra* III, 6, 7, 17, 18. Winternitz, *Indian Literature*, II, p. 371.

<sup>66</sup> Winternitz, *ibid.*, p. 372.

<sup>67</sup> Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 446.

<sup>68</sup> Sântideva wrote a book called *Sikṣāsamuccaya* which is full of quotations from scriptures.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Wm. T. DeBary et al., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 530-531, 556-557, 559.

The attitude of compassion also motivates one to esteem highly the natural disposition of man. Japanese Buddhism tends to be most conspicuous in that respect. Even Buddhist ideas were preached with a close reference to matters of love, and sexual love is not considered in Japan to be incompatible with religious love.

Though Zen Buddhism in China does not seem to have emphasized the ideas of compassion (there is not a single reference made to the word "compassion" in the well-known scriptures of Chinese Zen Buddhism), after Zen Buddhism was brought into Japan, deeds of benevolence began to be accorded a high degree of moral importance.

The spirit of tolerance and compassion engendered by Buddhist ideals made deep hatred, even toward sinners, a near non-reality. Hardly any cruel punishment existed in times when Buddhism flourished. Such a situation was reported by Chinese pilgrims to ancient India and this fact also holds true in most of the Buddhist countries of Southern Asia. In Japan of the Heian period, a time when Buddhism was actively practiced, capital punishment was not practiced for a period of nearly three hundred and fifty years.<sup>70</sup>

But, later, to our regret, this compassionate attitude was abandoned by some Japanese rulers, but now it is recovering again.

## V. The Man of the Whole World

In the older days when Buddhism originated, Buddha was de-

<sup>70</sup> However, the esteem of the compassion and love did not go together with the esteem of faith in a parallel way. In the West the Christian practice of love suffered restriction in some cases. The teaching "Love your enemies" was not put in practice in relation to persons holding opinions different from those of the ruling Church. Even the Christian God is not supposed to be kind to non-believers. St. Augustine believed that while God was merciful to mere moral wickedness, He could not extend forgiveness for error of dogma. The chief weapon for persecution was excommunication and the chief excuse for excommunication was "heresy."

In India intolerance of other faiths also characterized some of the Vaiṣṇava writers. The rival creeds were depicted with malice. Some Vaiṣṇava writings exhibit great intolerance of the Jaina and Buddhist faiths. (N.K. Devaraja, *Hinduism and Christianity* [Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969], pp. 101-103). Some rulers who maintained Saiva faith persecuted Jain monks, to the extent that some were boiled in hot water.

These facts involve a difficult problem of incompatibility of faith and tolerance in some cases.

paired at the desperate situation of the world in those days. Gotama Buddha endeavoured to establish the universal brotherhood, which was called *cātuddisa* sarigha. This might be interpreted as the world community in the religious sense.<sup>71</sup>

For a person whose mental attitude maintains no barrier, no discrimination, towards others, there is no animosity. Peaceful mental atmosphere prevails.

Those people who were called "cātuddisa" constituted the Buddhist Brotherhood, i.r. Sarigha. Therefore the Sarigha was also called "of the whole world" (*cātuddisa sarigho*).<sup>72</sup>

The word "Cātuddisa" might be translated as "cosmopolitan" or "weltbürger".

The ideal of Buddhist cosmopolitanism or world fellowship was officially expressed in antiquity in Japan on 753 A.D. Master Chien-chen (Ganjin 688-763) came from China to Japan, and converged the Code of Disciplines. The name of his temple is Tōshō-daiji, and shōdai is the Japanese transliteration of the Pali word *cātuddisa* or the Sanskrit *cāturdiśa*.

It is a well-known fact that cosmopolitanism was advocated in antiquity in the West also.

## VI. Conclusion

Our discussions so far is just to exemplify the thesis that the spirit of human love or compassion is common to mankind, and that it should be cultivated.

We should not abandon ourselves to despair, in so far as the spirit of human love is still preserved. Mutual understanding between East and West will certainly bring about the peaceful life of human beings. Bright future will be ours!

<sup>71</sup> Suttanipata 42.

<sup>72</sup> Viraya, vol. I, p. 305; vol. II, p. 147.