THE MIND NOT IN ACCORD
OF THE MAHAYANA
FAITH AWAKENING

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The Mahāyāna text in Chinese 大乘起信論 (Japanese pron., DAIJO-KISHIN-RON; A TREATISE ON THE MAHAYANA FAITH AWAKENING; Taishō 32 No. 1666, whose earliest version is said to have appeared in 550) gives two terms apparently opposite in meaning, whose relationship nevertheless has not always been clear, at least to the present reporter. They are 不相応心 “the (defiled) mind not in accord” and 相応心 “the (defiled) mind that accords”. This reporter feels that clarification of what these two terms mean and how they are related to each other may lead to a deeper understanding of the whole text, the prime concern of which is, in the deepest sense of the term, practice. The earliest extant commentary of this text entitled 大乘起信論義疏 (J., DAIJO-KISHINRON-GISHO; T 44 No. 1843) by 慧遠 Hui-yüan of the Ching-ying-ssu (A. D. 523-92) already refers to much of the subsequent material. From a scholarly standpoint, then, there is not much reason to rework an excellent predecessor’s explanation. Since hardly any modern studies on this text or its English translations seem to be satisfactory in their interpretations of the two terms, however, the present study is offered as a codification, mostly for this reporter’s own benefit, but also to make the following interpretations available to a wider readership.

I. 不相応心 or 心不相応 “the mind not in accord”:

The meaning of this is clear by itself. It means ‘the mind not being in accord with its self-nature, not being able to stand as it does’, in other words, the basic unawakening, avidya. The text states: “The self-nature of the mind being without thought, it is named ‘change-free’. Because it does not attain to the One-dharma-world, the mind is not in accord; it has thoughts arise,
uncaused. This is named *avidya* (root-ignorance)" (*T32, 577c*). The text gives three forms of the defiled mind which is not in accord with its self-nature: manifestation as the seen, manifestation as the seer, and root-

*karman*, i.e. the mind that stirs and thus manifests itself as the seen and the seer. The text defines the concept "not in accord" as follows. "The unawakening is of the mind, [and of nothing else; one is] always no different [from the other]. [But] the *vidya* [i.e. knowing as the self-nature of the mind] and the reasoning [of *avidya*] are not identical" (*577c*)

II. “the mind that accords”:

Concerning the above three forms (i.e. those of the mind not in accord) the text states: "Based on the unawakening there arise three forms, which accord with that unawakening and are inseparable from the latter. They are: *avidya-karman*, the seer, and the seen" (*577a*). Then the text gives the other three forms of the defiled mind which are said to "accord": they are attachment, non-interruption, and discrimination. The definition of the term to "accord" in this case, according to the text, goes like this: "Consciousness [which depends on its objects] differs from the mind [as the root-

*karman*]; the former discriminates pure from defiled, love from not-beloved. But [with respect to unawakening] the conditioned form [of the mind, i.e. consciousness] and the mind are identical" (*577c*)

This definition makes it clear that the latter three forms of the defiled mind accord with the former three in regard to unawakening, but it still leaves us wondering on what common ground one is said to accord while the other not to.

The text distinguishes the two classes, saying that one is "coarse" (*sthula*) and the other "subtle" (*suksma*). It says: "The manner of rise-and-decay can be divided into two: one is coarse because it accords with the mind; the other is subtle because it does not accord with the mind. These two manners of rise-and-decay are obtained because of the perfuming (*vasana*) of *avidya*; that is, because of the unawakening as the cause and [consciousness] deludedly taking external objects as the condition. If the cause ceases, the con-

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1) 不相違者, 議即心不覺, 常無別異, 不同知相縁相故。
2) 相違義者, 議心念法異, 依染淨差別而知相縁相同故。
Because the cause ceases, the mind which is not in accord ceases. Because the condition ceases, the mind which accords ceases” (578a). This largely clarifies the relationship between the two classes, but still it leaves the point mentioned above, regarding the common ground of their accord and non-accord, untouched.

III. The “accord” and the “non-accord” on common ground:

The text states as regards the second of the three forms of the defiled mind which “accord”: “It has the form of continuation; based on discrimination there arise the awarenesses of pain and pleasure; for the mind gives rise to thoughts, which accord with one another without interruption” (577a). To the same effect it says: “The consciousness continues because thoughts accord with one another without interruption; because it preserves good and evil karman of the innumerable past lives, missing none” (577b). This naturally leads one to the next step, the concept of “momentariness” (kṣanika).

The Śrīmālā-devī-simha-nāda sūtra states as follows. “The four abiding grounds [of delusions] (gnas-kiṣa-hṣi-po) are what give rise to all the miseries that take place... However, they are momentary; they accord with the momentariness of mind (sems-kiṣa-skad-cig-pa-dan-mtshun-par-ldan-pa). The abiding ground of avidyā (ma-rig-pahi-gnas-kiṣa), which exists ever since the beginningless time, does not accord with the [momentariness of] mind” (Tsukinowa edition p. 84, Kōkyōshoin, Kyoto, 1940). Now we can safely surmise the reason the KISHINRON speaks of the opposing concepts “coarse” and “subtle”. The object-conditioned three forms of the defiled mind are coarse because they accord with the momentariness of mind; whereas the other three forms of the defiled mind, the center of which is the avidyā-based root-karman, are subtle because the avidyā does not accord with the mind’s momentariness. The above-mentioned commentator of the KISHIN-RON, Hui-yüan already refers to this. With his understanding of this and other points, he may not have had such difficulties as the present reporter has had. For deeper understanding of this point, however, we find statements in the Laṅkāvatāra sūtra far more helpful. It is Hui-yüan himself who says that Bodhisattva Aśvaghoṣa...depending on the Laṅkāvatāra sūtra, worked
out the KISHINRON in one volume (T 44, 175c). The sutra says: “Joined with the five viññānas, manoviññāna arises—staying not a moment of time—that is momentariness. I say” (L. 6, Nanjō 235). “The ālaya-viññāna, which is proclaimed to be tathāgata-essence, when accompanied by manas is made momentary through being perfumed by arising viññānas; through being perfumed by the undefiled (anāsrava), it is not momentary” (Ibid. N 235–6). “The seven viññānas, i.e. manas, mano-viññāna, and eye- and other viññānas, are momentary because of being perfumed; they are destitute of the good, undefiled position; they are not what make transmigrations (saṃsārīnāḥ)” (L. 7, N 242).

IV. The “non-accord” nature of the “accord”:

Thus we know that the three forms of the defiled mind which “accord” accord with, that is, get along with the momentariness of mind because the mind does not realize its own momentariness or abodelessness. The defiled mind accords with the ordinary object-conditioned life, while incessantly making discriminations and attachments, and thus giving rise to and suffering from karma-pains, unaware of the cause of this all. To come to the awareness of the cause is extremely difficult because of the “accord” of our ordinary life. But this disguised “accord” eventually fails because the “defiled” mind really does not accord with its self-nature. The ordinary life cannot help becoming aware of its own “non-accord”. That is why the other three forms of the defiled mind which do not accord are said to be “subtle”. This awareness is very hard to attain; the awareness becomes most penetrating when one attains Buddha-hood. Being subtle, therefore, means the profundity of the awareness as well as the deep-rootedness of avidyā in the ordinary life. The deepest, the subtlest of all, is the Awareness of tathatā, which has nothing to accord with. “The self-nature of tathatā is neither being nor non-being,⋯; all the thought-discriminations are non-accords. Hence this is called śunya” (KISHINRON 576ab).

We see the reason now why the Laṅkāvatāra states that tathāgata-essence makes transmigrations [which the seven viññānas that “accord” do not], and becomes the cause of nirvāṇa and bliss and distress (L. 7, N 242. Cf. The Śrīmālā Tsukinowa 148). It is the tathāgata-essence that suffers, gets aware
of its own non-accord, seeks nirvāṇa, and attains it by home-coming. The ultimate “non-accord” is the true “accord”. The KISHINRON says, “Tathatā is what is free from any thought, for it is what Attainment alone accords with” (576b). The Laṅkāvatāra states: “The one who is in accord with the mind, not in accord with manas and others, is characterized by purity and abides with jñāna” (Sagatha-kam K 726). Also: “By attaining all the dharmas, I say, the mind is the Buddha” (Ibid. K 239cd). Ma-tsu Tao-i (馬祖道— 709–88), a Zen master of T’ang China who in his sermons quoted from the Laṅkāvatāra sūtra, once said: “No mind, no Buddha”. He also said: “The mind is the Buddha”. (景徳伝燈録 THE TRANSMISSIONS OF THE LAMP, 6. Cf. D. T. Suzuki : STUDIES IN THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA, London, 1930, pp. 46 & 47.)

V. Lastly, the three coarse forms of the defiled mind, i.e. attachment, non-interruption and discrimination, are the qualities of consciousness, whose momentary thoughts depend on and direct themselves toward the external objects, incessantly keep appearing and disappearing as long as they accord with the ordinary life. In other words, their cessation awaits the self-awareness of the non-accord nature of consciousness, which is none other than that of the defiled mind in the aspect of the three subtle forms we have been discussing. Regarding those three subtle forms, the root-karma, the stirring of the mind based on uncaused ignorance, makes up the other two forms, i.e. manifestations as object and subject and is the subtlest because it does not accord with the self-nature of the mind, which is No-mind. It makes the cause of birth-death transmigrations. Again it is subtlest because, for all this, it never has its own being apart from the self-nature of the mind.

The “accord” class and the “non-accord” class of the defiled mind seemingly correspond, respectively, with the vastu-prativikalpa-vijñāna (consciousness which discriminates objects) and the khyati-vijñāna (consciousness which perceives what appears external to itself, as with the mirror), which two are mentioned in the Laṅkāvatāra (2, N 37). The sutra says that these two are inseparable and mutually conditioned (Ibid.), while the KISHINRON regards one as depending on the other.
With a view to summarization let this report be closed by showing the reporter’s way of reading the apparently ambiguous terms of the KISHIN-RON which were taken up in the study, i.e. those of the six forms of the defiled mind. The text reads: “The defiled mind has six forms. What are the six? They are 1. attachment..., 2. non-interruption..., and 3. discrimination..., forms of the [disguised] accord of the defiled mind as well as 4. manifestation as the seen..., 5. manifestation as the seer..., and 6. root-karman, forms of the non-accord of the defiled mind”. (577c)³

³染心者有六種。云何為六。一者執相应染…二者不断相应染…三者分别智相应染…四者現色不相应染…五者能見心不相应染…六者根本業不相应染…。