PAPERS COMMUNICATED

33. The Ideas Underlying the Ideal Leadership as Conceived by Prince Shōtoku1).

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In the preceding paper2) on Prince Shōtoku's "Constitution" we have tried to elucidate the meaning of its clauses in the light of his Buddhist writings. There we have seen how those political injunctions and moral instructions are based upon the religious and metaphysical conceptions as stated in the three Buddhist scriptures on which the Prince has written commentaries. These are largely based upon those written by his Chinese predecessors but a remarkable point is that he shows his originality not only in interpreting many passages but in some vital points of ideas and conceptions. The most important of his originality is the selection of the three taken as a triad, in which he evidences a continuity of ideas and thereupon constructs a connected system of thought, an idealism in close touch with actual life.

How this is so will be shown in the course of the present paper, but one point to be made out at the outset is the distinction as well as correlation between the two notions, 仏 gōn and 仏 jitsu which run through all the three books but play a specially important part in the Hokke (Lotus) discussing Buddha's life and work under the two categories. Now gōn means transient or expedient and jitsu lasting or veritable. The distinction was made for accommodating the different, often seemingly contradictory, tendencies represented in the numerous Buddhist books ascribed to Buddha's sermons during the various periods of his ministry, explicating the divergence as due to the different tresses laid on the features of the gōn or expedient applications of the unique jitsu or fundamental truth. The Prince has adopted this traditional distinction and used it in many points of his interpretation, but his originality consists in emphasizing the correlation, perhaps more than the distinction, between these two aspects of Buddha's life, and, more remarkable, in carrying out his idea of the correlation in his own life and work. In fact, his government measures, including his proclamation of the Constitution, and all his civilizing work were nothing else than expedient applications of his deep conviction in Buddhist truth. In other words, his Constitution represents an aspect of the on applications of the jitsu truth as taught in the scriptures, which contain again the two aspects of doctrine within themselves.

Leaving the doctrinal points in this consideration to later discussion, one point to be noted here is that the Prince was conscious of his

1) For a fuller exposition, see the Proceedings (Japanese edition), Vol. I, No. 2. Passages are mostly not given here in citation, nor the references, which are given the Japanese version.
2) Proc. 16 (1940), 433-436.
statesmanship as an aspect of his spiritual leadership. He was a sage or philosopher ruler with firm conviction and definite conception as regards what he was doing. We shall now proceed to consider how he conceives the leadership embodied in a spiritual leader, whom he calls 大師 Daishi, which is the rendering of Mahāsattva, or Great Being, an equivalent of Bodhisattva, or Buddha-to-be.

The fundamental point in this is the idea that the meaning and worth of a person (人 purusha) is determined by the truth or law (法 dharma) he conceives and embodies in his life, while the vitality or validity of the truth is actualized by the person representing it in his faith and life. The Prince calls this correlation 人法相即 “the congruence between the person and truth,” which amounts to the same as 心行一體 “the identity of the soul and work” as emphasized in the Shōman. This idea runs through all the three books, and the Prince’s commentaries never cease to point out this idea wherever its bearing is involved. In fact, his whole life work amounted to the effort to actualize this idea in his person, in his life.

Now the idea of “Congruence” is the central theme of the scripture Lotus exemplifying the idea in the person of the Buddha Sakyamuni, and consequently of his genuine followers. The whole trend of the Lotus consists in enunciating the everlasting life of Buddha through his temporary manifestation, in which he works to lead up all beings to the attainment of Buddhahood. This means the realization of Bodhi, or Buddha-nature, which is inherent in all, due to the fundamental oneness of life, to the “lawful nature” (dharmatā) of existence. This attainment shown in the temporary life of the Buddha Sakyamuni is nothing but an evidence of the original nature of cosmic existence. In other words, the person of Buddha is a gon manifestation of the primordial entity which is realized in his jitsu enlightenment and everlasting Dharmatā, in short he is the Great Being, Mahāsattva, par excellence.

The Prince states this central idea in the opening of his commentary as follows:

This Scripture of the Lotus of the Perfect Truth is the bounteous field where all good is cultivated for the sake of the sole cause (the attainment of Buddhahood by all); it is the mysterious medicament which transforms the limited life of seven hundred kalpas (as attributed to the sage Yuima and others) into an everlasting life (of Buddha as enunciated in the fifteenth chapter of the book).

The first part of this statement is intended to convey the fundamental nature as well as the final goal of cosmic existence, whilst the latter half to express the personal feature of the primordial Buddhahood, the whole amounting to emphasize the “Congruence” of the

3) Legend says that he retired occasionally into the Yume-dono or Vision Chapel, for meditation for days and nights, when he had grave matters to settle or when he longed for his spiritual source. This is probably true in the light of his ideas stated in his writings, especially in the Yuima.

4) In fact the dignified title of Buddha, Tathāgata, represents this idea, meaning Truth-winner and Truth-revealer at the same time. See Hastings’ Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, art. Tathāgata ; Anesaki, Katam Karaniyam, pp. 240-50.
person and the truth. Beside the Prince’s further remarks on Buddha’s edifying method, the scripture proceeds to enunciate its efficient working by various arguments, parables, stories of origin and consummation, wherein numerous sages, saints, great beings play their respective roles. Underlying all this, the notion of “congruence” is the leading spirit, giving the basis for, and assurance of, the attainment of Buddhahood by all.

Seeing in this light, we can now point out the reason why the Prince has selected the two other scriptures as the wheels to the axis of the Lotus. The heroes of these two stories serve as the exemplary models of the Great Beings who work for the Buddhist cause deriving their inspiration from Buddha himself, all master demonstrations of the congruence.

Instead of giving the stories and dialogues in these two books, we cite at once the Prince’s words of appraisal and adoration of the heroes, one the Queen Shōman (Srimala) and the other the Elder Yuima (Vimalakirti). Of the former he says:—

夫勝鬘者本是不可思議，何知如來分身，或是法雲大士，……

Almost beyond comprehension is (the personality of) the Queen Srimala. She may have been a manifestation of the Tathāgata, or a Great Being who has attained the height of the Clouds of Truth (Dharma-megha). Yet she adopted a female body for the sake of the Ayodhyan people and descended to work among them. Thus, being first born in the royal house of Śrāvasti, she devoutly fulfilled her filial duties towards her parents (King Prasenajit and Queen Malli); then, having become queen consort to King Mitrayasa of Ayodhya, she observed faithfully the three rules of fidelity; and finally, trusting herself to Sakyamuni in devotion, she joined him in the work of extending the way of Mahāyāna, the Broader Communion. ……

While people of the world adorn their bodies with jewels, she adorns her body, “spiritual body,” with all good, therefore she is called. Śrī-mālā, the Excellence-garland.

The way in which the Queen joined Buddha’s work is stated in the vows she took in confession of her faith, which can be summed up in one phrase 稱正法 Shōju-shōbō. This means “embracing the righteous law” as well as “embracing all into the righteous law,” the two aspects being inseparable for realizing Buddha-nature in oneself and others. For a great being, spiritual leader, as the Prince insists here and everywhere else, saving and perfecting one’s self is incomplete without doing the same for others’ sake. Perfecting oneself without regard to others is not only an imperfect work but a contradiction, because of the fundamental oneness of one’s being and others; a point to which we shall return below. Here we shall not cite the passages where is stated how this universal perfecting is done, but suffice to say that all is done for leading, inspiring and edifying all fellow beings, by dedicating everything one’s own life and properties as well as spiritual attainment, for the sake of all, for the universal realization of Buddha-nature.

Then in the appraisal of the Elder Yuima the Prince says:—

維摩巂士，乃是已登正覺之大聖也，誦本既與真如冥一，設造示導萬品同蒙……

Vimalakirti was a great sage who reached the height of Buddhist perfection,
being an equal of Buddha himself in the spiritual enlightenment. In its source his person was identical with the Ultimate Entity (如 如 Tathātā), yet in its manifestations his life was identified with all different existences. His moral attainment was beyond the realm of intentions; his actions in fact amounted to non-action; the marks of his being culminated in non-mark. Then how could he be designated by names or marks? His mind was not trammled by affairs of state and society; yet being moved by an unintermittent compassion he kept perpetually in his mind the benefit of others.

He showed himself to be a layman of worldly life and had his residence in the town of Vaisāli. When he was aware that the period of his work (of leading others) was nearing an end and so he was ready to be back to the mysterious origin, he displayed an illness in his body and showed himself to lie in a sick bed. This was done in order to induce people to come and ask how he was, and thereby to furnish a chance to reveal transcendent truths. In fact Manjuṣrī knowing this visited the sick at his bed-side. Then the sage revealed various acts of a Great Being and thereby many novices were enlightened.

In fact the larger part of the Yuima-gyō consists in the dialogues exchanged between the elder and his visitors. The attitude of the sage elder in these dialogues is a thoroughgoing negation, denial of every notion, tenet, insistence, whether theoretical or practical, the final outcome being his silence, giving no response to Manjuṣrī’s last question, how a wise could go through the port of non-duality (不二 advaita), i.e. a series of neither–nor. If we should ask whether his silence could be taken as a negation of negation, he would give no reply. This is indeed a climax of the Buddhist via negativa, the insistence on śūnyatā, — non-action, non-mark, as enunciated by the Prince.

Whatever this thoroughgoing negation may mean, it is evident that the Prince regards the overcoming of all dualities and relativities as essential to the ultimate mastery of life, to the full realization of the all-embracing oneness of existence, therefore to the spiritual leadership as attested by Yuima himself.

The seemingly negative side of the Yuima-gyō is, however, supplemented by the positive ideal of the establishment of the Buddha-realm. This point has been given in outline in the preceding paper (p. 436). It suffices here to say that the 軍心 “Upright Soul,” 純心 “Pure Soul,” springing out of the transcendence over relativities is essential to the consummation, and that the great being is the man of pure soul in this sense.

Seen in this way, the ideal of the great being, the spiritual leadership, is represented in its two aspects, positive and negative, in the Shōman and the Yuima respectively. This contradistinction is, however, drawn simply by our ordinary bias, that what is actually before the eyes is real and positive and what is beyond it negative. Question arises whether this distinction is final, or there should be a higher standpoint in the spiritual leadership. The answer is evident, being in the affirmative of the latter alternative.

This consideration leads us to review the different heights of the spiritual development as taught by Buddhism. Adopting the traditional doctrine, the Prince distinguishes three large classes:—1) the ordinary man (凡夫 prthag-jana), 2) the recluse sage of two kinds (二乘, 随緣緣覺


śrāvaka and pratyeka-buddha), and 3) the great being (大士 Mahāsattva).
Suffice to quote from him:

凡夫樂於佳世，二乘欲出世，大士心存濟物，……

The ordinary man is satisfied with living in this world, whilst the recluse of
two kinks desires to escape from the world. The great being minds ever saving
others, hence he does not desire to escape from the world like a śrāvaka; he never
deviates from the stage of Buddha, hence does not care to abide in this world
like an ordinary man.

In another passage the Prince characterizes the ordinary man as
one who follows others blindly, the recluse as one who is self-contented,
being satisfied with speculation or immersed in meditation, whilst the
great being is high beyond worldly matters and therefore able to
look over all and care for all. In short the ordinary man and the
recluse are self-centered, while the leader is altruistic. But to be
altruistic in making a distinction between self and others is not worthy
of a veritable spiritual leader, so teaches the Prince in the Yuima-gyō.
To embrace others into righteousness, as stated in the Shōman-gyō,
means to dedicate self, to make self absorbed into the whole and to
absorb the whole into self, because the universal realization of Buddha-
nature is the final goal. For carrying out altruism in this sense the
Queen Shōman proceeds straight to benefitting others, both in material
and spiritual matters. On the other hand, the Elder Yuima is acute
in dispelling the illusion of duality and crashing any attachment.

This contrast between Shōman and Yuima may be summed up as
the two aspects of the Buddhist conception of charity, 協 ji and 結 hi,
hi meaning tenderness and compassion, while ji means affection with
rigor and sternness. Naturally the maternal aspect of affection is
represented by the Queen and the paternal by the Elder. How much
the Prince has put importance upon this contrast and its correlation
can be seen from his remark on the passage in the Shōman-gyō where
授受不計 persuasion and repression are stated in the Queen’s vow. In
fact the selection of the two books beside the Lotus can be considered
as partly due to this consideration, the mutually supplementing aspects
of the spiritual leadership.

Now we can take up the subject of the higher synthesis, which is
represented by the Lotus, not only in this but in other respects too.
The watchwords of the Lotus are 中道 the Middle Path (Madhyama-
pratīpad) and 乗 the Sole Road (Ekayāna). Both of these ideas are
represented in the two others too. In the Yuima the Prince points
out in the Bodhisattvaship a middle path between the hedonism
of the ordinary man and the solitary aloofness of the recluse sage.
Similarly, he characterizes the all-embracing charity stated in the
Shōman as the Sole Road to Buddhahood. But in the Lotus, either of
these terms has a wider bearing: the Middle Path between, or rather

5) This is derived from an interpretation of the Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit
maitrī-karuna, though maitri does not definitely indicate sternness. The Prince puts
much emphasis upon these two aspects of affection or charity, which has a parallel in
Christianity, misericordia and justitia. Comp. Proc. 16 (1940), 435.
above, the notions of being and non-being, the negative and positive ways of training. This higher synthesis is the way of Buddha himself, who stands above all relativities and leads all beings to the highest, all-uniting wisdom and life. Though one and all-inclusive is the road leading to Buddhahood, the Broad Road, the Universal Communion, there are various paths provided in concession, being adapted to the capacities and needs of many. Thus following the first sentence of the opening remark on the Lotus cited above, the Prince says:

若論説如来應現此土之大意者，將欲欲演此經教，修同歸之妙因，令得莫二之大果，......

Indeed the great intention of the Tathāgata Sakyamuni in manifesting himself in this world is to induce, by proclaiming this scripture, all beings to the unique consummation (of Buddhahood) through being trained in the all-inclusive cause of perfection. Yet most people are endowed only with poor store of good, their soul being shrouded and their senses obscured, their fundamental faculties being perturbed by the five conditions of degeneration, and their spiritual eyes covered by the six veils of vices. Thus, since these beings are incapable of comprehending at once the high idea of the consummation of the Sole Vehicle (Eka-yāna), the Tathāgata has at first opened the ways for the Three Vehicles (in his first sermon) at the Deer Park, accommodating himself to the needs and stages of those endowed with different capacities, so that they could attain several near stages according to their respective dispositions and within each one's reach. Since then the Tathāgata has proceeded to train them equally in the truth of non-mark (alakshana), and further to reveal the Middle Path by discriminating between the lower and higher. Even thence he has never ceased to enhance the growth of the respective dispositions by indicating the different fruitions through the three ways of discipline. Thus when the people have gradually been instructed, trained and brought up to maturity in the course of months and years, the ultimate principle of the Great Vehicle has been revealed at the Royal City (Rājagṛha), whereby the great aim of the Tathāgata's work in this world has largely been accomplished. Then the Tathāgata ......... has revealed the ideal of the all-inclusive perfection of all good and thereby assured the unique consummation of the great fruition.

In face of this great consummation all are united under the unique leadership of Buddha, both in the actual working of his present manifestation and in the metaphysical aspect of his primordial entity. In other words, the appearance of Buddha in this world has the sole aim of inducing all beings into communion with his primordial Buddhahood. This intention or scheme is called 開光明路 kai-gon ken-on, i.e. the revelation of the life remote and everlasting through the manifestation of the life near at hand, — what the Prince calls the “mysterious medicament” in his eulogy.

Now this interpretation of Buddha's personality implies the two connected and corresponding dual aspects of his work. It is the counterpart of gon and jitsu, as stated above, and is more specifically designated by the commentators as 開三路 kai-san ken-ichi, i.e. the opening wide of the Three Roads for the sake of the revelation of the One Road. As hinted at in the Prince's eulogy cited above, the three

6) These two are called 本 hon, the origin, source, and 迹 shaku, the trace, manifestation. The contrast and correlation between these aspects have become a subject of intense speculations and disputes among the later Japanese Buddhists, but the Prince has not put so much emphasis upon this point as the correlation between the gon and jitsu. This latter is, however, largely a counterpart of the former.
ways, that of the śrāvaka, of the pratyeka-buddha and of the bodhisat-
tva, are the gon, expedient accommodations or educative applications,
flowing out of, and aiming at, the jitsu, the fundamental truth of
Buddha’s own wisdom. Thus the way of the Bodhisattva is too one
of the three expedient ways but nearest to the original source. It is
naturally expected and admonished that every faithful follower of
Buddha should first throw off the fetters of the ordinary mortal life,
then overcome the temptation of self-contentedness in secluded specula-
tion or contemplation, and take up the strenuous course of saving
others together with self, as stated above.

This last is the way of the Buddha-to-be, the veritable spiritual
leadership. This way is, however, not a single tracked road but has
within itself various ways of application, as shown in the two books
referred to above and also as told in the stories of the great beings
in the Lotus. In fact the Prince distinguishes the Bodhisattvaship
above and below the eighth of the ten stages of perfection, granting
the veritable dignity only to the former group. Herein we see an
imprint of Buddhist scholasticism, but the general trend of his ideas
is seen in the more liberal and spiritual sense of the Bodhisattvaship
appropriate to his statesmanship. Yet we must know, on the other
side, that he has never lost sight of the highest aim of Buddhist per-
fection. This is attested, partly, by the dialectical development of his
idea of perfection, in distinguishing relative heights, not only between
gon and jitsu, but within each of the two as hinted at above in the
case of those below the great being and of the stages of the latter.
In other words, a great being at the eighth stage represents the jitsu
aspect of perfection in relation to those below it, but the same saint
is nothing but an imperfect gon embodiment of the ultimate truth.

Thus, every saint, however high his attainment may be, is a reflex
of a more perfect one; what he works thereby in his spiritual leader-
ship is an expediency in the light of his own innermost wisdom, while
even this latter is but a partial truth seen from one in a fuller grasp
of the fundamental truth. No one is perfect until he can identify
himself with Buddha, i.e., has attained full Buddhahood. At the same
time any one, however low may be his spiritual attainment, is not
entirely devoid of the fundamental wisdom; he has a certain reflex of
the light of Buddha-nature, though shrouded in the mists of illusion,—
seen that even the highest stage of Bodhisattvaship is called the
“Clouds of Truth.” Similarly, every one on any stage has to do his
work of leadership by adapting himself more or less to the needs of
others on the lower stages, which is necessarily an expediency in the
light of his own inner spiritual life. In fact Buddha himself has
worked out his leadership in his educative methods7 through adaptations

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7) In the Lotus, four stages of educative process are recounted: সমাধাপাণা (inducing to apprehend), সম্পিদার্সান (ind. to realize), অবতারান (ind. to attain), and প্রতিবোধান (ind. to permeate). See S. B. E., xxi, p. 41; Wogihara text, p. 37. The Prince also follows the scholastic tradition of grouping the ways of putting for-
ward theses in four categories and assigning them to the five periods or stages of
Buddha’s ministry, all interpreted as educative method or expediency.
and applications. Then the life work of every spiritual leader is nothing but following the steps of Buddha, the highest master, and doing one's best within his present capacity. This is the imitation of Buddha, and every genuine leader in this sense should give full effort to ascend the staircase of perfection in aiming at the height of Buddhahood and at the same time to descend that of adaptation for leading up others. Thus there is a wide range of gradation in the correlation between gon and jitsu on the part of the spiritual leaders on the One Road to Buddhahood, — a pilgrim's progress.

For summing up the ideas concerning the jitsu foundation and the gon application, we array here the counterpart notions which are enunciated by the Prince in various connections in the three commentaries. Though these parallel notions do not all exactly fall together, the parallelism is valid at large, and they are given here beginning with more abstract terms and going over to more concrete and practical ones.

| Jitchi (Fundamental truth or wisdom) | Gonchi (Expedient application) |
| Jissō (Entity, reality) | Keu (Appearance) |
| Tai (Substance) | Kuyū (Functioning) |
| Hon (Source) | Shaku (Manifestation) |
| Chiye (Wisdom) | Kudoku (Merit) |
| Jigyō (Perfecting self) | Keta (Edifying others) |
| Ichinen (Sole thought) | Mangyo (Manifold conduct) |
| Shintai (Spiritual principle) | Setai (Wordly principle) |
| Ri (Basic idea) | Kyō (Thesis of teaching) |
| Shōbō (Sacred law) | Sehō (Secular law) |

Chiefly concerned with Buddha's ministry, the main subject of the Lotus.
Metaphysical categories for the interpretation of being and non-being, in the Yuima.
General categories in the conception of things, in the Lotus.
Concerned with the leader's personality and work, in the Lotus and the Yuima.
Concerned with the leader's work, in the Shōman and the Yuima.
The same, in all the three.
Concerned with the working of Shōju Shōbō, embracing all, in the Shōman.
Concerned with the leader's points of view, in the Lotus and the Yuima.
Concerned with the aspects of Buddha's teaching, in the Lotus.
Concerned with functions of the law, in the Yuima.

To sum up, the cardinal point in the Prince's view of life is to conceive the world as the stage where all beings are induced to full communion with Buddha, to realize the Buddha-nature inherent in every one. The ordinary man is blind to this but all are destined finally to realize it. One is entitled to be a sage, even in the minimum degree,
The veritable sage is one who, being fully aware of this meaning of life and following Buddha’s steps, dedicates his whole self to that cause. The truth of the universal communion is so much embodied in his person as he advances on that way in perfecting self together with others. He is a Bodhisattva, Mahasattva, spiritual leader, each within the reach of his attainment and connections. This idea is summed up in one phrase, 人法相即 nimpo soṣoku, the “congruence of the person and truth.”

This leadership, including that of Buddha himself, implies the leader’s never-ceasing effort to induce others to the same path, which necessarily requires some accomodation or adaptation to the capacities and needs of those to be led, inspired, educated. This accomodation may seem a compromise, yet the essential point is that the expedient application shall always be a reflex of the spiritual attainment reached by the leader, and the methods aim at the final goal. This is the doctrine of 禪行 gon and jitsu, the fundamental truth and expedient applications. In fact the Prince was a sage statesman who knew how to govern and lead his people in the light of his Buddhist wisdom.

Thus the ways are many but the goal one; the work of leadership is broad and all-inclusive of the worldly matters as well as spiritual, but the consummation is unique and all-uniting. This is the doctrine of 開顯 kai- and ken, the opening demonstration and the actualizing revelation. All this shows that for the Prince his search of spiritual truth and his government were not a mere juxtaposition but all demonstration of his faith flowing out of his innermost spiritual life.