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Tientai and Takahashi on the Three Satyas

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Introduction

Reality is beyond dichotomy in the sense that it cannot be well captured by such dichotomous concepts as being vs. nothing, the subjective vs. the objective, good vs. evil and so on. More generally, it is beyond any types of conceptual discrimination such as dichotomy and trichotomy in that it cannot be well described by any sets of mutually exclusive concepts. These theses of trans-dichotomy and anti-conceptual discrimination are salient in the tradition of East Asian thoughts. Among variants of those theses are Non-duality in the Vimalakīrti Sūtra, Ineffability of Dao in Laozi, Dao as the axis that transcends the opposition between *this* and *that* in Zhuangzi.

Another example is *the middle way* or shortly *the middle* in *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā* (or *MMK*) of Nāgārjuna. Its standard Chinese translation equipped with Piṅgala's commentary highlighted the trans-dichotomous nature of the middle, charactering it as being attached to neither *Being* nor *Nothing* (Nāgārjuna 1924 33). Since then the trans-dichotomy had become one of the main ideas of East Asian Madhyamaka Buddhism that includes the *Sānlùn* (三論) and the *Tientai*

(天台) schools.

The Sānlùn school maintained that the trans-dichotomous nature of reality could be expressed by such *dichotomous* concepts as being vs. nothing only when they were endowed with special meanings; i.e., *meanings of the first chapter* (初章義: chū zhāng yì) or those that are to be mustered at the very beginning of Buddhists' learning. Though philosophically interesting in many respects, this Sānlùn's strategy of trans-dichotomy has a serious shortcoming that it presupposes another dichotomy between the dichotomous and trans-dichotomous aspects of reality (Deguchi et al. forthcoming).

The East Asian Madhyamaka tradition of trans-dichotomy culminates in, among others, the idea of *complete fusion of the three satyas* (円融三諦: yán róng sān dì) of the Tiantai school. In this paper, we will explore this idea and its present-day variant developed by a modern Japanese philosopher, Satomi Takahashi, questioning what they are, how they try to overcome the dichotomous mode of thought, how we can make sense of them, and how successful or unsuccessful they are. This paper is divided into two parts. The first part, sec.1 to 4, will examine the Tiantai's original ideas and the second one, sec.5 to 8, will focus on Takahashi's philosophy.¹⁾

Let us outline the first part. Unlike its rival view, *division and process among the three satyas* (隔歷三諦: gé lì sān dì), complete fusion of the three satyas intends to renounce any sort of conceptual discrimination including dichotomy or trichotomy that are implied in such concepts as the two satyas and the three satyas. Such anti-discriminative stance comes to the climax at the Tiantai's advocacy of *One-satya* (一諦: yī dì) and *No-satya* (無諦: wú dì).

Complete fusion of the three satyas can be compared to a unitary category for reality that has inconsistent properties. Unlike normal categories whose function is to draw distinctions, this unitary category does not carve reality into mutually exclusive parts. By giving up any discriminative functions that categories usually have, this unitary category makes itself as *category without discrimination*, or shortly *de-categorizes* itself.

However, this Tiantai strategy of trans-dichotomy implicitly introduces another dichotomy that categorizes reality into dichotomous and trans-dichotomous aspects. This is the dichotomy that the Sānlùn had been trapped in. The both schools' attempts to transcend dichotomy suffer from the same shortcoming.

1. Complete Fusion of the Three Satyas

The Three Satyas

The Tiantai is one of the most influential Chinese schools of Buddhism. It was established almost single-handedly by a great scholar Zhì yǐ (智顓 :538-597). The school has a long and rich commentarial tradition on Zhì yǐ's texts. But this paper will focus exclusively on the original works of Zhì yǐ such as *The Great Cessation and Contemplation* (摩訶止觀: Móhē Zhǐ Guan) and *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* (法華玄義: Fāhuá Xuán Yì).

Among Zhì yǐ's main ideas is complete fusion of the three satyas, which claims that the three satyas completely fuse with one another. The idea of the three satyas is an extension of Nāgārjuna's two satyas, with the addition of the middle satya (中諦: Zhōng dì) to the original two satyas; the conventional and the ultimate ones. It is not a Tiantai invention. We can find it in some apocryphal sūtras composed in China. A Sānlùn's text also mentioned it (Jízāng 1927 19).

As its *locus classicus*, Zhì yǐ took the famous verse of Nāgārjuna's *MMK*; i.e., the verse 18th of chapter 24th, paraphrasing it as follows.

Everything that is dependently co-arisen is empty, provisional and middle. (Zhì yǐ 1927 25; 1955 80/ 1932 682; 2011 26)²⁾

As shown in this paraphrase, Zhì yǐ adds the middle satya to the conventional and the ultimate, dubbed as the provisional and the empty satya respectively.

Then what is a satya? In Buddhists' context, the Sanskrit word, *satya*, has been always ambiguous between truth and reality. For the Sānlùn, it is a verbal discourse about reality (Jízāng 1927 19). On the other, Zhì yǐ characterized satya as 'what is disclosed' in contrast to 'eye and cognition' as 'what discloses', and continued that 'if there is no the middle [satya], there is nothing to be cognized by cognition and to be viewed by eye' (Zhì yǐ 1927 26; 1955 83). Thus he took satya as an object of our cognition or what is disclosed or discovered by our cognitive powers. For him, satya is not truth as a property of our cognitions or propositions but rather reality, which our verbal and non-verbal cognitions are about. So the three satyas should be the three aspects, modes or properties of reality. Also complete fusion of the three satyas has to be translated as complete fusion of three *realities* rather than that of three *truths*.

What aspect of reality is each satya? The provisional satya, or shortly the provisional, means interdependent or relational mode of being. If someone accepts the provisional as an aspect of reality, she would claim that something exists and that its existence is always relational or interdependent. Specifically, Zhì yǐ distinguishes such three modes of relational or interdependent being: causal, temporal and conceptual. To take a state of mind as an example: the mental state is *causally* dependent on external and internal (or bodily) stimuli to it, *temporarily* on a previous mental state, and *conceptually* on non-metal entities (Zhì yǐ 1927 63; 1955 192).

By the empty satya, or shortly the empty, Zhì yǐ doesn't mean non-existence (Zhì yǐ 1932 682; 2011 26). For him, it is the property of reality that it cannot be asserted in any ways, or is beyond any assertion. It's the unassertability of reality (Zhì yǐ 1927 65, 66; 1955 198, 202). So if one accepts the empty as a property of reality, one should *negate* any assertion about reality. (This negation will turn out not as falsification or more generally speaking *designation shifting*, as we will call it later, but as demonstration of trans-dichotomy.) Zhì yǐ regarded the provisional truth; i.e., that everything in reality is interdependent, as an assertion about reality. For him, such claim implies that reality is assertable. Therefore, the claim about the provisional should be negated, considering the empty; i.e., unassertability, of reality. Among other assertions to be negated, are those that nothing exists, that everything exists and doesn't, that everything neither exists nor doesn't exist, and even that reality is ineffable (Zhì yǐ 1927 65-66, 1955 198-203).

It is interesting to ask whether the claim about the empty is also an assertion about reality, which is unassertable. If so, the empty would be a self-contradictory idea, implying that reality is unassertable and not unassertable at the same time. However, as we will show below, the main point of our discussions isn't affected substantially, whether the empty is self-contradictory or not.

Now we have a dichotomous opposition: according to the provisional property of reality, it is assertable, but due to its emptiness, it is not. The third, i.e., the middle satya, transcends such dichotomy. It is also beyond other related dichotomies such as the one of suffering vs. nirvana (Zhì yǐ 1927 24; 1955 78). It is a trans-dichotomous property of reality that transcends any dichotomy, including the one between assertability and unassertability.

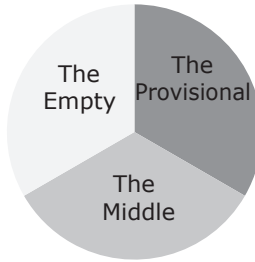
Now we have three aspects of reality: interdependent, unassertability and trans-dichotomy. For Zhì yǐ, each of them is indispensable, which means that no aspect can be reduced to either or both of the other two. For instance, the middle is the third aspect that cannot be subsumed under the other two. He criticized earlier Buddhists who had mentioned the middle way for not taking it as an irreducible aspect of reality (Zhì yǐ 1927 28; 1955 89). He also claims that the trans-dichotomous aspect cannot be explicated by any combinations of dichotomous concepts such as *Being* and *Nothing* (Zhì yǐ 1927 26, 1955 84, 201). He writes that ‘exit from *Being* and *Nothing* to the outside. This is called as the middle way’ (Zhì yǐ 1927 66, 1955 201). Here he criticizes the Sānlùn school for trying to explicate the middle in terms of combinations of *Being* and *Nothing* that are equipped with special characters. For him any dichotomous concepts, whether with special meaning or not, fall short of expressing the trans-dichotomous aspect of reality. Thus he introduces the third satya, which transcends any dichotomous concepts, as an irreducible aspect of reality. Zhì yǐ’s motivation for expanding the two satyas to the three satyas is to fully emphasize the trans-dichotomous nature of reality. Tientai’s theory of the three satyas is a clear manifestation of Zhì yǐ’s conviction that reality is, at least in one of its aspects, trans-dichotomous.

Complete Fusion

Zhì yǐ characterizes the relation among the three satyas as complete fusion. ‘Complete fusion’ is a metaphor. To understand its meaning, let’s first look at its rival view: division and process among the three satyas (Zhì yǐ 1932 682; 2011 25). According to this view, there is a division among the three satyas, and accordingly our meditation on each satya progresses from one to another. Division and process among the three satyas can be understood as the three categories of reality. Anything real can be characterized in terms of those three mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive aspects, i.e., the interdependent, the unassertable, and the trans-dichotomous (see Diagram 1). Those categories are distinct and discriminative with each other.

In contrast with such a division, the complete fusion suggests the lack of distinction among the three satyas. However, it is not just a simple unification of them. A sort of distinction is still preserved among them. Hence the complete fusion has two aspects: one that makes distinctions and one that does not make

Diagram 1



any distinction among the three satyas. Zhì yǐ famously expressed the relation between the two aspects as follows.

The three satyas completely fuses with one another in such a manner that one is three and three is one.

三諦圓融一三三一。(Zhì yǐ 1932 682; 2011 25)

[The three satyas are] not three but three, and three but not three. Let us use a metaphor of a clear mirror: a clear reflection is the empty, an image is the provisional, and a mirror is the middle. [Those are] neither combined nor dispersed. The combination and the dispersion exactly match with each other. One is neither two nor three, but does not hinder two and three.

非三而三三而不三。譬如明鏡。明喻即空。像喻即假。鏡喻即中。不合不散。合散宛然。不一二三二三無妨。(Zhì yǐ 1927 8-9; 1955 28)

Here the two aspects are labeled as 'One' and 'Three' respectively, and their relation is expressed by the mirror metaphor and such contradictory remarks as 'one is three and three is one' and 'the three satyas are not three but three and three but not three'.

In the following, we will examine what the two aspects are, and how they are compatible with each other.

The Aspect of Reality that Doesn't Involve Distinction

Zhì yǐ explains the aspect that does not make distinctions in such terms as

Non-duality (不二: bú èr), No-difference (不異: bú yì) and No-exhaustiveness (不尽: bú jìn) (Zhì yǐ 1932 682; 2011 26-27). By non-duality, he means that ‘*Being is Empty* and *Empty is Being*’ (Zhì yǐ 1932 682; 2011 26); by no-difference, that ‘there is no middle way that is separated from *Empty* and *Being*’ (Zhì yǐ 1932 682; 2011 26), and by no-exhaustiveness, that ‘there is no single phenomenon that is not the middle way’ (Zhì yǐ 1932 682; 2011 27).

Furthermore, to emphasize the perspective by which the three satyas are indistinguishable, he ventured to make a claim of one-satya.

The *Nirvāna sūtra* reads: so-called two satyas are in fact one. It is told as two just as a skillful means. Like a drunker sees that the sun and the moon rotate and says that they rotate and don’t rotate, while a sober person sees only their non-rotation but not rotation. While referring to rotations and therefore the two [satyas], Mahāyāna sūtras state only non-rotation and therefore one [satya]. (Zhì yǐ 1932 705; 2011 117).

Round Teaching [that is Tiantai doctrine] discloses only one real satya. The *Nirvāna sūtra* says that, though there is in fact one satya, two satyas are mentioned just as a skillful means. Following this remark, even though there is only one satya, three satyas are mentioned just as a skillful means. (Zhì yǐ 1927 28; 1955 90)

Zhì yǐ’s advocacy of one satya can be interpreted as a rejection of any conceptual discrimination brought about by categorization. The three satyas, by carving reality into three distinct aspects, create categories and distinctions. As mentioned earlier, the three satyas had been introduced to overcome dichotomy. But it invites another conceptual discrimination, trichotomy. To evade one kind of distinction, it ends up with another kind of distinction. Zhì yǐ points out that this is a serious problem for the three satyas in general and division and process among them in particular.

How to resolve this predicament? His answer is to introduce one satya, that is, a unitary category of reality which sorts everything into just one class. With no distinction among classes, it brings about no discrimination among things. Though still a sort of category, the unitary category gives up its discriminative function. It is a *category without discrimination*. Or it *de-categorizes* itself.

With such a unitary category, everything is now sorted into the middle. (More precisely speaking, as shown below, it is sorted into a class that is conjointly the middle, the provisional and the empty.) Thus the distinction among the provisional, the empty and the middle evaporates. The former two are just reduced to the middle. This is what is meant by non-duality and no-difference. In other words, in reality everything is nothing but the middle. So, since the number of things is infinite and therefore not exhausted, that of what is counted as the middle is unexhausted too. This is no-exhaustiveness.

Being driven by his aversion to categorical discrimination, Zhì yǐ also embraces a more radical idea: No-satya. The phrase no-satya indicates that neither satya is entangled with or inconsistent with any another (Zhì yǐ 1932 705; 2011 118). It does not mean that there is no reality. Rather it means that there is no categorical discrimination within reality. Thus no-satya is just a paraphrase of one-satya. They both refer to the unitary category without discrimination. The three satyas constitute not as a ternary but as a unitary category. This is the aspect of the complete fusion relation among the three satyas that admits no distinction among the three.

The Aspect of Reality that Involves Distinction

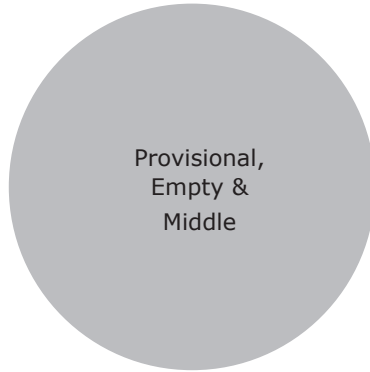
As noticed above, complete fusion doesn't totally abandon the distinction among the three satyas. For Zhì yǐ, the three satyas are three *aspects* of reality. But, as noticed above, it can be also taken as three *properties* of the reality: interdependency, unassertability, and trans-dichotomy. Obviously they are different from one another. With those three different properties, reality still involves division and distinction.

Relation between the Two Aspects

Then how are the two aspects compatible, one admitting of no distinction, the other involving internal division? What do such contradictory remarks as 'one is three and three is one' and 'the three satyas are not three but three and three but not three' mean? What is 'one is neither two nor three, but does not hinder two and three'?

Although they are different properties, each of the three satyas are conjointly shared by the three aspects of reality. For instance, the provisional aspect has all the three properties so that it is interdependent, unassertable and trans-

Diagram 2



dichotomous. This is also the case for the empty and the middle aspects (Zhì yǐ 1927 55; 1955 170).

That the three aspects share these properties is not surprising because they are now reduced to a single and unitary aspect. The one single aspect of reality conjointly has the three different properties (see Diagram 2). This is how the two aspects are compatible with each other. This is also what the metaphors of complete fusion and mirror indicate.

The three satyas have a double meaning: both *aspects* and *properties* of reality. As the aspects, they are no different from one another because the first two, the empty and the provisional aspects, are reduced to one single aspect, the middle. As properties, they are still distinct from one another. There is no contradiction here. So the apparent contradictions such as ‘one is three’ and ‘three is not three’ are now parameterized away. But as shown below, while the apparent contradictions disappear, other ones will emerge when we draw implications of complete fusion of the three satyas.

2. Tiantai Dialetheism

Now we can see two significant implications from our interpretation on Zhì yǐ’s complete fusion of the three satyas; (1) it implies ontological dialetheism, and (2) it is not committed to trivialism.

First let’s go back to division and process among the three satyas. These are

the three aspects of reality. Each aspect has its own characteristics: interdependency, unassertability or trans-dichotomy. Those characteristics diametrically oppose one another in two ways; (1) assertability as an implication of the claim about interdependency versus unassertability, and (2) dichotomous confrontation between assertability and unassertability versus trans-dichotomy. But each of opposing characters only appears within one aspect of reality. For instance, assertability is the character of the provisional aspect, while unassertability is of the empty aspect. So those opposing characters don't come into direct contradiction with one another. Here contradictions are parameterized away.

By contrast, complete fusion of the three satyas reduces the different aspects to a single one. Consequently the single aspect comes to be assertable and unassertable at the same time, within a single domain of reality. Since the parameters that prevented contradiction are now removed, contradictions emerge. These contradictions are real in that reality itself has those contradictory properties. Thus complete fusion of the three satyas implies ontological dialetheism, according to which some contradictions are true and real. Specifically, Zhì yǐ had to accept the following two contradictions as true and real: that reality is assertable and unassertable, and that it is dichotomous and trans-dichotomous.

As noticed, Zhì yǐ claims that reality is unassertable. One might suspect that this claim of unassertability is an assertion. If so, it is self-contradictory. But regardless, Zhì yǐ should take the above two contradictions as real and endorse ontological dialetheism.

There is no genuine contradiction involved in Zhì yǐ's apparently contradictory remarks such as 'one is three' and 'three is not three'. They can be interpreted as saying that the one single aspect has the three different properties. But, since those three properties are inconsistent with one another, true contradictions occur. The true contradictions are not those between one and three, but among the three.

Complete fusion of the three satyas doesn't degenerate into trivialism because Zhì yǐ took some contradictions as true but others as simply false. Usually a contradiction becomes true if and only if both of its constituents (a proposition and its negation) are true. This is the case for the true contradictions above. But for some contradictions, only one of their constituents is true and the other

is simply false. Take the proposition that every real thing is interdependent, and its negation that some real things do not exist interdependently. Since a Buddhist, Zhì yǐ wouldn't accept non-interdependent, or substantive existence. Thus he should dismiss the negation as false. So for him, the contradictory proposition that every real thing is both interdependent and not would be false.

Let's look at another example. Zhì yǐ insisted that Buddhist's claim that reality is unassertable is the not same as Daoist's idea of the ineffability of Dao (Zhì yǐ 1927 68; 1955 208). According to him, the Daoist's claim is an assertion about a property of Dao, i.e., its ineffability, whereas the Buddhist's claim is a total rejection of any assertion whatsoever. Whether or not he is successful in differentiating these two claims, it is pretty obvious that he would not accept the opposite claim that the Buddhist's and the Daoist's claims are the same. Thus, for him, the contradiction that the two claims are both the same and not the same should be simply false. So it's clear that Zhì yǐ is not committed to trivialism.

3. A Hidden Dichotomy

Zhì yǐ's rejection of trivialism creates another dichotomy between the dichotomous and the trans-dichotomous aspects of reality. To see this, let's first construct a truth value system for complete fusion of the three satyas. That should be a three-valued system that is similar, though not identical, to the system mentioned in our interpretation of the Sānlún school (Deguchi et al.). It has two designated or 'true' truth values, t and m , and an undesignated or 'false' truth value, f . Those values are partially defined by a truth table for negation as follows (See Diagram 3).

α	$\neg \alpha$
t	f
f	t
m	m

t and $m \in D$.

Diagram 3

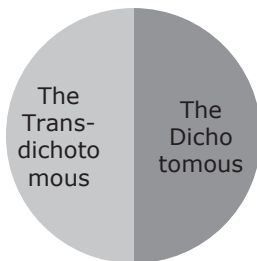
As this table shows, a *true* truth value *t* is dichotomous in that, if a proposition has *t*, its negation is false, while another *true* value *m* is trans-dichotomous because, even if a proposition is given *m*, its negation has also *m* and is therefore *true*. As for the Sānlún case, here we have two sorts of truth: some truths are dichotomous and others are trans-dichotomous.

As argued above, Zhì yǐ took some contradictions as true and others as false. For a false contradiction, one of its constituents should be dichotomously true, and its negation false. For instance, the proposition that everything is interdependent is dichotomously true, whereas its negation is false. The proposition that the Buddhist's claim of unassertability and the Daoist's claim of ineffability are different is dichotomously true because its negation is false. For a true contradiction, both of its constitutive propositions should have the trans-dichotomous truth value *m*, and be trans-dichotomously true. Thus the both proposition that reality is assertable and its negation are trans-dichotomously true. If otherwise, the contradiction that reality is both assertable and unassertable cannot be true.

Like the Sānlún system, the Tiantai truth value system presupposes the following binary category about reality: i.e., dichotomous and trans-dichotomous aspects (see Diagram 4).

The dichotomously true value is based on the dichotomous aspect of reality, while the trans-dichotomously true value on the trans-dichotomous one. In other words, the dichotomous aspect of reality is the dichotomous truthmaker that makes a proposition true and its negation false. On the other, the trans-dichotomous aspect constitutes the trans-dichotomous truthmaker that makes

Diagram 4



both a proposition and its negation true.

Such a binary category of reality can be taken as a variant of two satyas that carves reality into two aspects: the dichotomous and the trans-dichotomous. So, as long as Zhi yǐ takes some claims as simply false, he implicitly retreats to the two satyas, betraying his official claims of three satyas and one- and even no-satya.

The dichotomous aspect includes the truthmaker for the provisional claim that reality is interdependent. So Tientai's provisional aspect is a sub-aspect of the dichotomous aspect. The dichotomous aspect should contain the truthmaker for the claim about the difference between Buddhist's and Daoist's views on unassertability or ineffability. Moreover, it should contain the truthmaker for such an ordinary claim as that Kyoto was the capital of Japan.

The trans-dichotomous aspect includes the truthmaker for the emptiness claim that reality is unassertable. This means that it also includes the truthmaker for its negation that reality is assertable. This trans-dichotomous aspect is nothing but the aspect of the middle. So Tientai's aspect of empty is a sub-category of the trans-dichotomous aspect of the middle.

As the truth table above shows, in the Tientai system as well as the Sānlún one, negation has two different functions: one dichotomous and the other trans-dichotomous. Negation exercises its dichotomous function for propositions with *t* or *f* value. For those propositions, negation changes their truth values from designated to undesignated value or from undesignated to designated value. Negation plays the role of a designation shifter.

On the other, for propositions with *m* value, negation doesn't bring about any designation-shift. Absence of designation-shift, as a result of negation, reveals the trans-dichotomous character of reality. With respect to propositions with *m* value, negation plays the role of indicator of trans-dichotomy.

As mentioned above, the claim about emptiness (reality as unassertable) and that about provision (reality as interdependent, and therefore assertable) negate with each other. The negation here acts not as designation-shifter but the trans-dichotomy indicator. By showing the absence of designation-shift, it indicates that reality is trans-dichotomous with regard to its assertability or unassertability.

In the Tientai and the Sānlún systems, a true contradiction is a trans-dichotomous indicator. By implying that no shift of designation takes place between its constituent propositions, it demonstrates that reality is trans-

dichotomous with respect to the aspect, which those constituent propositions are about. In contrast, a false contradiction shows that there is a designation-shift between its constituents, and therefore that reality is dichotomous in that respect. It is a dichotomy indicator. Thus, contradictions in general have the function of detecting whether reality is trans-dichotomous or dichotomous with respect to the aspect in question. It is a litmus test for the dichotomous or trans-dichotomous character of reality.

Generally speaking, any proposition can be a litmus test to detect the dichotomous or trans-dichotomous character. When a proposition has t or f value, the aspect of reality in question is dichotomous. If it is the m value, the aspect in question is trans-dichotomous. Such a detective function originates from the behaviors of the truth values that are summarized in the truth table above. Contradictions also provide information about the behaviors of the truth values, and can serve a good litmus test for detecting the dichotomous and the trans-dichotomous aspects of reality.

4. Summary for the First Part

Both the Tiantai and Sānlún schools proposed that reality is trans-dichotomous, and aimed to overcome the dichotomous mode of thinking and the dichotomous view on reality. But their strategies are not the same. The Sānlún tried to introduce a non-classical negation that can be well characterized by a fixed point of negation that is a designated value (Deguchi et al forthcoming). Though Tiantai's founder Zhì yǐ also effectively appealed, in our analyses, to the same tool, his main strategy is to introduce a category without discrimination or a unitary category that gives some inconsistent properties to reality. Both of them embrace ontological dialetheism that incorporates a trans-dichotomous aspect of reality.

They are successful, to a degree, in articulating their trans-dichotomous stance towards reality. But their successes are limited because they implicitly introduce another dichotomy between the dichotomous and trans-dichotomous aspects of reality, by saying some claims as dichotomously false. They tried to get rid of the dichotomy between, say, *Being* and *Nothing*, but ended up with other dichotomies (e.g. dichotomy between dichotomous vs. trans-dichotomous, assertable vs. unassertable). Tiantai's failure is more devastating because it

advocated the three satyas and even one- or no-satya rather than the two satyas, aiming to eliminate any categorical distinction. Nevertheless those are serious philosophical attempts to overcome our dichotomous attitude towards reality.

5. Satomi Takahashi on Complete Fusion of the Three Satyas

Being inspired by the Tientai thoughts, a modern Japanese philosopher, Satomi Takahashi (1986-1964), tried to develop his own philosophy of trans-dichotomy and anti-conceptual discrimination. He reformulated Zhì yǐ's idea of complete fusion of the three satyas in terms of a variant of Hegelian dialectic: *complete fusion dialectic* (円融の弁証法 Enyū-teki-benshōhō), pointed out its shortcomings, and tried to overcome them by his own logic of *the including-transcending* (包越者 hou-etsu-sha). We will examine Takahashi's logical concepts, questioning whether they can be proper interpretations of the original Tientai ideas, and whether they can overcome the Tientai's shortcomings and whether they can make a satisfactory success. Though admiring his attempts as worthy of serious considerations, we will give largely negative answers to those questions. His complete fusion dialectic is not a proper interpretation because it *either* fails to make compatible the two aspects of complete fusion of the three satyas *or* introduces another impermissible categorical discrimination between those aspects. Also his criticisms against the Tientai are misdirected. But his logic can, in effect, improve the original Tientai ideas because it can surmount their real shortcoming by avoiding the dichotomy that they are trapped in. But his success is limited because he is also trapped into another kind of discrimination.

Takahashi is not counted as a member of the Kyoto school because he was not affiliated to Kyoto University. But he elaborated his ideas through criticisms against his contemporary Kyoto school philosophers such as Kitarō Nishida and Hajime Tanabe. Like his Kyoto counterparts, he attempted to construct his own logical system that is based on, among others, East Asian Buddhism. But, unlike the Kyoto school philosophers, his main Buddhistic resource is the Tientai school rather than Zen tradition. Thus he refers to such Tientai key phrases as *complete fusion of the three satyas, true manifestation of all phenomena* (諸法実相: zhū fā shí xiàng), *embracing three thousands worlds in one thought* (一念三千: yī niàn sān qiān). In his works we can find an interesting modern

philosophical development of the Tientai tradition.

Complete Fusion Dialectic

Takahashi characterizes complete fusion dialectic as a variant of Hegelian dialectic. It has two versions; complete fusion dialectic of the three satyas (三諦円融の弁証法 *santai-enyū-no-benshōhō*) and complete fusion dialectic of the infinite (無限円融の弁証法 *mugen-enyū-no-benshōhō*).

Hegelian dialectic consists of three theses; thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Takahashi regards them as three different stages of movement of a single agent or 'pole' (Takahashi 1973 275, 290). The pole is a sort of abstract entity that exercises such logical functions as negation, determination, intermediation, synthesis and sublation. While Hegelian dialectic, as Takahashi claims, has only one pole, complete fusion dialectic of the three satyas has three poles, which mutually intermediate or sublimate with one another (*ibid.* 285). For instance, the pole of synthesis intermediates or sublates the poles of thesis and anti-thesis, whereas the pole of thesis intermediates or sublates those of anti-thesis and synthesis. Such logical functions as intermediation and sublation are also characterized as 'taking the middle between the two poles' (*ibid.* 286). For instance, one of the three satyas, the middle, is now taken as the intermediating pole while the other two, the provisional and the empty, as the intermediated ones.

Next Takahashi mentions *repetition* or *iteration* of function of intermediation or taking the middle (*ibid.* 286-287). Let's explicate his idea of repetition of taking the middle in terms of our own notations. At the initial stage of the repetition, there are three poles that intermediate with one another. Takahashi uses a metaphor in which those poles are compared with three points on the circumference of a circle with an equal distance between them. Let's denote them as $P_{1/3}$, $P_{2/3}$, $P_{3/3}$. They form a regular inscribed triangle (see Diagram 5). Suppose the length of the circumference as c , the distance between those poles is $c/3$. This is the stage where complete fusion dialectic of the three satyas holds.

At the second stage of repetition, three poles, $P_{1/6}$, $P_{3/6}$, $P_{5/6}$, are added, each of which is inserted between each pair of the initial three poles: say, $P_{3/6}$ is placed between $P_{2/6}$ ($=P_{1/3}$) and $P_{4/6}$ ($=P_{2/3}$). In effect, six poles, $P_{1/6}$, $P_{2/6}$ ($=P_{1/3}$), $P_{3/6}$, $P_{4/6}$ ($=P_{2/3}$), $P_{5/6}$, $P_{6/6}$ ($=P_{3/3}$), lie on the circumference with equal distance $c/6$ between them. They form a regular inscribed hexagon (see Diagram.6). A

Diagram 5

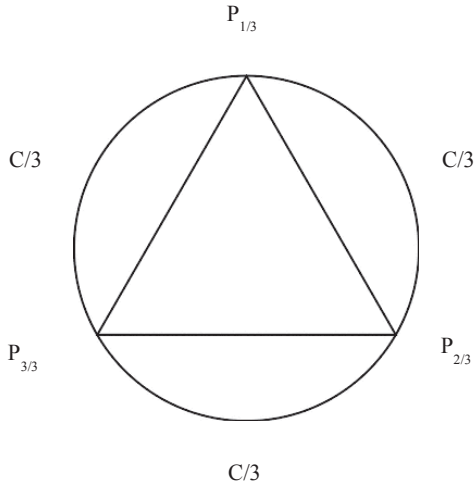
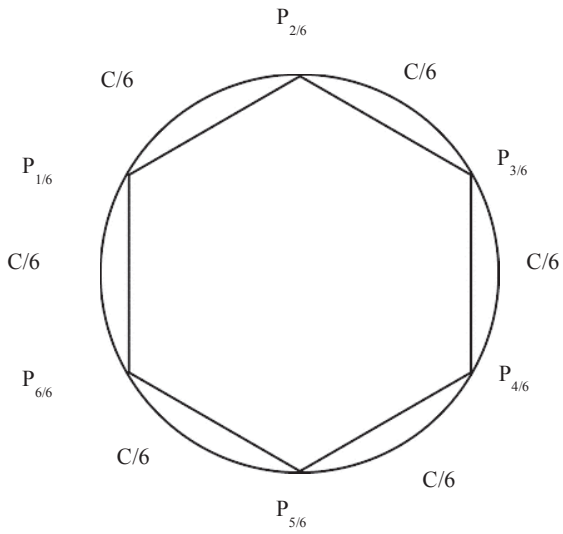


Diagram 6



new pole intermediates with its two neighbors. Putting another: it takes the middle position between the two initial poles. So by adding the three poles the operation of taking the middle is repeated.

Let n be a finite number. After n times iteration of taking the middle operation, there exist $3 \cdot 2^n$ poles on the circumference with an equal distance of $\frac{c}{3 \cdot 2^n}$ between them. Those form $3 \cdot 2^n$ -sided regular inscribed polygon. Each pole intermediates or takes the middle of its two neighbors. As the number of times of repetitions increases, the number of poles grows and the distance between them becomes closer. At each of the stages of such finite repetitions or the *finite stages*, we have a logical structure that can be dubbed as complete fusion dialectic of the $3 \cdot 2^n$ satyas. This is a generalization of complete fusion dialectic of the three satyas.

Takahashi goes on to introduce the infinite repetition of the operation and its limit stage. At the limit stage, infinitely many poles lie on the circumference with an infinitely small distance between them. Now n -sided regular inscribed polygon converges to the circumscribed circle as the number of its angle and side n becomes infinite. By analogy with such a geometrical fact, he would imply that, at the limit stage, the infinitely many poles jointly constitute a single pole. Also he may implicitly regard the infinitely many poles with the infinitesimal distance between them as forming a single continuum. This single continuum as a logical structure was called as complete fusion dialectic of the infinite. This idea seems to be inspired by Zhi yǐ's one-satya.

6. Complete Fusion Dialectic vs. Complete Fusion of the Three Satyas

Let's ask whether Takahashi's complete fusion dialectic is a proper interpretation of Zhi yǐ's complete fusion of the three satyas. As noticed earlier, complete fusion of the three satyas has the two aspects: the distinctive and the non-distinctive. On the other hand, complete fusion dialectic has the two stages: the finite and the limit. At the finite stage, there remains a distinction among the poles. At the limit stage where such a distinction vanishes, the poles become indiscriminative with one another. So it is natural to attribute the finite stage to the distinctive aspect and the limit stage to the non-distinctive one.

However, there is a problem here. The finite and the limit stages are different stages of the repetition of taking the middle. They are distinctive with each

other. One of those distinctive stages is provided with the distinctive character while the other with the non-distinctive one. In effect, there is nothing that has the both characters.

In contrast, according to our interpretation, there is something that has the both characters, that is, everything real. Everything real is distinctive in that it has the three distinctive qualities, but at the same time non-distinctive in that it is classified into a unitary category of what has those three qualities. One and the same thing, everything real, combines the two aspects. Thus our interpretation can make the two aspects compatible by taking them two characteristics of one and the same thing, while Takahashi's cannot.

Takahashi would reply that we should take the whole process of repetition of taking the middle as a single logical structure. Let's call this entire process as *discrete process of taking the middle*. This process has two characters: the distinctive character at its finite stage and the non-distinctive one at its limit stage. Then he would claim that this process could make the two aspects compatible because it combines the distinctive and the non-distinctive aspects.

For the sake of argument, let's admit that the discrete process as a whole can make the two aspects compatible. But there still remain a problem. The finite and limit stages are two distinct sub-categories of a more comprehensive category: category of stages of the discrete process. Here is another categorical discrimination: any stage of the process is categorized into either the distinctive stages or the non-distinctive one. This means that the two aspects of complete fusion are discriminated in an exclusive and exhaustive manner. Such categorical divide between the two aspects flies in the face of Zhì yǐ's motivation of anti-conceptual discrimination. Consequently Takahashi's complete fusion dialectic is not a proper interpretation of Zhì yǐ's complete fusion of the three satyas.

In contrast our interpretation is free from such a categorical discrimination. It introduces a conceptual distinction between *aspect* and *property* of reality. But nothing is sorted out into either sub-category of aspect or that of property in an exclusive and exhaustive manner. So they are not sub-categories of a more comprehensive one. Rather, the aspect of reality is supposed to have the properties.

Let's sum up. Takahashi's complete fusion dialectic is an improper interpretation of Zhì yǐ's complete fusion of three satyas either because it

cannot provide something that has both the distinctive and the non-distinctive aspects and therefore make the two aspects compatible, or because it smuggles a categorical discrimination between the two aspects, and therefore betrays Zhi yi's basic motive of anti-conceptual discrimination.

7. Takahashi's Completion of Complete Fusion of the Three Satyas

While reformulating Zhi yi's complete fusion of the three satyas in terms of complete fusion dialectic, Takahashi doesn't satisfy with the latter. Generally he doesn't satisfy with any types of dialectic. Instead he proposes *logic of wholeness that includes and transcends* (包越の全体性: houetsu-teki-zenntaisei) or *logic of the including-transcending*.³⁾ He claimed that logic of the including-transcending grounds various forms of dialectic. It is also claimed to be their completion. This is also the case for Zhi yi's complete fusion that is interpreted as complete fusion dialectic. Takahashi mentioned that it is to be grounded or completed by his logic of the including-transcending. He wrote that it should be got rid of its 'process-ness' and be founded on the basis of 'the wholeness' (ibid. 286 290). Then what is his logic of the including-transcending? Why is complete fusion of the three satyas unsatisfactory? How is it improved? Is Takahashi's completion of it successful? To answer those questions, let's first articulate his logic and then identify his motivation behind it.

Conceptual Continuum

Takahashi seems to presuppose a fundamental metaphysical view that everything, including natural phenomena, human action, and social history & etc., is in the process of generation (ibid. 299-300). His logic of the including-transcending is a logical form of 'the general character of such generation' of all phenomena (ibid. 299). According to him, 'the generation is continuous, one-directional, irreversible' (ibid. 299). For him, the logical form of such generation is one or another conceptual continuum or spectrum, which takes, as its two extremes, dichotomous concepts that opposes with each other. For instance, generation of human action is logically characterized in terms of the conceptual spectrum that has as its extremes such dichotomous concepts as the subjective vs. the objective, and spans from the purely subjective via 'half-subjective and half-objective' (ibid. 301) to the purely objective. The most general framework

is, he claims, the conceptual spectrum between *being* and *nothing*. So generation in general is described as the continuous process that starts from purely nothing via 'half-being and half-nothing' and ends with purely being (ibid. 295).

We usually think of conceptual continuums for some concepts that obviously have degrees. Based on his view that everything is in the process of continuous generation, Takahashi makes a general claim that every concept has degree and therefore forms continuous spectrum. What kind of characters does this conceptual spectrum have? What is the relation between the spectrum as a whole and its elementary parts? What relation holds among those parts? He doesn't answer to those questions explicitly. So let's answer.

Take as an example the spectrum of brightness that has absolute white and black as its two extremes and various shades of grey as its intermediate part. This spectrum is usually understood to have the same characters as an interval of real numbers has. An interval of real numbers, say the one between 0 and 1, has the property, among others, that the interval as a whole is prior to its elementary parts, i.e., each real number within it, ontologically and conceptually: the latter are derived from the former as limits of infinite repetition of taking a narrower sub-interval of the former. Also each real number occupies a particular position in the interval as a whole so as to be totally ordered with all the other parts in accordance to its distance from the both ends: for any two numbers, x and y , x is nearer to one end than y , x is as near to the end as y , or y is nearer to the end than x . Takahashi might ascribe the same characters to every conceptual spectrum: the whole is prior to its elementary parts and the latter are totally ordered with one another with respect to their distances to the ends.

He also set up an unsymmetrical relation between the spectrum as a whole and its elementary parts: the whole continuum *includes* and at the same time *transcends* its parts but not vice versa. That is why he called idiosyncratically the whole spectrum as *the including-transcending*. Claiming that it is similar but not identical to Jaspers' idea of *the encompassing* (ibid. 304), he characterizes this concept as follows.

The whole includes and transcends the part. The including-transcending is a kind of transcendence. But unlike a simple transcendence, it transcends [its parts] by including [them]. It not only includes [them] externally but also

permeates [them] internally. Therefore it is also immanent. (ibid. 291)

Here he mentioned an apparently contradictory character of the including-transcending: it transcends its parts and at the same time doesn't. But we can parameterize away this apparent paradox in the light of our observations on conceptual spectrum. The spectrum as a whole includes its parts mereologically. The transcendence as external inclusion mentioned above means this mereological inclusion. On the other, since the spectrum is prior to its elementary parts, the former is presupposed by the latter ontologically and conceptually. This is what the immanence as internal permeating means. In sum, the including-transcending is nothing but the whole conceptual continuum that mereologically includes its parts and at the same time is presupposed by them.

Motivation for Continualization

Let's ask on what motivation Takahashi introduces the idea of conceptual continuum and tries to improve complete fusion of the three satyas by means of it. This amounts to inquire his motivation of the basic metaphysical thesis that everything is in the process of continuous generation. To answer those questions, we should first examine Takahashi's ideas on why and how complete fusion of the three satyas is insufficient and how the continuum can improve it.

As mentioned above, Takahashi criticizes Zhì yǐ's' complete fusion of the three satyas and his own modern reformulation of it, complete fusion dialectic, as that they are not free from process-ness and lack the wholeness as their basis. What does he mean? The process-ness and the lack of the wholeness are characteristics of the discrete process of complete fusion dialectic discussed earlier. The discrete process is generated by infinite iteration of taking the middle operation. Since the repetition is discretely step-wise, the process itself is so. The process-ness can be construed as this discreteness of the process. Also in the discrete process, each stage, finite or limit, precedes the whole process ontologically and conceptually. By the lack of the wholeness, Takahashi might mean such absence of priority of the whole over its parts.

As discussed earlier, the discreteness and the lack of priority of the whole are responsible to the conceptual discrimination among stages of the process. Due to this discrimination, the discreet process brings about the categorical divide

between the two aspects of complete fusion of the three satyas (sec. 6). On the other, since the conceptual spectrum is continuous rather than discrete and has the priority of the whole, it should be free from such conceptual discrimination and categorical divide. Those discrimination and division are smoothed away, so to say, in the continuous process. That's why Takahashi holds the metaphysical view on universal continuity and introduces the conceptual continuum, we claim. His motivation is to get rid of the conceptual discrimination inherent in the discrete process and therefore in complete fusion dialectic as well as complete fusion of the three satyas.

Let's have a historical panorama. The Chinese apocryphal sūtras introduced the third satya to overcome a conceptual discrimination of the traditional Buddhism, i.e., dichotomy between the two satyas. Zhì yǐ found a remaining discrimination, i.e., trichotomy between the three satyas, and tried to remove it by advocating complete fusion among them. Zhì yǐ admitted that complete fusion has the two aspects: the distinctive and the non-distinctive. In reformulating the Zhì yǐ's ideas in terms of complete fusion dialectic, Takahashi identified a discrete categorical discrimination between the two aspects, and tried to smooth it away by making the discrete process of complete fusion dialectic continuous. So the intention of conceptual continuum is to eliminate the last remaining conceptual discrimination in the East Asian tradition. He is definitely among East Asian philosophers of anti-conceptual discrimination.

How Can Takahashi Overcome Tientai?

Continuation is the key word for Takahashi's strategy of anti-conceptual discrimination. For him, reality is continuous in all respects. It is trans-dichotomous and anti-discriminative because it is continuous. Any conceptual distinction such as dichotomy and trichotomy fails to be honest to this continuity. So he makes all concepts continuous. His stance can be called as philosophy of continue trans-dichotomy or anti-conceptual distinction.

How can this continuation strategy be applied to the original Tientai thoughts? The dichotomies that the Tientai School tackled with are now resolved not by its concept of complete fusion but by continuation. For instance, there is no clear distinction in reality between nirvāna (or enlightenment) and saṃsāra (or delusion). Everyone is more or less enlightened or unenlightened.

Likewise the distinction among the three satyas is continualized. Take the

distinction between the provisional that implies that reality is assertable on the one hand and the empty that claims that it is unassertable on the other. For Takahashi, reality is more or less assertable and unassertable. Take another distinction between the dichotomy between the provisional, or assertability, and the empty, or unassertability on the one hand and the trans-dichotomy, i.e., the middle, on the other. Takahashi would claim that reality is more or less dichotomous and trans-dichotomous.

This last claim is significant because it amounts to overcome the shortcoming of the Tientai that we pointed out in the first part of this paper: the dichotomy between the dichotomous and the trans-dichotomous aspects of reality. For Takahashi, reality forms a continuum from the purely dichotomous via partly dichotomous and partly trans-dichotomous to the purely trans-dichotomous. Thus the dichotomy between the dichotomous and the trans-dichotomous is smoothed away.

As we claimed, Takahashi's criticism against Zhì yī's complete fusion of the three satyas is misdirected. Its two aspects, i.e., the distinctive and the non-distinctive, can be interpreted, as we do, without a categorical discrimination that Takahashi alleges to ascribe to it. But his alternative strategy of anti-discrimination in effect provides a remedy for another conceptual discrimination that the Tientai is trapped in. He made undoubtedly a modern philosophical development of the school's thought, which is worthy of serious attentions.

8. Did Takahashi Make a Success?

Can Takahashi's continuation strategy successfully overcome any conceptual discrimination? Our answer is negative. Let's remind that there always remains a total order among elementary parts of conceptual continuum. Though such order is not discrete but continuous, it still ranks each part distinctively in accordance with its distance to the extremes of spectrum. For instance, a person is closer to attain nirvāna than another. Everything in reality cannot be escaped from this kind of continuous ranking. Likewise everything is discriminated with each other in the continuous manner.

Even if we use a circle rather than a straight line as geometrical metaphor of the conceptual spectrum, the situation doesn't change. Now we have a spectrum that starts from a certain point on the circle and ends with the same

point. On this cycloid spectrum, any points on the circle are continuously discriminated with one another with respect to their distances to the original point. This remains the case even when we take, as Takahashi suggested (ibid. 299), every points of the circle as the original point. Here, since there are infinitely many original points, we have infinitely many cycloid spectrums on the circle. According to each of those spectrums, every point is ranked in infinitely many different ways. As a result, the continuous discrimination is merely *multiplied infinitely* rather than removed altogether.

As far as we use the idea of conceptual continuum, there is no exit from such continuous discrimination. While avoiding the discrete discrimination by his continuation strategy, Takahashi invites another sort of conceptual discrimination, i.e., continuous one. Though definitely making an advance from the original Tiantai position, his anti-discrimination strategy is also trapped into conceptual discrimination.

9. Conclusion

We have examined two interesting attempts to overcome any dichotomy and conceptual discrimination in the East Asian tradition. Both of them couldn't be sufficiently successful: they suffer from one or another conceptual discrimination. However it is too early to conclude that the East Asian philosophical move of trans-dichotomous and anti-conceptual discrimination is entirely hopeless. There are many other significant efforts to be explored such as those of the Kyoto School. Above all, the ant-dichotomous project should be taken over by generations to come, including ours.

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- 1) The first part is my draft for a chapter of Deguchi et al. forthcoming. Other authors of the book will edit it substantially so as to make it a full-fledged co-authored work. Let me thank to Jay Garfield, Graham Priest, Robert Sharf and Qianyi Qin for their comments on that draft. I originally wrote the second part as an appendix to the book, but decided to publish it here as an independent work.
 - 2) All translations from Chinese and Japanese texts in this paper are mine.
 - 3) 'Wholeness which includes and transcends' is Takahashi's own English translation. He also named his logic as a system which includes dialectic (包弁証法: hou-benshōhō). But since his system is not dialectic at all, this name is misleading.

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円融三諦論によせて
——天台智顛と高橋里美——

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東アジアには、二項対立をふくめ、概念的区分一般を乗り越えようとする思想系譜が連綿としてあった。その代表例の一つが天台智顛(538-597)の円融三諦論であり、その現代的展開を図った試みとして高橋里美(1886-1964)の包摂的全体性の論理がある。本論は、これら両者の議論を再構成した上で、それらを批判的に検討する。その結果、両者とも、ある種の概念的区分を否定する際に、別の概念的区分を招き入れてしまっているという事態が明らかとなる。だが本論としては、彼らの試みが、今日的観点から見ても刺激に満ちた哲学的挑戦であったことも、あわせて示していきたい。