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PEACE AND COMPASSION IN THE
MICROCOSMIC–MACROCOSMIC PARADIGM
OF WHITEHEAD AND THE LOTUS SUTRA*

In a previous book¹ I have examined similarities between the organic process metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead and the teachings of Chinese Hua-yen (Japanese: Kegon) Buddhism, arguing that both formulate a dynamic, holistic, and interrelational vision of reality wherein each nonlocal event is a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic whole, thereby atomizing the entire spatiotemporal continuum from a unique perspective in nature. I argued that Whitehead's microcosmic–macrocosmic metaphysics wherein each momentary event arises as a one-in-many and many-in-one has many structural parallels with the Hua-yen/Kegon Buddhist philosophy as summed up by the doctrinal formulations *li-shih wu-ai* (Japanese: *riji muge*),^a or “interpenetration of part and whole,” and *shih-shih wu-ai* (Japanese: *jiji muge*),^b or “interpenetration of part and part.” It was further shown how for Kūkai, the founder of Shingon Mikkyō Buddhism in Japan, the Kegon (Chinese: Hua-yen) “exoteric” doctrine of “interpenetration of part and whole” could itself be directly experienced through the “esoteric” practice of visualizing mandala paintings as images of wholeness by means of secret meditations such as the “expansion technique” (Japanese: *kaku-dai hô*),^c a contemplative method whereby an image is expanded by degrees to the size of the cosmos and then contracted back to normal, thereby to reveal the nature of self and reality as a microcosm of the macrocosm. Furthermore, I endeavored to demonstrate the close structural proximity between Whitehead's microcosmic–macrocosmic metaphysics and the Hua-yen/Kegon infrastructure of Japanese Zen Buddhism as developed by Dōgen (1200–1253), along with its reformulation in the Zen metaphysics of “absolute nothingness” articulated by Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) and the Kyoto school of modern Japanese philosophy.

In the present article, however, I would like to take up another area for comparative analysis, namely, those significant parallels to be discovered between Whitehead's microcosmic–macrocosmic metaphysics

and Tendai (Chinese: T'ien-t'ai) Buddhist philosophy rooted in the Buddhist scripture known as the *Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law* (Japanese: *Myôhō renga kyô*), otherwise known as the Lotus Sutra (Japanese: *Hoke-kyô*). More specifically, this holographic or microcosmic–macrocosmic paradigm is articulated in the Lotus Sutra tradition in terms of the doctrine of “three thousand worlds in each thought-instant” (Japanese: *ichinen sanzen*).^d This Tendai doctrine of *ichinen sanzen* is a functional equivalent of the Hua-yen/Kegon principle of *li-shih wu-ai* (Japanese: *riji muge*)—“interpenetration between particular-object and universal-whole,” whereby each dharma event is like a jewel in the dynamic interrelated matrix of Indra’s Net, reflecting the totality from its own perspective as a microcosm of the macrocosm. Like the Hua-yen/Kegon Buddhist concept of *li-shi wu-ai*, the T'ien-t'ai/Tendai Buddhist concept of “three thousand worlds in each thought-instant” is best illuminated in Western philosophical categories by Whitehead’s microcosmic–macrocosmic events, which both contain and pervade the entire spatiotemporal continuum as a many-in-one and a one-in-many.

Indeed, Whitehead’s organic process cosmology based on the principle of “universal relativity,” the Hua-yen/Kegon principle of “interpenetration between part and whole,” and the Lotus Sutra/Tendai principle of “three thousand worlds in each thought-instant,” might all be comprehended by means of David Bohm’s Holographic Model of quantum physics based on the principle of “holo-flux” or “holo-movement,”² wherein the implicit order of undivided wholeness is enfolded into each nonlocal hologram produced by an interference pattern of light waves so as to represent a microcosm of the macrocosm. Finally, I endeavor to clarify in this article how this holographic or microcosmic–macrocosmic paradigm developed by Whitehead’s organic process cosmology and process theology as well as the Buddhist religious philosophy of the Lotus Sutra both involve a moral–spiritual vision of universal peace and compassion.

SPECULATIVE METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHICAL METHODOLOGY

Prior to discussion of various metaphysical categories in the Whitehead/Lotus paradigm of organismic process thought, I would like to make several brief remarks about philosophical methodology, focusing especially on the relation between Whitehead’s idea of metaphysical categories as “working hypotheses” and the Lotus Sutra idea of truth as *upâya*, “skillful means,” or “expedient devices,” a temporary explanation with

no absolute status functioning as a tool or instrument to solve problems in particular situations. For Whitehead, metaphysics, or speculative philosophy, is the “endeavor to frame a . . . system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted.”³ He criticizes the “dogmatic fallacy” whereby metaphysical categories are thought to be clear, obvious, certain, fixed, universal, a priori, and eternal truths.⁴ Influenced by the tradition of American pragmatism, instrumentalism, and experimentalism as developed by Charles S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and others, Whitehead articulates a fallibilistic, nonfoundationalist, and pragmatic idea of speculative philosophy wherein metaphysical categories are testable “working hypotheses,” temporary explanations having warranted assertability, that forever undergo change, revision, falsification, and verification through a dynamic reflective process of ongoing self-corrective inquiry conducted by an intersubjective community of critical thinkers. He writes: “Thus speculative philosophy embodies the method of the ‘working hypothesis.’”⁵ Elsewhere, he asserts: “Metaphysical categories are not dogmatic statements of the obvious; they are *tentative formulations* of the ultimate generalities” (italics added).⁶ Again, he says that the progressive rationalistic enterprise of speculative metaphysics always has the status of an “experimental adventure.”⁷

Here it should be pointed out how this pragmatic notion of truth as a temporary explanation or working hypothesis with a problem-solving function in particular situations represents a Western counterpart to what is the most celebrated notion of the Lotus Sutra—namely, the concept of *upâya*, a skillful means or temporary problem-solving device. The doctrine of *upâya* or skillful means, developed in the famous second chapter of the Lotus Sutra, has become a prevalent notion in most all Mahâyâna Buddhist philosophy. But like Whitehead’s idea of speculative philosophy as a categorical scheme of metaphysical principles comprehended as ultimate generalities being only tentative, provisional, and temporary explanations of actuality, the Lotus Sutra idea of truth as *upâya* or skillful means designates a temporary solution to problematic situations with no absolute ontological or epistemological status. Here I can only mention this topic in a cursory manner, yet at the same time it should be emphasized that the relation between the instrumentalist and experimental idea of truth as a problem-solving device, working hypothesis, or temporary explanation developed in American pragmatism, along with its extension into the organismic process metaphysics of Whitehead, itself suggests a most significant parallel with the notion of truth as *upâya* or “expedient device” in the Lotus Sutra tradition of Buddhist philosophy in the East.

BECOMING AND PERISHING OF DHARMA EVENTS

Whitehead's organic process philosophy is formulated in terms of a categorical scheme of ultimate metaphysical generalities wherein the basic actualities are described as nonsubstantial, momentary, and interconnected "events" or "occasions," which are characterized by their perishing and becoming: "Events become and perish. In their becoming they are immediate and then vanish into the past. They are gone; they have perished . . . Plato terms them things that are 'always becoming and never really are.'"⁸ There is clearly a resemblance between Whitehead's principle of process as the becoming and perishing of "actual occasions," also termed "actual entities," and the momentary dharmas of Buddhist philosophy as expressed by the Lotus Sutra.

It was Gene Reeves who first pioneered the exploration of parallels between Whitehead and the doctrinal teachings of the Lotus Sutra, including the parallels between Whitehead's idea of events or actual entities, and the notion of transitory dharmas in the Lotus Sutra. As stated by Reeves in his important article titled "The Lotus Sutra and Process Thought":

In one sense, human beings and nature are integrated in the Lotus Sutra through the doctrine of dharmas. That is, all things . . . can be analyzed into dharmas, the ultimate actualities which in many ways are not unlike Whiteheadian actual entities.⁹

The relation between Whiteheadian actual entities and the Buddhist idea of dharmas as expressed by the Lotus Sutra is further clarified by a passage from the latter text, which Reeves translates as follows:

According to the nature of things (the Dharma), all things (dharmas) emerge. According to the nature of things, all things live. According to the nature of things, all things change. According to the nature of things, all things perish. According to the nature of things, bad and good things emerge, live, change and perish. . . . None of these things continues to live even for a moment, but they emerge and perish every moment, and each emerges, lives, changes, and perishes in an instant.¹⁰

A further aspect of the dharma theory in the Lotus Sutra emphasized by Reeves is that, "Like most of Buddhism, the Lotus is very clear that nothing exists apart from the process of causal relations . . . Thus, everything is related to everything else, throughout infinite reaches of time and space. This process [is] known as *pratitya samutpada* . . ."¹¹ This interrelational aspect of dharmas coarising by *pratitya samutpada* at once suggests the understanding of actual occasions arising through the causal process of prehensions in Whitehead's philosophy of organism.

ICHINEN SANZEN AND
THE MICROCOSMIC–MACROCOSMIC STRUCTURE OF EVENTS

The above analysis of becoming and perishing dharma events that are nonsubstantial, transitory, and interrelated underlies what might be called the microcosmic–macrocosmic structure of reality articulated by Whitehead and the Lotus Sutra.

(I) In the organic process cosmology of Whitehead, the holistic structure of nonlocal events is established by his Category of the Ultimate,¹² according to which every actual occasion arises by an act of creative synthesis that unifies manyness into oneness, multiplicity into unity, or disjunction into conjunction so that each occasion represents a microcosm of the macrocosm. Whitehead expresses the microcosmic–macrocosmic structure of actual occasions as a one-in-many and many-in-one through a succession of bold speculative generalizations such as those that follow:

Each actual entity . . . repeats in microcosm what the universe is in macrocosm.¹³

Each actual entity is a throb of experience including the actual world within its scope.¹⁴

In a sense, every entity pervades the whole world.¹⁵

Each unit has in its nature a reference to every other member of the community so that each unit is a microcosm representing in itself the entire, all-inclusive universe.¹⁶

No two actualities can be torn apart: each is all in all.¹⁷

Furthermore, in his famous critique of the fallacy of simple location, Whitehead proclaims that in some sense, “everything is everywhere at all times”:

My theory involves the entire abandonment of the notion that simple location is the primary way in which things are involved in space-time. In a certain sense, everything is everywhere at all times. For every location involves an aspect of itself in every other location. Thus, every spatiotemporal standpoint mirrors the world.¹⁸

Whitehead postulates an extensive continuum, or as it were, a relational continuum as the scheme of potential relatedness atomized by all actual occasions:

This extensive continuum is one relational continuum in which all potential objectifications find their niche. It underlies the whole world, past, present and future. . . Actual entities atomize this extensive continuum.¹⁹

Moreover, each actual occasion both houses and pervades the entire relational continuum so as to undermine the property of simple location:

Every actual entity in its relationship to other actual entities is in this sense somewhere in the continuum, and arises out of the data provided

by this standpoint. But in another sense it is everywhere throughout the continuum; for its constitution includes the objectification of the actual world and thereby includes the continuum.²⁰

Consequently, says Whitehead, “the continuum is present in each actual entity and each actual entity pervades the continuum.”²¹

(II) In the fifth volume of *Maka-shikan* (Great Calmness and Insight), Chih-i (538–597), the founder of T’ien-t’ai (Japanese: Tendai) Buddhism in China, develops a hermeneutic doctrine according to which “hidden in the depths” of the Lotus Sutra is to be found the ultimate Buddhist cosmological principle: *ichinen sanzen*—“three thousand worlds in each thought-instant.”²² The T’ien-t’ai cosmological principle of *ichinen sanzen* is the culmination of Buddhist thought whereby each dharma arising through the causal process of *pratitya samutpada* is comprehended as a microcosm of the macrocosm.

One of the most important interpreters of the Lotus Sutra was Nichiren (1222–1282), a Tendai monk who founded the Nichiren sect of Buddhism in Japan. The basic practice of Nichiren Buddhism is chanting the *daimoku* or title of the Lotus Sutra—“*[Nam] myô-hô -renge -kyô.*”^e Chanting the *daimoku* is performed before the *gohonzon*, the great mandala, or object of worship, upon which the title of the Lotus Sutra is inscribed down the center. Nichiren quotes Chih-i, the founder of Tendai Buddhism in China, at the beginning of his treatise, “The True Object of Worship,” to clarify how the *gohonzon*, or mandala of the Lotus Sutra, itself embodies the structure of *ichinen sanzen*, or “three thousand worlds in each thought-instant,” as generated from the “mutual containment of ten worlds”:

The mind at each moment is endowed with the Ten Worlds. At the same time, each of the Ten Worlds is endowed with all the others, so that one mind actually possesses one hundred worlds. Each of these worlds in turn possesses thirty realms, which means that in the one hundred worlds there are three thousand realms. The three thousand realms of existence are all possessed by the mind in a single moment. . . . if there is the slightest bit of mind, it contains all the three thousand realms.²³

In “The Ideas of the *Lotus Sutra*,” Tamura Yoshiro underscores the microcosm–macrocosm philosophy of the Lotus Sutra, as well as its interpretation by Chih-i, founder of T’ien-t’ai (Tendai) Buddhism in China, and Nichiren, founder of Nichiren Buddhism in Japan:

Chih-i systematized the teaching of the “three thousand realms in one mind,” and the Japanese priest Nichiren (1222–1282) depicted the ten realms of being in the form of a mandala. The teaching of the “Three thousand realms in one mind” explains that the realm of the microcosm (one mind) and the realm of the macrocosm (three thousand realms) are interdependent and one in their true state, forming a harmonious whole under the wonderful law as the one vehicle. The mandala of the

ten realms of being illustrates diagrammatically the existences of various beings in the universe under the wonderful law as the one vehicle.²⁴

In his commentaries on the Lotus Sutra, Chih-i, the founder of T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) Buddhism, argues that the ultimate meaning hidden at the depths of the Lotus Sutra is the notion of *ichinen sanzen*, "three thousand worlds in each thought-instant," signifying that the whole cosmos is present in the human mind as a microcosm of the macrocosm. For Nichiren, the *daimoku*, or sacred title of the Lotus Sutra, and the *gohonzon*, or mandala upon which it is inscribed, function to reveal the unity of the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of the individual mind as expressed by the Tendai principle of *ichinen sanzen*—"three thousand worlds in each thought-instant." Nichiren's mandala of the Lotus Sutra represents a schematic diagram of the interpenetrating cosmos by the "mutual containment of the 'ten realms'" (Japanese: *jikkai gogu*),^f itself a component principle of *ichinen sanzen*, which multiplied through a specific formula comes out to "three thousand realms in each thought-instant." The Tendai Buddhist cosmological principle of *ichinen sanzen* or "three thousand worlds in each thought-instant" designates the ten worlds (hell, hunger, animality, anger, humanity, heaven, learning, realization, bodhisattvas, buddhas), their mutual possession, the ten factors of life (appearance, nature, entity, power, influence, internal cause, external cause, latent effect, manifest effect, consistency from beginning to end), and the three realms of existence (five components, individual life, and surrounding environment)—all of which multiplied together ($10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 3$) equal three thousand dimensions in a single moment of life. According to Nichiren Buddhism, then, the practice of chanting the *daimoku* of *Nam-myōhō-renge-kyō* to the mandala results in achieving Buddhahood through realization of the interpenetrating multidimensional cosmos of the Lotus Sutra as represented by the "mutual containment of ten realms" (*jikkai gogu*) and its multiplication into the ultimate Tendai principle of *ichinen sanzen*, "three thousand worlds in each thought-instant."

From the above discussion, it might be said that the theoretical frameworks of the Lotus Sutra tradition in the East and Whiteheadian philosophy in the West are both variants of a global paradigm of organic process metaphysics wherein each arising and perishing dharma event generated by the causal process is to be conceived as a microcosm of the macrocosm.

WHITEHEAD AND THE LOTUS SUTRA ON PEACE AND COMPASSION

One of the most significant points of contact between the frameworks of Whitehead and the Lotus Sutra is that both develop central notions of

peace and compassion based on the microcosmic–macrocosmic structure of dharma events whereby all phenomena are interconnected in a web of relationships through the process of coarising by causal relationships.

(I) In his book *A Buddhist Approach to Peace*, Niwano Nikkyô, the late founder and former president of Rissho Kosei-kai, develops a Buddhist ethics of peace and compassion based on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. He writes: “Buddhism in general and the Lotus Sutra in particular are profound teachings on peace. This is because . . . Sakyamuni Buddha is a true exemplar of Peace.”²⁵ Elsewhere in the same book, he likewise asserts: “The teachings on peace in the Lotus Sutra are countless, since the whole of the Lotus Sutra presents a concept of peace.”²⁶ Niwano Nikkyô then describes the Buddhist moral ideology of peace, compassion, and nonviolence exemplified in the conduct of a bodhisattva revealed in chapter 13 of the Lotus Sutra (Exhortation to Hold Firm), citing the words “Be pleased, O Buddha, to abide in peace.”²⁷ According to Niwano’s understanding of the Lotus Sutra, peace is grounded in the bodhisattva’s egoless “compassion” (Japanese: *jihî*)²⁸: “The Japanese word *jihî* is the equivalent of benevolence or compassion . . . a benevolent spirit is the true starting point of peace.”²⁸ Moreover, he emphasizes the relation of achieving peace in the world to Chih-i’s principle of *ichinen sanzen* in the Lotus Sutra tradition of Tendai (T’ien-t’ai) Buddhist philosophy:

T’ien-t’ai Chih-i, the third patriarch in the lineage of the Chinese T’ien-t’ai school of Buddhism, who lived in the sixth century, taught “Three Thousand Realms in One Mind” [Japanese: *ichinen sanzen*], interpreting liberally the possibility of change and the flow of humanity taught in the Law of the Ten Suchnesses [in chapter two of the Lotus Sutra]. That is, the “three thousand realms” will change in accordance with one’s spiritual attitude. I believe that true world peace is based upon this truth.²⁹

The underlying metaphysical explanation of peace, nonviolence, and compassion provided by the Lotus Sutra is to be found, according to Niwano Nikkyô, in the *equality* of all things in the doctrine of “Ten Suchnesses” or the “Reality of All Existence,” whereby all phenomena share a single basic nature: “Their fundamental nature is *sûnyatâ* (voidness), in which all things are completely equal . . . Voidness is the only one, real existence that makes everything and every phenomenon of the universe.”³⁰ He continues:

The reason I emphasize that the Lotus Sutra teaches peace is that the teaching of the Reality of All Existence, which demonstrates the philosophical basis of the peace ideology of the sutra, is based on a spirit of boundless benevolence. Now . . . doesn’t it follow that each human being . . . is essentially equal in his or her existence? . . . The spirit of the equality of all human beings, which is one of the main pillars upon which world peace must be built, is I believe solidly endorsed by the Lotus Sutra.³¹

The Buddhist concept of *sūnyatā* (Japanese: *kū*),^h translated as “emptiness” or “voidness,” is propounded in the fifth chapter of the Lotus Sutra, wherein it is stated

Those grasses and trees, shrubs and forests, and medicinal herbs do not know themselves whether their nature is superior, intermediate or inferior; but the Thus Come One knows this Dharma of a single mark and a single flavor namely . . . the mark of ultimate nirvāna, finally reducing itself to emptiness.³²

As emphasized by Niwano Nikkyō and other scholars in the interpretation of this passage from the Lotus Sutra, insofar as all phenomena possess the single mark of “emptiness” or “voidness” (*sūnyatā*), itself defined in terms of the causal process of arising through “dependent coorigination” (*pratitya samutpada*), all phenomena are equal; it is this emptiness and interconnectedness underlying the equality of all things that provides the basis for universal peace, compassion, nonviolence, and salvation.

(II) Like the Lotus Sutra tradition of Buddhist philosophy, Whitehead’s organic process metaphysics articulates a doctrine of peace and compassion based on a metaphysics of interconnected events coarising through a process of causal relationships. Although Whitehead does not use the language of emptiness, voidness, or nothingness per se, he does formulate a doctrine of interrelated occasions arising through prehensions or causal relations, which calls to mind the Buddhist doctrine of *pratitya samutpada*: dependent coarising, or interrelational existence. Whitehead’s metaphysical principle of “universal relativity” functions as a generalized category expressing the interrelatedness, interdependence, and interpenetration of all microcosmic–macrocosmic events. The principle of relativity states that “every item of the universe including all the other actual entities are constituents in the constitution of any one actual entity.”³³ Again, the principle of relativity asserts that “every item in the universe is involved in each concrescence.”³⁴ Indeed, Whitehead’s principle of relativity is at once reminiscent of the Buddhist doctrine of *sūnyatā* (emptiness), which was translated as “relativity” and “universal relativity” by the Soviet Buddhologist Th. Stcherbatsky:

The central conception of Mahayana was their relativity (*sūnyatā*). Since we use the term “relative” to describe the fact that a thing can be identified only by mentioning its relations to something else, and becomes meaningless without these relations . . . we safely, for want of a better solution, can translate the word *sūnya* by relative or contingent, and the term *sūnyatā* by relativity or contingency.³⁵

In Whitehead’s metaphysics, the Buddhist theme concerning the “indivisibility of emptiness and compassion” (*sūnyatākarunabhinnam*) is articulated in terms of what the former calls the “concern” structure

of causal process and universal relativity, wherein each act of causal prehension, or “feeling of feeling,” is itself comprehended as an act of “sympathetic concernedness.” Whitehead explicitly asserts that the object-into-subject pattern of causal transmission may be directly conceived as the “concern” structure of immediate experience when he writes: “The occasion as subject has a ‘concern’ for the object. And the ‘concern’ at once places the object as a component in the experience of the subject with an affective tone drawn from this object and directed towards it.”³⁶ Hence, Whitehead continues, “Concernedness is of the essence of perception.”³⁷ This concern structure of causal process whereby objects (causes) enter into the subjects (effects) coarising through the causal process is further clarified when Whitehead formulates his theory of primordial perception in the mode of causal efficacy in terms of “sympathy,” or “feeling of feeling”:

The primitive form of physical experience is emotional—blind emotion—received as felt elsewhere in another occasion . . . The primitive element is sympathy, that is, feeling the feeling in another and feeling conformally with another.³⁸

Hence, for Whitehead, concernedness is a functional equivalent to compassion (deriving from the Latin verbal root *compassio* meaning “to feel with”), understood as sympathy or feeling of feeling. Like Buddhist compassion, Whitehead’s concernedness involves sympathy with all phenomena and perception of the fundamental interdependence of all things in the relational continuum of nature. Chang Chung-yuan describes the relation of Whitehead’s thought to the Chinese Buddhist idea of “sympathy” (Chinese: *tz’u*),ⁱ which is understood as universal compassion and unconditional concern for all sentient beings. He explains the Chinese Buddhist conceptualization of sympathy as primordial identification, interfusion and unification of subject and object, of one and many, and of man and the universe.³⁹ He continues: “The dissolution of self and the interfusion among all individuals constitutes the metaphysical structure of sympathy (*tz’u*).”⁴⁰

Furthermore, it should be pointed out how the dipolar God in Whitehead’s process theology relates to images of the compassionate Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that abound in the Lotus Sutra. In Whitehead’s process theology, God is not the creator of the universe, just as in Buddhism the Buddha is not understood as a divine Creator; for both traditions, all dharma events are self-actualizing and self-creative. According to Whitehead’s process theology, in its “primordial nature” the dipolar God is a *lure for feeling*—not an authoritarian deity who rules by forceful coercion—but a caring deity who “lures” events to achieve maximum depth of aesthetic value through gentle persuasion. In its “consequent nature,” the dipolar God is a caring deity who preserves all beauty

achieved by self-creative events as everlasting aesthetic value qualities in the divine memory. Of God's consequent nature, Whitehead thus writes: "The image . . . under which this operative growth of God's nature is best conceived, is that of a *tender care* that nothing be lost" (italics added).⁴¹ Just as in his organic process cosmology Whitehead describes the "concern" structure of interrelated events arising through the causal process of sympathy, or feeling of feeling, whereby one event enters into the composition of another event, so in his process theology he emphasizes that God's consequent nature is that of "care." In his consequent nature, the pathos of God operates like a caring Buddha who endeavors to save all sentient beings through the sympathetic concernedness of compassion.

It is significant that Whitehead's visionary book *Adventures of Ideas* concludes with a chapter titled "Peace."⁴² In Whitehead's process metaphysics of becoming and perishing events, suffering and tragedy are intrinsic to the temporal process of creative advance: "Decay, Transition, Loss, Displacement belong to the essence of Creative Advance."⁴³ And just as for Buddhism, deliverance from *dukkha* or suffering of impermanence is realized only in the peace of nirvana, so for Whitehead, tragedy and suffering end only with the immediate experience of Peace:

The Adventure of the Universe starts with the dream and reaps tragic Beauty. This is the secret of the union of Zest with Peace: That the suffering attains its end in a Harmony of Harmonies. The immediate experience of this Final Fact . . . is the sense of Peace.⁴⁴

Whitehead further describes his concept of peace in a manner consonant with the Buddhist soteriological notion of detachment from suffering when he writes: "Peace is the understanding of tragedy."⁴⁵ The salvific transpersonal dimension of peace is then indicated by Whitehead in a manner reminiscent of Buddhist *anâtman* or no-self: "Peace is . . . the width where the 'self' has been lost, and interest has been transferred to coordinations wider than personality."⁴⁶ Again, "Peace carries with it a surpassing of personality."⁴⁷ Moreover, "Peace . . . is a broadening of feeling due to the emergence of some deep metaphysical insight."⁴⁸ Whitehead even identifies the immediate experience of transpersonal peace as the "attainment of truth"⁴⁹ and with "extreme ecstasy."⁵⁰ Yet in relation to the Buddhist principle of *ichinen sanzen*, Whitehead's most suggestive definition of transpersonal peace is that it represents the "conformation of appearance to reality."⁵¹ Insofar as Whitehead defines "appearance" as the parts discriminated in the foreground focus and "reality" as the nondiscriminated whole of causal relations given in the background field, the "conformation of appearance to reality" designates the interfusion of part and whole or microcosm and macrocosm, as immediately experienced through interfusion and harmony of foreground focus and background field.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have suggested that like Whitehead's framework, the Lotus Sutra develops a variant of an organic process metaphysics wherein the fundamental units are insubstantial, transitory, and interconnected dharma events that arise and perish through a causal process of dependent coorigination. Moreover, like the Whiteheadian framework, this organic process view of the Lotus Sutra provides the theoretical basis for a microcosmic–macrocosmic paradigm of dharma events as expressed by the Tendai Buddhist principle of *ichinen sanzen*: “three thousand worlds in one thought-instant.” Finally, I have endeavored to clarify how this organic process metaphysics of both Whitehead and the Lotus Sutra involves a moral doctrine of peace and compassion based on awareness of the harmonious interconnectedness, interdependence, and interpenetration of all microcosm-qua-macrocosm dharma events in the relational continuum of nature. In this context, it was argued that just as Whitehead's organic process cosmology underscores the “concern” structure of causal relations between interconnected events, so his process theology underscores the nature of God as a caring deity who saves all transitory, aesthetic and novel self-creative occasions everlastingly in the divine memory. Hence, the image of the peaceful, loving, and compassionate Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Lotus Sutra can be articulated by Whitehead's generic description of the divine nature, wherein he propounds that the image under which God's nature is best conceived is “that of a tender care that nothing be lost.”⁵²

In conclusion, this holographic or microcosmic–macrocosmic paradigm articulated by Whitehead's organic process philosophy in the West as well as the Lotus Sutra tradition of Buddhism in the East, wherein a moral consciousness of universal peace and compassion is rooted in an awareness of the interrelatedness of all phenomena, can be summed up by the words of Miyazawa Kenji (1896–1933), a celebrated Japanese poet well known for his dedication to the Lotus Sutra:

The happiness of the individual cannot be attained without first realizing the happiness of the whole world.

The consciousness of self will gradually evolve from the individual to include the group, society, and finally the universe . . .

To live strongly and truly is to live with a consciousness of the galaxy within you and to respond to it.

Let us seek true happiness for the whole world . . .⁵³

ENDNOTES

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GLOSSARY OF SINO-JAPANESE CHARACTERS

- a. 理事無碍
- b. 事事無碍
- c. 拈大法
- d. 一念三千
- e. 南無妙法蓮華經
- f. 十界互具
- g. 慈悲
- h. 空
- i. 慈