



# The Logic of the *Diamond Sutra*: A is not A, therefore it is A

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**ABSTRACT** *This paper attempts to make intelligible the logic contained in the Diamond Sutra. This 'logic' is called the 'logic of not'. It is stated in a propositional form: 'A is not A, therefore it is A'. Since this formulation is contradictory or paradoxical when it is read in light of Aristotelean logic, one might dismiss it as nonsensical. In order to show that it is neither nonsensical nor meaningless, the paper will articulate the philosophical reasons why the Sutra makes its position in this contradictory form. The thesis to be presented is that as long as one understands the 'logic of not' from a dualistic, either-or egological standpoint, it remains contradictory, but in order to properly understand it, one must effect a perspectival shift from the dualistic, egological stance to a non-dualistic, non-egological stance. This thesis is advanced with a broader concern in mind: to reexamine how the self understands itself, how it understands others, and how it understands its intra-ecological relationship with nature.*

When one side is illuminated,  
the other side remains in darkness.  
Dōgen (1200–1253), *Genjōkōan*

## I. Introduction

An early phase of Mahāyāna Buddhism witnessed the development of a genre of literature that Buddhologists call *prajñāpāramitā*, which is translated in English as the 'perfection of wisdom'. To this genre of literature belongs a treatise that is named the *Diamond Sutra*. (Hereafter, it will be abbreviated as the *Sutra*; Skt.: *Vajracchedhikāpraiṭāpāramitā*) This paper attempts to render intelligible the logic that is used in this *Sutra* in which a seemingly contradictory assertion is made to articulate the Buddhist understanding of (human) reality. The renowned Japanese Buddhologist, Hajime Nakamura, calls it a 'logic of not' (Skt.; *na pṛthak*).<sup>1</sup> The 'logic of not' can be stated in propositional form as: 'A is not A, therefore it is A'. When this is read and interpreted in light of Aristotelean logic, the linguistic formulation of this logic is outright contradictory, and one may therefore dismiss it as nonsensical.<sup>2</sup> As I think such a pronouncement is based on an un-informed and misguided judgement when it is assessed in light of Mahāyāna Buddhism in general, and the *Diamond Sutra* in particular, I should like to elucidate its significance by clarifying the philosophical reasoning that informs the formulation of the 'logic of not'. In order to do so, I will develop in this paper the position that it remains contradictory only as long as one understands the 'logic of not' in light of Aristotelean logic, which assumes a dualistic, either-or egological<sup>3</sup> stance, but to understand it properly, I shall argue that one must read it by effecting a perspectival shift to a non-dualistic, non-egological stance. Only then can one see that it is not contradictory, and hence that it is not nonsensical.

In order to show unequivocally that the ‘logic of not’ does indeed appear to be contradictory, or if not that, paradoxical, it is best to cite some of the representative examples from the *Sutra*. To this end, note the following examples of the ‘logic of not’.

- (1) ‘The world is not the world, therefore it is the world’ (section 13-c).
- (2) ‘All *dharmas* are not all *dharmas*, therefore they are all *dharmas*’ (section 17-c).
- (3) ‘The perfection of wisdom [*prajñāpāramitā*] is not the perfection of wisdom, therefore it is the perfection of wisdom’ (section 13-a).
- (4) ‘A thought of truth [*bhūtaśaṃjñā*] is not a thought of truth, therefore it is the thought of truth’ (section 14-a).

Although these instances obviously do not exhaust all the occurrences of the ‘logic of not’ in the *Sutra*,<sup>4</sup> it is clear that the ‘logic of not’ uses the form, ‘A is not A, therefore it is A’, where A stands for a linguistic sign, such as ‘the world’, ‘all *dharmas*’, ‘the perfection of wisdom’, and ‘a thought of truth’, mentioned in the above sample sentences. Each of these terms can be systematically placed into this propositional form to formalise the logic as: ‘A is not A, therefore it is A’.<sup>5</sup>

Upon reading these example sentences, we would intuitively judge that they are contradictory or paradoxical at best. A question arises as to why we intuit them in this way. Is there in our conceptual scheme something that compels us to make this judgement? Contrary to our ordinary conceptual scheme, could it be that the *Sutra* has its own conceptual scheme which is different from ours? If so, what is it? Could it have its own philosophical reason to formulate its position in this contradictory or paradoxical form?

As a way of specifically addressing these questions, this paper will assume the following order of presentation. In Section II, I will provide a brief introduction to what the *Sutra* takes its goal to be, i.e. the ‘perfection of wisdom’, for it provides the necessary background information for those who are unfamiliar with the *Sutra*. In Section III, based on the *Sutra*’s basic theme of the perfection of wisdom, I will articulate the conceptual scheme of the *Sutra*, by spelling out some of the fundamental characteristics given to the *bodhisattva*, while contrasting them with a conceptual scheme of what the *Sutra* identifies as the ‘foolish, ordinary people’. With this contrast in mind, I will analyse in the following two sections the first two components in the ‘logic of not’ namely, an affirmation of A, and the negation of A. Based on this two-part analysis of ‘A is not A’, I will clarify the meaning of the perspectival shift in Section VI, showing a transformation from the dualistic either–or egological stance to the non-dualistic, non-egological stance, the topical concern of this paper. In Section VII, I will briefly attempt to clarify the meaning of the reaffirmation of A after it is negated, i.e. ‘therefore it is A’. In Section VIII in lieu of a conclusion, I will draw implications of this ‘logic of not’ that may be pertinent in reflecting upon the contemporary situation.

Before proceeding to follow the above outline, the methodological orientation that this paper assumes may briefly be indicated in order to avoid an unnecessary accusation and criticism. This paper on the philosophical articulation of the ‘logic of not’ does not intend to be a philological piece that scrutinises the text from within the standpoint of the *Sutra* itself, although an inter-textual study may yield fruitful results, especially in connection with the works of Nāgārjuna. It will not entirely ignore a philological aspect of the text, but it will probe into the text and textual evidence from the philosophical viewpoint wherever an issue in question is relevant to the thesis of this paper. This orientation is necessary because the text in question is a *sutra*, not a commentary; it

simply makes declarative statements concerning the philosophical and experimental background for the formulation of the 'logic of not' without explicitly stating its reason or structure in analytical terms that are intelligible to the contemporary reader. For this reason, I do not believe that a purely philological or textual investigation can render the 'logic of not' intelligible. The paper must proceed from a philosophical point-of-view, which is suggested in the way the thesis of this paper is formulated, and it must take into account an experiential background that informs the formulation of the 'logic of not', though this experiential component is embedded in the text and requires unveiling.

## II. The Goal of the Diamond Sutra

As preparatory to making the 'logic of not' intelligible, it will be helpful to have in our purview the original meaning of the Sanskrit title of the *Diamond Sutra*, for the *Sutra* develops on its meaning as the thematic focus. The Sanskrit title for the *Sutra* is *Vajraccedhikāprajñāpāramitā*, which is usually divided into two components, as each forms a linguistic unit: *vajraccedhikā* and *prajñāpāramitā*. According to Hajime Nakamura, the first component of the title, *vajraccedhikā*, means to 'cut like a diamond' or to 'sunder like a thunderbolt' where 'diamond' or 'thunderbolt' is used metaphorically to designate the power of severing all doubts and attachments<sup>6</sup> from the cognitive activity of the human being. In the *Sutra*, this idea of 'severing all doubts and attachments' is conceived to be a project of *praxis*. That is, since they are deeply connected to the somaticity and the unconscious of the cognitive subject, the act of severing doubts and attachments must be distinguished from the suppressive power of a conscious, non-meditative 'rational will' as Kant, for example, conceives of handling the issue in his first *Critique*.<sup>7</sup>

The second component of the title, *prajñāpāramitā*, as mentioned at the beginning, designates the 'perfection of wisdom',<sup>8</sup> where wisdom (*prajñā*) operates in the form of knowledge that is non-discriminatory in nature.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, it should also be clearly demarcated from the meaning of wisdom in which a theoretical knowledge of the universal is singled out as the genuine form of wisdom, as, for example, Aristotle proposes in his *Metaphysics*.<sup>10</sup> In light of the practical nature of 'severing all doubts and attachments', the perfection of wisdom is an existential project aiming at achieving and embodying a non-discriminatory basis for knowledge. That is to say, the 'perfection of wisdom' designates an achieved state of personhood.<sup>11</sup> To put it differently, wisdom is posited as a practical ideal for those who have not achieved it, in which case it involves a process of perfecting it, while when it is taken to mean the achievement of an awakened state, it describes a state in which the 'perfection of wisdom' is embodied *vis-à-vis* the emancipation from the fundamental ignorance of not knowing how to experience reality as it is.

What needs to be noted methodologically in this connection is that the *Sutra* presupposes that the perfection of wisdom is realised by letting the practical take precedence over the theoretical.<sup>12</sup> As we gather the foregoing senses of *vajraccedhikā* and *prajñāpāramitā* together in light of this methodological attitude, the thematic concern of the *Sutra* emerges; it centres on the idea of practically perfecting the goal of wisdom that functions like a diamond or a thunderbolt, such that it severs 'all doubts and attachments' from the cognitive activity of the human being where the metaphors 'diamond' and 'thunderbolt' designate the non-discriminatory activity of the mind.

This practical meaning of perfecting wisdom is a leitmotif of the *Sutra* and it is

developed throughout this text in a series of dialogues between the Buddha and Subhuti,<sup>13</sup> one of his disciples, wherein the Buddha is depicted as an incarnate embodiment of wisdom, while Subhuti appears as an interlocutor who raises questions to the Buddha as to how this practical goal of perfecting wisdom is realised, and how it should be articulated when appealing to language. This sense of perfecting wisdom is established early in the *Sutra*. For example, in section 2 of the *Sutra* Subhuti asks a question to the Buddha concerning how one should go about achieving the perfection of wisdom. It reads:

How then, O Lord (*Bhagavad*), should a son or daughter of good family, who has set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle (*bodhisattva-yāna*), stand, how progress, how control their thoughts?<sup>14</sup>

This question can generally be posed as: ‘how should one go about the practice of perfecting wisdom?’ as Conze suggests.<sup>15</sup> According to his interpretation, ‘standing’ refers to one’s determination to bring the practical, existential project to perfection, ‘progress’ refers to the seeker’s steady development in concentration and wisdom, and ‘control’ refers to the seeker’s ability to ward off distractions in the calm of meditative stillness.<sup>16</sup> The above quote identifies the practice of perfecting wisdom as the ‘bodhisattva-vehicle’ (*bodhisattva-yāna*), wherein it is metaphorically spoken of as a vehicle (*yāna*) upon which a *bodhisattva* rides. There are many interpretations of how to understand the idea of the *bodhisattva*,<sup>17</sup> but in the context of the *Sutra* it refers to ‘a being who intends on [the achievement of] enlightenment’<sup>18</sup> for one’s own sake as well as for the sake of benefiting others, wherein the priority is placed on the first rather than on the second aspect, although they are integral to each other in that one without the other cannot be established as a full-fledged person.<sup>19</sup> Such a person is the type whose activity is depicted as ‘energetic, courageous, heroic and victorious.’<sup>20</sup> The *Sutra* alternatively calls the goal of perfecting wisdom as ‘the supreme, right, equal enlightenment’<sup>21</sup> (*anuttarā samyak-saṃbodhi*). To recapitulate the goal of the *Sutra*, then, its thematic focus is placed on the *bodhisattva* who strives toward realising the ‘supreme, right, equal enlightenment’, and who embodies the basis for the nondiscriminatory knowledge that is the perfection of wisdom.

### III. The Conceptual Scheme of the *Sutra*: the Bodhisattva

With this understanding of the goal of the *Sutra* in mind, I will examine some of the fundamental characteristics which the *Sutra* gives to the person of the *bodhisattva*, while drawing philosophical implications from them, insofar as they are pertinent to rendering the ‘logic of not’ intelligible. In so doing, the conceptual scheme of the *Sutra* will become evident.

In order to have a clear idea of how the *bodhisattva* is depicted in the *Sutra*, it is perhaps informative if we first examine how it understands the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ (*bāla-prthag-janān*),<sup>22</sup> so that we can put the idea of the *bodhisattva* in clear relief in contrast to it. In a passage taken from section 25 of the *Sutra*, we find the following description of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’. It reads:

[T]he foolish, ordinary people [*bāla-prthagjanān*] think that they have a self [*ātman*]. Therefore, they seize on (or have an attachment to) it.<sup>23</sup>

*Bāla-prthag-janān*, if translated literally, means ‘those who were born separately’ but in its plural form it designates, as Nakamura and Conze inform us, ‘the fools’ and ‘the

ordinary people',<sup>24</sup> and hence their present rendition of *bāla-pṛthag-janān* as the 'foolish, ordinary people'. Because the phrase 'foolish, ordinary people' is ambiguous in that it may be taken to mean that there are either ordinary people who are foolish or those who are not, it is important to specify the intent of qualifying the ordinary people with the adjective 'foolish'. The phrase does not suggest that there are ordinary people who are not fools, rather all ordinary people, according to the *Sutra*, are 'fools'. It does implicitly suggest, however, that there are people who are not 'fools'. One of the representatives of that class, according to the *Sutra*, is the *bodhisattva* who is on the way to perfecting wisdom.

Here we need to pose the question as to why the *Sutra* maintains that having the idea of a self (*ātman*) is a characteristic of 'the foolish, ordinary people'. This calls for a philosophical articulation of the conceptual scheme<sup>25</sup> of the *Sutra* which regards 'the foolish, ordinary people' as holding the idea of a self, and in virtue of which the idea arises in them such that they believe it worthy of accepting it to be true. The above quote thematises the epistemological stance of such 'foolish, ordinary people' in terms of 'seizing on'; it states that the 'foolish, ordinary people seize on the idea of a self'. Generally speaking, we can take 'seizing on' to refer to an act-aspect of the mind, in the present context, that of the 'foolish, ordinary people'. It is philosophically significant to note here that the idea of a self that is seized on, to use Husserl's terminology, is 'correlative' with the (noetic) act of seizing.<sup>26</sup> According to Husserl, the subject casts a (thematic) intentionality to an object in virtue of the basic structure of consciousness that he characterises as 'consciousness-of', where 'of' connotes a linkage between the act of consciousness and its (noematic) content, i.e. an object. Consequently, an object is thematically constituted in the field of consciousness. In the terminology of the Mind-only<sup>27</sup> school ('*Vijñāptimātra*') of Mahāyāna Buddhism, this is formulated as the relation between the grasping-aspect (*grāhakākāra*) and the grasped-aspect (*grāhyākāra*); the (noetic) act is that which grasps and the self is that which is grasped as object, where the latter arises in virtue of the former, although the *Sutra* would maintain the reverse is also true. Because of this relationship, which is integral to the epistemological stance of the 'foolish, ordinary people', the *Sutra*, in agreement with Husserl, maintains that the correlative relationship between them is *structurally* established. When we analyse this relationship, it suggests that one is nothing without the other, i.e. they are mutually dependent on each other for their *raison d'être*. The ordinary people are called 'fools' for the very reason that they do not realise this correlative, mutual dependency. That is to say, there is no awareness on the part of the 'foolish, ordinary people' that the idea of a self arises as that which is grasped in virtue of the act of 'grasping'. However, they are co-determinative with each other. Since this is the case, it is clear that the idea of a self cannot obtain independently of this epistemological stance; it is relative to, and co-determinative with, the act of grasping.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, the sense of independence and autonomy, if ascribed to the idea of a self, can only be relative in nature. The self is neither self-contained nor is it self-sufficient, as the 'foolish, ordinary people' may want to believe.

Psychologically speaking, the act of 'seizing' is an expression of the autonomous activity of an unconscious<sup>29</sup> desire that surfaces in the field of consciousness where it permeates the act aspect of the mind of the 'foolish, ordinary people', and because it is unconscious in origin, it is also constituted somatically.<sup>30</sup> Specifically, it is a deep-rooted desire to connect with the idea of an object such that the act of grasping and that which is grasped, in the present case, the idea of a self, become identified with each other such that the 'foolish, ordinary people' can declare: 'I am my self', whether one

interprets this self to be empirical or metaphysical in nature, although the *Sutra* takes the latter interpretation to be an issue that needs to be dissolved. Psychologically speaking, this urge for identification arises due to an instability from which the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ suffer, and the act of grasping is an expression of the yearning to stabilise it. The stabilisation also ‘frames’ the ‘foolish, ordinary people’, although they are again unaware of it. In this connection, we must point out that there are degrees to this identification, depending on the intensity and the nature of the grasping involved in the constitution of the idea of a self, ranging from a mere recognition of it from the point-of-view of *theōria* to an intense emotional attachment to it, as in the case of ‘fatal attraction’. In spite of the differing degrees of its expression, however, the driving force is undoubtedly a passion of grasping. According to Buddhism, the degree of its intensity is reflective of a pattern or a configuration of the affective dispositional tendency of ‘the likes and dislikes’ which every one of ‘the foolish, ordinary people’ embodies as a contingent being. What is significant to note regarding the act of grasping is that this affective dispositional tendency permeates the (noetic) act with this unconscious affectivity, and the noetic act is consequently affected by the affective disposition in spite of the alleged transparency of its act.<sup>31</sup> Its alternative rendition of ‘seizing’ as ‘attaching’<sup>32</sup> captures this point, where the (noetic) act moves affectively toward the identification with the idea of a self which, as an object of the (noetic) act, however, is extrinsic to the (noetic) act itself. Gathering these points together, it is noteworthy that both the ‘seizing’ and ‘attaching’ discernible in the (noetic) act are operative unconsciously in the ‘foolish, ordinary people’, i.e. the (noetic) act that is allegedly purely cognitive in nature, is permeated by the affective dimension of the cognitive subject.<sup>33</sup>

What is significant in weighing both the cognitive and affective dimensions together is the *Sutra*’s value-judgement that having the idea of a self and an attachment to it is ‘foolish’. We will further examine the epistemological structure of why the *Sutra* deems it ‘foolish’, but for now we shall simply characterise the conceptual scheme, à la early Heidegger, as the everyday standpoint, for one of the characteristics of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ is that they are immersed in the everydayness of the world, oblivious to the question of their existential ground.<sup>34</sup> The preceding analysis informs us that such immersion is due to their unawareness of the correlative, epistemological structure that holds between the grasping and the grasped.

Now, contrast the characteristic of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ with the characterisations which the *Sutra* gives to the *bodhisattva*, where the qualification for the *bodhisattva* is expanded beyond the ascription given to the ‘foolish, ordinary being’. This includes a negation of such ideas as a living being (*sattva-saṃjñā*), an individual soul (*jīva-saṃjñā*), a person (*pudgala-saṃjñā*), all of which are metaphysicalised with an air of eternity. Thus, section 3 of the *Sutra* reads:

If in a Bodhisattva<sup>35</sup> the thought of a ‘being’ should take place, he could not be called a ‘*bodhi*-being [*bodhisattva*]. ‘And why? He is not to be called a *bodhi*-being, in whom the thought of a self [*ātman-saṃjñā*] or of a being [*sattva-saṃjñā*] should take place, or the thought of a living soul (*jīva-saṃjñā*), or of a person (*pudgala-saṃjñā*).<sup>36</sup>

In order to qualify as a *bodhisattva*, then, the *Sutra* maintains that one should not seize on the thoughts<sup>37</sup> of a self (*ātman*), a living being (*sattva-saṃjñā*), an individual soul (*jīva-saṃjñā*), or a person (*pudgala-saṃjñā*), where ‘should not’ carries a sense of negating the ‘foolish’ thoughts that are ascribed to the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ as their characteristic, thereby moving away from foolishness toward the perfection of wisdom.

For now, we can understand the *bodhisattva* to mean a seeker of the path who does not attach him/herself to the metaphysical or substantialistic ‘thoughts of a self (*āman*), an individual being (*jīva*), a living being (*sattva*), or a person (*puṅgala*)’. As such, it is advocating for the *bodhisattva* stance of non-attachment. I will deal with the logical structure of what it means to hold a stance of non-attachment when I examine the meaning of negation in the *Sutra*.) At this point, it will be sufficient to take note of the fact that the above analysis suggests that it conceives of the epistemological stance of the *bodhisattva* as departing from the conceptual scheme of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ that is everyday in nature. That is to say, the *Sutra* conceives of an epistemological stance unique to the *bodhisattva* that is not found in the epistemological stance of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’. What distinguishes the *bodhisattva* from the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ in regard to their conceptual schemes is whether or not there is ‘seizing’ or ‘attachment’ in the act-aspect of the cognition.<sup>38</sup>

Now with these observations in mind, we will see a further qualification given to the idea of the *bodhisattva*, this time regarding the object of both sensory perception and mind. We find the following in section 14-e:

Do not generate a mind that dwells on the material things, nor on the objects of sight, sound, touch, fragrance, nor on the objects (*dharma*) of the mind.<sup>39</sup>

To qualify as a *bodhisattva* in search of ‘the supreme, right and equal enlightenment,’<sup>40</sup> the *Sutra* stipulates in this passage that the *bodhisattva* must not dwell on material objects, objects of external sensory perception, or objects of mind. What is the philosophical significance of specifying these three classes of objects as a possible source of non-attachment for the *bodhisattva*? Is there a common denominator in the *bodhisattva*’s conceptual scheme which, contrary to the standpoint of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’, generates non-attachment? Let us take the example of a material object as an instance of generating attachment, and infer from it the conceptual structure of the *bodhisattva*. In the everyday standpoint of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ when they assume the ‘natural standpoint’,<sup>41</sup> a subject stands ‘here’, while a material thing exists ‘out there’ as an object, wherein a spatial distance separates them. In coming to know a material thing, the subject must objectify it and thus distance itself from the object, although in this operation no question is asked regarding the presuppositions and projections which the subject brings to the process of knowing. Note that the distinction between ‘here’ and ‘there’ is established in the subject as a referential point from the side of the subject, and as such this distinction is relative to the subject. In this scheme, knowledge does not obtain if there is no subject apart from the object, or conversely if there is no object apart from the subject. One presupposes the other for knowledge to obtain. If, for example, the primacy falls on the subject, it takes on an idealistic stance, and if, on the other hand, it focuses on the object, it assumes an objectivistic stance as in the case of natural science. In either case, what is known is relative to the nature of the structural relationship that is sustained between the subject and the object. Here the relationship between the subject and the object is taken to be ontologically dualistic, however naïve it may be. Moreover, note that this spatial distance between them is constituted by a relation of opposition: the subject stands opposed to the object, for they ‘face’ each other. For this opposition to be a constituting factor in this relationship, there must be an act of discrimination on the part of the subject, for the discrimination does not arise, under normal circumstances, from the side of the (material) object.

In fact, the oppositional relationship between the subject and the object structurally arises from the discriminatory function of the subject in relating itself to the object – the

discriminatory function, for example, that enables the subject to differentiate one object from another object, which is a thematising function of the (noetic) act of the mind. This is no different when examining objects of external sensory perception or objects of the mind. Both are constituted as objects by the epistemological subject, although the object that is so constituted is no longer 'out there' but instead 'in here', in the mind of the subject, i.e. it is constituted immanently in the field of the subject's consciousness. The differentiations arises due to a thematic intentionality that is driven by ego-interest and concern.<sup>42</sup> Even this difference is self-generated; the 'distance' between the subject and the object still remains structurally, because the subject, by definition, is that which cannot become an object; there is a structural gap between them. It is a structural gap intrinsic to its epistemological stance that cannot be closed due to the limitation which this epistemological stance imposes on the nature of experience. In all of these instances, however, we are led to accept that the subject is the generative factor for establishing the discriminatory and oppositional relationship, wherein the subject operates by relying, to use modern terminology, on the ego-consciousness, whose primary function of discrimination is triggered by its own ego-desire and interest. In other words, the material object, the object of external sensory perception and the object of mind are all *egologically* constituted, where I understand the term egological to mean an oppositional, discriminatory attitude issuing from the ego-consciousness of the subject that is driven by an unconscious desire. (Later we will see a fuller development of this term.) We will conclude, then, that because of this egological constitution, the 'seizing' and 'attachment' to the object of cognition occur. It is this egological constitution that the *Sutra* admonishes to negate and avoid, i.e. it encourages us to go beyond the egological constitution of internal and external objects which 'foolish, ordinary people' habitually 'seize' upon in their everyday standpoint. According to the *Sutra*, this is because:

if, Subhuti, these *Bodhisattvas* should have a thought<sup>43</sup> of either a *dharma* or a *no-dharma*, they would thereby seize on a self, on a being, on a soul, on a person. And Why? Because a *Bodhisattva* should not seize on either a *dharma* or a *no-dharma*.<sup>44</sup>

Here in this passage, the *Sutra* introduces the most comprehensive category of Buddhism, *dharma*, to subsume the idea of a self, a being, etc., and states that the ideas such as the objects of external sensory perception and the objects of mind arise in virtue of 'having a thought of either *dharma* or *no-dharma*'. The intent of introducing the idea of '*dharma*' is clear: to cut off, once and for all, an 'idle' discourse in the mind arising from the everyday, dualistic standpoint – the 'idle' in the sense of a 'chatter' which makes Heidegger's *Das Man* inauthentic – for the term *dharma* is the most comprehensive category in Buddhism that includes in its scope both the conditioned and the unconditioned. Hence, if a *bodhisattva* can also do away with the thought of either a *dharma* or a *no-dharma*, it naturally follows that the *bodhisattva* can do away with the idea of a self, a being, etc.

To give the general, philosophical point of this passage, then, the act of 'seizing on (or attaching to) either a *dharma* or a *no-dharma*' creates a one-sided attitude. For example, if a *bodhisattva* seizes on a *dharma*, it leads to the postulation of a metaphysical substance, i.e. the creation of substance ontology, when *dharma* is metaphysicalised. When this is applied to the idea of a self, for example, it leads to the postulation of an eternal self, i.e. it substantialises and absolutises the idea of a self such that it takes on a metaphysical meaning. On the other hand, if the *bodhisattva* seizes on a *no-dharma*,

it leads to nihilism.<sup>45</sup> Both of these positions are entailed by the egological act of 'seizing' intrinsic to the epistemological stance of the everyday standpoint. More importantly, this occurs unconsciously in the case of the 'foolish, ordinary people', as was noted in the foregoing. That is, without conscious awareness one commits oneself to a homocentric understanding of one's self, and thus to one's interpersonal relationships, and one's ecological relation to nature. The standpoint of the 'foolish, ordinary people' is homocentric because whatever arises, be it eternalism or nihilism, arises out of the very structure of the dualistic egological constitution by means of the act of 'grasping'.

When we examine the linguistic aspect that accompanies the egological constitution of the object, it entails the following consequences. Seizing on (or attaching to) either a *dharma* or a *no-dharma* translates into accepting a dichotomy of either affirmation or negation as the standard for making a judgement, which presupposes either-or logic as its *modus operandi*. Here, the either-or attitude is a logical stance that *prioritises* one over the other by dichotomising the whole, usually saving the explicit at the expense of the implicit, hence resulting in the one-sidedness of 'seizing on either dharma or no-dharma.' As such, it favours an imbalanced attitude that is invested by ego interest and desire. In this context, we have a clearer understanding of the term '*egological* constitution' wherein the 'logical' designates the either-or logic operative in the constitution of an object when making judgements or when discerning an object. Once it is accepted as the standard of thinking, it is easy to create various kinds of dualisms. The use of the terminology, 'dualistic, egological' is thus justified in such dualisms as mind *vs* body (matter), good *vs* evil, along with a host of others, for dualism of any kind is seamlessly interwoven with the epistemological structure that frames the ego-consciousness through either-or logic, i.e. it either affirms or negates a statement. In other words, the egological constitution of an object inherently involves the necessity of dichotomising the whole, and this in turn is linked to the act of prioritising one part of the whole over the other parts. (I will examine another implication of this structure when we analyse the nature of affirmation in a subsequent section.) What is troublesome is that this process appears 'natural and reasonable' to the 'foolish, ordinary people', for it is propelled and guaranteed by the structure of their epistemological stance. As a consequence of prioritisation by means of either-or logic, dualism is accordingly legitimized in the mind of the 'foolish, ordinary people'.

By contrast, the *Sutra* admonishes the *bodhisattva* against taking either-or logic as the *modus operandi* for making judgements or understanding reality. Rather, it recommends taking the logical stance of 'neither-nor' propositional form. Linguistically, it advocates neither affirming nor negating a '*dharma* or a *no-dharma*', or ontologically, it maintains neither being nor non-being. One of the important points that deserves special attention, here, is that the neither-nor propositional form offers a *holistic* perspective to the *bodhisattva* because this attitude does not admit a dichotomisation as a way of organising reality, as does the either-or attitude. In this recommendation, we have a glimpse of the *bodhisattva*'s departing from the egological stance to a non-egological stance, from dualism to non-dualism, although this transition is only implicit at this stage of our inquiry. What is established at this point is that the *Sutra* rejects either-or logic in favour of neither-nor logic, and in so doing adopts the process of reasoning that aims at freeing 'the foolish, ordinary people' from their dualistic, either-or egological constitution that is structurally imposed by the everyday standpoint of the 'foolish, ordinary people', although this freedom, when understood conceptually, is simply intellectual in nature. In order to actually embody freedom, a perspectival shift must be effected, as

we shall see, through an existential transformation through meditation to the non-dualistic, non-egological stance.

Let us pursue further how the *bodhisattva* is characterised in the *Sutra* in order to hold in our purview a still clearer idea of how the *bodhisattva* is conceived. In section 14-e, we find the following description of the *bodhisattva*:

... the *bodhisattva* must depart from all thoughts, and aspire to the mind of the supreme, right, equal enlightenment (*amuttarā samyak-saṃbodhi*).<sup>46</sup>

How should we philosophically understand the *Sutra*'s recommendation that the *bodhisattva* 'depart from all thoughts' (*dharmasajjñā*)?<sup>47</sup> 'All thoughts' here refers to any characteristic, sign or object that the discriminatory mind (*manas*) or sensory perception of ego-consciousness may entertain as its object. In light of what we have already observed in the foregoing, we interpret this recommendation to mean a taking of the neither-nor stance, i.e. neither affirming 'all thoughts' nor negating them. The *Sutra* advances the idea of 'departing from all thoughts' as an existential remedy for 'seizing either on a *dharmā* or a *no-dharmā*.' When seen from the logical point of view, it becomes evident that such a stance is antithetical to the either-or attitude.

However, this interpretation is still short of the *Sutra*'s intention, because simply taking the neither-nor stance does not enable the *bodhisattva* to 'depart from all thoughts'. That is to say, when attempting to assume this stance, there still remains the act of taking the attitude of neither affirmation nor negation, which means that there still exists an ego-consciousness which takes this stance – the postulation of the ego-consciousness that acts. Of course, we conceive of this act as having the power to free conceptually (but not existentially) from the dualistic, egological constitution of objects, because we believe that the neither-nor stance transcends the either-or attitude. Here, we have a glimpse of a difficult idea of negation that is thematised in the *Sutra*. We will examine the meaning of negation later, but at this point, we must note that the *Sutra* does not accept a straightforward, simple negation by following either-or logic. In order to fully understand the idea of the negation in question, it is necessary to incorporate in our understanding, in addition to the operation of negation based on either-or logic, an existential negation by means of meditational practice, which enables the *bodhisattva* to embody non-attachment. It is enough for now, however, to note that when the *Sutra* advocates the neither-nor alternative, it is opting for a *third* perspective that cannot be accommodated by either affirmation (e.g. substantialistic ontology) or negation (e.g. nihilism) which the either-or egological stance stipulates.

For this reason, the *Sutra* qualifies further: 'If a person is versed in [the experience] that all thing-states (*dharmā*) are without self, the *Tathāgata* says that such a person is truly a *bodhisattva*'.<sup>48</sup> This is where we find textual evidence for the use of the term 'non-egological'. The idea of 'all thing-states are without self' – which appears to be logically entailed by the negation of the idea of a self – must be applied to the ego-consciousness as well. Otherwise, the ego-consciousness posits the idea of a self as performing the act of neither affirming nor negating 'all things (or thing-states)'. In short, there must be a disappearance of the ego-consciousness from the field of awareness for anyone to qualify as a *bodhisattva*. The *Sutra* explicitly makes this point in the following:

If a *bodhisattva* says that 'I will lead innumerable sentient beings to nirvana, such a person cannot be said to be a *bodhisattva* ... This is because there is no such a thing [*dharmā*] that is called *bodhisattva*'.<sup>49</sup>

We have so far dealt with the *bodhisattva* as the thematic focus of the *Sutra*, but here we are now told, to our great surprise, that ‘there is no such a thing (*dharma*) that is called a *bodhisattva*’. The reason for this denial is found in the very establishment on the one hand, ‘I *qua* the *bodhisattva*’ who performs an act of grasping (*grāhya*), and, on the other, the ‘innumerable sentient beings’ as that which is grasped (*grāhya*). Again, this is predicated on the idea that dualism is epistemologically and ontologically the standard of understanding reality, in this particular case, the nature of interpersonal relationships. In the terminology we have used previously, it demonstrates an instance of dualistic egological constitution. Hence, in the second half of the above quote we see the *Sutra* denying ‘I *qua* the *bodhisattva*’ as an object of thought (*dharma-sañjñā*). This is an issue concerning the negation of ego-consciousness that is framed from within the egological constitution of the self, i.e. whether or not one can negate one’s ego-consciousness by relying on either-or logic (either affirmation or negation) to embody the stance of non-attachment. (I will examine this issue when dealing with nihilism.) Along with this negation, the above passage further implies a negation of the dualistic stance that the ego-consciousness employs for engaging its self, its interpersonal relation to others and its intra-ecological relation to nature. Consequently, the negation of the dualistic, egological stance suggests an introduction of the non-dualistic, non-egological stance as its *modus operandi*, wherein we see a hint for a non-discriminatory activity of the mind (*prajñā*)<sup>50</sup> which the *bodhisattva* existentially attempts to bring to perfection, for the non-discriminatory activity of the mind arises only through the non-dualistic, non-egological stance.<sup>51</sup>

With this brief articulation of the conceptual structure which the *Sutra* gives to the *bodhisattva*, we are now ready to analyse the meaning of the ‘logic of not’ that is formulated as: ‘A is not A, therefore it is A’. However, before probing into the philosophical nature of this propositional statement, there is a point that is worthy of special mention.<sup>52</sup> Until the present, we have never questioned the status of this propositional statement, whether it is applicable only to specific instances or if its application is universal. If it is not universal, it has only a local applicability, that is, only within the domain of Buddhist scholarship and practice. On the other hand, if it is universal, it is necessary that the form of the statement be capable of instantiating any A, insofar as it is a thing–event of the world and insofar as it can be realised as a subject in the subject–predicate structure<sup>53</sup> of language. The *Sutra* intends the statement to be universally applicable to any (linguistic) sign used in subject–predicate structure and this is textually suggested by the use of the term *dharma*, the most comprehensive term in Buddhism. When this is translated into ordinary language, it means that A can be a (linguistic) sign for anything that *is* of and in this world. Accordingly, this means that A is linguistically a sign for a noun, a noun–phrase, or a noun–clause in the subject–predicate structure of a language, where the language may designate a logical, artificial or natural system of signs. Given this observation, then, we are led to think that A stands for anything whatsoever of this world as well as that which occurs in this world, where the world refers to a domain in which thing–events, including objects of the mind, are thematised through language and experience.<sup>54</sup> The above specification of A is the most inclusive and comprehensive, and hence universal in the widest sense of the term, for it purports to exclude nothing of the world, including the idea of nothing, so long as it functions as a nominative in the subject–predicate structure of a given language, so long as we can thematise it in a discourse.

In order to see its universal applicability, then, it will be our task to articulate the process of reasoning that has led to the formulation of the ‘logic of not’. What makes

us judge that the statement 'A is not A, therefore it is A' is contradictory or paradoxical is the presence of the syncategorematic word 'not', and if it weren't for the occurrence of this word, it simply states an identity statement that reads: 'A is A, therefore it is A'. In this case, it makes an identity statement to the effect that 'A is the same as A'. There will be allegedly no problem of understanding it, but this statement is vacuously true, since it is tautological, i.e. it does not give us any additional information about A. The *Sutra* obviously does not want to make a statement that is vacuously true. Instead, it casts the statement in a contradictory or paradoxical form, by inserting 'not'. It maintains its position by making the paradoxical statement that A is A only when A is negated, only when it goes through the logical moment of negation. In this case, the first occurrence of A must be different in meaning from the second occurrence of A when it is seen from the perspective of the *bodhisattva*. That is, the first occurrence of A is seen from the perspective of the 'foolish, ordinary people', but the second occurrence of A appears only after putting the first occurrence of A into the logical momentum of negation. Otherwise, we fail to see both the practical and logical necessity of negating A. It seems then, that the intelligibility of the statement 'A is not A, therefore it is A' lies in how we should understand the meaning of negation as the *Sutra* conceives of it. How, then, does the *Sutra* understand negation? In the following section, I will proceed to examine how the *Sutra* recognises A, and how it conceives of the meaning of affirming A. After clarifying these two points, I will examine, in the following section, the meaning of negating A as the *Sutra* conceives of it. And lastly, I will analyse the status of A that is reaffirmed after it is negated.

#### IV. Affirmation of A

What, then, does it mean to affirm A? Here I will examine the logical structure of affirming and recognising A as A. There are two logical senses on which I will focus with regard to the idea of A when it is seen in light of either-or logic: in affirming A, A is taken to be (1) self-same such that 'A is the same as A,' and (2) A is taken in relation to not-A without postulating a strict self-sameness where 'strict' means that there is no gap or fissure in identifying A as A. The former takes the position that it is meaningful to make an identity statement by taking A to be self-same, while the latter does not take this position, because it believes that A can be understood only in relational terms, i.e. only in relation to not-A. Here I will examine only the first sense of A, so as to better clarify the second, relational sense of A later.

That A is a sign means that it can become a subject of a sentence, wherein an act of thematisation gives rise to A. Generally speaking, the act of thematisation is an operation of the ego-consciousness that is propelled by or invested in ego-interest and desire. For this reason, it is a homocentric way of understanding A.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, although A is originally a fluid thing-event in the world, the thematisation, once it is realised as a subject of a sentence, suggests that A is 'frozen' or 'fixed' so that any speaker of a language can engage it, to borrow Wittgenstein's terminology, in a 'language game'.<sup>56</sup> Once it is frozen in this manner, it enters into, and is situated in, a conceptual space that a speaker creates for the use of language. This suggests that it departs from experience and that it is oblivious to the original fact that A is an experience; a phenomenon of thing-event in the world. In other words, A functions in the mode of 'as if' by disregarding the temporalisation of time. It becomes 'frozen' as a sign in the language, and conforms to the syntax of a given language. That is to say, A appears to gain an *atemporal* status, for whenever a speaker uses (but not just

mentions) A in any given domain of discourse, all other users can appeal to its 'same' meaning.

When the self-sameness is asserted in respect of A, then, we tend to forget the factors mentioned above, as if A can stand on its own. By forgetting these factors, however, the idea of A *qua* A arises disregarding the fact that A is an artificial sign, where 'artificial' means that it is divorced and abstracted from a flux of the changing world.<sup>57</sup> This is so because the idea of A in the sense of the self-sameness is a linguistic and conceptual reification; it is linguistic because A is realised as A in the language, and it is conceptual because it is *thought* of as being atemporal or enduring through time. It occurs in the mind of a person who thinks of A.<sup>58</sup> It needs to be pointed out, however, that experience subsumes the use of a language.

As we have seen in the previous section, the idea of self-sameness presupposes the grasping–grasped relationship, which Buddhism rejects as delusory, because it is a product of the discriminatory mind. Moreover, the self-sameness arises as a consequence of substantialising A.<sup>59</sup> Once it is substantialised, it gives rise to an ontology in various formulations, ranging from a naturalistic to a metaphysical understanding of being. Substantialisation<sup>60</sup> and ontologisation psychologically derive from the stance of attachment, and focus on a meaning that is intra-linguistically defined. Here we need not reiterate the argument concerning the grasping and grasped relationship. What needs to be noted, however, is the logical implication of the act of affirmation. The idea of self-sameness is predicated on a one-sidedness or on a prioritisation that accompanies the *modus operandi* of either-or logic. The act of affirmation presupposes this scheme. At the very foundation of the act of affirmation, with its egological either-or attitude, is the philosophical belief that discrimination is a proper way to approach and understand A. When the affirmation of A is pronounced, it moves to prioritise that A which is being affirmed.

Now, in connection with the idea of prioritisation, we need to think through its meaning from a logical point of view. Take an example of holding the idea of 'a self', which can be realised as A in the propositional statement: 'A is not A, therefore it is A'. To hold the idea of a self means to affirm its being or its meaning. But what is the logical structure of this affirmation? When the idea of a self is affirmed, in order to legitimise its act of affirmation, it must implicitly negate all that is not the idea of a self. Or conversely, when the idea of a self is negated, this act of negation must implicitly affirm all that is not the idea of a self. That is, when A is affirmed as A, for example, it means that its isolation is accomplished only in a domain where there is not-A. In other words, A is topicalised by a thematic intentionality chosen out of this domain. Where there is no A in a domain, it would be meaningless to affirm that A is A. This analysis suggests that the idea of self-sameness is predicated on the acceptance of either-or logic as the standard for thinking, as the *modus operandi* for making judgments. Either-or logic prioritises a thematic concern which is realized as A. In this respect, the act of affirmation and the act of negation presuppose each other, as long as they are framed within the structure of either-or logic. Here, there is a mutual dependency and relativity between them. From this analysis, it is clear that the idea of a self is an idea of a self if and only if both the affirmation and the negation of it are together in operation. Although the one is explicit, the other is implicit. When explicitly affirming A, its negation is implicit. Since the implicit does not surface in the affirmative judgement, the negative judgement recedes into the background. On the other hand, when explicitly negating A, the affirmation is implicit, and recedes into the background.

To bring out more clearly the relationship between the explicit and the implicit,

between affirmation and negation, one can take an example from Gestalt psychology which makes the distinction between foreground (A) and background (not A). When I see a little squirrel running in the garden, the foreground (a running squirrel) cannot appear without the *supporting* function of the background (the garden), nor can the background appear without the *supporting* function of the foreground. The determination of what becomes a foreground in one's perceptual field or in one's field of consciousness depends upon a human thematic interest, as well as upon judgements which a human deems to be true. A philosophical point we can derive from this analysis is that the act of affirmation is an affirmation *qua* negation and the act of negation is a negation *qua* affirmation when viewed from a *holistic* point of view. To understand an affirmation only as an affirmation without realising this explicit-implicit structure, then, is only to have a *surface* understanding of affirmation. In other words, as long as one makes judgement relying on either-or logic, there is no affirmation *qua* affirmation pure and simple just as there is no negation *qua* negation pure and simple. The 'foolish, ordinary people' ignore this logical interdependency. They pretend to focus only on the explicit while believing that affirmation is an affirmation pure and simple, and negation is a negation pure and simple. This is an egological constitution.

What follows further from this analysis, however, is that in order for any thing to qualify as an A, whether it is perceptual or conceptual in nature, the act of discernment must embrace both affirmation and negation, however contradictory it may seem, when it is seen from a holistic standpoint. Affirmation pure and simple ignores this fact, and fails to see the 'depth' of discernment and judgement. In fact, without this contradictory nature, no thing can appear as an A. What this analysis informs us, then, is that any thematic interest, when either affirmed or negated, is *realised* as such, to use Kitarō's Nishida terminology, as an instance of 'the self-identity of contradiction' (*mujunteki jiko dōitsu*). In spite of this, the 'foolish, ordinary people' ignore it, because they cannot bring this logical structure to self-awareness, i.e. they suffer from the limitation and constraint of their standpoint. But what is more fundamental than a recognition of this paradoxical 'identity of contradiction' is the fact that both 'identity' and 'contradiction' are twin brothers of the dualistic and egologically constituted, conceptual scheme of either-or logic. What this reveals is that A is a matter of language which champions distinction-making as its primary function.

When A is taken to be self-same, i.e. 'A is the same as A', there must be a logical moment of self-reflexivity between the first occurrence of A and the second occurrence of A in the mind which makes this identification, such that they coincide with each other without jeopardizing the unity of each occurrence, and without creating a gap between them. That is, they must be conceptually juxtaposed with each other, wherein there must be a conceptual 'distance' between the first occurrence of A and the second occurrence of A, whether the self-sameness is taken numerically or qualitatively. The establishment of the self-sameness in this regard is a bridging act of identification between these two occurrences. One must function as a subject and the other must function as an object in the subject-predicate relationship, and the former must be used as a standard to measure the latter to determine if they are the same with each other. In this case, the act of identification stands outside of the domain in which the self-sameness is to be asserted. That is, it is *as if* the act of identification is extrinsic to the idea of self-sameness. As long as there occurs a distinction between the subject and the object in the establishment of the sameness, a question arises if it is logically possible for the subject to identify or to judge the first occurrence of A and the second occurrence of A as being the same as itself. In order for the first occurrence as a subject

to determine the second occurrence of A as A, there must be a *difference* between them. Otherwise, it is impossible to identify or judge that the first occurrence of A and the second occurrence of A are the same as itself. If this is the case, the idea of self-sameness presupposes a difference and only through this difference is it logically possible to identify A as the same as itself. In other words, the self-sameness is the self-sameness *qua* difference. There is no idea of self-sameness pure and simple. Here we can witness an operation of the prioritisation as well as interdependency intrinsic to either-or logic, when A is taken to be same as itself.

When ontology is envisioned by relying on the dualistic, either-or egological stance, while disregarding the above point, A stands for whatever is perceived and/or conceived to *be*. The *Sutra* does not make, however, distinctions among being, being *qua* being, Being, or Being of being. The *Sutra* neither distinguishes among these senses of being, nor does it take a stance of dismissing them, and therefore it does not raise an objection to accommodating them. Simply put, these distinctions are not crucial or central to the thematic concern and focus of the *Sutra*. In other words, this kind of distinction making is foreign to the *Sutra*. As long as the grasping–grasped relationship is operative in the theoretical construction of ontology, it does not object to them, for any ontology constructed in this way is that which the *Sutra* negates as delusory. However, it does provisionally recognise the ontological status of A, however A may be ontologised, either naturalistically or rationalistically. The *Sutra* grants a provisional sense of reality to A. The granting of the sense of reality to A is correlative with the nature of the ontologising activity of the cognitive subject. Yet, it is performed, we must note, by our everyday, commonsensical understanding of the world in which A can be singled out as a subject of discourse or as an object of experience. This leads us to the next section where I shall delve into the meaning of the negation of A as the *Sutra* conceives of it.

## V. A is not A

In the preceding section, we have examined the idea of A as being self-same, wherein I pointed out that the idea of self-sameness presupposes the idea of difference in order for the idea of self-sameness to be intelligible. Along with this I also pointed out that prioritisation and interdependency are concurrent in establishing the idea of self-sameness. In this section we are concerned first with specifying the meaning of the negation of A, and secondly with specifying the meaning of negating A that includes ‘neither-nor’ propositional form which implies a third perspective, i.e. one that cannot be accommodated by either-or logic.

Now, a question arises: ‘Can A in the sense of the self-sameness which the “foolish, ordinary people” accept “stand on its own” without reference to other things?’ ‘Can A just be A outside of a domain of discourse where both A and not A are logically constituted together as the essential components?’ The answer is no; one without the other is unintelligible in making either an affirmative or a negative statement. If we are to understand ‘standing on its own’ in the sense, for example, of having an essence in light of this logical foundation, the ‘standing on its own’ must be relative in its being and meaning, because without other things, i.e. not A, there is no A. That means that A is dependent for its being and for its meaning on other things. For this reason, the ‘standing on its own’ cannot be taken as absolute or essential in meaning. It cannot fully or completely ‘stand on its own’, because it is relative to, and dependent on, other things. The fact that A can be singled out as A (i.e. that it can be thematised as A in a given discourse by taking the subject–predicate sentence structure), already discloses

this dependency and partiality, for it presupposes both its context and its relationship with other things. That is, without the context in which A is singled out as A, there can be no not-A either. This context is the ground out of which and upon which either the act of affirmation or negation can be made. This implies that when we attribute a self-sameness to A in its own right, we must understand it to be partial and relative in respect to its ground as well as to that which is not self-same. In other words, a self-same A cannot be conceived as the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ want to have it. It entails, therefore, that A is absolutely neither self-sufficient nor self-contained. To believe, then, that A is absolutely self-same and that it can stand on its own is a linguistic fiction or illusion.

This linguistic fiction or illusion surfaces in the use of language when the speaker substantialises A in the conceptual space created by language, which entails the appearance of atemporality. Textually, we have dealt with this essential substantialising or eternalising of objects when we discussed the qualification for the *bodhisattva* who does not hold reified ideas of a self or *dharma*. The ‘not’ of ‘A is not A’ then functions to de-substantialise the A that is substantialised by ‘foolish, ordinary people’ through their everyday standpoint. What is specifically negated, according to the *Sutra*, are categories that are classified as material objects, objects of sensory perception, objects of mind, all of which are subsumed under the most comprehensive category of *dharma*. Accordingly, by negating all these categories of *dharma*s, the *Sutra* strives to lead the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ away from their everyday standpoint toward the standpoint of bodhisattva-like non-substantialisation. Thus, the standpoint of non-substantialisation first is reached by way of de-substantialising A. It is advanced as a counter-thesis to the standpoint of substantialisation which essentialises and/or eternalises either material objects (materialism), objects of sensory perception (phenomenalism), or objects of mind (idealism). This is the first meaning of negating A.

Coupled with this idea of non-substantialisation is the *Sutra*’s intention to de-ontologise these objects, i.e. material objects, perceptual objects and objects of thinking. Here, ‘de-ontologisation’ means to go away from the intellectualisation of these objects; moving away from the dualistic oppositions of being and non-being, eternalism and nihilism that are framed by the egological constitution based on either-or logic. The preposition ‘de’ in fact designates a freedom from understanding A as being self-same in its absolute sense. When we understand substantialisation in this way, the idea of A as being self-same is something that is *thought* of, or intellectualised independently of the impermanence of the world. The act of thinking or intellectualisation, when seen diachronically, is no exception to it. Alternatively, the de-ontologisation may be conceived as discarding either-or logic as the *modus operandi* that governs the act of thinking and judging, for it is through either-or logic with its intrinsic characteristic of becoming one-sided that a thinking subject contributes to the postulation of A as being self-same.

To further illustrate the point that the stance of non-substantialisation and hence an embodiment of non-attachment, cannot obtain simply by engaging in the logical act of negation let us consider nihilism. Although it arises from the same conceptual scheme, nihilism is a counter-thesis to eternalism, i.e. they both arise from the dualistic, egological constitution that accepts either-or logic as the standard for understanding reality. Nihilism attempts to negate the being of A together with its meaning. In order to negate A as an object (whether that be a material object, an object of sensory perception or an object of mind), one must logically presuppose an affirmation of not-A. That is, in the terminology of the *Sutra*, it must affirm no-*dharma*. However, as

long as one *affirms* not-A when negating A, it cannot but gain a relative status, for what is negated rests on what is affirmed for its meaning. This is because there is something that nihilism still affirms, namely, the act-aspect of the cognitive subject; the noetic act affirms itself in the act of negating. To put this point in terms of the earlier category of 'attachment' as opposed to 'non-attachment', nihilism *attaches* itself to the act of negation without actually negating the act itself, where attachment remains. For this reason, nihilism always remains partial and incomplete in virtue of its failure to negate this act of affirmation. This incompleteness is structurally framed within either-or logic. It cannot surpass itself in spite of its intention. In order for it to become a full-fledged nihilism, it must also negate the affirming act itself such that the act becomes *no-dharma* itself. For this reason, nihilism can only hope to turn into cynicism, without being able to realise its own original intention. The nihilist must be content with him/herself celebrating the task half-completed.

Recognising that this incompleteness is structurally embedded in either the act of affirmation or negation, the *Sutra* advocates the stance of non-attachment. From the above analysis, it should be clear that this stance is not derived from the mere logical negation of the substantialist position. In order to understand the non-substantial, de-ontologising position, the act of negation must be expanded to operate not only on the object but also on the act of negation itself. The *Sutra* makes this point by saying that 'all *dharma*s are without a self', where 'self' means that which can stand on its own, without dependence on anything else. From it arises the idea of self-sameness, which is an essence, or a substance that is intellectually fabricated.

For this reason, the *Sutra* introduces a third perspective in order to avoid the positions entailed either by substantialism or nihilism. This position is expressed as 'neither A nor not-A', where one avoids either-or logic that leads the human being into mistakenly believing that prioritisation or one-sidedness is a structural necessity in the act of judgement and a correct way of discerning (human) reality. This is the second sense of the negation in saying that 'A is not A'. The third perspective of 'neither nor' states that a correct way of discerning reality can obtain by taking neither affirmation nor negation (logically or linguistically); and by siding ontologically with neither being nor non-being. A 'neither-nor' proposition understood in this way is a deepening of the idea of the either-or logical negation, for the mere logical act of negating A as that which is an object of negation fails to fully accomplish its original intention, that is, it fails to embody the stance of non-attachment. In other words, nihilism which accepts relative nothing must be radicalised. To illustrate the point which the neither-nor stance makes, let us examine further the idea of non-attachment as a qualification for being a *bodhisattva*.

We must note that the stance of non-attachment is not merely the consequence of logically negating the stance of attachment, although the *Sutra* does linguistically state it first in terms of the logical negation, as we illustrated above. That is, psychologically speaking, 'foolish, ordinary people' may negate their attachment with a view to yielding non-attachment, but there arises in them an attachment to non-attachment. In other words, there arises an affirmation of what is negated. Since there is this affirmation, they need to further negate the affirmative attitude that is entailed by the initial act of negation. It is, however, impossible to logically achieve the stance of non-attachment by means of this logical or linguistic process, because it involves an infinite regress. That is, as soon as one negates the stance of attachment that arises out of an initial negation, there occurs an affirmation of this negation and then one must negate this affirmation, and so on *ad infinitum*. As long as the 'foolish, ordinary people' remain on the logical

plane of negating the stance of attachment, or as long as they approach the task as an intellectual issue, it is impossible to free themselves from repeatedly referring back to the previous stance of affirmation. At best, this process can yield a nihilistic stance, as we have just seen in the preceding paragraph. It can not yield the stance of non-attachment.

What causes the above-mentioned infinite regress is the fact that in addition to the content (i.e. the attitude of attachment) that needs to be negated, there remains in this process the *act* of negation that also needs to be negated in order for the negation to be complete, i.e. in order to embody the stance of non-attachment. However, there is no logical end to negating the act of negation, either. This path also involves an infinite regress, as long as the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ remain in the egological and intellectual place, for it yields only a nominal sense of non-attachment. This arises because the issue of negating the attitude of attachment is conceptually framed within the standpoint of dualistic either-or egological structure. To embody an existential stance of non-attachment, the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ must depart from the dualistic egological standpoint. This was stated in the *Sutra* that a *bodhisattva* must depart from all ‘objects of thought’. The issue is not logical or intellectual in nature; it is deeply connected to the unconscious and the somaticity of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ which, for this reason, is more fundamental than the intellectual or logical approach to the issue of non-attachment, because the unconscious and the body support the activity of ego-consciousness without its knowledge. It demands an existential transformation of the negating subject. This is the very reason that the *Sutra* adopts the third perspective of the neither-nor propositional form, which advances neither attachment nor non-attachment.

It must be noted, however, that the third perspective of the *Sutra* relies on the egologically constituted either-or logic to advance its position. Thus, it is true that the *Sutra* does not provide a system of its own logic that is different from either-or logic. We can only speculate as to why it does not. It may be due to the fact that the *Sutra*’s main concern is not a construction of a logical system *per se*, but rather an existential concern for freeing the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ from the linguistic binds which either-or logic imposes on them. Moreover, either-or logic, or the act of affirmation and the act of negation, is the most familiar and readily accessible means of thinking for the ‘foolish, ordinary people’. By pointing out its inherent limitation, the *Sutra* attempts to guide the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ away from it. Whatever the reason for the lack of its own logical system, the point is clear. When the third perspective is assessed in light of either-or logic, one sees that the *Sutra* rejects the ordinary understanding of an absolute, self-same A. Thus, the *Sutra* rejects this allegedly ‘correct’ way of discerning (human) reality.

The *Sutra* advocates the stance of non-attachment, the negation of material objects, objects of sensory perception and objects of mind, and this is due to a very practical or experiential concern. In short, the *Sutra* addresses the problem of image-experience that people encounter in dreams, hallucinations and meditation. This concern reflects the historical period in which the *Sutra* was composed. For example, Kajiyama notes:

... [T]he period in which the *prajñāpāramitā* sutras were written was a time which witnessed an increasing *stūpa* worship, along with the faith in future buddhas such as Maitreya. This meant an increase of the number of seekers who wanted to see various buddhas in dreams, hallucinations and in meditation. However, ... the *prajñāpāramitā* sutras did not affirm their wish to see

the image of the buddhas, but instead it attempted to teach people about the buddha in a higher dimension, by rejecting their wish of image-experience of the buddha and transcend it. What the *Sutras* had in mind when it spoke of 'a buddha in a higher dimension' was the 'mother of the buddhas', i.e., the mother who gives birth to the buddhas.<sup>61</sup>

The mention of a 'mother of the buddhas' in this quotation is significant when we probe psychologically into the nature of 'perfection of wisdom'.<sup>62</sup> It suggests that the *Sutra* adopted the feminine principle, rather than the masculine principle, as the foundational source of knowledge. This point has a bearing on the nature of 'wisdom' (*prajñā*) that is linked to 'all knowing' (*sarvajñā*). The masculine principle is related to *logos*, and when it takes the form of knowledge, its strength lies in intellectual analysis by bifurcating and dissecting the whole. By contrast, the feminine principle of knowledge has the strength of bringing contradictions together and of dissolving conflicts. As such it functions to establish harmony.<sup>63</sup> When we take note of this point, we can see that the *Sutra's* contradictory position arises as a collision or incongruity between the masculine principle that is represented by the use of language relying on either-or logic and the feminine principle that is represented by wisdom. Seen in this psychological manner, the 'logic of not' insofar as it is a 'logic' is a casting of the feminine principle into the masculine terms of *logos* in an attempt to subsume the latter under the former by using terminology foreign to it. Because of this forced subsumption, the *Sutra* states its position in the contradictory form when its 'logic of not' is stated in the propositional form as: 'A is not A, therefore it is A'. In other words, its logical subsumption cannot be complete, given the neither-nor stance which the *Sutra* adopts.

When people, focusing on an object, engage in meditation, it eventually disappears from the field of meditative awareness, along with its shape, its name, attributes, and function(s).<sup>64</sup> If the categories subsumed under *dharma* are real (i.e. material objects, objects of sensory perception, and objects of mind), they should not disappear from the meditative field as a consequence of focusing on them. The fact that they do disappear in meditation, however, signifies that these objects are not independently real. In other words, the reality of these objects are mind-dependent. It would be a mistake, then, to disregard this interdependency and attribute a reality to them. In the process of meditation, then, we should be able to find the experiential origin for the logical negation that is formulated as 'A is not A'. The *Sutra* was quite familiar with the autonomous character of the human psyche in that when the suppressive power of the ego-consciousness is somatically reduced by means of the seated form of meditation, the psychic energy naturally surfaces by taking the form of various images from within the meditative awareness that is rooted in the depths of the psyche and the world. Furthermore, it is known that in a deeper state of meditation images of various luminous beings start appearing in the meditative field. The sight of these images is so attractive and transformative that the meditator will develop an attachment to them, for it gives the adept a glimpse into a world about which the ego-consciousness knows nothing. The *Sutra's* negation of this sort of image-experience is a warning against this tendency, for the images are nothing but a projection of the unconscious mind. This warning is given to the meditator for the purpose of guiding him/her to experience the 'Mother of the buddhas' in the meditative state of neither affirmation nor negation. It is given so as to transcend such image-experience,<sup>65</sup> in favour of a luminous experience of total transparency, which the *Sutra* designates by 'Mother of the buddhas'.

## VI. Perspectival Shift

When the *Sutra* thematises the perspectival shift, it appeals to an analogy. As a preparatory to the examination of the perspectival shift which the *Sutra* proposes, it will be helpful, then, to assess the *Sutra*'s analogical way of describing it. This analogy is informative for it explicitly states a transformation from darkness to light, from 'not seeing' to 'seeing'. The passage in question reads:

Subhuti, analogically speaking, it is like a person who cannot see anything when entering darkness even if he has an eye. The *bodhisattva* who has fallen into things (*vatsu-patita*) should be regarded accordingly ... [But] Subhuthi, it is like a person with the eye who can see many things when the night has become light and the sun has arisen. The *bodhisattva* who has not fallen into things should be regarded accordingly.<sup>66</sup>

Here, the night metaphorically designates the fundamental ignorance of not knowing how to experience reality as it is, and the way the 'foolish, ordinary people' experience their self, their interpersonal relationships with others, as well as their engagement with the ecological world. The transformation from 'not-seeing' to 'seeing', is, among other things,<sup>67</sup> an epistemological translation of the transformation from night to light, which I propose to interpret to mean a transformation existential in nature such that it effects a perspectival shift from the dualistic, egological stance to the non-dualistic, non-egological stance. I use the term 'existential' here because the transformation must be effected by changing the unconscious-somatic dimension of the 'foolish, ordinary people'. That is, this transformation cannot be effected simply by intellection, i.e. by thinking or imagining it. 'Not seeing' is a failure of seeing, because this seeing is constituted dualistically and egologically. It fails to 'see' non-dualistically and non-egologically. Instead, the seer, to quote Kitarō Nishida must 'see in the mode of nothing',<sup>68</sup> wherein the seer's mind is rendered no-mind. When the seer is rendered nothing, no cognitive activity associated with the ego-consciousness is in operation. The *Sutra* only hints at what this 'seeing' is by appealing to such words as the 'Buddha Eye' and 'Buddha cognition'.<sup>69</sup> It is an activity of, to use Hiroshi Motoyama's terminology,<sup>70</sup> 'superconsciousness' which has become a 'place', within which the course of birth and death, generation and extinction of all that is, occurs. But this 'place' is 'no place', because no-mind does not have a boundary or determination save its own determination via negation. Alternatively, it is a 'seeing without a seer',<sup>71</sup> wherein there is only the activity of seeing without the ego-consciousness positing the self as a structuring and organising principle of experience. This activity of seeing is the activity of super-consciousness. As long as the 'foolish, ordinary people' assume the dualistic, either-or egological stance, 'seeing' in the sense indicated here cannot take place.

In order for the mind to 'see in the mode of nothing' or to 'see without being a seer', the *Sutra* recommends that one:

... generates the mind of no place to dwell on, because the dwelling of the mind is not the dwelling of the mind.<sup>72</sup>

From what has been said of the negation of the dualistic, either-or egological stance in the foregoing section, we can understand the phrase to 'generate a mind of no-place to dwell on'<sup>73</sup> to point to an experience that is based on the non-dualistic, non-egological stance. It is not that there is no 'dwelling of the mind', but that the mind in question is not a mind in which the ego-consciousness is posited and acts. Rather, to use Kitarō

Nishida's terminology again, the mind in question is 'a place of no-thing' [*mu no basho*], in which no privileging occurs between the act of grasping itself and what is being grasped by it. That is to say, the discriminatory mind achieves an equality with respect to them by transcending them, and when it does, the mind becomes non-discriminatory. This becomes possible when a de-tensionalised intentionality is at work, where the term 'de-tensional' means a doing away with the dualistic tension created by either-or egological constitution intrinsic to the everyday standpoint. This is the meaning of 'generating the mind of no-place'. It means entering into the original body-mind oneness, while the intentionality issuing from the detensional modality of the mind-body oneness is in attunement<sup>74</sup> with the activity of the world. To articulate it still further, the mind must become no-thing, free from the positing of the ego-consciousness as well as from various complexes arising from the unconscious. The mind that becomes no-thing is no-mind and when it becomes no-mind, it can become anything, for there is nothing to hinder its original activity. It should be noted, however, that this does not occur at the physical dimension as the external sensory perception is wont to grasp it. This point is clearly shown in the following poem, which is presented in the *Sutra* as the words of the Buddha. It declares:

Those who by my form did see me, and those who followed me by voice,  
Wrong efforts they engaged in, Me those people will not see.<sup>75</sup>

As long as 'foolish, ordinary people' rely on either-or logic to posit a self that frames itself dualistically and egologically in an oppositional relationship to the things constituted by the ego, they cannot 'see' the Buddha, nor can they hear the voice of the Buddha, for buddhahood transcends the dualistic, either-or egological stance. That is to say, unless the 'foolish, ordinary people' can assume the non-dualistic, non-egological stance, they cannot experience the Buddha, i.e. an emancipation from the fundamental ignorance that is constituted by the binding of the dualistic, either-or egological stance. This is an instance of what Buddhism calls 'self-binding without a rope'. In order to assume the perspective that transcends it, the 'foolish, ordinary people' must effect the above mentioned existential transformation through practice, particularly the practice of meditation.

The *Sutra* notes that this dualistic, either-or egological stance also applies to the way in which ordinary language is incapable of dealing with *dharma*. Not only are *dharma*s incapable of being grasped dualistically and egologically, but they 'cannot be even talked about'. The following passage introduces this idea:

This *dharma* which the *Tathāgata* has fully known or demonstrated – it cannot be *grasped*, it cannot be *talked about*, it is neither a *dharma* nor a no-*dharma*.  
And why? Because an Absolute exalts the Holy persons.<sup>76</sup> [emphases added]

As long as the 'foolish, ordinary people' assume a dualistic, egological stance, 'this *dharma*' which the Buddha embodies cannot be 'grasped', for the reason I have provided in the foregoing. But to repeat the point briefly here, what is grasped is correlative and co-determinative with the act of grasping, and both are mutually dependent on each other. This is characteristic of the structure of the epistemological stance rooted in the dualistic, either-or egological stance, i.e. its thematising intentionality that issues out of the ego-consciousness of the everyday standpoint. In this case, *dharma* becomes that which is *thought*, and not that which is experienced. However, one understands *dharma* only when it is 'grasped' non-dualistically and non-egologically,

where this ‘grasping’ is no longer an act on the part of ego-consciousness, but is the ‘act’ of that which transcends it, i.e. the world of emancipation.

But what about the statement that ‘*dharma* cannot be talked about’? How should we interpret it? It cannot be ‘talked about’, for ‘this *dharma*’<sup>77</sup> is extralinguistic; ‘this *dharma*’ is that which appears in a meditation experience which ordinary language is not prepared to adequately express. Here, we need to examine what ‘extralinguistic’ means in order to understand the statement that the ‘*dharma* cannot be talked about’. I propose it to mean that it is outside conventional, ordinary language<sup>78</sup> which employs subject–predicate structure, while accepting either-or logic as the standard for its *modus operandi*. In the subject–predicate structure of language, all that happens, including the experience of *dharma*, is gathered together into the subject, when in fact the experience itself must be expressed phenomenologically by the predicate. In this case it is the subject that is subsumed by the predicate, but not vice versa. In Nishida’s terminology, it is the transcendental predicate [*chōetsuteki jutsugo*] that subsumes the subject. If, however, the predicate is subsumed under the subject, and if an experiencer is posited as the referential framework for the experience, it reveals that the experience of *dharma* is grasped dualistically and egologically. For the experience of *dharma* to be had and embodied, it must be had non-dualistically and non-egologically. That is to say, it can not be either subject or predicate in which the experience occurs, for it occurs in the stillness of meditation, i.e. in the state experientially and logically prior to the bifurcation between the subject and the object. It is ‘pure experience’ admitting of no bifurcation between the experiencer and the experienced. Or put differently, when the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ remain under the sway of either-or logic embedded in ordinary language, the prioritisation intrinsic to either-or logic occurs for the subject, because it believes that it operates under the subject–predicate structure. Consequently, a judgement made from this standpoint fails to achieve a balanced discernment, because it does not know the whole. It is made from within a partial or one-sided perspective. It is a human judgement that privileges the interests of ego-desire. For this reason, the *Sutra* has no choice except to say of ‘this *dharma*’ that ‘it is neither a *dharma* nor a no-*dharma*’<sup>79</sup> to indicate an (experiential) transcendence beyond and trans-descendence into, the dualistic, either-or egological framework. This transcendence is actualisable only when it is accompanied practically by the trans-descendence into the human psyche by means of meditational practice. Meditational practice opens up both the transcendence and the trans-descendence, for meditation is a way of probing into the ground of being that is extra-linguistically nothing.

The thesis advanced in this paper may now be recapitulated in summation, namely that one must effect a perspectival shift from the dualistic egological stance to the non-dualistic, non-egological stance in order to understand the ‘logic of not’ that is formulated as: ‘A is not A, therefore it is A’. The dualistic, egological stance is the everyday standpoint of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ who attach themselves to the objects of their own constitution that structurally frames this stance. It may be taken either naively, perceptually, or conceptually, by postulating the idea of A as being self-same, where there occurs an unconscious or conscious substantialisation of A. This postulation on the part of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ is derived from the ‘attachment’ that is driven by the unconscious instinct ‘to live’, and hence it is an expression of the instinctual ‘self-preservation’. Because one’s ego-investment directs the dualistic postulation of the idea of a self and the object it engages itself with, any object that is framed from this standpoint is an instance of egological constitution.

The meaning of negation that appears in the form of ‘A is not A’ brings out a change

of this perspective. It is an attempt to free the 'foolish, ordinary people' from this dualistic, egological constitution, i.e. to effect their perspective to the non-dualistic, non-egological stance. This is done first by way of negating the idea of A as self-same, which is a move to de-substantialise and de-ontologise the status of A granted by the everyday standpoint of the 'foolish, ordinary people'. This de-substantialisation and de-ontologisation is fully accomplished by transcending to a standpoint which language formulates as a neither-nor propositional form, because it is a logical formulation accessible to the everyday standpoint of the 'foolish, ordinary people'. The neither-nor propositional form, as a momentum of negation that is achieved through the practice of meditation, offers a third perspective which does not fall into the traps of either eternalism nor nihilism, or either being or non-being, both of which are entailed by either-or logic in virtue of the act of prioritising either affirmation or negation that this logic stipulates as its *modus operandi* of thinking as well as the structuring of experience. When expressed linguistically, this momentum of the negation takes on the 'neither-nor' propositional form, and designates the existential transformation into the non-dualistic non-egological stance that is achieved with the embodiment of the stance of non-attachment. This embodiment cannot obtain as long as the 'foolish, ordinary people' adhere to their dualistic, either-or egological stance, because in attempting to reach the stance of non-attachment, the logical act of negation inherent in this standpoint only produces an infinite regress as shown in the analysis of nihilism.

## VII. Therefore it is A

In order to understand the last component in the 'logic of not', i.e. 'therefore it is A', it is necessary to examine briefly meditative experience, for it gives us an experiential background that informs us of the *Sutra's* formulation. In the *Sutra*, there are only two explicit references to meditation,<sup>80</sup> but it is also implied by mention of the hierarchical rankings of achieved personhood. The first explicit reference is found in section 1-a where the Buddha is described as 'mindfully fixing his attention in front of him'.<sup>81</sup> The second reference occurs in section 3 in the depiction of being, in which we find a mention of 'neither image nor non-image'.<sup>82</sup>

It is the second reference that offers us a clue to understanding the experiential nature of the 'neither-nor' propositional form, for the state of 'neither image nor non-image' is a meditative stage recognised in the Pali Buddhist texts, in which the *experience* of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) initially obtains. Prior to this meditative state, Pali Buddhism recognises the hierarchical order of such meditative states as 'awareness of [empty] sky with no boundary' and 'awareness of no boundary', and 'no-thing existing'. Briefly, the meditative state of 'awareness of [empty] sky of no boundary' is a state in which attachment is broken through, for there is nothing that one can attach oneself to once the meditator experiences the '[empty] sky of no-boundary'. Here, however, an image of the empty sky still remains. That is, the noetic act is still operative, however subtle it may be. Next, the meditative 'awareness of no boundary' is a state in which 'names and forms' cease, and the mind becomes freed from its discriminatory function, because the name and form arise through the discriminatory function of the mind. Such a mind does not posit any object (noematic content), and because of this, its act is non-positional in nature, i.e. it does not take any attitude toward any object, it neither affirms nor negates it. The meditative state of 'no-thing existing' is a further development of the meditative state of 'awareness of no boundary', but significantly differs from the latter in that the mind becomes free from the self-projective image-experience.

Here, there is the realisation that there is nothing one can claim to possess or to own. In addition, one gains insight into how the discriminatory activity of the mind operates, because the noetic act of the mind diminishes – the act of the ego-consciousness.

The achievement of these meditative states is followed by the meditative state of ‘neither image nor no-image’. Such a state provides the experiential ground for the *Sutra* to advance its third perspective, i.e. ‘the middle perspective, where “the middle” means that the being of the meditator is “here” as well as “there” but at the same time, it is neither “here” nor “there”’.<sup>83</sup> In the preceding quote, we see two moments: the first is an affirmation of the specific spatial determinations ‘here’ and ‘there’, which sensory perception can determine. In the meditative state of ‘neither image nor no-image’, however, there occurs an interchangeability between ‘here’ and ‘there’. The second moment is thus a negation of the spatial determinations that are represented by ‘here’ and ‘there’. The negation of ordinary spatial determinations suggests that the mind in this state of no-mind is no longer bound by the spatial determination to which a particular thing is physically subject in the everyday standpoint. In no-mind, the discriminatory activity of the mind associated with the previous states of meditation is rendered inoperative and it suggests that the mind’s non-discriminatory functions are activated. No-mind is no-place. That no-mind is no-place means that it can be any place without being subject to spatial determinations that are imposed on objects of perception by virtue of one’s everyday epistemological stance. Hence, there is an interchangeability of ‘here’ and ‘there’. As such, it is an extraordinary experience when assessed from the everyday standpoint. Yet, their spatiality can be determinable as to their specific spatial location of ‘here’ and ‘there’, because their spatial determinations are not ‘fixed’ or *a priori*, for they are an empty determination. The no-mind can move from ‘here’ to ‘there’. This is suggested by the statement that ‘it is neither here nor there’, a perspective that allows an interchangeability between ‘here’ and ‘there’, because it transcends the stance from which ‘here’ and ‘there’ are viewed. In other words, the relationship between ‘here and there’ and ‘neither here nor there’ is an instance of determination *qua* indetermination and indetermination *qua* determination – a freedom from ordinary spatial determination.<sup>84</sup> What is significant to note in this regard is that ‘here’ and ‘there’ in the state of no-mind (or no-place) are not simply determined in reference to the physicality or materiality of objects that are either ‘here’ or ‘there’, for ‘here’ and ‘there’ are images that appear in the meditative state of ‘neither image nor non-image’. This is a rough construal of what it means for an object to be non-dualistically, non-egologically ‘constituted’ where I enclose the word ‘constituted’ in quotation marks to avoid the implication that there is some-thing that is doing the constitution, for here there is no such a ‘thing’ *per se*.

‘Neither here nor there’, which is formulated by rejecting either-or logic, is a third perspective which the *Sutra* attempts to express in stating ‘A is not A’. The third perspective means that A is *identifiable* with not-A. For example, A is B where A and B belong to the same domain and where B is a member of the set comprising not-A. A and B are ‘identifiable’ in the course of impermanent thing-events, insofar as the intelligibility of the destinies of A and B is concerned, where A and B, in this case, do not include anything that is conceptually or intellectually ‘frozen’ in conceptual space. The statement ‘A is not A’ is thus an attunement of identifying A as B in the matrix of impermanent causality. It refers to an experience of emptiness. It is also an experiential basis for the non-discriminatory knowledge (*prajñā*), which, according to the *Sutra*, is an initial phase in the perfection of wisdom. In other words, the *Sutra* attempts to express the experience of emptiness by using the ‘neither-nor’ propositional form.

What is significant for our present concern with the perspectival shift is that in the meditative experience of emptiness, there is no essence or substance which the substantialistic understanding of A can ascribe to A. If this were not the case, it would be experientially impossible to be 'here' as well as 'there' but at the same time, it is neither 'here' nor 'there'. That is, if there is an essence of A, there obtains no logical possibility of experiencing 'the middle', for an essence is that which a being is in and of itself, i.e. self-contained and self-sufficient with a sense of closure. In light of the experience of and the idea of emptiness, we must conclude that the idea of essence, or substance is a linguistic illusion or fiction.

'A' in this formulation embraces the momentum of negation which includes in its embodiment the 'neither-nor' perspective as a third alternative which the dualistic, either-or egological stance cannot offer. Once this is embodied, A as that which is self-same is stripped of its substantialistic import. This means that A and not-A are the same insofar as they are both non-substantial, in which case they are not 'two', but one. They are both empty of substance. In virtue of this fact, it is possible for the meditator whose no-mind is no-place to identify himself/herself in a place where 'this' is 'that' and 'that' is 'this'. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the place in which 'this' and 'that' occur and the actual occurrences of 'this' and 'that' in that place. In this respect, they are not 'one', but 'two'. Taken together, it is an instance of discrimination by nondiscrimination, i.e. the fact that 'this' and 'that' are distinctly in the place. And yet, it is also non-discrimination by discrimination, i.e. the fact that the place reveals both 'this' and 'that' because of their emptiness. The preceding analysis gives us a glimpse into an instance of non-discriminatory knowledge (*nirvikalpa jñāna*) that is the perfection of wisdom (*prajñā*).

To recapitulate the foregoing, there are two senses of negation concealed when the *Sutra* declares 'A is not A': (1) the negation of the substantialistic understanding of A in the sense that A is the same as itself, and (2) a third perspective which does not commit itself to the pitfalls of either-or logic. It is this second sense of the negation which enables us to see a transformation from the dualistic, either-or egological stance to a non-dualistic, non-egological stance.

The third occurrence of A in the formulation: 'A is not A, therefore it is A' signifies the idea of A's non-substantiality. A had been first posited conceptually or linguistically in the understanding of the 'foolish, ordinary people.' The non-substantiality of A, however, arises in virtue of the negative momentum involving the two senses of negation mentioned above. In this regard, the negative momentum may be considered the existential act of de-substantialisation and de-ontologisation, as I have indicated. A that is reaffirmed after it goes through this existential act is an A that is experienced from the point-of-view of non-substantiality, and experientially it is A seen through the experience of emptiness that is achieved through the process of meditation.

### VIII. Concluding Remarks

The preceding inquiry has enabled us to conclude that the *Sutra* provisionally relies on either-or logic to advance its philosophical position, and because of this reliance, its philosophical position is stated in a contradictory or paradoxical form. Its provisional use is based on the *Sutra*'s concern for the 'foolish, ordinary people' because their either-or logic is a method of discourse most readily understandable and familiar to them in their use of ordinary language. In so doing, however, the *Sutra* was not successful, because it usually mystifies the 'foolish, ordinary people', or if not that, it

simply leads them to dismiss the linguistic formulation of its philosophical position as nonsensical. I have attempted to demonstrate that it is not nonsensical by articulating the epistemological standpoint of the ‘foolish, ordinary people’, while disclosing the logical limitations that either-or logic intrinsically contains in its *modus operandi*. In point of fact, the *Sutra*’s philosophical position cannot be accommodated by either-or logic, which simply offers an either-or alternative, i.e. either affirmation or negation when translated into a linguistic formulation. The *Sutra*’s own position is a third perspective that cannot be accommodated by relying on either-or logic, and for this reason it chooses to express its philosophical position by relying on a ‘neither-nor’ propositional form. In adapting this way of expressing its philosophical position, it rejects either-or logic as a proper way of discerning thing–events of the world and their linguistic articulation.

In spite of the *Sutra*’s recommendation for the non-dualistic, non-egological perspective, this perspective has not survived the demands of contemporary times. In fact, it has been almost obliterated<sup>85</sup> in the face of the superiority of Western science and technology, not to mention her economic power which the US, for example, is exercising over the rest of the world. Because of her influence over the world *vis-à-vis* these activities, the world is on the way to globalisation, ignoring the traditional national boundaries and cultures which each ethnic group has long fostered and cherished. The process of globalisation, however, has also taught us the idea of interdependency which Buddhism has long cherished as one of the cardinal teachings between thing–events that we observe in natural phenomena, industrial pollution and the economic activity between the nations, not to mention interpersonal relationships. Today, we are also facing an unprecedented task of how to deal with various environmental issues such as global warming, the thinning of the ozone layer and melting of ice in the antarctic regions. I wonder if human beings can collectively deal with these issues by relying on the dualistic, either-or egological standpoint which has promoted the development of science and technology.

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## NOTES

- [1] The Sanskrit *na prthak* embraces such meaning as ‘not’, ‘non’ and ‘difference’, where we can take ‘not’ to mean a negation, ‘non’ to designate contrary and ‘difference’ to connote an instance of contrary. The Japanese rendition of this phrase is *sokuhi*, which linguistically means ‘is not’, but syntactically there is no presence of ‘is’. This suggests that ‘*na prthak*’, when understood as ‘*soku*’, cannot be treated either as a copula or as a linking verb. Rather ‘*soku*’, is used as a connective between two heterogenous elements that are ‘immediately’ or ‘directly’ conjoined as is ‘one *soku* many’ and ‘many *soku* one’.
- [2] In fact, a renowned specialist, Edward Conze reports his friends complaining that his commentary ‘is unhelpful, inconclusive, tedious, uninspiring and positively confusing’. He attributes the failure to the text’s ‘invincible obtuseness’. See CONZE, EDWARD (1958) *Buddhist Wisdom Books* (New York, Harper Torch, p. 51).
- [3] The term ‘ego-logical’ is a neologism proposed by Nathan Levith, a student of political science at Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania. It also appears in HUSSERL, EDMUND (1997) *Cartesian Meditations* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff).
- [4] The other instances of this formulation include the following where the section number indicates Conze’s division: ‘accumulation of merits’ (section 8); ‘arhat’ (section 9-c); ‘construction of the buddha-field’ (sections 10-b and 17-g); ‘the thirty-two marks of the *tathāgata*’ (section 13-d); ‘leading innumerable beings to nirvana without the substrate [*anupadīṣa-nirvāṇa*]’ (section

17-a); ‘the *dharma* demonstrated by the *tathāgata*’ (17-d); ‘the flow of mind [*cittadhārā*] is not the flow of mind, and therefore it is the flow of mind’. (section 18-b); ‘the perfection of the proportionate body [*upeta-kāyo*]’ (section 20-a); ‘the endowment of the bodily characteristics [*lakṣaṇa*]’ (section 20-b); ‘the *tathāgata*’s achieving the supreme, right, equal enlightenment [*anutarā samyak-saṃbodhi*]’ (section 22); ‘the sentient beings’ (section 21-b); ‘good *dharma*s’ (section 23); ‘the collection of particles of dust’ (section 30-a); ‘The attachment to a whole [*piṇḍa-grāha*] is not the attachment to a whole, and therefore, it is the attachment to a whole’ (section 30-b); ‘A thought of thing [*dharma-saṃjñā*] is not a thought of thing, and therefore it is the thought of thing’ (section 31-b).

- [5] To formulate the ‘logic of not’ in this way is an issue concerning the universality of this logic. Unless it is formalised in the propositional form: ‘A is not A, therefore it is A’, however, the ‘logic of not’ will be confined primarily to the interest of Buddhist scholars, and hence it will not appeal to people beyond its own home ground. Certainly, this is not the intent of the *Sutra* and we can see it briefly by thinking philosophically through the examples mentioned above as they are framed in the formalised statement. Take Example 1, which reads: ‘The world is not the world, and therefore it is the world.’ (section 13-c). If we take the category ‘world’ to mean the most inclusive category in a domain of discourse in which everything excluding none occurs, i.e. it can subsume every other category that is of and in the world, insofar as it is understood from the everyday standpoint, it is evident that this logic is not to be confined locally, since the *Sutra* applies the ‘logic of not’ to this category. Especially, when we regard the human being as that which is, to use Heidegger’s terminology, ‘thrown’ into the world, a ‘being-in-the-world’, who suffers from the fundamental passivity for this reason, anything the human being engages in occurs in this world and it is of this world. HEIDEGGER, MARTIN (1962) *Being and Time* (JOHN MACQUARRIE ET AL.) (New York: Harper & Row). Now, take Example 2, which reads: ‘All *dharma*s are not all *dharma*s and therefore they are all *dharma*s’. In Buddhism, ‘*dharma*’ is the most comprehensive category under which both the conditioned and the unconditioned thing–state are subsumed, i.e. anything is either the conditioned or unconditioned *dharma*, and nothing escapes from this category, where the force of this statement is to break down the distinction between the conditioned and the unconditioned that was upheld by the previous schools of Buddhism (see WALPOLA, RAHULA, (1974) *What the Buddha Taught* (New York, Grove Press). Given this understanding of *dharma* and what we have said of the world, it is self-evident that the ‘logic of not’ is to be expanded universally but not regionally, however A may be construed to mean, insofar as A is of the *dharma* that is in and of the world. The *Sutra*’s application of the ‘logic of not’ is in fact relentless, because it is applied to the very goal for which the *Sutra* is written, i.e. achieving the perfection of wisdom, as it is seen in Example 3. It reads: ‘The perfection of wisdom [*prajñāpāramitā*] is not the perfection of wisdom, and therefore it is the perfection of wisdom’. Moreover, any truth claim one wants to make concerning *dharma*s or the world is also stated in the same propositional form as is seen in Example 4: ‘A thought of truth [*bhūtasamjñā*] is not a thought of truth, and therefore it is the thought of truth’ (section 14-a). In fact, no statement, including self-referential statements, can be excluded from the formulation: ‘A is not A, therefore it is not A’. From the preceding analysis, it is clear that the *Sutra* intends to endow the ‘logic of not’ with a universal applicability to any statement appearing in any given discourse.
- [6] NAKAMURA HAJIME & KINO KAZUYOSHI (Trans. and Ed.) (1996) *Hamyashinkyō, Kong ōhamnyakyō (The Heart Sutra and the Diamond Sutra)* (Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, p. 195. Since doubt and attachment are depth–psychological issues for the ego-consciousness, I shall deal with them later.
- [7] KANT, IMMANUEL (1965) *The Critique of Pure Reason* (New York, St Martins Press), p. 633.
- [8] NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 17. This interpretation follows the theory that *pārami* (to reach the other shore) is combined with the abstract noun that indicates a state (*tā*), wherein the whole phrase *pāramitā* means ‘reaching the other shore’. And hence it means ‘perfection’. The other dominant interpretation follows the analysis that *pāramitā* is the feminine form of the passive past participle *pāram* (the other shore) that is conjoined with the verb *iā* (to reach).
- KAJIYAMA, YŪICHI (1976) *Hamyā shinkyō (The Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra)* (Tokyo, Chūōkōron), pp. 100–101, also discusses the term *pāramitā* in two senses and opts for the meaning of ‘perfection’. According to Kajiyama, *pāramitā* can linguistically be analysed in two ways: (1) *pāramitā* means ‘reaching an ultimate or perfection’, and it is an abstract compound noun consisting of *pārami*, which is derived from the adjective *parama* that means ‘paramount’ and the postposition *tā* and (2) *pāramitā* means ‘the other shore’ and is a compound consisting of (a) *pārami*, which is the

objective case of the noun *pāram*, meaning ‘the other shore’ (b) it is conjoined by the nominalisation of the verb *i* (to go), wherein the whole phrase comes to mean ‘that which goes to the other shore’, when the postposition *tā* is added to it. He says that linguistically the former is more appropriate than the latter, but he notes that the latter is also widely accepted in view of the dogmatic, philosophical interpretation. Having stated this, however, he seems to opt for the ‘perfection’, because the ‘other shore’ means nirvana or satori, which is ‘to go to reach the paramount ultimate’.

Kanaoka gives the same interpretation on this point, see KANAOKA, SHŪYŪ (1973) *Hannya shinkyō* (*The Heart Sūtra*) (Tokyo, Kōdansha), pp. 38–39.

- [9] NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 17. This ‘non-discriminatory knowledge’ is contrasted with ‘discriminatory knowledge’ (*vijñāna*). I shall discuss the difference between ‘non-discriminatory knowledge’ and ‘discriminatory knowledge’ in the section dealing with ‘dualistic, ego-logical stance’ and ‘non-dualistic non-egological stance’ respectively.
- [10] Compare, for example, Aristotle’s hierarchy of knowledge in which wisdom as a knowledge of the universal is placed as the highest form of theoretical knowledge. See ch. 1 of HOPE, RICHARD (1975) *Aristotle Metaphysics* (Ann Arbor, MI, The University of Michigan Press) or MCKEON, RICHARD (Ed.) (1941) *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York, Random House).
- [11] In the terminologies of the *Sutra*, the achieved personhood includes, from the higher to the lower in ranking, an awakened one (a buddha), a thus-come: *Tathāgata*), the three ranks of arhat, which are the never-returner (*anāgāmin*), the once-returner (*sakṛdāgāmin*), and the stream-entrant (*srota-āpanna*). These categories will be important when considering the hierarchy of meditative experience.
- [12] YUASA, YASUO (1987) *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory* (Trans. SHIGENORI NAGATOMO & T.P. KASULIS) (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press).
- [13] Subhuti is depicted in the *Sutra* as foremost in having achieved a meditative state wherein is experienced an absence of ‘battle’ (*araṇā-vihāriṇām-agryah*). The ‘battle’ refers to conflict and delusion when it is psychologically interpreted.
- [14] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 22.
- [15] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 24.
- [16] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 24. In Nakamura’s translation, this passage is rendered as: How should a son or daughter of a good family, who turns to the path of a seeker, live, and act, and maintain their mind?’ See NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 45. In Kumārajīva’s translation: ‘set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle’ is rendered as ‘set their mind on the unexcelled, supreme enlightenment’ (see *ibid*, p. 44).
- [17] They include the meanings such as ‘a seeker’, ‘a being on the way to enlightenment’, and ‘a being who postpones one’s own enlightenment until he/she carries the innumerable beings to final nirvana’. In addition to the perfection of wisdom, the *bodhisattva* is required to bring to perfection such things as giving, patience, making efforts, keeping precepts, and meditation. For the purpose of this paper, I shall focus just on the idea of perfecting wisdom.
- [18] KAJIYAMA, op. cit., note 8, p. 121, and NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6,
- [19] It should be noted that primacy applies only to those who are on the way to perfecting wisdom, but not to those who have already embodied it.
- [20] KAJIYAMA, op. cit., note 8, pp. 120–121.
- [21] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 22.
- [22] NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 154. CONZE, op. cit., note 2, translates this terms as ‘the foolish common people’. This would correspond in meaning to Nietzsche’s ‘herd’ or ‘little man’.
- [23] NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 115. Also see CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 62. What is quoted here regarding the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ is not the final characterisation which the *Sutra* gives to them. The ‘logic of not’ is also applied to them as found in section 25 which reads: ‘The foolish, ordinary people [*bāla-prthagānāḥ*] are not the foolish, ordinary people, and therefore they are the foolish ordinary people’.
- [24] NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 154.
- [25] I understand the phrase ‘conceptual scheme’ to mean a holistic operation of epistemological, ontological, linguistic and experimental categories that frame the way a person understands the world. In other words, the understanding of the world is analytically accessible in part through a specific conceptual scheme.
- [26] HUSSER, EDMUND (1967) *Ideas: A General Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York, Collier, 1967), p. 80.

- [27] In this context, the mind specifically means the act aspect of its operation, rather than a general concept of the mind. See HATTORI, MASAOKI (1973) *Bukkyō no shisō: Ninshiki to chōetsu (Buddhist Thought: Cognition and Transcendence)* (Tokyo; Kadokawa shoten), p. 98. Historically, the Mind-only school arose after the tradition of the *prajñāpāramitā* literature. Strictly speaking, then, the interpretation advanced here does not necessarily reflect the positions of the *Diamond Sutra*. This may invite a criticism that I am superimposing an interpretation that is not intrinsic or germane to the *Sutra*. This is a valid criticism when we adhere and confine ourselves to the textual evidence, for we can find no such interpretation in the *Sutra*. But when we consider the historical development of *prajñāpāramitā* literature, it is known that it arose as a counter-movement to the Abhidhamic tradition, notably, Sautrantika and Sārvastivādin, both of which maintained the categorisation of experience. Hence distinction-making was considered the primary business of scholastic activity. Sārvastivādin, in particular, adapted the stance of substantialising the 75 concepts (*dharma*s), and thereby claimed their eternality. Philosophically, in opposition to a nominalist position, this is a realist position, which is analogous to the Western counterpart in which an idea is maintained to be real. Since the *Sutra* in question rejects the idea of a self, whose idea arises by accepting the realist position, I am inferring from this rejection that the *Sutra* will endorse the interpretation of the noetic act in terms of the relationship between grasping-aspect (*grāhakākāra*) and the grasped-aspect (*grāhyākāra*).
- [28] If we think that there is experience first *à la* Nishida (see NISHIDA KITARŌ. (1987) *Inquiry Into Good* (Trans. ABE MASAO & CHRISTOPHER IVES) (New Heaven, CT, Yale University Press), ch. 1, we will recognise that the idea of a self is a concept that is intellectually abstracted from the experience prior to its separation into the subject and the object relationship.
- [29] JUNG, C.J. (1972) *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 128 and 271.
- [30] When the unconscious is seen from the view-point of consciousness, it intersects in its function with the body. Physiologically speaking, for example, the region where emotion is generated is in the hypothalamus below the activity of neencephalon. Furthermore, the correlativity between the unconscious and the body may be seen in galvanic skin response. Emotion is a modification of the body as Spinoza correctly points out in his *Ethics* DE SPINOZA, BENEDICT (1955) *The Chief Works of Benedict De Spinoza*, vol. 2 (trans. R.H.M. ELWES) (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.).
- [31] See ch. 1 in NAGATOMO, SHIGENORI (1992). *Attunement through the Body* (Albany, NY, The State University of New York Press).
- [32] Both Kumarajīva and Nakamura translate ‘seizing on’ as ‘attachment’. See NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, pp. 54–55.
- [33] NAGATOMO, op. cit., note 31, particularly ch. 1 that deals with Ichikawa’s concept of the body.
- [34] As a parenthetical remark, we must note here that there is no word ‘foolish’ appearing in Heidegger’s characterisation of ‘*Das Man*’ in his *Being and Time*, but in light of his existential project of achieving authenticity, it would seem that the idea of ‘foolishness’ is implied in the concept of ‘*Das Man*’. HEIDEGGER, MARTIN (1962) *Being and Time* (JOHN MACQUARRIE ET AL.) (New York: Harper & Row).
- [35] The other references in the *Sutra* to the bodhisattva are found in section 6 [CT33,34, NT53,55]; and section 14-e [NT81, CT53]. The negation of the notions of a self [*ātman*], a being [*sattva*], a living soul [*jīva*], or a person [*pudgala*], however, is also extended to the Buddha and the *Tathāgata*. In the case of the Buddha, see section 4 [NT47, CT25] and in the case of the *Tathāgata*. See section 25 [NT115, CT62].
- [36] Conze, op. cit., note 2, p. 25. In Conze’s translation the word *saṃjñā* is translated as ‘notion’, but it is changed to ‘thought’ in the quotation. Nakamura has a slightly different rendition of this passage, which reads: ‘If anyone entertains a thought of a self [*ātman-saṃjñā*], a living being [*sattva-saṃjñā*], an individual soul [*jīva-saṃjñā*], a person [*pudgala-saṃjñā*], he/she is not a *bodhisattva*’. See NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6; p. 47.
- [37] The self (*ātman*), the living being (*sattva*), the individual soul (*jīva*), the person (*pudgala*), were the ideas that were debated vehemently both inside and outside the Buddhist tradition as to their reality or unreality, at the time when the *Sutra* was composed.
- [38] In practical terms, the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ must move from the either-or logical or intellectual project to *doing away with* and *forgetting* both affirmation and negation. The intent of employing this neither-nor proposition in the *Sutra* is to enable the ‘foolish, ordinary people’ to realise that they are each empty (*śūnya*), although the *Sutra* does not contain this word, emptiness (*śūnyatā*) which only emerges with the great Buddhist philosopher, Nāgārjuna.

- [39] NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 83. Also see CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 53. The same statement is made also in section 4.
- [40] Other passages which suggest the negation of the material object, the object of sensory perception, and the object of mind are found in section 4 [CT26, NT49] and section 10-c [CT47–48, NT67]. A reference is also found in respect to the streamwinner (*śrota-āpanna*) in section 9-a [CT43, NT59].
- [41] HUSSERL, op. cit., note 26, Ch 2.
- [42] HUSSERL, EDMUND (1973) *Experience and Judgment* (Evanston, IL Northwestern University Press), p. 151.
- [43] The ‘thought’ appears in Conze’s translation as ‘perception’. I have taken the liberty of changing it, for ‘perception’ is associated with the activity of sensory organs.
- [44] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 34.
- [45] Insofar as nihilism affirms *no-dharma*, it remains a relative nihilism, for there is something it still affirms, i.e. the act-aspect of the cognitive subject. In order for it to become a full-fledged nihilism, it must negate the affirming act itself such that it becomes *no-dharma* itself. Or when the act of seizing becomes the seized through the negation of the subject, it can become a full-fledged nihilism. Otherwise, nihilism remain cynicism.
- [46] I follow here Kumarajīva’s translation contained in NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 83, for it brings out a philosophical issue more clearly than the translations by Nakamura and Conze. Also see CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 53. The same statement is made also in section 4.
- [47] This idea of ‘departing from all thoughts’ is ascribed to the *tathāgata*. See, for example, section 14-c. NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 79. Also see CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 53.
- [48] See section 17-h. NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 101. Also see CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 59.
- [49] See section 17-f. NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 99. Also see CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 59.
- [50] Technically, this nondiscriminatory activity of the mind is called *nirvikalpa jñāna*.
- [51] The existential project of a *bodhisattva* is to achieve the elimination of the ego-consciousness and to avoid the opposition relationship between ‘I’ and others. It is practical ideal. Emphasising this point, Nakamura notes: ‘[I]n order to realize this ideal, one must eliminate and render into nothing the oppositional feeling between the self and the selves of others ... However, the elimination of the oppositional and rendering into nothing calls forth a new opposition if one were to station oneself in it. The elimination of opposition by rendering it into nothing (i.e. *śūnyatā*) must be negated.’ See NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, pp. 202–203. The issue Nakamura points out regarding the oppositional relationship between ‘I *qua* the *bodhisattva*’ and the ‘innumerable sentient beings’ is concerned with the elimination of the idea of a self through the existential negation. I will deal with this issue of negation later. This dualism arises by positing the idea of a self, and unless the self is rendered as nothing, the oppositional relationship between ‘I *qua* the *bodhisattva*’ and the ‘innumerable sentient beings’ recurs.
- [52] Although it is possible to regard the propositional statement: ‘A is not A, therefore, A’, as an instance of Hegel’s dialectic, regarding A as a thesis, not A as an antithesis, and A as a synthesis, I will not approach this proposition in this paper as an instance of Hegel’s dialectic, because Hegel’s dialectic moves on a horizontal temporal process assuming an oppositional stance as its formal structure, while the proposition in the *Sutra* does not assume this temporal unfolding, nor does it accept the oppositional stance as its *modus operandi* when it is seen from the standpoint of *ordo essendi*, i.e. from the perspective of the Buddha. Having made this remark, I need to yield to the possibility of regarding the propositional statement as an instance of Hegel’s dialectic if it is taken to be an instance of *ordo cognescendi*, i.e. the process of the *bodhisattva* perfecting wisdom. If we assume this stance, as for example Conze does in his commentary on the *Heart Sutra*, we are not regarding the propositional statement as the final formulation of the *Sutra*’s thematic concern.
- [53] Although it would be interesting to examine the subjectless sentence of Chinese and Japanese language, I shall for now restrict my analysis to the subject–predicate structure of language. Incidentally, the Chinese or Japanese subjectless sentence is a full sentence, despite the fact that the grammatical subject does not appear. Megumi, SAKABE for example, would call such a construction the description of a proto-personal dimension of experience which is temporally and logically prior to the split between the subject and object. That is, it describes a state in which a subject is so immersed in the world that he/she is forgets both the world and the self, whether the worlds is segmented as a concrete sensible object or as action. See SAKABE, Megumi (1989) *Kakamino naka no nihongo (The Japanese Language in the Mirror)*. This construction is also

- discussion in YUASA, YAUSO (1995) *Kyōjisse: no uchūkan* (The Synchronistic cosmology) (Kyoto: Jinmon Shoin).
- [54] The relationship between language and experience is a complicated issue. I simply want to note that what counts as the content of experience may or may not depend upon the language one speaks. It would seem under normal circumstances, however, that unless there is a lexicon to identify an aspect of experience, the content of the experience cannot be brought to one's ego-consciousness, whether it be an external perception or an internal phenomenon of consciousness that involves bodily sensation in the state of meditation. On the other hand, if we think that language is formative or determinative to the kind of experience we can have, it will rule out any possibility of discovering a deep sensibility of the body as well as a possibility of the creative aspect of language use.
- [55] Logical formulations that rely on either-or logic and its three laws (i.e. the law of the excluded middle, the law of contradiction and the law of identity), as the standard of making judgments are homocentric at best. Therefore, truth and objectivity claimed in respect to these laws are homocentric.
- [56] WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG (1958) *Philosophical Investigations* (London, Basil Blackwell & Mott).
- [57] The *Sutra*, or for that matter Buddhism in general, maintains the momentariness of all things. Thus, the use of language, the subjects of sentences, and the status of a cognitive subject are all impermanent. From this point of view, A can not endure as A through time, or it can not maintain its self-sameness through temporal change.
- [58] If we expand this idea, human beings can believe that the human subject who cognises nature can stand outside of nature, elevating him/herself to a position of *theōria* that enables the cognitive subject to observe nature from outside. The *Sutra* maintains that the human cognitive subject is a being-in-nature, not a being-outside-of-nature, to use Yuasa's terminology (personal communication) When the idea of being-outside-of-nature is linked to the control of nature, human beings begin to think that they can assume the standpoint of an all knowing God.
- [59] Historically, the *Sutra* advanced its position as a counter-thesis to the Abhidharmic tradition, and particularly to the *Sarvāstivādin* tradition which substantialised concepts such as the past, the present, and the future.
- [60] When we take into account the act of thematising A and its consequent substantialisation, the standpoint which assumes A to be self-same is biologically rooted in the broader principle of self-preservation. This animal instinct asserts itself for its own survival at the expense of everything else. The so-called ego-consciousness is its manifest expression. As such, it is driven by animal instinct, and in this respect there is nothing human about it. If there is, it is an awareness upon which rationality is superimposed. Rationality is forgetful of the fact that the human being in the everyday standpoint is supported by the principle of self-preservation. The principle of self-preservation, however, is coupled with the principle of self-contraction which tends toward disorder. Buddhism understood these two principles in terms of generation-extinction, under which the human birth-death is subsumed. It recognized that there is something greater in the activity of generation-extinction that is discernible in nature. The exercise of human rationality (passive thinking, in Aristotle's terminology) attempts to override this subsumption, by asserting its 'superiority' over nature.
- [61] KAJIYAMA, op. cit., note 8, pp. 111–112.
- [62] KAJIYAMA, *ibid.*, pp. 111–112.
- [63] KAWAI, HAYAO (1992) *The Buddhist Priest: Mōe* (trans. MARK UNNO) (Verice, CA, Lapis Press), p. 136ff.
- [64] KAJIYAMA, YŪICHI (1971) *Bukkyō no shisō. Kūno ronri* (*The Buddhist Thought: The Logic of Emptiness*) (Tokyo, Kadokawa shoten), p. 31.
- [65] Historically speaking, Nāgājūna later conceptualised the meditative state of neither affirmation nor negation as emptiness (*śūnyatā*).
- [66] NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 85.
- [67] I insert this qualification here because physiological changes also occur. To mention just a few; the reduction of breathing, and hence the decreased consumption of oxygen, the alternation of the competitive balance between the activities of sympathetic nerves and parasympathetic nerves through the establishment of a breathing pattern, the enhancement of immune system, and the secretion of dopamine and β-endorphin.
- [68] NISHIDA, KITARŌ (1965) *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* (*Self-Aware Determination of Nothingness*), Complete Works, Vol. 6. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- [69] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 55.

- [70] MOTOYAMA, HIROSHI (1992) *Bashoteki ko toshite no kakusha (The Awakened One as the Basho Individual)* (Tokyo, Shūkyō shinri shuppan).
- [71] NISHIDA, op. cit., note 68.
- [72] I follow here Kumarajiva's translation contained in NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 83, for it brings out the philosophical issue more clearly than the translations by Nakamura and Conze. Also see CONZE, op. cit., note 2. also in section 4.
- [73] For an application of this idea to Japanese swordsmanship from the standpoint of Zen Master Takuan, see NAGATOMO, SHIGENORI & LEISMAN, GERALD (1966). An East-Asian perspective of mind-body, *Journal of Philosophy and Medicine*, 21, pp. 439–466.
- [74] For a further characterisation of 'detentionality', see NAGATOMO, op. cit., note 3
- [75] See section 26-a. CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 63.
- [76] Section 7. CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 36. NAKAMURA & KINO, op. cit., note 6, p. 57.
- [77] Conze interprets 'this dharma' as 'the ultimate reality'. It may be understood, grasped as 'the ultimate reality', only when one stands on this side of language within the bounds of intra-linguistic structure, which one needs to keep in mind when understanding the term 'ultimate reality'. See CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 37.
- [78] I am using ordinary language primarily to refer to Indo-European languages which contain the subject-predicate syntactic structure. In such languages as Chinese and Japanese, however, where the subject-predicate structure is not the norm of making judgments, what follows does not apply. In both of them, there are such syntactic constructions as subjectless sentences. These examples call for a different analysis than I have given here.
- [79] Since the *Sutra* does not employ either-or logic, the neither-nor proposition as in 'it is neither *dharma* nor no-*dharma*' is not reducible to either *dharma* or no-*dharma*, as symbolic logic may attempt to apply its truth-functional rules. In the terminology of Nāgārjuna, the neither-nor proposition is translated into the idea of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), but since the *Sutra* predates Nāgārjuna, it does not know how to express the idea of emptiness. There is no occurrence of this term in the *Sutra*.
- [80] Aside from these explicit references, the *Sutra* entertains such ideas as 'the buddha-field' and 'the huge buddha-body', which suggests a reflection on the meditative experience somewhat analogous to Yoga's *Kāraṇa śarīra*.
- [81] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 21. In his commentary, Conze interpreted this passage to mean that after the Buddha fixed his mind, he entered into a 'trance' state (ibid., p. 22). It would seem that Conze here is a little careless in characterising the meditative state (the king of *samādhi*) as a 'trance' state, because in the trance state, the meditator does not remember anything of what transpires during the meditation. For this reason, it is definitely not a trance state, although it might occur in the course of meditative training as a sign of progress. However, the trance state of meditation is inferior to a meditative state in which there is a total transparency in meditative awareness. Without the experience of this transparency, there is no possibility of developing a basis for nondiscriminatory knowledge.
- [82] CONZE, op. cit., note 2, p. 25. Conze has 'perception' in place of 'image'. I choose the word 'image' here because the meditation is in part an image-experience.
- [83] MOTOYAMA, HIROSHI (n.d.) *The Buddha's Satori*, (Trans. SHIGENORI NAGATOMO), p. 23, Unpublished monograph.
- [84] Although one might think that the neither-nor formulation applies only to spatial experience, it is not restricted to this. For example, when we look at Dōgen's writing such as the *Bendōwa* and *Uji* fascicles, we find multi-directionality in the flow of time. For example, Dōgen writes in *Uji* (Being-Time) fascicle, 'it [i.e. time] ranges from today to tomorrow, ranges from today to yesterday, ranges from yesterday to today, ranges from today to today, ranges from tomorrow to tomorrow'. Here we can see the multi-directionality of time experience in the state of mediation. As Dōgen theorises his experiential reflection of how one experiences time, that time cannot be experienced apart from a being, it suggests that the multi-directionality of time is also inseparable with the experience of a being in the movements mentioned in this quoted passage. (In this translation, I have used the word 'ranges' where in the original the word 'passes' is used.) See WADELL, N.A. (1979) *Being-Time, Eastern Buddhism*, XII (1), pp. 120–121.
- [85] Historically, the *Diamond Sutra* exercised an enormous influence in the development of Zen Buddhism in China and Japan. In contemporary times, such figures as Kitarō, Nishida, D.T. Suzuki and Keiji Nishitani have showed their interest in the logic of not.