Personal and Cosmic Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union in Jesus Christ: Dialogue Between Christology and Buddha Body Theory in Shin Buddhism

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PERSONAL AND COSMIC DIMENSIONS OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION IN JESUS CHRIST: DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTOLOGY AND BUDDHA BODY THEORY IN SHIN BUDDHISM

Yuichi Tsunoda, S. J.

presented to
The Faculty of the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology Berkeley, California December 7, 2016

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Abstract

PERSONAL AND COSMIC DIMENSIONS OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION IN JESUS CHRIST: DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTOLOGY AND BUDDHA BODY THEORY IN SHIN BUDDHISM

Yuichi Tsunoda, S.J.

This work conducts a comparative study of the hypostatic union of Christ and the theory of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism, focusing on the personal and cosmic dimensions of salvation in the two traditions. The goal of this approach is ultimately to gain new insights into Christ’s hypostatic union and thereby elucidate the salvific dimensions of the union for the entire cosmos.

Founded by Shinran (1173-1263) in Japan, Shin Buddhism is a branch of the Pure Land School of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Christianity and Shin Buddhism share certain core elements in terms of their faith in a personal divinity (God or Buddha), their soteriologies, and their theologies of grace. This study is located within the broader context of the dialogue between Shin Buddhism and Christianity in Japan. The dissertation is the first comparative research on the points of contact between the hypostatic union of Christ and the fulfilled Buddha body. Thus, it breaks new ground on the horizon of comparative research on these core elements of both religious traditions.

Regarding methodology, the study employs the “fulfillment” model of interreligious dialogue proposed by Paul Knitter. This model recognizes the soteriological value of other religions and their capacity to enhance the Christian revelation itself through dialogue, while understanding Christ as the summit of God’s saving revelation in history. Regarding structure and content, the study first elucidates the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ. Secondly, it considers the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union through an investigation of the cosmic
dimensions of salvation. Thirdly, it explores the structure of the cosmic Buddha body of Amitābha Buddha and the Pure Land, which is realized by Dharmākara bodhisattva's fulfillment of his vow to save all sentient beings. Fourthly, it examines the structure of Dharmākara's individual subjectivity. Finally, the study elucidates new perspectives on the hypostatic union of Christ that emerge in the dialogue with the Buddha body theory in Shin Buddhism.

In my conclusions, I will point to some concrete implications of this cosmic vision of interdependence for social and environmental praxis and pedagogy, as well as solidarity with those who suffer. These insights will bring a new appreciation of the hypostatic union not only for the individual, but for the entire cosmos, affirming the interdependence of all things within the cosmic web of life.

Thomas Cattoi, Ph.D., Director
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1. Introduction

This dissertation conducts a comparative study of the hypostatic union of Christ and the theory of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism, focusing on the personal and cosmic dimensions of salvation in the two traditions. The goal of this approach is ultimately to gain new insights into the relationship between the personal and cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union. In turn, these insights will elucidate the salvific implications of the hypostatic union for the entire cosmos.

My interest in this topic was first awakened when I studied Christology during my early Jesuit formation in Japan. I found the hypostatic union to be the core of the mystery of Christ and therefore inextricably linked not only to soteriology, but to theological anthropology and cosmology as well. In this I came to see that the union is not limited to the individual historical Jesus, but is inclusive of his cosmic body, which is realized through his death and resurrection, and the indwelling of the Spirit in the world.

Prior to this time, I had been deeply immersed in Shin Buddhism, which would provide me with an invaluable foundation from which to study Christology. I came to realize that the personal and cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union are analogous in several ways to the structure of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism, and that a comparative and dialogical approach could potentially shed new light on the salvific implications of the hypostatic union.

Shin Buddhism was founded by the monk Shinran (親鸞 1173-1263). In this tradition of Buddhism, which is a branch of the Pure Land School, there are several dimensions of the Buddha body which are similar to the relation between the Father and the Incarnated Son in Christianity. In the Buddha body theory of Shin Buddhism, the Dharmākara bodhisattva and his subsequent enlightenment as Amitābha are regarded as the self-manifestation of the formless, ineffable Buddha body, Tathāgata. In its
self-negation, *Tathāgata* became the Dharma body of Buddha as compassionate means of salvation. In this eternal movement, the *Dharmākara* bodhisattva took vows to save all sentient beings. Through many ages of rigorous practice, *Dharmākara* finally attained true enlightenment as *Amitābha*, who has a fulfilled spiritual body (*sambhoga-kāya*). In Shin Buddhism, the fulfilled body of *Amitābha* contains all sentient beings. The body of *Amitābha* is in turn incarnated into countless transformed and assumed historical bodies (*nirmana-kāya*). *Shakyamuni* (Gautama) is the preeminent historical Buddha among the transformed bodies of Buddha.

As principle of compassionate means of personal salvation, *Dharmākara* imparts self-awareness through which the individual recognizes his/her deep sinfulness and by grace receives faith in *Amitābha* and is reborn in the Pure Land.  

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1. There are controversies among Shin Buddhist thinkers regarding whether one is reborn in the Pure Land after death or can experience the Pure Land when one attains faith in *Amitābha* in this world. In the view of modern Shin Buddhist thinker Ryōjin Soga (曽我量深 1875-1971), when one attains faith, one can live in the state of non-retrogression, in which entry into the Pure Land is assured in the future. This future is not distinct from the present time, but sustains the present time as the coming of the Pure Land.

2. Scope and Nature

This study is located within the broader context of the dialogue between Shin Buddhism and Christianity that began in Japan in the 1920s with the publication of Ryōjin Soga’s seminal work, *A Savior on Earth: The Meaning of Dharmākara Bodhisattva’s Advent*. The scope of the present study consists of a comparative analysis of the hypostatic union of Christ and the theory of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism, focusing on the personal and cosmic dimensions of salvation in both traditions. In so doing, it considers how the cosmic salvific dimensions of the Buddha body may offer a new hermeneutical perspective on Christian soteriology, one in which personal and cosmic salvation are inextricably bound. First, the approach will elucidate the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ. Secondly, it will consider the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union through an investigation of the cosmic dimensions of salvation in Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner. Thirdly, the study will consider the structure of the cosmic Buddha body of Amitābha and the Pure Land, which is realized grace and salvation. The Christian notion of salvation can be interpreted in different ways: one such notion entails being freed from forms of servitude and slavery; others can be understood as liberation through purchase or for a ransom, reconciliation after a dispute, redemption as satisfaction of the divine justice, redemption as the expiation for sins through a sin-offering, redemption as the forgiveness of sin, justification and sanctification and so forth. For his part, Haight classifies all Christian soteriologies into three fundamental categories: (1) Eastern soteriology, (2) Western soteriology, and (3) Reformed soteriology. In my proposal, the expression “Christian soteriology” parallels Haight’s definition of Western soteriology. The latter was fully developed by Augustine and Anselm and mainly focuses on the salvation from sin and the satisfaction of divine justice, while Eastern theologians such as Irenaeus and Athanasius regarded the Incarnation as the divine entering human nature and the created order as a whole in order to divinize them. Augustine holds that the reason for the Incarnation is God’s own love, as God wants to save humans from their sins. Jesus’ work is a sacrifice bringing about the redemption of humanity through an act of ransom. His redemptive work is accomplished through his death on the cross. He cleanses our sins and unites humankind to God (Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 4.13. 16-19).

In Japan, Catholic theology is still under the influence of the classical Western model of soteriology. Many Japanese theologians find an intriguing similarity between personal salvation from sin in Western Christian soteriology and individual salvation from karmic evil in Shin Buddhism. That is why I chose to apply Western Christian soteriology to the comparison between the two traditions. At the same time, I also plan to explore Eastern Christian soteriology because it emphasizes the cosmic dimensions of salvation, echoing the teaching of the cosmic body of Amitābha in Shin Buddhism.

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by Dharmākara’s fulfillment of his vow to save all sentient beings. Fourth, it will examine the Dharmākara as the self-determination of the eternal, formless Tathāgata, and explore the structure of Dharmākara’s individual subjectivity. Finally, it will elucidate new perspectives on the hypostatic union of Christ that emerge in dialogue with the Buddha body theory in Shin Buddhism. These insights will bring a new appreciation of the hypostatic union not only for the individual, but for the entire cosmos. In my conclusions, I will briefly point to some concrete implications of this cosmic vision for social, environmental, and ethical praxis, as well as pedagogy.

3. Thesis Statement

The hypostatic union of Christ has profound soteriological implications, both personal and cosmic, that are not always adequately appreciated in christological discourse, particularly in the Western theological traditions. This dissertation will argue that a comparative study of the hypostatic union in Christianity and the theory of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism will yield new insights into the soteriological implications of the relationship between the personal and the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union.

4. Methodology

For purposes of a comparative study of the hypostatic union and the Buddha body theory, with an eye toward gaining new insights into the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union, I find the “fulfillment” model of interreligious dialogue to be the most adequate. This approach recognizes the soteriological value of other religions while understanding Christ as the summit of God’s saving revelation in history.4 The Catholic Church makes use of this model to dialogue with other religious traditions.

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My reason for choosing this model is that it allows us to make truth claims about the uniqueness of Christ in a way that embraces mutuality and recognizes that each of the world’s religions, in its own unique way, represents “what is true and holy,” and “reflects a ray of Truth that enlightens all people” (NA 2). Moreover, in the years following the Second Vatican Council, the Church, harking back to Karl Rahner, began to officially recognize that the other world religions, besides being merely ways of truth and revelation, were in themselves paths of salvation. In the words of Dialogue and Proclamation, the other world religions play a “providential role in the divine economy of salvation” (DP 17). For this reason, the Church must be dialogical in order to truly be catholic. In the dialogue with other religions, believers must be prepared to be transformed and challenged by the encounter.

Further, the dialogue should be mutually nourishing and enlightening. According to the 1984 document Dialogue and Mission, dialogue “means not only discussion, but also includes all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment” (DM 3). In this regard, Gavin D’ Costa insists that “fulfillment” must not be one-sided, but must be a mutual fulfillment. Furthering this line of thinking, Jacques Dupuis calls for a relational approach to interreligious dialogue that finds the Christian message itself enhanced through dialogue. Such exchange allows Christians to perceive “certain dimensions of the Divine Mystery” more fully.

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7 Knitter, Introducing Theologies of Religions, 83.

8 The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission, AAS 75 [1984], pp. 816-828; also Bulletin Secretariatus pro non Christianis 56 (1984/2), no. 13.

9 Knitter, Introducing Theologies of Religions, 88.
and to encounter the Christian revelation “at greater depth.”¹⁰ I will draw on this perspective in considering how the Shin Buddha body theory, with its emphasis on the interdependent and all-inclusive nature of salvation, may enrich and amplify the cosmic significance of the hypostatic union for Christian soteriology.

5. Significance

First, this study is significant in its elucidation of the relation between the personal and cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union. Many Western Catholic theologians focus on the union of the two natures in the individual person of Christ. However, several Western Catholic theologians, among them Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner, and certainly the Greek Fathers, explore the universal dimensions of the hypostatic union. In synthesizing and distilling their various christological perspectives, this study seeks to make an important contribution to the field of contemporary Christology in a pluralistic context.

Second, the study is significant in its comparative analysis of the hypostatic union in Christianity and the theory of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism. Christianity and Shin Buddhism share certain core elements in terms of their faith in a personal divinity (God or Buddha), their soteriologies, and their theologies of grace. Although there is a wealth of research in Japan comparing these various dimensions of Christianity and Shin Buddhism, there is no comparative research specifically on the points of contact between the hypostatic union of Christ and the fulfilled Buddha body. My dissertation seeks to address that lacuna. It will thus break new ground on the horizon of comparative research on these core elements of both religious traditions.

6. Chapter Outline

I. Personal Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union

In this chapter, I will elucidate the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union of

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¹⁰ Ibid., 92.
Jesus Christ. First, I clarify the meaning of the Chalcedonian definition: the unity of the human and divine natures in the one divine person unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably. Specifically, I consider the significance of the terms hypostasis (individual substance), prosopon (person), physis (nature), and ousia (essence) to describe the reality of the two natures of Christ in his one individual being.

Second, I explicate the personal dimensions of the Incarnation, drawing on the christological dispute between Cyril of Alexandria (376-444) and Nestorius of Constantinople (386-450). Cyril held that the divine and human natures of Christ subsist in one individual substance and that between the two was a communicatio idiomatum, which allowed the transferral of the properties of one nature to the other. Nestorius, on the other hand, clearly distinguished the human and divine natures of Christ. These two natures appear as two prosopa in Christ. This view sought to preserve each prosopon in a separate nature while simultaneously holding to their union in one prosopon of Christ. Nevertheless, the union in Christ was not hypostatic, but merely moral.

Third, I explicate the model of hypostatic union in post-Chalcedonian Christology. In particular, I explore the understanding of the hypostatic union and the meaning of enhypostasis and anhypostasis in neo-Chalcedonian theology and Dyothelite Christology (the divine and human wills of Christ) in Maximus the Confessor (580-662).11

II. Cosmic Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union

In this chapter I will consider the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union through an investigation of the cosmic scope of salvation in Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and Karl Rahner (1904-1984). Each theologian, in his own way, holds that the cosmic Christ comprehends all creation in the eternal Logos, leading the whole cosmos to perfection in union with God.

11 Enhypostasis means that Christ’s human nature subsists in his divine hypostasis while anhypostasis signifies that Christ’s human nature cannot exist apart from his divine hypostasis.
In particular, Rahner analyzes the hypostatic union from transcendental perspective, which observes the relationship between the human self-consciousness of Christ and the un-objectified horizon of divine sonship in the self-communication of God. I explore how Rahner’s notion of hypostatic union differs from classical Chalcedonian and post-Chalcedonian models.

III. Cosmic Dimensions of the Buddha Body in Shin Buddhism: Amitābha

This chapter explores the structure of the cosmic dimensions of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism. Formless dharma body (Tathāgata, suchness) chooses self-determination and becomes the dharma body as compassionate means of salvation of all beings, taking form in the Dharmākara bodhisattva and subsequently in Dharmākara’s enlightened fulfilled body as Amitābha Buddha.  The body of Amitābha and his Pure Land constitute the fulfilled body of the Buddha, which is realized through the vows and practices of Dharmākara. Amitābha is inseparable from the Pure Land and contains all sentient beings, leading them to faith through the recitation of Namu-Amida-Butsu (I take refuge in Amitābha), and birth in the Pure Land. One who is born in the Pure Land aspires to save others in the power of Amitābha, who directs them to return to the world and to save others who are still suffering.  Only when all others are saved is one’s own enlightenment/salvation fully realized.

IV. Individual Dimensions of the Buddha Body in Shin Buddhism: Dharmākara Bodhisattva

This chapter explicates the structure of the personal dimensions of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism. As an individual personality, Dharmākara unites in one principle the Buddha nature and human subjectivity. I explore the unique understanding


of the Dharmākara in the work of Ryōjin Soga (曽我量深 1875-1971), who recognizes Dharmākara as the ground of our individual subjectivity. Soga focuses on the salvific role of Dharmākara’s rigorous practice as bodhisattva to save all sentient beings. Dharmākara’s subjectivity is the fundamental consciousness, which is sustained by interdependent relationships with other beings within the cycle of karmic reality.

V. New Perspectives on the Hypostatic Union of Christ in Light of the Relationship between Dharmākara and Amitābha

In this final chapter I elucidate new perspectives on the hypostatic union of Christ in light of the fulfilled Buddha body in Shin Buddhism. Dharmākara lives as the true self of each individual and sustains the unity between human nature in the karmic cycle of life and death, and the Buddha nature (infinite Tathāgata). Amitābha sustains the unity of all in the cosmic and formless Buddha body of Tathāgata. This cosmic body realizes the salvation of all sentient beings in their interdependent relationships on the way to the Pure Land. This theory of the Buddha body lends itself well to a cosmic perspective on the hypostatic union of Christ, whose cosmic body comprehends all creation. There is a fundamental difference between the Buddha body and the cosmic body of Christ, however. The Buddha body is the self-realization of the infinite Tathāgata, which is emptiness itself. This emptiness indicates the infinite reality, which does not have its own substance because this reality is realized only in the interdependent relationships of all individual beings. Furthermore, in the infinite reality of Tathāgata, each individual lacks its own substance because one is sustained in the interdependent relationship with others. On the other hand, the cosmic body of Christ is self-existent reality, which is sustained by the hypostasis of the Logos. All individual beings have their own substance in the cosmic body of Christ. Nevertheless, I emphasize that all things in creation exist in a web of interdependent relationships within the cosmic body of Christ as this body moves toward
ultimate salvation. Through my comparative analysis of the hypostatic union and the Buddha body, I will show how the cosmic salvific dimensions of the Buddha body can pose a broader vision for much of Christian soteriology, one in which personal and cosmic salvation are inextricably bound.
I. Personal Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union

1.1 The Fundamental Understanding of the Hypostatic Union in the Chalcedonian Definition

1.1.1 Three questions regarding the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union

In this chapter, I explore the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ. This approach raises at least three fundamental questions.

The first concerns how Christ’s human nature and the divine nature are united with one another in his single hypostasis, which is the divine Logos. The human nature and the divine nature preserve their respective characters and make a composite union in the divine person. Those two natures coexist in the locus of the divine Logos without confusion, change, division, or separation. I explicate how the two natures have a balanced union in the divine hypostasis.

The second issue concerns how Christ’s human nature subsists as a concrete, reality and autonomous character in the divine hypostasis. Christ’s humanity is not abstract, but includes a human soul, intellect, and body. Christ’s autonomous free decision by his human will plays a crucial role in the redemption of humanity. Nevertheless, in some types of Christology, such autonomous character of the human nature is neglected and Christ’s humanity is completely dominated by the divine hypostasis. Hence, I explore how the human nature can be a subsistent reality and autonomous faculty in relation to the divine hypostasis.

The third issue revolves around how Christ’s human consciousness is united with his divine person without destroying the personal unity. Christ has a single divine person, which is the Logos of God. Nevertheless, he also has a human consciousness in his human nature. Thus, his human consciousness can be juxtaposed with his divine person. Some might infer from this juxtaposition two subjectivities in Christ, in which case
Christ’s personal unity would be eclipsed. Hence, I explore how the human consciousness belongs to the divine person without endangering his personal identity. Addressing these issues calls for a clarification of the meaning of the Chalcedonian definition, which expounds the fundamental understanding of the union.

1.1.2 The Chalcedonian definition of the hypostatic union

In the Chalcedonian definition, Jesus Christ is the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and the same truly man, of a rational soul and body, consubstantial with the Father in respect of the Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in respect of the manhood, like us in all things apart from sin, begotten from the Father before the ages in respect of the Godhead, and the same in the last days for us and for our salvation from the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, in respect of the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures [en duo physisin] unconfusedly [asynchitōs], unchangeably [atreptōs], indivisibly [adiairetōs], and inseparably [achoristōs] (the difference of the natures being in no way destroyed by the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved and coming together into one person and one hypostasis), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, Only-begotten, God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ, even as the prophets from of old and Jesus Christ himself taught us about him and the symbol of the fathers has handed down to us.¹

The Chalcedonian definition declares that Christ is truly God and truly human. He is made known in the divine nature and the human nature, which exist in one divine prosopon, or one divine hypostasis. The formula establishes that he is “in two natures (ev duo physisin),” and “one hypostasis.” Christ keeps the two natures after the Incarnation, but they are united in the single, divine hypostasis.

The fundamental problem revolves around how these two natures are united in one single hypostasis. Theologian Sarah Coakley suggests that the Chalcedonian definition may be understood as an ‘horos,’ which means boundary, horizon, limit.

standard, or rule. The formula established a boundary around the understanding of Jesus Christ. The word can also be used directly of Christ with the meaning of “expression” (Christ as the horos and logos of God, as in Gregory of Nazianzen).²

In my view, the formula has substantial content because it comprises several terms, hypostasis, prosopon and physis, which describe the “who,” “what,” and “how” of Christ. These terms correspond to a certain level of reality in Christ. Moreover, as Coakley mentions, the definition establishes certain boundaries in the understanding of Christ. For example, the four adverbs, “unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably,” create a clear distinction between the divine nature and the human nature within the one person of Christ. These terms serve to regulate certain erroneous understandings of the relation between the two natures. Therefore, I first examine the meaning of the terms used to describe the Incarnation, which correspond to the internal reality of Christ. Second, I explore the meanings of the four adverbs of the Chalcedonian definition and how these words serve to articulate the appropriate relationship between the two natures.

1.1.3 Meaning of the four Christological terms: ousia, physis, hypostasis, and prosopon

In this segment, I consider the meanings of four Christological terms which describe the composition of Christ’s divinity and humanity. The four terms are ousia, physis, hypostasis, and prosopon. From the third to the fifth centuries, the ancient theologians developed and determined the meanings of these terms within the context of the christological and the Trinitarian controversies. However, they often assigned different meanings to the terms. This difference in turn lay at the heart of the various controversies. Following Aubrey R. Vine and John A. McGuckin’s explanations, I

examine the meaning of the terms and how each term corresponds to a particular ontological dimension of reality in Christ.

_ Ousia _ is the essence of any particular thing and “the ultimate ground of its existence.”\(^3\) _ Ousia _ is “a noun derived from the feminine participle _ einai_, which means ‘to be.’” In Aristotle, this term signifies “the essence of any particular thing, the thing in itself absolutely, _ to ti esti_ (what it is).” _ Ousia _ is in “the ground of existence of _ to on_ (being) and _ to on_ exists in virtue of its _ ousia_.” Thus, _ ousia _ is “the thing as it is in itself independently of being known.”\(^4\) For example, the _ ousia _ of a stone exists “independently of our knowledge of it and possesses properties and qualities independent of our interpretation of them.”\(^5\) Therefore, in the context of ancient Christology, _ ousia _ means the “essence, substance, being, genus, or nature” of being.\(^6\)

_ Physis _ originally meant “nature, inborn quality, property or constitution of a person or a thing.”\(^7\) Thus, the _ physis _ of _ ousia _ is “the sum total of its qualities and properties.” The _ physis _ of any particular _ ousia _ includes “everything about it, known and unknown,” including shape, size, weight, color, texture, and all other properties and attributes, and would transcend the limits of our knowledge.\(^8\) For example, the _ physis _ of water is “clear liquid, tasteless, and odourless.”\(^9\) An _ ousia _ is manifested by its _ physis _. An _ ousia _ cannot be perceived or known except as it is revealed in its _ physis_, and there cannot

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4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.


7 Vine, 65-66.

8 Ibid., 66.

9 Ibid.
be a physis without an ousia to give it a ground of existence.\textsuperscript{10} Hence, in the context of Christology from the fourth century, physis indicates the “nature, the make-up of a thing,” and in earlier Christian thought before the fourth century, “the concrete reality or existence.”\textsuperscript{11} Ousia and physis are thus intimately linked and primarily indicate essence or nature, namely the “what-ness” of Christ.

After the Counsel of Chalcedon, in the Christology of the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} centuries, ousia and physis become interchangeable because both terms came to mean commonality of being, while and hypostasis/prosopon meant individual existence. Eventually, neo-Chalcedonian theologians came to use ousia for describing the what-ness of Christ, a point I will explore below.

\textit{Hypostasis} means the concrete reality of a thing, the underlying essence. In earlier Christian thought, hypostasis was the synonym of physis. In the New Testament, hypostasis is equivalent to physis or ousia (Heb. 1: 3). Origen uses this word to denote actual existence. In his commentary on John, he repudiates those who distinguish Father and Son only in thought (epinoia), not in hypostasis, actual concrete reality.\textsuperscript{12} He mentions that there are three hypostaseis, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{13} In the Trinitarian controversy during the late fourth century, hypostasis involves a newer meaning as individual concrete reality. The Cappadocian Fathers hold that there are three hypostaseis and one ousia (substance) or physis (nature) in the Trinity. Gregory of Nyssa clarifies that hypostasis means individuality, which is separated from the other persons of the Trinity by attributes or properties peculiar to each. On the other hand, ousia or physis

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} McGuckin, 138.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 2. 75.
means the essence or nature which is common to the three hypostases and remains one in the Trinity.14

Thereafter, hypostasis indicates the individual divine person of Christ in Cyril of Alexandria (376-444)’s Christology and becomes a basic term of later Christology. In the neo-Chalcedonian Christology, hypostasis comes to mean individual existence, which exists by itself and sustains the union of the two natures. It is the foundation of subjectivity of Christ, which sustains the activity of the intellect and will of Christ.

Prosopon originally means “face, visage, or countenance.” It is equivalent to “prosapeion, a mask, a dramatic part, or character” in classical Greek. Other classical usages are front, outward appearance, and beauty. When it is used to refer to a person, it is always “the person as regarded from the outside, not the inner ego or personality.”15 In Cyril, prosopon becomes synonymous with hypostasis, which is the individual concrete reality. The terms primarily indicate individual, concrete reality and are inclusive of both the inner and outer person. In the Christological context, this signifies the “who” of Christ as well as hypostasis. The terms are synonymous in the Chalcedonian definition, indicating the two natures “coming together into one prosopon and one hypostasis (eis hen prosopon kai mian hypostasin syntrechouses).”16 Nevertheless, other theologians, notably Nestorius, used prosopon in its etymological meaning as the self-manifestation of ousia, not individual reality. Therefore, after the Counsel of Chalcedon, the term hypostasis eventually replaced prosopon as “individual existence” to avoid this confusion.

1.1.4 Types of the union of the divine and human natures

In this segment, I examine several types of relationship between the divine and human natures in Christ and how the four Chalcedonian adjectives, namely “unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably,” serve to establish a boundary between correct and erroneous formulations of the relationship between the two natures.

Philosopher Harry Austryn Wolfson explicates five types of physical union in the ancient Greek Church Fathers: (1) Union of composition, in which the elements are united as an aggregate of constituents in perceptible juxtaposition; (2) Union of mixture (the first type), in which two elements become a third one (tertium quid) after the union, though it can be dissolved into its constituents; (3) Union of mixture (the second type), in which the union is not a third one but an aggregate of its constituents in juxtaposition. It can be dissolved into its constituent parts, but the constituents are imperceptible; (4) Union of confusion, in which the union is a third one, but it cannot be dissolved into its constituents; (5) Union of predominance, in which one smaller element is dominated by another, greater element. Nevertheless, the smaller is not completely destroyed but is related to the greater as matter to form. In addition, it is important to refer to the union of association, of which Nestorius (386-450) is the primary proponent. This union means that the Logos assimilates the already-existing human nature. This union is also related to the notion of voluntary union, in which the Logos incorporates humanity in its divine will and the human accepts the Logos in his human free will. In this case, the Logos can only connect itself to humanity by its will, not by nature. Therefore, the Logos cannot be Christ’s person itself, but can only dwell in Christ’s human body.

Wolfson notes that many ancient Church Fathers prefer the union of predominance when they speak of the relationship between the divine and human natures.

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of Jesus Christ (e.g., Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Nemesius of Emessa, John Damascus, and so forth). For example, some Greek Fathers use the analogy of “fire” and “iron” to explain the unity of the divine and human natures. When one puts iron to fire, the iron will be ignited and united with fire, but the essence of the iron still remains. This analogy is a good example of the union of predominance.

In my view, the relationship between divine and human natures is best described in the union of composition, because in this schema neither the divinity nor the humanity dominates nor are they mixed or confused. In the union of composition, the divine nature and the human nature coexist and are unified in Christ’s divine hypostasis, which is Christ’s single individual existence. Though these natures cannot exist by themselves, they are nevertheless discrete and concrete realities because they are hypostatized in the one divine hypostasis.

The four Chalcedonian regulation terms, “unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably” set limitations on the different types of possible relations and attempt to preserve the union of composition. The term “unconfusedly” regulates the position on the union of mixture (the first type), and the extreme version of the union of predominance. The first type of the union of mixture reflects a moderate form of Monophysitism. This type of Monophysitism means that Christ consists of two natures and that neither of the natures increases nor decreases after the union. Nevertheless, the two natures are united with each other deeply and constitute one composite nature. This one nature can be dissolved into its constituent parts as the divine nature and the human nature. This composite nature indicates a third substance as one nature because this composite nature does not sustain the union of the two natures as a locus of the union, but

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18 Ibid., 387-406.

constitutes one nature, which becomes a third nature.

An extreme form of the union of predominance reflects an extreme Monophysitism. Eutyches (378-454) is a representative of such a position, holding that the human nature is consumed by the divine nature to the point that Christ assumed one, single, divine nature after the Incarnation. In this view, the human nature is completely absorbed by the divine nature. After the absorption, the human nature and the divine nature are mixed into a third substance, which is called the single divine nature, and can no longer be distinguished. In these positions, it is difficult to understand the true significance of the Incarnation, in which Jesus takes on the limitations and conditions of human reality in order to save all of humanity.

The word “unchangeably” disallows the union of confusion, in which the union is a third one, but it cannot be dissolved into its constituents. When the divine Logos becomes incarnate, it is not changed into human flesh. Likewise, human flesh cannot change its nature into the divine Logos. If both natures are collapsed into the other, they constitute a third substance, which is neither God nor human. Such a third substance would not be related to the real human being because it has lost human nature itself and thus cannot effect human salvation. This position reflects the Christology of Apollinarius of Laodicea (310/15-390), which belongs to the union of confusion.

Apollinarius holds that the Logos assumed only the human body in the divine intellect (nous) and spirit, not the human intellect and spirit. The divine Logos animates the human body, which is a divine instrument. In this case, when the Logos unites itself with humanity, it excludes the human intellect and spirit and eventually changes the human nature. Thus, the human nature is mutated by the divine Logos. The Logos and the human body are united in a third substance, which has full divinity mixed with half humanity. Although the union of the divine Logos and the human body can theoretically
be dissolved into their respective constituents, the constituents are not discernible because we cannot perceive the human body in its wholeness, as it lacks a human intellect and spirit.

Third, the terms, “indivisibly and inseparably” regulate an extreme position on the union of composition and the union of association, which reflect the Christology of Nestorius, who radically divides the divinity and the humanity, and finds two *prosopa* in Christ. Cyril of Alexandria sees two divided persons in the one Jesus Christ in Nestorius’ doctrine and regards it as a Christology of “two Sons.” In such a Christology, it is not clear how salvation for human beings is effected, because the humanity and divinity are completely separated. Furthermore, in the union of association, the Logos takes form in a human Jesus, who already existed. The divine Logos connects itself with humanity through the divine will and Jesus conjoins himself to the Logos by his human will. In this case, there is no foundation of personal identity in Christ’s individual existence. If there is no personal unity of Christ, there is no foundation for the salvation of the human person as Christ’s person is the foundation which sustains the personal identity of each individual person. Without the realization of the personal identity of the human person, human salvation cannot be accomplished. Therefore, the divine nature and the human nature cannot be completely divided even though they are clearly distinguished.

Thus, the union of composition, in a less extreme form, appears to be the most appropriate reflection of the Chalcedonian definition. The difference between the two natures is not dissolved by the union, and the integrity of each nature is preserved. Christ lives in the two natures even after the Incarnation. The natures are united in a single person, which is the divine Logos. The Logos of God is the locus of the union and of Christ.

We turn now to explicate the relation between the composition of the two natures...
and Christ’s subjectivity, which is the divine Logos. To do so, the following segment explores the controversy between Cyril and Nestorius.

1.2 Christ’s True Subjectivity and the Composition of the Two Natures in Cyril and Nestorius

1.2.1 The Incarnation theory of Apollinarius of Laodicea

Before exploring the controversy between Cyril and Nestorius, I briefly explicate the Incarnation theory of Apollinarius of Laodicea, an important predecessor of the two theologians. His analysis of Christ’s subjectivity and of the relation of his divinity and humanity made a significant impact on later Christology.

Apollinarius held that Christ is both coessential with God in invisible Spirit and coessential with humanity in visible human body. The nature of the flesh is not altered by its union with the Godhead and on the other hand the nature of the Godhead is not changed by its participation in the body of flesh. Christ emptied himself in the fashion of slaves, but in his divine essence he is unemptied and unaltered and undiminished. In this way, Apollinarius seems to preserve the distinction between divinity and humanity in Christ. Nevertheless, he concludes that Christ exists “in the singleness of an incarnate nature which is commingled with flesh.” In Christ, “the creature is in unity with the uncreated, while the uncreated is commingled with the creature, so that one nature is constituted out of the parts severally, and the Word contributes a special energy to the whole together with the divine perfection.” In other words, Christ’s divinity and humanity are commingled and make a single divine nature, which is manifested in his

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21 Ibid.

22 Apollinarius of Laodicea, *Frag. 9*.

23 Apollinarius of Laodicea, *On the Union in Christ of the Body with Godhead 5*.
flesh. Christ’s flesh is animated by the infinite, powerful deity of the Logos and is thus a
divine instrument. Apollinarius notes that the Logos and its instrument (Christ’s human
body) produce a single action because Christ’s essence is one and thus the action is one; he is moved only by one divine will.25

Apollinarius referred to Christ as “the human being from heaven.”26 He is not an
ordinary human, but rather a special divine human, who is an incarnate divine intellect27
and possesses a divine “life-giving Spirit.”28 In Adversus Apollinarium, Gregory of
Nyssa quotes Apollinarius’ statement regarding Christ as a heavenly human: “The man
Christ pre-exists (proupairchei ho anthropos Christos), not because the spirit, that is, God
is other than him, but because the Lord, the divine spirit, is in the nature of God man.”29
This means that Christ already existed in heaven with his humanity before he appears in
the world. As “a heavenly human,” he has a divinized humanity from the beginning.

In Apollinarius’ view, if the divine intellect (nous) and the human intellect are
juxtaposed in Christ, the work of the Incarnation is not accomplished.30 Rather, the
divine intellect assumes only the human body and eliminates the human intellect.
Apollinarius reasoned that the human is not saved by Christ’s assumption of the human
intellect, but only by the assumption of the human flesh. The reason is that the human
intellect is weak, changeable and unstable because of sin and is affected by carnal desire

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24 Apollinarius of Laodicea, Frag. 117.
25 Apollinarius of Laodicea, Frag. 108.
26 Apollinarius of Laodicea, Frag. 25.
27 Apollinarius of Laodicea, Frag. 71.
28 Apollinarius of Laodicea, Frag. 89.
29 Apollinarius of Laodicea, Frag. 34, in Gregory of Nyssa, Adversus Apollinarium, in Gregorii Nysseni
Opera 3. 1, ed. Werner Jaeger (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), 147. English translation is in John Behr, The
Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004), 393.
30 Apollinarius of Laodicea, Frag. 74.
and cannot rule the flesh. However, when “unchangeable Intellect” is incarnated in the human body, this divine intellect, because it is not dominated by carnal desire, leads the whole humanity to salvation.\(^{31}\)

In Apollinarius’ view of the communication of idioms, “both that which is corporeal and that which is divine are predicated of the whole Christ.”\(^{32}\) Christ is one unified divine-human and thus we can say that the Son of man is from heaven and the Son of God is born of woman.\(^{33}\) In other words, the predication of divinity to humanity and that of humanity to divinity is based on the single divine nature of the heavenly-human Christ. There is no locus of interchange between the two natures. Moreover, Christ cannot have a relation with sinful humanity in his divine humanity because Christ has a perfect, divine humanity from the beginning. Therefore, when we say that the Son of man is from heaven and the Son of God is born of woman, there is no dynamic exchange of the divine properties and the human properties in Christ because those statements only describe the single nature of the divine-human Christ without the exchange of the properties of the two natures.

According to Apollinarius, the human spirit and intellect are completely replaced by the divine spirit and intellect in the Incarnation because human spirit and intellect cannot effect human salvation. Later, however, Gregory Nazianzen would counter: “What he (the Logos) has not assumed, he has not healed.”\(^{34}\) If the divine Logos had not assumed the human intellect and spirit, the human subjectivity would not be redeemed.

Consequently, though Apollinarius succeeded in saving the unity of Christ’s

\(^{31}\) Apollinarius of Laodicea, \textit{Frag.} 76.

\(^{32}\) Apollinarius of Laodicea, \textit{On the Union in Christ of the Body with Godhead} 15.

\(^{33}\) Apollinarius of Laodicea, \textit{Frag.} 18.

subjectivity by eliminating the human spirit and intellect, he ultimately failed to establish
the means of salvation of the whole human person. Therefore, when we treat the mystery
of the Incarnation, it is crucial to determine how the human spirit and intellect are united
with the divine person without destroying the unity of Christ’s subjectivity.

Nestorius held that Apollinarius’ view of the Incarnation dissolved the human
reality of Christ in its divine counterpart. According to Nestorius, Apollinarius only
emphasizes Christ’s divinity and neglects his true humanity. In such a case, we cannot
understand his human suffering and death. From the Apollinarian perspective, we
therefore cannot understand his last words on the cross, “My God, my God, why have
you forsaken me?” (Mt. 27:46). Thus, Nestorius separates the divine nature from the
human nature in Christ and avoids any kind of ‘‘mixture’’ or ‘‘confusion’’ of the divine and
human spheres of reality in Christological discourse.” Nestorius reasons that God
cannot change Godself and mix with humanity. If the Logos of God has changed, it is not
divine any more. On the other hand, if humanity is confused with the divine Logos, the
human nature can no longer become human. Thus, the divinity and the humanity must
preserve their respective integrities.

Cyril of Alexandria also explores the distinction between the full divinity and full
humanity of Christ and explicates the form of the union between the two natures in order
to save the personal unity of Christ. Consequently, Cyril provided the theory of the
*hypostatic* union while Nestorius proposed the theory of *prosopic* union.

1.2.2 *Hypostatic* union in the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria

1.2.2.1 The union of the divine nature and the human nature in the divine *hypostasis*

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35 McGuckin, 131.
37 McGuckin, 131.
In this segment, I focus on Cyril’s understanding of the hypostatic union. Historically, he was the first to propose the hypostasis of the Logos as the locus of the union between the divine and human natures of Christ. Thus, Christ’s personal unity is sustained by the Logos of God as the divine hypostasis, in which subsist the divine and human natures.

Cyril explains the union of the divinity and humanity in the Logos of God according to hypostasis or physis. He holds that the Logos of God is “hypostatically united to the flesh” in Christ.\(^{38}\) The Logos is the individual concrete reality as a hypostasis and the foundation of subjectivity of Christ. His divine and human natures are united in the single divine hypostasis. He also uses the phrase, the union “by nature” (kata phisin or physei). After the Incarnation, Christ’s human nature and divine nature are preserved in his single divine physis. Cyril calls this a “natural unity.”\(^{39}\) In this context, physis means the individual concrete reality, which is synonymous with hypostasis. The Logos is united with his humanity in his single physis, which is an individual subjectivity. Nevertheless, in the later development of Christology after Cyril, physis came to indicate merely the two natures of Christ, not hypostasis.

How does the Logos of God become the locus of the union between his divine and human natures in the Incarnation? Cyril explores the Incarnation of the Logos from the perspective of kenosis. The Logos of God emptied itself, assuming the form of a slave and coming in the likeness of the human (Phil. 2. 6-8).\(^{40}\) The Logos assumed human flesh in kenosis and the Logos and human flesh thus have an inextricable relationship

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with one another. This relation plays a crucial role in the redemption of humanity. Nevertheless, in the Incarnation, we cannot say that the nature of the Logos was changed and became flesh, nor that it was transformed into a perfect man of soul and body. Cyril held that the divine Logos appropriates human nature in the Incarnation within the divine economy while remaining unalterably and unchangeably in its own proper nature.\footnote{Cyril of Alexandria, “Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten,” para. 13, trans. John A. McGuckin, in ibid., 307.} Thus, the divine \textit{hypostasis} is not changed when it unites itself with humanity. The body of the Logos has its own \textit{proprium}, but it is distinguished from the \textit{proprium} of the human. The body was made through a true union with the Logos and served the function of an economic instrument of the Logos.\footnote{Ibid., para. 25, in ibid., 307.} Therefore, we can only say that the Logos, in an ineffable and incomprehensible manner, united to itself flesh animated with rational soul by its economy, and thus became human and was called the Son of Man.\footnote{Cyril of Alexandria, “The Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius,” para. 3, trans. John A. McGuckin, in ibid., 263.}

In the Incarnation, the Logos of God assumes a full humanity, which contains human flesh with a rational soul. In this union of the divine Logos and the humanity, the divine and human natures retain their respective attributes and do not change or influence the other. Christ experienced real human suffering and death in the passion even though he is the Logos of God, which is impassible and immortal. Cyril says that “he (the Logos) suffered impassibly.”\footnote{Cyril of Alexandria, “Scholia on the Incarnation of the Only Begotten,” para. 35, in ibid., 332.} Such a paradoxical relation between the Logos and humanity in Christ indicates an ineffable intimacy between the divine and human natures.

Cyril explains the ineffable intimacy of the union of the divine and the human in various ways. He uses two popular formulae, the union “out of two natures” (\textit{ex dyo}...
As noted, the divine nature, which dwells in the human body, does not suffer any mixing, or confusion with the human nature, or change to something other. The divine nature and the human nature remain distinct from one another. Out of both natures, there is one Jesus Christ. After the union, we conceive of only one incarnate nature of the Logos.

Some object that if there is but one incarnate nature of the Logos, there must necessarily have been a mixture or confusion of the two natures and that the human nature is replaced by the divine Logos. Nevertheless, for Cyril, the one single composite physis means the individual concrete reality, which is the locus of the union of the divine and human natures. Cyril does not seek to mix the two natures in the one single nature. He describes the union between the divine Word and the holy human flesh, which is endowed with a rational soul, as united without change (atreptōs), without alteration (ametabletōs), and without confusion (asynchytōs). These words reflect a middle way between “Nestorian duality and Apollinarist fusion” and are antecedent to the Chalcedonian definition. There is no new nature that emerges as the result of the union.

The two natures are distinct but unified in Christ’s hypostasis. This reality makes the communication of idioms possible in the statement about the person of Christ and his natures. The communication of idioms allows the transferral of the properties of one

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46 Ibid.
49 Ibid., para. 3 , in ibid., 360.
50 Cyril of Alexandria, “First Letter of Cyril to Succensus,” para. 6, in ibid., 354.
51 McGuckin, 237.
nature to the other as long as the two natures are united in the divine *hypostasis*, which is the locus of the union. Such an interchange of the two natures in his *hypostasis* allows mutual predication of one property to another property in the same grammatical subject. We can predicate the divine property of Christ’s subjectivity, which describes his humanity. Thus, we can say, “Jesus is the Son of God” and “Jesus was resurrected from the dead.” Furthermore, we can predicate the human property of Christ’s subjectivity which describes his divinity. Thus, we can say that “the Logos is suffering,” and “God was crucified.” As the locus of the union of the divine and human natures, the single subjectivity of Christ is the basis of interexchange of the divine and human properties. It makes the communication of idioms possible.

1.2.2.2 Problems with Cyril’s Christology

There are several problems in Cyril’s Christology. I will mention two. The first is that Christ’s integral humanity does not play its own distinct role in the salvific action. Influenced by the Alexandrian tradition, Cyril emphasizes the unity of the person of Christ. As a result, he holds that the divine nature and the human nature are deeply united, but that the human nature is subjected to the divine Logos as an instrument in the divine economy. In particular, Christ’s human soul does not play a significant role in Cyril’s analysis of Christological union. John McGuckin observes that for Cyril, Christ’s human soul and *nous* are not the ultimate locus of his personhood. For Cyril this is reserved for the *hypostasis* of the Logos. In the modern philosophical context, personhood is “predominantly defined in terms of psychic emotional capacities (ancient psychology’s realm of the Soul) or in terms of intellectual judgment and consciousness (*Nous*).”\(^{52}\) Such a modern view of the person emerged from Rene Descartes’ philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of self-consciousness and its intellectual activity, and forms

\(^{52}\) McGuckin, 206.
the foundation of the subjectivity of the human person (*Cogito ergo sum*). However, for Cyril, intellectual judgment and consciousness do not constitute the person itself, but are functions of the person. Hence, Cyril “is not positing personhood on the basis of either psychic or intellective states, but on the basis of the act of divine power which first creates man. Neither the soul nor the *Nous* nor the flesh is the real substrate of the person.”

Nevertheless, if there is only one divine *hypostasis* in Christ, Christ is only God, but cannot be fully human because his human *physis* cannot be made real by having a corresponding human *hypostasis*. His idea of human nature without human *hypostasis* means that Cyril sees Christ’s manhood as abstract and notional. Nevertheless, Cyril holds that the human *physis* is hypostatized by the divine *hypostasis* and that Christ’s humanity is individual, concrete, and real, making him a distinct human being.

Therefore, in my view, it is important to consider, in light of Cyril’s Christology, how to understand Christ’s humanity in its wholeness (his soul, intellect and body) as a substantial reality, as it plays a crucial role in human salvation, and how we juxtapose his human consciousness with his single personality, which is the divine Logos.

Second, Cyril used the term *physis* in various ways. This imprecision in the use of the term caused misunderstanding of his Christology and created the confusion of the Monophysite controversy. When he mentions the union “out of” the divine *physis* and the human *physis*, the *physis* means nature or the sum of the properties of being. However, when he uses this term in the formula “the one single *physis* of the incarnate Logos,” this single *physis* means individual concrete reality, which is synonymous with *hypostasis*. In the Monophysite controversy from the fifth to the seventh centuries, Cyril’s terminology was seen to provide a warrant for Monophysite Christology. These theologians drew on Cyril’s two formulae: “the union out of the two *physeis,”* and “one single *physis* of the

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53 Ibid., 206-207.
54 Ibid., 210.
incarnate Logos.” They held that after the Incarnation, Christ has one divine *physis* out of the two *physeis* and does not subsist in two *physeis*. In contrast, Dyophysite (“two natures”) theologians hold that Christ has two *physeis* in his *hypostasis* after the Incarnation and that the two *physeis* remain intact. Such a controversy was sparked by Cyril’s vague use of *physis*.

1.2.3 *Prosopic* union in the Christology of Nestorius

1.2.3.1 The meaning of *prosopon* in Nestorius

Cyril’s opponent Nestorius held a different understanding of the union between the divine and human natures in Christ. Instead of the union subsisting within the *hypostasis*, he proposed the *prosopic* union, which means the *prosopon* of God and the *prosopon* of the human make one *prosopon* in Jesus Christ because he has the *prosopon* of God as his own *prosopon*. He is deeply influenced by the Antiochian tradition, which emphasized a clear distinction of the divinity and the humanity in Christ. Nestorius explicates his idea of *prosopic* union in his later work, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*.

Aubrey Vine analyzes Nestorius’ terminology in *The Bazaar of Heracleides*. Vine demonstrates that in Nestorius, the *prosopon* means the self-revelation and self-manifestation of a particular *ousia*. The *prosopon* consists of the underlying individuality and the manifestation of that individuality. Prosopon has an indispensable relation with *ousia* and nature because *prosopon* is the manifestation of an *ousia* according to its nature. There is a correspondence between *ousia* and nature. Likewise, *prosopon* also has “the same necessary correspondence” with an *ousia* and its nature. There is “no *prosopon* without an underlying *ousia* to give it a ground of existence” and “the *prosopon* of an *ousia* is as necessarily related to it as is its nature.”

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55 Vine, 99-100.

56 Ibid., 105.
prosopon has its own nature. Hence, the union of ousiai necessarily involves the union of nature, and the union of ousiai and natures involves the union of prosopa. John McGuckin analyses the relation between the divine prosopon and the human prosopon in Nestorius’ Christology. The two prosopa, the human and the divine, are clearly distinguished, explains McGuckin. First, Jesus is a man who is born from a human womb and grows as a human child. As an ordinary human, he has a human mind and emotions. Those features are all the prosopic mark of human nature and manifest his human prosopon. The human prosopon is designated as Jesus. Second, Christ also has the divine prosopon, which is the manifestation of his divine nature. He pre-existed as the divine Logos and displays the divine power in raising the dead and walking on the sea. The divine prosopon is designated as the Logos of God. While the two prosopa are clearly separated in the being of Christ, there are not two Christs. The divine prosopon and the human prosopon coexist in one prosopon of Christ. We thus encounter “unity as well as diversity in the single concrete figure of ‘the Christ.” This one common prosopon is designated as “Christ, Only Begotten, Son, or Lord.”

1.2.3.2 Two aspects of prosopon in Nestorius

Christ has one single prosopon which consists of the human prosopon and the divine prosopon. Nevertheless, it is not clear how the two prosopa make one composite prosopon. Are they combined with one another and make a third prosopon? Is the one prosopon the locus of the two prosopa or only an aggregate of the two?

A. Vine analyzes the relation among the divine prosopon, the human prosopon,

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57 Ibid.
58 McGuckin, 151.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., 152.
61 Ibid.
and the one single composite *prosopon* in Nestorius’ Christology. He distinguishes two aspects of Nestorius’ *prosopon*. One is “the autogenous *prosopon,*” in which the *ousia* is manifesting itself in its nature without making use of anything other than itself. For example, the *ousia* of desk manifests itself in the *prosopon* of desk by itself. Most inanimate *prosopa* have this autogenous character. The other is “the allogenous *prosopon,*” which is the self-manifestation of an *ousia* and nature by making use of other *ousia* and natures for its self-manifestation. Thus, the *prosopon* is the self-manifestation of that *ousia* and nature, but contains elements not within its own *ousia* and nature, of which it is making use by entering into voluntary synthetic union. Many animate *prosopa* utilize the allogenous *prosopa*. For example, a baseball player manifests his *ousia* through glove, bat, and uniform. Without those instruments, he cannot show himself as a real baseball player. Thus, he makes use of the *prosopa* of glove, bat, and uniform to manifest the *prosopon* of a baseball player. In such a case, the *prosopon* of the baseball player is the allogenous *prosopon* because his *prosopon* is manifested through other *prosopa*.

To explain the two types of the *prosopon* in the context of the Incarnation, I refer to Nestorius’ example of a king and a servant. When a king takes the *prosopon* of a servant as his own *prosopon*, his own *prosopon* of king dwells in the *prosopon* of servant. In such a case, the servant is revered in the *prosopon* of king. The *prosopon* of king and that of servant are one because the king possesses the same *prosopon*. 

Applying Vine’s framework to this example, the king originally has the autogenous *prosopon* of king, but he throws away his garment and his throne and
becomes a servant. Nevertheless, his prosopon of king still remains. The king makes use of the prosopon of servant for manifesting his prosopon of king. Thus, his prosopon is the allogenous prosopon. We cannot divide the prosopon of king and that of servant because a king uses the prosopon of servant as his own prosopon. Likewise, the Logos of God has the divine prosopon, but this prosopon reveals itself in the human prosopon as his own prosopon. The human prosopon is the instrument for the divine prosopon’s self-manifestation. When the divine prosopon makes use of the human prosopon, the divine prosopon can possess the human prosopon as its own. Nevertheless, the human prosopon is not abolished because it is an instrument for a full manifestation of the divine prosopon. In such a case, there is only one composite prosopon of the divine-human, Jesus Christ, who consists of the two prosopa. Jesus Christ is the synthesis of the divinity and the humanity in his single prosopon. Vine’s view of Nestorian prosopon theory is appropriate to explain the complex relation between the two prosopa and one composite prosopon in Nestorius’ Christology.

Nestorius explains the relation of the two prosopa by the example of the dweller and the place where one dwells. The dweller dwells in the nature and “the dweller is he who dwells in him in whom there is dwelling, and he has a prosopon, while he in whom there is dwelling has the prosopon of him who dwells. So by the use of their prosopa as though they were making use of their own authoritatively, the one is the other and the other the one, the one and the other abiding just as they are in their natures.” 65 This means that one autogenous prosopon consists of dweller and the place where one dwells. In the human prosopon of Jesus, Jesus dwells in the human nature and thus he can appear as a human, while in the divine prosopon of the Logos, the Logos dwells in the divine nature and thus it can appear as God. In the prosopic union, one prosopon can make use

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65 Ibid., 233.
of another *prosopon* for its self-manifestation. In such a case, one *prosopon* can dwell in another *prosopon*, and vice versa. The divine *prosopon* of the Logos can dwell in the human *prosopon* for its self-manifestation and the human *prosopon* of Jesus can dwell in the divine *prosopon* and show himself as a real human. In brief, the *prosopa* can inter-dwell and make use of one another. However, we cannot apply the Cartesian model of subjectivity to this two *prosopa* theory because the two *prosopa* would indicate the intellectual activities of two subjectivities and thus the impossibility of inter-dwelling one another.

1.2.3.3 Voluntary union of the two *prosopa* in the Incarnation

Nestorius holds that the one Christ must be fully divine and also fully human. To be fully divine means that the Logos of God is impassible, immortal, and eternal. This depends on the fact that he is consubstantial with the Father. On the other hand, to be fully human means that Christ has a human nature. He is mortal, passible, created, and has a human mind and body. The divine nature and the human nature correspond to the divine *prosopon* and the human *prosopon*, respectively. They are united in the one common *prosopon* of Jesus Christ.

In the Incarnation, what is the means for the union of the two *prosopa* in one *prosopon*? Like Cyril, Nestorius explains the process of the Incarnation by employing the notion of *kenosis*. In the *kenosis*, the Logos of God humbled himself and became a man and then humbled himself unto death on the cross, making use of the human *prosopon*, who died and was crucified and exalted. The *prosopon* of the Logos has the divine nature. The human *prosopon* has the human nature in terms of dying on the cross and being exalted. Christ has two natures, the likeness of God and the likeness of a servant.

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66 Ibid., 172.

67 Ibid.
Nevertheless, Christ has one *prosopon* of two natures because there is only one name which is more excellent than all names.\(^{68}\)

In Vine’s interpretation, Nestorius’ *kenosis* means that the Logos, wishing to reveal itself through the synthesis of Jesus Christ, decides to limit itself to the range of its nature which can manifest and express itself through the synthesis of humanity.\(^ {69}\) This is the voluntary action of the Logos. Nestorius explains that the *ousia* of God is linked with the *ousia* of the human by a mutually voluntary union, not by a natural union. The human Jesus, through the freedom of his human will, likewise accepts the *prosopon* of God. The divine *prosopon* and the human *prosopon* are united with one another in the use of the *prosopon* and not in a natural union.\(^ {70}\) This voluntary union consists in the connection through love, adoption, and acknowledgment between God and the human in Christ.\(^ {71}\) The two *prosopa* have an analogical relationship which is described as “conjunction,” and “association.”\(^ {72}\) The Logos binds itself to the human Jesus in intimate union and associates humanity, without destroying the free capacity of human agency.

In the Incarnation, the Logos of God voluntarily assumes the human *prosopon* as its own *prosopon*. Apart from this *prosopon*, Jesus Christ is not divine or appertaining to honor or authority. On the other hand, Christ is accepted by his Father in his voluntary obedience as a servant. He is a sinless man because of his complete obedience to God.\(^ {73}\) Nevertheless, if he ceased to be obedient to the will of God, the *prosopon* of God would

\(^ {68}\) Ibid., 57.

\(^ {69}\) Vine, 168.

\(^ {70}\) Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 38.

\(^ {71}\) Ibid., 54-55.


become separated from Jesus. In his analysis of Nestorius’ Christology, Vine proposes the concept of the “potentially separate man Jesus.” There was never a mere man \textit{(psilanthropos)} Jesus, who existed separate from God the Word. Nevertheless, if God had withdrawn Godself from Christ, a separate man Jesus would have at once come into existence.\textsuperscript{74}

When Vine explains this relation of the divine and the human in Nestorius’ Christology, he invents his own term, “quasi-\textit{ousia},” which refers to the one composite \textit{ousia}, consisting of the divine \textit{ousia} and the human \textit{ousia}. The \textit{ousia} of God and that of the human are united and interactive in the quasi-\textit{ousia} of the synthesis of Christ.\textsuperscript{75} This quasi-\textit{ousia} is mutually synthetic, voluntary, loving, and adoptive.\textsuperscript{76} Vine also coins the term “quasi-\textit{prosopon}.” When the \textit{prosopon} of God and that of the human are united, God the Word makes use of the human \textit{prosopon} of Jesus as God’s own \textit{prosopon}. In this case, Jesus Christ may be regarded as a synthesis with a quasi-\textit{prosopon}, or as an allogenous \textit{prosopon} of the Logos of God during a certain period.\textsuperscript{77} Jesus Christ is one, single quasi-\textit{prosopon} of the synthesis, which consists of the allogenous \textit{prosopon} of the Logos and the autogenous \textit{prosopon} of the hypothetically separate man Jesus.\textsuperscript{78}

1.2.3.4 Denying the communication of the idioms

In this view of \textit{prosopic} union, Nestorius denies the communication of idioms in Christ. When we make a statement about Christ, we have to be conscious of the distinction between his divine \textit{prosopon}, his human \textit{prosopon}, and his one composite \textit{prosopon}. The Logos of God is unchangeable and invariable. Thus, one cannot predicate

\textsuperscript{74} Vine, 156.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 167.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 166.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 172.
human attributes of the Logos because the human attributes are changeable and variable.\footnote{Nestorius, \textit{Bazaar of Heracleides}, 212.}

For example, we cannot say, “The Son of God is suffering” because this statement contradicts the unchangeable nature of divinity. The divine \textit{prosopon} is infinite and so cannot be compatible with the human \textit{prosopon}, which is finite. The properties of the human \textit{prosopon} cannot be predicated of the properties of the divine \textit{prosopon}. If the properties of the human \textit{prosopon} are predicated of the properties of the divine \textit{prosopon}, the divine \textit{prosopon} loses its infinite nature. Such a diminished divinity cannot lead humans to true redemption. On the other hand, we cannot say, “the Son of man is glorified” because this statement does not reflect the real weakness and limitation of humanity, which is incompatible with the divine \textit{prosopon}. Such overrated humanity cannot represent sinful human reality and cannot lead humans to true redemption. We can only say, “Christ is suffering” and “Christ is glorified.” Christ can only be the synthesis of the divine and human \textit{prosopa}. Though the two \textit{prosopa} have a mutually inter-dwelling relationship, there is no locus for the union of these \textit{prosopa} in Nestorius’ Christology. Hence, the communication of idioms is not possible because there is no single, real subjectivity which sustains the two natures. For Nestorius, Jesus Christ is only an aggregate of the two \textit{prosopa}. Without this fundamental, singular subjectivity, we cannot exchange the divine and the human properties with one another.

The impossibility of the communication of idioms is connected with Nestorian soteriology. Christ takes human nature in order to abolish the guilt of the first man Adam and in order to restore the image of God, which humans had lost through his guilt.\footnote{Ibid., 62.} The sin of the human being comes from Adam’s disobedience to God. In contrast, Christ assumed voluntary obedience to the Father’s will and took human nature, which is sinful.
Nevertheless, his humanity is not subjected to sin because he is obedient to God in his will. In Christ, the divine prosopon of the Logos took the human prosopon as his own prosopon in his obedience to the Father. Two prosopa are conjoined with one another in Christ’s voluntary obedience to the Father. Christ conforms to the Father in his will and thus possesses “one purpose, one will, one intelligence, indistinguishable and indivisible as in one” with the Father in his composite prosopon. Christ is in the likeness of servant and in the likeness of God and thus possesses the same prosopon of humiliation and exaltation. Christ’s composite prosopon is the nexus of the two prosopa, but it is not the locus of the interchange of the attributes of the two prosopa.

This one prosopon of Christ is the foundation of human salvation. Christ’s voluntary obedience enables a true human redemption from sin. Human redemption is the regaining of the relation between God and the human and the restoral of the image of God in the human. In Nestorius’ view of salvation, however, though this restoral takes place, there is no deification of the human. The reason is that the Logos unites itself to humanity in its will, not in its nature and thus salvation consists solely of the human’s restored relation to God and does not bring transformation of human nature itself.

1.2.3.5 Problems with Nestorius’ Christology

There are several problems with Nestorius’ Christology. First, his understanding of prosopon is only that of a self-manifestation of ousia or appearance of a nature, while Cyril uses this term as the individual concrete reality. Hence, Nestorius’ two prosopa theory is easily construed by Cyril as indicating two persons or as the “two Son’s theory”

81 Ibid., 63.
82 Ibid., 69.
83 Ibid., 70.
84 Ibid., 70.
85 Ibid., 62.
mentioned above. He objected that Nestorius divides the two *hypostaseis* or *prosopa* in Christ. Cyril uses *prosopon* as a synonym for *hypostasis*, which means for him individual reality. In his context, *prosopon* means the person who is a rational being, and indicates the external aspect of the individual, with the potential to have a personal relation with another *prosopon* (face to face), while *hypostasis* emphasizes the internal aspect of the individual. Nestorius, on the other hand, was not able to arrive at the individual reality of Christ, which is the foundation of subjectivity. The reason is that Nestorius remained on the level of the nature or *ousia* of Christ and so located the subjectivity of Christ in the composite *prosopon*—the composite of the self-manifestation of the two natures.

Second, Nestorius held that *hypostasis* means *ousia* or nature. Nestorius interpreted Cyril’s Christological conceptions of “hypostatic union” as fundamentally compromising the abiding separateness of the natures in Christ. Nestorius held that *hypostasis* is equivalent to *ousia*. Thus, “hypostatic union” signifies an *ousic* or natural union for him, which seems to mean that God’s *ousia* was changed and became the *ousia* of the human at the moment of the Incarnation. He denies *ousic* or natural union because in his view, in the Incarnation, the Logos of God cannot forge a unity with humanity in one nature because it means that the Logos has to change itself to be integrated with human nature. This constitutes the mixture or confusion of the two natures. As noted, Nestorius held that the union of the Logos of God with the human nature is neither hypostatic nor natural, but voluntary, because this union is made by the will of God and Jesus, not by nature. In Nestorius, there are elements of voluntarism (which were later developed in the theology of William of Ockham), which emphasizes the divine freedom

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88 Ibid., 157.
89 Ibid., 216.
and omnipotence with regard to human salvation. Nestorius did not understand the deeper meaning of *hypostasis* proposed by Cyril as he could not arrive at the individual reality of Christ, which is the foundation of subjectivity.

Third, for Nestorius, because Jesus Christ is only the synthesis which consists of the divine *prosopon* and the human *prosopon* in the voluntary union, if Christ were to reject the relation with God, the synthesis could theoretically be dissolved and the man Jesus would exist separately from the divine Logos (*homo assumptus*). As noted, Christ’s one single *prosopon* is not the locus of the union of the two *prosopa*, but only a composite of the two *prosopa*. Thus, the one *prosopon* could be lost if the conjunction of the two *prosopa* were dissolved. Cyril criticizes Nestorius’ manner of envisaging the union, which is the conjunction (*synapheia*) of the two *prosopa* in terms of his dignity, or authority, but not in terms of natural union.⁹⁰ Against Nestorius, Cyril emphasizes the Logos of God, who is deeply immersed in humanity in his *hypostasis* and thus the divine nature cannot be separated from the human nature in his *hypostasis*.⁹¹ We do not separate God and the human as if they were connected to one another by a unity of dignity or sovereignty, nor do we designate specifically a Christ who is the Word of God and then specify another Christ, the one who is born of a woman.⁹²

1.2.4 Single subjectivity in the Christology of Cyril and Nestorius

Here I summarize how Cyril and Nestorius construe the relation between the two natures with respect to the subjectivity of Christ. Cyril recognizes the divine *hypostasis* as the foundation of Christ’s single, true subjectivity and considers this *hypostasis* the locus of the union of the divine and human natures. In contrast, Nestorius recognizes one


⁹² Ibid.
composite *prosopon* of Christ as a single subjectivity. However, in his terminology, *prosopon* means self-manifestation of *ousia*, not individual concrete reality. The *prosopon* expresses its *ousia* to others. He has a human *prosopon* and a divine *prosopon*, which undertake self-manifestation autonomously (*autogeneous *prosopon*). They also inter-dwell one another and the divine *prosopon* makes use of the human *prosopon* for its self-manifestation, and vice versa (*allogeneous *prosopon*). However, Nestorius only acknowledges one composite *prosopon*, which exists at the level of *ousia*, and does not recognize the foundation of subjectivity, which is the divine *hypostasis* for Cyril. Hence, he does not identify a real locus of the union of divinity and humanity because there cannot be such a union in Nestorian Christology.

However, in conceiving the role of Christ’s human consciousness in the divine Logos, Nestorius tries to save the role of free decision in Christ’s human consciousness, whereas Cyril does not emphasize the meaning of his human soul and *nous* in the divine Logos. In Nestorius, because Christ’s human *prosopon* and divine *prosopon* have a voluntary union with one another, his human consciousness plays an active role in accepting the divine Logos. The exercise of free will in human consciousness makes possible Jesus Christ, who is the synthesis of God and the human. Nestorius regards Christ’s human free will as indispensable for the creation of Jesus Christ himself because Christ’s voluntary obedience enables the conjunction of the divine *prosopon* and the human *prosopon* in one composite *prosopon* of Christ.

In contrast, in Cyril, Christ’s human consciousness does not play an active role. The Logos of God is originally united with his humanity in his mother’s womb and his humanity subsists in the unity with the divine Logos. The Logos assumes the whole humanity, which contains the human body and soul. However, his human body and soul are merely the instruments of the divine Logos, which is the foundation of single
subjectivity. His human soul and nous thus play a merely auxiliary role in the self-exercise of the being of Christ.

In my view, Nestorius divides Christ’s divine prosopon and human prosopon too sharply and emphasizes the self-contained character of each prosopon, but fails to establish the personal unity of Christ in his theory of voluntary union because he does not find a true, single subjectivity of Christ, which is sustained by his individual concrete reality. In his model of composition, the composite prosopon is equal to the subjectivity of Christ and thus his subjectivity is also a kind of nature.

On the other hand, Cyril discovered the true, individual subjectivity of Christ in the divine hypostasis. The hypostasis sustains the union of the two natures as the locus of their union. Nevertheless, in Cyril’s composition model, the hypostasis does not clearly transcend the two natures on the ontological level. The two natures come together in the single hypostasis and the hypostasis consists of the two natures. In this model, we cannot separate the divine nature from the divine hypostasis. From Cyril’s perspective, the power of the Logos unites itself with humanity and dominates the human nature. In this case, the distinction between the energy of the Logos and the Logos itself is not clear. Though Cyril himself identifies with the Dyophysite Christology, he also has a tendency toward “semi-Monophysitism,” because Christ’s human nature is subjected to (and largely subsumed by) the divine Logos. In particular, it is not clear how the human nature can be a concrete subsistent reality and play a positive, specific role in the divine hypostasis. These characteristics of Cyril’s theology influenced the Monophysite theologians.

Consequently, the problems inherent in the Christologies of both theologians catalyzed the Christological controversies (particularly the various forms of Monophysitism) from the fifth to the sixth centuries. In what follows, I explore the way in which the human nature is related to the divine hypostasis and how the human nature
realizes its concrete subsistent reality and plays an active role in human salvation. Further, I elucidate the specific role of Christ’s human consciousness and how it is juxtaposed with the single subjectivity without dissolving his personal identity.

1.3 The Relation between the Human Nature and the Divine Hypostasis: the Chalcedonian Definition and Neo-Chalcedonian Christology

1.3.1 The Monophysite controversy and the Council of Chalcedon

In Cyril’s theology, “one incarnate nature of the Logos of God” can be interpreted in two ways. One interpretation, consonant with Chalcedon, is that “one incarnate nature” means the single hypostasis, which is an individual concrete reality. This interpretation holds that the two natures remain in Christ after the Incarnation, with the single nature (hypostasis) forming the union of the two natures. However, the single nature does not transcend the two natures. In this case, the divine activity is directly connected with the divine hypostasis.

Another interpretation is that “one incarnate nature” means a composite of the two natures. The single nature is on the same ontological level as the two natures because it is not the locus of the union of the two natures in this interpretation. This position is connected with Cyril’s other formula, “out of two natures,” and directly led to Monophysitism.

As I already noted, the Monophysite theologians are divided into two positions. One is the extreme form of Monophysitism, which holds that the human nature is completely absorbed by the divine nature and thus there is only one, divine nature in Christ. The other position, the moderate Monophysitism, holds that Christ consists of the two natures, neither of which has been lost or reduced after the union. Godhead and human personhood continue to exist in Christ after the Incarnation. Nevertheless, the union is so intimate that there is only one incarnate nature of the divine Logos. In this
case, the single *phasis* indicates the center of subjectivity.

Before the Council of Chalcedon, the monk Eutyches argued for the extreme form of Monophysitism. He held that Christ is from two natures before the union of divinity and humanity, but has only the divine nature in him after the union because his human nature is consumed by the divine nature. It follows that he denied Christ’s consubstantiality with the human.\(^3\)

Pope Leo I opposed Eutyches’ Monophysitism in his letter to Flavian (the Tome of Leo). Leo held that the properties of the two natures are preserved and coexist in one *prosopon* or *hypostasis*. In Jesus Christ, the distinctive character of each nature is maintained while the two are united in one person (*prosopon*). The Logos of God assumed the form of servant without any defilement of sin, augmenting the human without diminishing the divine, since that emptying through which the invisible made itself visible, and the maker and the master of the universe chose to become one with humanity, was a condescension of compassion and not a deficiency of power.\(^4\) The one who is God is also truly human. God encompasses both the lowliness of the human and the greatness of the Godhead. God does not undergo change through compassionate identification with the human, and the human is not consumed by the greatness of the divine dignity. For each form carries out what is proper to it in communion with the other, the Logos achieving what is properly of the Logos, while the body accomplishes what is properly of the body.\(^5\) Leo emphasizes the specific role of the human nature in Christ as well as that of the divine nature. Against Eutyches, he preserves Christ’s real humanity.

Eutychian Monophysitism thus provoked serious controversy and precipitated the


\(^5\) Ibid., 19.
council of Chalcedon in 451. In the Council, there was a conflict surrounding the question of whether Christ is “out of two natures” or “in two natures.” Those who insisted upon the “out of two natures” formula were theologians who belonged to the moderate Monophysitism. They held that Christ has a single nature out of the two natures after the Incarnation. They rejected the Tome of Leo. They cannot say that Christ is still in the two natures. Dioscorus of Alexandria (?-454) belongs to this position. Dioscorus acknowledges Christ’s consubstantiality with both God and humans. He holds that Christ has a twofoldness of divinity and humanity, but it does not involve a division of the one Christ into the two natures. He was opposed to confusion, change, division, or mixture of the two natures. However, he could not accept the coexistence of the two distinct natures of Christ after the incarnation.

In contrast, those who insisted upon the “in two natures” formula were Dyophysite theologians, whose position was based on Cyril’s hypostatic union, but also influenced by Leo’s Tome in terms of a clear distinction between the two natures. They held that the two natures of Christ remain intact after the Incarnation. Finally, “Christ in two natures” was established in the Chalcedonian definition of faith, and Eutyches and Dioscorus were condemned by the bishops of the council. The Chalcedonian definition declares that Christ retains the divine nature and the human nature after the Incarnation and the distinctive character of each nature is preserved and comes together into one prosopon and one hypostasis. This position avoids a tertium quid. This perspective was deeply influenced by Leo’s Tome.

Following the council, many Monophysite theologians remained unsatisfied with the Chalcedonian definition. In particular, Severus of Antioch (465-538), Timothy

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96 Samuel, 185.
97 Ibid., 182.
Aelurus, and Philoxenos of Mabogh, insisted that the definition is inherently Nestorian because of the division of the two natures in Christ. Severus held that when the earlier Fathers used “two natures,” it meant that Christ is God and human at the same time though it does not imply a division. The union of natures does not affect the reality, perfection, and integrity of each nature, which continues dynamically in one Christ. Nevertheless, we cannot divide Christ into the two natures and make a composite union without confusion, change, division and separation.  

1.3.2 Neo-Chalcedonian Christology

Several theologians defended the Chalcedonian definition against Monophysite Christology. They dialogued with the Monophysite theologians and persuaded them to accept the Chalcedonian definition. Their thought is called “neo-Chalcedonism.” Nephalius of Alexandria, John of Scythopolis, John the Grammarian, Leontius of Jerusalem, and Leontius of Byzantium belong to this group of theologians.

Eugene M. Ludwig identifies four characteristics of Neo-Chalcedonism. First, neo-Chalcedonian theologians accepted both Monophysite and Dyophysite language as together necessary for orthodoxy. They consider both Cyril’s “mia physis” (or mia hypostasis) formula and the Chalcedonian “dyo physeis” formula necessary for orthodoxy. They equated Cyril’s physis/hypostasis with the hypostasis/prosopon of Chalcedon.  

Second, they used a theopaschite formula, “God suffered in the flesh.” The formula, “One of the Trinity suffered [in the flesh]” first appeared in the Henotikon of 482 and became a Monophysite slogan against Chalcedon. It aimed at upholding the unity of Christ and at emphasizing the divine activity of the Trinity in the work of human

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98 Ibid., 192-194.

salvation. Neo-Chalcedonians applied this formula for indicating the sameness between the second person of the Trinity and the person of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{100}

Third, they developed the “two nativities of God the Word” motif. One nativity is from eternity—from the Father—and the other nativity is in time, from the \textit{theotokos}, Mary.\textsuperscript{101}

Fourth, they use Cappadocian Trinitarian terms to understand Christological terms and the development of a theory of “synthetic union.” For Cappadocians, the divine \textit{ousia} was “the principle of unity” and the three \textit{hypostaseis} were “principles of distinction.” In the neo-Chalcedonian Christology, “the one \textit{hypostasis} becomes the principle of unity” in Christ. “The two \textit{physeis} are defined like \textit{ousia} as ‘that which is common [to all members of a class], to \textit{koinon}’ and become the basis of distinction of the two natures.”\textsuperscript{102}

Neo-Chalcedonian Christological terminology “goes beyond the Cappadocian conception of \textit{hypostasis} as ‘to \textit{idion}, that which is individual’ and defines \textit{hypostasis} as ‘that which exists by itself.’” This definition, together with “the alignment of \textit{physis/ousia} to express commonality, and \textit{hypostasis/prosopon} to express individuality, form the metaphysical basis of neo-Chalcedonian Christology.” Moreover, “neo-Chalcedonian metaphysics is the assertion that things which are not \textit{homoousios} with each other [divine \textit{ousia} and human \textit{ousia}] are united hypostatically or synthetically.”\textsuperscript{103}

Further, I add one more point. The neo-Chalcedonian theologians applied the distinction of hypostatic properties and natural properties from Cappadocian Trinitarian theology to Christology. In the Trinity, the divine nature (substance) has its own natural property. For example, God is immortal, immutable, and indestructible. God is one, good,

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 10-11.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 11-12.
true, the creator of all beings, and so forth. These characteristics are commonly shared by
the three hypostaseis (persons), the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In contrast, each
hypostasis has its own hypostatic properties. For example, the Father himself is
unbegotten, but he begets the Son and spirates the Holy Spirit. The Son is begotten by the
Father. The Holy Spirit is spirated by the Father through the Son. The relationship
between one person to the other persons signifies the one person’s hypostatic properties.
Each person has particular hypostatic properties and the hypostatic properties enable the
individuality of the person.

The neo-Chalcedonian theologians applied the distinction of the natural and
hypostatic properties to analyze the relation between the two natures and the one
hypostasis in Christ. The Logos is the hypostasis of Christ because the Logos has its own
hypostatic properties. However, his two natures cannot have hypostatic properties. If the
human nature possesses hypostatic properties, it becomes a human hypostasis. As a result,
Christ would possess a divine hypostasis and a human hypostasis. This view creates a
division in the Person of Christ. Nevertheless, the human hypostasis does not exist,
though the human nature is not an abstract but a concrete reality. Therefore, the
neo-Chalcedonians struggled with explaining the concreteness of Christ’s human nature
in relation to the divine hypostasis.

Neo-Chalcedonians defended the Chalcedonian Dyophysite definition, namely
that the two natures subsist in the divine hypostasis, and refuted the Monophysite
Christology in the indispensable relation between nature and hypostasis. They deepened
the understanding of hypostasis from “individual” to “the individual existence,” which
exists by itself. This individual existence “sustains” the two natures as an ontological
foundation. If there is one single nature of Christ, they say, the nature cannot exist by
itself and has to be sustained by the hypostasis. However, the human nature is not
accompanied by a human hypostasis because there is no human hypostasis in Christ, but the human nature is sustained by the divine hypostasis. To clarify the relation between Christ’s human nature and the divine hypostasis, Neo-Chalcedonian theologians introduced the idea of composite hypostasis and the notion of anhypostasis/enhypostasis.\(^{104}\)

1.3.3 Leontius of Byzantium’s view of the hypostatic union

1.3.3.1 Composite hypostasis in Leontius of Byzantium

Leontius of Byzantium (485-c.543) is a well-known Neo-Chalcedonian theologian. Leontius introduced the Cappadocian concept of ousial/physis and hypostasis in Christology. In Cappadocian Trinitarian theology, ousial/physis means “common nature” or “substance” as genus and form. Hypostasis means the concrete individual, the particular existence, which is separated from other hypostaseis according to its characters or properties.

Leontius explains that physis is predicated of being, but hypostasis is of “being-by-oneself” (\textit{tou kath’ heauto einai}). Physis “presents the character of genus, but hypostasis expresses individual identity.”\(^{105}\) He also explains, “the definition of a hypostasis is either what is the same in nature but different in number (e.g. the three divine persons in the Trinity), or what is put together from different natures but shares reciprocally in a common being (e.g. soul and body in one human person).” For example, each human is a human hypostasis, consisting of the two natures, namely soul and body. The hypostasis is common to the two natures, but each nature is individual, having a different structure (logos) of being. This is “composite (synthetos) hypostasis,” which is

\[^{104}\text{Enhypostasis means the human nature and the divine nature of Christ can subsists in the divine hypostasis. Anhypostasis means the two natures cannot subsist without the divine hypostasis. These concepts will be discussed in detail below.}\]

distinguished from “a composite nature.”

In Jesus Christ, there is “one hypostasis of divinity and humanity” and thus “predicates of his hypostasis are common to both (natures); but there is not one nature, and therefore the characteristics of his natures are not (common to both).” Leontius holds that hypostasis is the locus of the union of the two natures and thus “one hypostasis and one prosopon can receive opposite and contradictory predicates together and in the same subject.”

He analyzes the two types of relation (schēsis) in the Trinity. One is that “the Son is the same as the Father,” the other is that “the Son is distinguished from” the Father. “The one is called by the title ‘physis’ and the other is known by the name hypostasis.”

This relation is applied to the hypostatic union. The human hypostasis of each human consists of its body and soul. In this case, the human hypostasis is the whole, but its body and soul are the parts. Those parts are distinguished, but united with one another and have mutual relationship. Likewise, in Christ, his divine hypostasis is whole, and the two natures are its parts. The Son “is related wholly as a hypostasis to the Father” because of his divinity, which is together with his humanity. At the same time, the Son “is related wholly as a hypostasis to us” because of his humanity, which co-inherits with his divinity. His hypostasis is related with the Father and human through its parts, namely the divine nature and the human nature.

In Leontius’ view, the concrete human individual is a “composite hypostasis”

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106 Ibid., PG 86, 1280AB. English translation in ibid., 262.

107 Leontius of Byzantium, Adversus Argumenta Severi 8, PG 86, 1945CD. English translation in ibid., 258-259.

108 Ibid., PG 86, 1944 B. English translation in ibid., 249.

109 Leontius of Byzantium, Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos, PG 86, 1288AB. English translation in ibid., 252.

110 Ibid., PG 86, 1288D-1289A. English translation in ibid., 252.
Because it remains an inextricable union of soul and body. Thus, every human hypostasis contains a kind of hypostatic union of spiritual and material realities. Likewise, Christ has a composite hypostasis, which consists of the two natures. In this case, the two natures are parts and the hypostasis is the whole.

1.3.3.2 The mode of union

The moderate Monophysite theologians held that the union of the divine nature and the human nature exists in the one divine nature. However, Leontius argues that nature and union are opposite because they are different. One nature out of the two natures indicates the confusion of the two natures.

Leontius considers “the mode of union” (tropos tēs henōseōs), rather than the structure of nature. Brian. E. Daley argues that Leontius’ Christology focuses on “the historical concreteness of the person of Christ.” The task of this Christology is “not to investigate what God or the human person is, not to examine either divine or human nature in themselves or to ask how either can be the source from which a Savior springs.” Rather its task is “to look at the ‘fact’ of Christ, as faith perceives him—the fact of a single individual’s being both God and a man—and to reflect on ‘the mode of union’: on the how of this stunningly composite person, on the meaning for us of the way God has chosen to become a healing presence in the toils of human history, and of the way Jesus

111 Thomas Cattoi explicates the specific role of Leontius’ composite hypostasis. “What sets Leontius’ Christology apart from the standard Chalcedonian position” is “the interpretation given to the notion of henōsis kath’ hypostasin, where the principle of unity that sustains and informs the life and mission of the incarnate Christ comes into being as the Logos enters the created order and embraces the concrete reality of our flesh. This notion of a hypostasis emerging kata synthesin—a composite principle of subjectivity brought together by the blending of distinct ontological realities.” Thomas Cattoi, “An Evagrian ὑπόστασις? Leontios of Byzantium and the ‘composite subjectivity’ of the person of Christ,” Studia Patristica LIV (2012): 6.


113 Ibid., PG 86, 1940BC. English translation is in ibid., 257.
has succeeded in living a human life divinely, in being truly Son of God.”

The mode of union stems from the notion of the “modes of existence” (tropoi tēs hyparxeōs) in Cappadocian Trinitarian theology. The modes of existence indicate the different mode of existence of each person in the Trinity. For example, the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Spirit is spirated by the Father through the Son. Each person has different hypostatic characteristics and realizes a different mode of existence.

Leontius uses this category to interpret the union of the two natures. The mode of union explicates how Christ appears himself as fully divine and fully human in the world as the incarnate Logos. In particular, the mode of union indicates two things about Christ’s humanity. First, Christ has a concrete universal humanity which is common to us in the unity of the Logos even though he does not have the human hypostasis. Second, Christ’s humanity consists of a different mode from other, ordinary humans because he has his unique characteristics in the unity of the Logos. These unique characteristics are described in several ways. For example, Jesus is a Jewish man, the son of Mary; he has no sin, and so forth. Moreover, Leontius introduced the notions, enhypostasis and anhypostasis to his Christology, which explicates the mode of union between the human nature and the divine hypostasis.

1.3.3.3 Leontius of Byzantium’s anhypostasis and enhypostasis

Leontius introduced the notion of anhypostasis and enhypostasis to indicate the relation of the human nature and the divine Logos in Jesus Christ. In the modern interpretation, the terms mean the human nature of Jesus has no subsistence (an-hypostasis) apart from the union with the Logos, but the human nature can have its

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114 Daley, “‘Richer Union’: Leontius of Byzantium and the Relationship of Human and Divine Christ,” 261. Italics are original.

115 Gregory of Nyssa, Contra Eunomium I: GNO I, 89.20f., 17-20.
being only through its subsistence “in” the Incarnate Son of God (en-hypostasis).\footnote{F. LeRon Shults, “A Dubious Christological Formula: From Leontius of Byzantium to Karl Barth,” in \textit{Theological Studies} 57 (1996): 431.}

Originally, \textit{anhypostasis} and \textit{enhypostasis} were used as \textit{anhypostaton} and \textit{enhypostaton} by the ancient Church Fathers. The term \textit{anhypostaton} means “not subsisting” and \textit{enhypostaton} means “subsisting.”\footnote{Ibid., 438.} Leontius of Byzantium used these terms while investing them with newer meanings in his Christological work, \textit{Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos}. He held that \textit{hypostasis} and \textit{enhypostaton} are not precisely the same: \textit{hypostasis} indicates the person through characteristic idioms, whereas \textit{enhypostaton} indicates that something is not an accident, which has its being in another and is not seen in itself.\footnote{Leontius Byzantium, \textit{Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos}, in PG 86, 1277CC-1280 A. I refer to English translation in Dirk Krausmüller, “Making Sense of the Formula of Chalcedon: the Cappadocians and Aristotle in Leontius of Byzantium’s \textit{Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos},” in \textit{Vigiliae Christianae} 65 (2011): 487.}

The word \textit{anhypostatos} means “without subsistence or hypostasis”\footnote{Ibid., PG 86, 1277CC-1280 B. I refer to English translation by F. LeRon Shults in “A Dubious Christological Formula: From Leontius of Byzantium to Karl Barth,” 439.} and so \textit{physis} or \textit{ousia}, which is \textit{anhypostatos}, cannot exist.\footnote{Ibid., PG 86, 1277CC-1280 A. I refer to English translation in Dirk Krausmüller, “Making Sense of the Formula of Chalcedon: the Cappadocians and Aristotle in Leontius of Byzantium’s \textit{Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos},” in \textit{Vigiliae Christianae} 65 (2011): 487.} Thereafter, modern patristic scholar Friedrich Loofs interpreted Leontius’ \textit{enhypostaton} (the adjectival form of \textit{hypostasis}) to signify a nature that has its existence not in its own \textit{hypostasis}, but in the \textit{hypostasis} of another nature.\footnote{Shults, 431.} According to Loofs, Leontius held that the human nature in Christ is not \textit{anhypostatos}, nor \textit{hypostasis}, but \textit{enhypostatos}. The human nature has its subsistence in the Logos (\textit{hypostenai en tō logō}).\footnote{Friedrich Loofs, \textit{Leontius von Byzanz: und die Gleichnamigen Schriftsteller der griechischen Kirche}}
and *enhypostatos* influenced modern Protestant theologians. Karl Barth explains that *anhypostasis* means the human nature has no existence apart from the concrete existence of God. He also explains that *enhypostasis* means that the human nature of Christ acquires existence (subsistence) in the existence of God.\(^{123}\)

*Enhypostasis* means that something has its own reality, but at the same time it does not have a concrete and separate existence. Thus, *enhypostasis* has an intermediate status between *hypostasis* (concrete existence which stands by itself) and *anhypostasis* (non-being). Such an intermediate position regarding *enhypostasis* was introduced by Leontius of Byzantium. His contemporary, Leontius of Jerusalem, also used *enhypostatos* and *anhypostatos*. In his view, there is no nature that is *anhypostatos*. If something is *enhypostatos*, it is not a *hypostasis* which exists by itself, just as if something is *enousios* (in one *ousia*), it is not itself *ousia*. For example, the three *hypostaseis* in the Trinity are *enousios*, but they are not three *ou siai*. Likewise, in the one *hypostasis* of Christ, there are two *physeis* (natures), which are *enhypostatos*. They are not two *hypostases* in Christ.\(^{124}\)

Leontius of Byzantium discusses the concrete relation between the human nature and the divine *hypostasis*. The human nature is not an abstract notion, but a concrete reality together with the divine *hypostasis*. How does the human nature become subsistent reality? Leontius held that the human nature is “the *enhypostatized* nature.” He proposed that “the one which is *enhypostatized*” (*to enhypostaton*) means “*enhypostatized* nature” (*physis enhypostatos*).\(^{125}\) The *enhypostatized* nature means the

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nature which becomes subsistent reality in the unity with the divine hypostasis. In his interpretation of Leontius’ text, David Evans argues that the definition of Leontius’ enhypostatos is that the predicate of the ousia of a being in its mode of union is united as hypostasis to beings of another nature.\(^ {126}\) In Jesus Christ, the natures of the Word and flesh are both enhypostatized natures in the hypostasis of the Logos.\(^ {127}\) The divine nature and the human nature are united not to one another directly, but only within the hypostasis.\(^ {128}\) This resolves the problem of the union of the two natures in one hypostasis.

1.3.3.4 Evaluation of Leontius of Byzantium’s view of the hypostatic union

Leontius of Byzantium holds that Christ has a composite hypostasis, which consists of the divine nature and the human nature. He indicates the composite union of the two enhypostatized natures in the divine Logos. The union of the two natures is sustained by the divine hypostasis. This relation between the natures and the hypostasis becomes clear when Leontius explains that hypostasis and physis/ousia have a different ontological status. The hypostasis is individual existence, which exists by itself. The physis/ousia indicates common essence and nature, which subsists in the hypostasis. Thus, one can say that the composition of the two enhypostatized natures is sustained by Christ’s divine hypostasis. Here one might suggest that when the fundamental hypostasis sustains the two natures, the hypostasis becomes a sort of tertium quid for the two natures.

In this case, on the one hand, we have to recognize that the hypostasis has a different ontological status than the mere composite of the two natures, and sustains their union. On the other hand, we have to show that while the hypostasis is the locus of the union of

\(^ {126}\) Ibid., 136.

\(^ {127}\) Ibid.

\(^ {128}\) Ibid., 138.
the two natures, we must reject the notion that it is some sort of *tertium quid*.

Leontius also introduced the distinction of the hypostatic properties and the natural properties from Cappadocian Christology. Prior to the emergence of neo-Chalcedonian Christology, there is no distinction between the hypostatic and natural properties of the Logos, only between the divine properties and the human properties. Cyril held that the body of the Logos has its own *proprium*, but it is distinguished from the *proprium* of the human. The body was made through a true union with the Logos and served the function of an economic instrument of the Logos.\(^{129}\) However, if the hypostatic properties of the Logos are not clear, the constitution of the *hypostasis* is not clear and finally the divine *hypostasis* is equated with the divine nature, a view reflected in the moderate Monophysitism. Monophysite Christology did not recognize the distinction between the hypostatic properties and the natural properties. As a result, when the Chalcedonian definition declared the distinction of the divine and the human natures after the union, the moderate Monophysite theologians confused natural properties and hypostatic properties. Thus, they presumed that natural difference brings “hypostatic division” in Christ. Leontius’ Christology clarifies such confusion.

Leontius also articulated the relation between the two natures and the divine *hypostasis* as *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis*. In my view, the terms, *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* are useful concepts for exploring the relation between the human nature of Christ and the divine *hypostasis*. In particular, those notions are helpful when considering the juxtaposition of the human consciousness and the single, divine *hypostasis*, which is the Logos of God. The human nature can only become a concrete reality insofar as it subsists within the divine *hypostasis* (*enhypostasis*) and thus his human nature cannot

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exist (*anhypostasis*) outside the *hypostasis* of the Logos. Hence, Christ’s human consciousness cannot subsist outside the single *hypostasis* of the Logos. His human consciousness resides in the divine *hypostasis* even though the human consciousness maintains a cognitive faculty which is separate from the *hypostasis* of the Logos. Nevertheless, it does not destroy the unity of the person in Christ as the human consciousness belongs to the *enhypostatized* nature in the divine Logos.

It seems that the term *enhypostasis* includes the dynamism of the full realization of the human in the divine Logos. In the union with the divine Logos, Christ’s humanity becomes a subsistent reality. His human nature can never be changed to the divine nature, but it can realize its full potential and achieve perfection in the Logos. In this way, his human nature is the *enhypostatized* nature within the divine *hypostasis*. The human nature includes his human consciousness, which becomes subsistent reality in the divine Logos. The human consciousness has a cognitive, subsistent faculty which is separate from the divine Logos because the human nature is *enhypostatized*. Nevertheless, his human consciousness is not a separate independent person (a human *hypostasis*) because it can exist only in the divine *hypostasis*. Furthermore, the human consciousness is not the instrument of the divine subjectivity because the human consciousness is a subsistent reality and thus it has its own intellectual faculty.

Nevertheless, we may wonder how the human consciousness is juxtaposed with the single subjectivity of the divine Logos. In my view, the divine Logos is the foundation of Christ’s true subjectivity and the Logos makes his human consciousness possible. Christ’s human consciousness has its own autonomy and self-determination, but can always be more fully realized by the divine Logos. Therefore, the human consciousness is united with the divine Logos as *enhypostatized* nature even though each maintains its own intellectual function.
1.4 Maximus the Confessor’s View of the Hypostatic Union

1.4.1 Christological controversy of Monenergism-Monothelitism

In the seventh century, the Christological controversy around Monenergism and Monothelitism emerged. Monenergism holds that Christ has only a single *energeia*, namely action. Monothelitism means Christ has only one will. Monenergism and Monothelitism are often linked. These Christological positions have their origin in the early Christological thought from the fourth to the sixth centuries. For example, Apollinarius held that the divine intellect and spirit replaced the human intellect and spirit as the single subjectivity of Christ, and that the Logos had only assumed a human body. Thus, Christ’s *energeia* is the only thing that is divine. Christ also has a single divine will, which depends on the single divine *energeia*. The humanity of Christ participates in the divine *energeia* because it is totally subjected to the Godhead.\(^{130}\)

In the Antiochian tradition, Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428/429), a predecessor of Nestorius, held a Monenergistic position. He clearly divides the divine nature and the human natures of Christ into two *prosopa*. These *prosopa* co-operate with each other and make a single, composite *prosopon* consisting of a single *energeia* and will in Christ.\(^{131}\) Among the anti-Chalcedonian Christologists, Severus of Antioch espoused Monenergism, which had its basis in his Monophysite position. The *energeia* of Christ is single because Christ’s nature-*hypostasis* is single.\(^{132}\) Christ has a single composite nature, which consists of his divine and human natures. Likewise, he has a single, composite *energeia*.\(^{133}\)


\(^{131}\) Ibid., 11.

\(^{132}\) Severus considered the terms, nature and hypostasis in application to Christ as synonyms. Ibid., 19.

\(^{133}\) Ibid., 20.
These three positions have a common character. Christ’s single *energeia* and will are based on the single subjectivity of Christ. Apollinarius finds a single will in Christ’s single subjectivity, which consists of a mixture of the divine intellect and the human body (the human intellect having been eliminated). Theodore and Severus have the same type of composition model. The single subjectivity of Christ is found in the composite of the divine nature and the human nature (the two *prosopa* or two natures). They did not recognize the individual existence (*hypostasis*) as the single subjectivity. Hence, they directly connect Christ’s activity and will with his subjectivity, which is a composite of the two natures.

In the seventh century, Sergius of Constantinople (?-638) proposed a new Christological formula: two natures and one *energeia* of Christ. Essentially, he proposed that this new formula could reconcile the Chalcedonian position (the two natures in the divine *hypostasis* of Christ) with the anti-Chalcedonian, Monophysite position (one composite nature in Christ) by emphasizing the role of the divine nature. He also held that Christ has only one will, which is connected with the single *energeia*. He created his Monenergist-Monothelite doctrine following the Chalcedonian formula (one *hypostasis* and two natures of Christ). I thus characterize his position as Chalcedonian Monenergist-Monothelitism. This Christological position was approved by the Emperor Heraclius.

Nevertheless, some Chalcedonian theologians opposed this formula and held that Christ has both the divine *energeia* and the human *energeia* (Dyenergism) and thus possesses both a divine and a human will (Dyothelitism). Christ has the divine *energeia* and divine will because he is the Logos of God and his life is sustained by the divine activity and the divine will. Nevertheless, Jesus has his own human *energeia* and human will because he travels through his life as a human in the world; in his human will, he is
tempted to oppose the Father’s will at Gethsemane. Nevertheless, finally he accepts the Father’s will in his free decision and is obedient to the Father until his human death. This action leads all humans to salvation. Therefore, his redemptive action is based on his divine and human *energeia* and will.

The two *energeiai* and wills are based on Christ’s divine and human natures. In particular, Dyenergite-Dyothelite Christology was developed by Maximus the Confessor (580-662), who evidences a profound understanding of the Chalcedonian definition. Subsequently, Monenergism and Monothelitism were condemned and anathematized in the Lateran council (649) and the council of Constantinople III (681).

1.4.2 Maximus the Confessor’s composite *hypostasis*

Following the neo-Chalcedonian tradition, Maximus also applies the Cappadocian understanding of *ousia/physis* and *hypostasis/prosopon* to his Christology. *Ousia/physis* indicates what is common and universal. *Hypostasis/prosopon* indicates what is particular.\(^{134}\) *Hypostasis* is a particular, which exists by itself and is distinguished from other *hypostaseis* in the same nature (*homoeidos*) by number (as in the Trinity).\(^{135}\) He also explains that *hypostasis* is individual substance (*ousia*) with idioms, or properties (*meta idiomatōn*), and indicates individual being (*atomon*).\(^{136}\)

Maximus employs the terms “logos of nature” (*logos physeōs*) and “mode of existence” (*tropos hyparkseōs*) in his Christology. Mode of existence came from Cappadocian Trinitarian thought and was already applied by the neo-Chalcedonians to Christology. “Mode of existence” means how one divine person subsists in the Trinity. The unique mode of one person distinguishes it from the other persons. Maximus applies

\(^{134}\) Maximus the Confessor, *Ep.* 15, PG 91, 545A.

\(^{135}\) Maximus the Confessor, *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica*, PG 91, 152D.

\(^{136}\) Maximus the Confessor, *Ep.* 13, PG 91, 528AB.
the relation between the mode of existence and the person of the Trinity to the relation between the human nature and the divine hypostasis of Christ. Christ shares common human nature with us. However, Christ’s human nature is not human hypostasis because his human nature does not have hypostatic properties. His human nature is enhypostatized (individualized) in the hypostasis of the Logos. Thus, his enhypostatized human nature has its own mode, which is different from ordinary humans. The flesh of the Logos is not hypostasis, but enhypostatized in the Logos and through the Logos receives the genesis of being and becoming by the union in the hypostasis. This particularity of Christ’s humanity is divided from the rest of humanity. Maximus holds that “the individuation of the humanity took place in the act of assumption.” The humanity of Christ differs from ours “by a new tropos [mode] of his coming to be.” As N. Madden suggests, “The subsistence of the Logos is the principle of the individuation of his humanity as well as of its union with him. But even if enhypostatisation renders the human nature of Christ individual it does not mean that he assumes an individual.” His human properties are generated by the hypostasis of the Logos in the assumption of his flesh.

Maximus rejects the Monophysite notion of Christ’s one composite nature out of the two natures. When he explains the hypostatic union of Christ, he compares it with the human composite hypostasis, which consists of the substance of body and that of soul. Maximus holds that “Christ is not a composite nature because he exists according to a


138 Ibid., PG 91, 560BC. English translation is in ibid., 189.

139 Madden, “Composite Hypostasis in Maximus the Confessor,” 188.

140 Maximus the Confessor, *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica*, PG91, 60C.

141 Madden, “Composite Hypostasis in Maximus the Confessor,” 188.

hypostatic mode totally independent of the law of composite nature.” However, “he is a composite hypostasis which does not comprise synthetic nature which would be attributed to him according to essence.” It is paradoxical “to contemplate a composite hypostasis without the composite nature being attributed to him according to essence.”\textsuperscript{143} Christ is “a composite hypostasis,” which consists of enhypostatized divine nature and human nature in the divine hypostasis.

In the Counsel of Chalcedon, there is a conflict concerning whether Christ is “out of two natures” or “in two natures.” However, Maximus combines them and declares that Christ is “out of two natures,” “in two natures,” and of “two natures” (\textit{Ou monon gar ek toutōn, alla kai en toutois, kai kurioīteron eipein tauta estin ho Christos}).\textsuperscript{144} According to Demetrios Bathrellos, “Out of two natures” refers to the natures before the union; “in two natures” refers to the natures after the union, and of “two natures” means the identity between Christ and his two natures.\textsuperscript{145} Madden argues that in Maximus the ek and the en “indicate some kind of distinction between the unique subject and the natures, a distinction that is elsewhere formulated as that between the whole and the parts.” In Madden’s view, “The \textit{ek} does not imply any pre-existence of the humanity of Christ, but emphasizes the logical anteriority of the natures of their union.”\textsuperscript{146} The \textit{en} emphasizes “the permanence of the two natures in the union.” The \textit{estin (tauta estin, “is the two natures”)} insists on the fact that there is not a third \textit{quid} in Christ, that whatever hypostasis may be it is not reducible to the essential order (divine and human essences)

\textsuperscript{143} Maximus the Confessor, \textit{Ep.} 13, PG 91, 517C. English translation is in ibid., 182.


\textsuperscript{146} Madden, “Composite Hypostasis in Maximus the Confessor,” 184.
and at the same it can be identified with that order.”

There is no tertium quid in Christ. Maximus holds that Christ is nothing else except his natures. However, “the ‘who’ is identified with the two ‘whats’ without being reduced to them.” In this regard, “Hypostasis at once transcends and is identified with the order of physis.”

Bathrellos interprets Maximus’ idea of Christ’s hypostasis in three dimensions. First, there is the personal aspect. “On the ‘personal’ level, on the ‘who’ and ‘I’ level, the hypostasis in Christ is strictly identified with the divine Logos.” Second, there is a material aspect of Christ’s hypostasis. As Bathrellos explains, “Christ, the incarnate Logos, is a composite hypostasis in terms of his two natures, on the level of ‘what’ or of ‘material’ hypostasis.” Such a “theandric hypostasis” is a common hypostasis, which embraces the two natures. Third, there is a formal aspect of Christ’s hypostasis. The unity of divine and human particular idioms constitutes the “formal” aspect of Christ’s hypostasis.

1.4.3 Maximus the Confessor’s Dyenergite-Dyothelite Christology

Maximus the Confessor held that Christ has both divine and human energeiai, which correspond to his divine and human wills (thelēma). These two energeiai and

147 Ibid., 184.
148 Maximus the Confessor, Disputatio cum Pyrrho, PG91, 289B. I also refer to English translation in Maximus the Confessor, The Disputation with Pyrrhus of our Father among the Saints, trans. Joseph P. Farrell (South Canaan: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 1990), 4.
149 N. Madden, “Composite Hypostasis in Maximus the Confessor,” 184.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid., 107.
153 Demetrios Bathrellos explains that thelēsis-thelēma is rarely used as Greek literature and philosophy compared to “boulēsis” and “proairetis.” Demetrios Bathrellos, The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in the Christology of ST. Maximus the Confessor, 118.
wills are based on his divine and human natures, not on his hypostasis. The Chalcedonian Monenergists-Monothelites and Dyenergists-Dyothelites both accepted that the two natures of Christ subsist in the one hypostasis. Nevertheless, they differed from one another regarding the natural properties of each nature. Monenergist-Monothelites allowed for a significant distance between Christ’s natural qualities and his energeia-will, connecting the single energeia-will with the single divine hypostasis. In contrast, Dyenergist-Dyothelites regarded the energeia and will as natural properties.\footnote{Cyril Hovorun, *Will, Action and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century*, 105.}

In *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of our Father among the Saints*, Maximus the Confessor contends with Pyrrhus, who was a Monenergist-Monothelite. Maximus holds that the divine and the human natural properties can be exchanged according to the ineffable union without change or mixture of the properties. In this exchange, there are two wills in Christ.\footnote{Maximus the Confessor, *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, PG91, 297A. I refer to English translation in Maximus the Confessor, *The Disputation with Pyrrhus of our Father among the Saints*, trans. Joseph P. Farrell, 16.}

Maximus made a distinction between the capacity of willing (*thelēsis*-*thelēma*) and the object that is willed (*thelēton*-*thelēten*). Likewise, he makes a distinction between the capacity of seeing (*optikon*) and the object which is seen (*oraton*).\footnote{Ibid., PG 91, 292 C-D. English translation is in *ibid.*, 8-9.} Christ has the divine will and the human will, but their object is the same. For example, Christ desires the salvation of humans both in his divine will and his human will.

Maximus asserts that the will belongs to nature and that an act is an aspect of willing.\footnote{Ibid., PG 91, 333 C. English translation is in *ibid.*, 53.} Thus, the divine nature has a divine will and a divine energeia. The human nature has its own human will and energeia. These two natures are not changed by the other through their exchange. Maximus uses the example of a sword being hardened by...
fire. Though the operation of the sword and that of the fire are united, we nevertheless observe that the fire’s effect is burning and the iron’s effect is cutting. The effects of their actions are not confused with one another because we distinguish the effects; we do not say “the burning cut” or “the cutting burn.” Likewise, the effects of heaven, earth, and the sun differ from one another. Therefore, each nature preserves its own properties in the exchange.

In particular, Maximus emphasizes the autonomous character of the human will and *energeia* in the human nature. The human possesses the faculty of reason in itself and the rational nature exercises self-determination (*autexousios*). The self-determination occurs in the freedom of the human will. Therefore, the faculties of reason, self-determination, and will belong to the human nature. Christ has a habit of will and an execution of intention in himself. Several biblical passages indicate his human will and *energeia*. For example, on the cross, Jesus said, “‘I thirst.’ And they gave him wine mixed with gall; and tasting it, he would not drink” (Mt. 27:34). Because of the human nature he thirsted but willed not to drink that which was not fit for drink. Christ humbled himself and became obedient to the Father, even unto the death of the cross (Phil 2: 8). He willingly obeyed the will of the Father, becoming obedient in his humanity, not in the Godhead.

Maximus strongly opposed Monenergist-Monothelitism. If Christ contains the one energy in his whole existence (*hypostasis*), this one energy is hypostatic. Likewise, he must have a different energy than his Father or his Mother because his *hypostasis* is

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158 Ibid., PG 91, 341 B-D. English translation is in ibid., 62.
159 Ibid., PG 91, 304 C-D. English translation is in ibid., 25.
160 Ibid., PG 91, 321 A-B. English translation is in ibid., 43.
161 Ibid., PG 91, 324 A-B. English translation is in ibid., 45.
different from both of them. Maximus insists that if energy and will were hypostatic features of the divine hypostasis and not natural properties, we would fall into Tritheism, because each person of the Trinity would have its own subsisting energy and thus three hypostaseis would have three separate operations. Furthermore, we would have fallen into the Sabellian modalistic view of a mono-personal God. The reasoning here is that if the energy is hypostatic, we would find the one operation of Godhead, who is the only Person of God, merely manifested in the modes of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Christ has a single subjectivity of the divine hypostasis, in which the divine nature carries out the divine action and the human nature carries out the human action. Does the same person operate dually by means of the duality of natures, or singly, by reason of the singularity of the hypostasis? If one person operates dually, the fact that there is more than one energy does not imply there is more than one person. The doctrine of one energy or operation being produced from two distinct natures will result in a hybrid combination of operations of both natures, i.e., whenever two distinct things are made one in their effect or production, the inevitable result is a mixture of both.

In my view, the fundamental problem of the controversy between the Chalcedonian Monenergist-Monothelites and the Dyenergist-Dyothelites is the way in which the divine hypostasis is construed. Maximus discovered a deeper dimension of the divine hypostasis, which transcends (while serving as the locus of) the union of the divine nature and the human nature. Hence, the divine hypostasis has a different ontological status from the mere union of the two natures, making the two natures possible and sustaining their union. In this way, we can separate the divine energetia-will from the

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162 Ibid., PG 91, 333 D-336A. English translation is in Ibid., 55.

163 Ibid., PG 91, 336 D-337A. English translation is in ibid., 57.

164 Ibid., PG 91, 340 B. English translation is in ibid., 60.

165 Ibid., PG 91, 341D-344A. English translation is in ibid., 63.
divine *hypostasis*. Hence, Maximus attributes the divine *energeia*-will to the divine nature, not to the *hypostasis*. He also attributes the human *energeia*-will to the human nature.

From the perspective of Christ’s subjectivity, the *hypostasis* is the divine Logos, which is the foundation of subjectivity itself. His divine nature contains the divine consciousness and the divine *energeia*-will while his human nature contains the human consciousness and the human *energeia*-will. In contrast, Monenergists-Monothelites could not obtain a deeper understanding of the divine *hypostasis* and thus were unable to distinguish the ontological level of the *hypostasis* from that of the simple union of the two natures. As a result, they regarded the divine *hypostasis* as merely the composite of the two natures, asserting that the divine consciousness dominates Christ’s whole existence (*hypostasis*) and that it is only the divine will that operates in Christ.

1.4.4 The relationship between the composite *hypostasis* between the two natures

Following the neo-Chalcedonian Christology, Maximus expresses the concrete physical existence of the Incarnate Logos as a composite *hypostasis*. He uses the Cappadocian notion of *ousialphysis* to speak of the two natures. The human nature indicates what is universal and common to all humans. This view clearly illuminates that the Logos assumes universal humanity rather than merely the individual human. The Logos *enhypostatizes* (individuates) the humanity and becomes Christ’s unique humanity. This understanding of the Incarnation can avoid the union of association, which holds that the Logos associates with the existing individual human.

Furthermore, the mode of union can explain the concreteness of Christ’s human nature in the divine *hypostasis* and also the unique characteristics of his humanity. Christ’s divine nature and human nature do not have hypostatic properties, but natural properties. Thus, he shares a common human nature with ordinary humans. However, his
humanity has different characteristics from those of all other humans. For example, Christ knows no sin. However, this unique characteristic of Christ’s humanity does not indicate that it has a different nature from ordinary human nature. The sinless character of Christ does not belong to Christ’s divine hypostasis, but to his enhypostatized human nature, which is sustained by the divine Logos. His sinless character does not indicate that he has a special human nature, but rather reflects the unique mode of the union between the human nature and the Logos.

Maximus’ notion of the composite hypostasis of Christ seems to contain a contradiction, however. On the one hand, there is a composition of the two enhypostatized natures, which both belong to the one hypostasis. The two natures seem to be combined with one another in the Logos at the same ontological level. Maximus also holds that there is nothing except the two natures in Christ and that there is no tertium quid, which exists beside the two natures. On the other hand, the hypostasis transcends the divine and human natures, which contains the divine and human wills and consciousnesses. The hypostasis sustains the unity of the two natures as the locus of the union. In this case, the hypostasis and the two natures have different ontological statuses. How can we reconcile this apparent contradiction within the notion of composite union?

In my view, the hypostasis sustains the union of the two natures because the hypostasis has a different ontological status from the two natures. When the hypostasis of the Logos is united with the two natures, they constitute the unique mode of union in Christ. The Logos has its hypostatic properties, which indicate that the Son is begotten by the Father. The hypostasis of the Logos enhypostatizes the divine nature, which indicates that God is creator, eternal good and truth; is immortal and indestructible; and has divine consciousness and self-determinative divine will. In particular, in the divine consciousness, the Logos is connected to the Father in the same divine nature, and in the
divine will God accomplishes the divine action (creation and salvation).

The hypostasis of the Logos also enhypostatizes the human nature, which indicates that the human is creaturely, mortal and destructible, has limitations in its capacity for recognition, is body and soul, and possesses human consciousness and self-determinative human will. In this case, we have to see the mode of the union, which indicates how the hypostasis of the Logos enhypostatizes the two natures and how Christ’s two natures appear in the world in this unique mode of union. For example, Christ performs miracles by his divine energy (healing lepers, casting out devils, and so forth). This unique characteristic of Christ comes from the unique mode of the union wherein the Logos enhypostatizes the divine nature. Christ has a personal human name—Jesus; he is born of Mary, and has no sin. These unique characteristics of Christ likewise come from the unique mode of the union in which the Logos enhypostatizes the human nature.

The divine Logos is fully God, and at the same time, is fully human as Jesus Christ. That means that the Logos has the fully enhypostatized divine nature and fully enhypostatized human nature in Jesus Christ and realizes the unique mode of his existence. Maximus insists that there is no tertium quid outside the two natures, but rather that the Logos transcends the two natures as the locus of their union. As the locus, the hypostasis of the Logos cannot be a tertium quid and only serves to sustain the two natures. Christ appears as a man, who has the divine enhypostatized nature and the human enhypostatized nature. However, when we see his divine hypostasis, the hypostasis transcends the two natures, and thus the hypostasis preserves its identity by itself.

1.5 Conclusion

As noted, there are three fundamental problems in the interpretation of the hypostatic union. The first concerns how Christ’s human nature and the divine nature are
united with one another in his single hypostasis, which is the divine Logos. The second concerns how the human nature has its concrete subsistent reality and autonomous character in the divine hypostasis. The third considers how his human consciousness is united with his divine person without destroying the unity of his subjectivity.

First, as I have shown, the human nature and the divine nature form a composite union in the divine hypostasis. Historically, there are three fundamental ways of interpreting the composition of the two natures. (1) In the moderate Monophysitism, the divine nature and the human nature form a composite nature. This composite nature cannot be the locus of the union of the two natures. Thus, a composite nature is also a kind of nature. In Nestorius, prosopon means the appearance of ousia or nature. The divine prosopon and the human prosopon form a composite prosopon. A composite prosopon belongs to the level of ousia or nature. (2) The two natures have a composite union in the divine hypostasis, which is an individual concrete reality. The hypostasis forms the union the two natures in itself. Nevertheless, the hypostasis does not transcend the two natures at the ontological level and so must be grounded in the natures. The two natures come together in the hypostasis and the hypostasis consists of the two natures. In this case, the divine nature is not clearly separated from the divine hypostasis. Consequently, the divine activity and will are confused with the divine hypostasis itself. Cyril represents this tendency as does Chalcedon itself. (3) The hypostasis is the individual existence, which exists by itself. This hypostasis transcends the union of the two natures and serves as the locus of this union. The hypostasis and the two natures belong to different ontological levels. The divine hypostasis makes the two natures possible and sustains the two natures. The divine nature has its own energeia and will and is clearly separated from the divine hypostasis. At the same time, the human nature has its own autonomy and specific role. Maximus the Confessor espouses this perspective.
Nevertheless, the *hypostasis* cannot be a *tertium quid* for the two natures even though the *hypostasis* transcends the two natures. The *hypostasis* is the locus of the union, which sustains the two natures and thus there is only a composition of the two *enhypostatized* natures which appears as the Incarnate Logos in the world. Therefore, Maximus holds that Christ’s *hypostasis* is a composite *hypostasis*.

In my view, the divine *hypostasis* is the direct presence of the Logos of God and the foundation of subjectivity, which sustains his divine and human consciousnesses. Following Maximus, I submit that the divine *hypostasis* transcends the two natures and sustains their union. The divine *hypostasis* is individual existence, which has its hypostatic properties. The divine nature and the human nature are universal, and do not have hypostatic properties, but their own natural properties. The *hypostasis enhypostatizes* the two natures. The divine nature contains the divine consciousness, in which God can accomplish the divine activity (miracles, and so forth) in his divine *energeia* and will. On the other hand, the human nature contains the human consciousness, in which he carries out the full range of human activities (walking, eating, and sleeping, as well as experiencing normal human emotions) by the self-determination of his human *energeia* and will.

In the subjectivity of Christ, the divine *hypostasis* is the locus of the union between the divine nature (the divine consciousness and the divine *energeia* and will) and the human nature (the human consciousness and the human *energeia* and will). In contrast, if we understand the divine *hypostasis* as not transcending the two natures, and the *hypostasis* as merely consisting of the sum of the two natures, we may confuse the divine consciousness with the divine *hypostasis*. As a result, we regard the divine consciousness and will as dominative of his whole existence, and risk falling into Monenergism-Monothelitism. If we understand his true *hypostasis* as equivalent to the
mere composite of the two natures, we cannot identify a true, single hypostasis which sustains the union of the two natures. As a result, we cannot find a mechanism for the communication of idioms because we cannot exchange the divine and the human properties without the underlying hypostasis.

Second, the human nature possesses its concrete, subsistent reality and autonomous character as enhypostatized nature in the divine hypostasis. Nestorius tried to save the autonomous nature of humanity, but failed to save the personal unity of Christ because he could not find the hypostasis of Christ, which is the individual existence. However, contra Nestorius, the human nature becomes subsistent reality in union with the divine Logos. When the hypostasis of the Logos assumes universal humanity instead of merely the individual human, the Logos enhypostatizes (individualizes) Christ’s unique humanity (e.g., Christ has no sin, and so forth) because of the unique mode of the union between the Logos and the human nature. The enhypostatized human nature also has its own autonomous character, which exerts self-determination by his human will.

Third, his human consciousness is united with his divine person without destroying the personal unity of Christ as the human consciousness is enhypostatized nature and belongs to the divine hypostasis even though the human consciousness has its own intellectual faculty. The divine hypostasis is not an intellectual faculty itself, but rather the ultimate foundation of the personhood and makes the divine consciousness and the human consciousness possible. The divine hypostasis can reform the human consciousness, which has its own self-determination. Therefore, the divine hypostasis retains its personal unity even while it sustains the divine and the human consciousnesses.

This chapter has elucidated the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ. In the following chapter I will consider the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union through an investigation of the universal scope of salvation in Teilhard
de Chardin and Karl Rahner. In these theologians, the hypostatic union of Christ comprehends all creation, leading the whole cosmos to perfection in union with God.
II. Cosmic Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union

2.1 Fundamental Questions of the Cosmic Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union

In this chapter I will consider the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union through an investigation of the cosmic scope of salvation in Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) and Karl Rahner (1904-1984). Each theologian, in his own way, holds that the cosmic reality of Christ’s hypostatic union comprehends all creation, leading the whole cosmos to its perfection in union with God. When we think of the cosmic dimensions of the union, three fundamental questions arise.

The first question concerns the manner in which Christ’s human nature is related to the divine nature in the cosmic dimensions of the union. Whereas in the personal dimensions of the union, Christ’s individual human soul and body are united with the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Logos, in the cosmic dimensions of the union, Christ’s cosmic humanity is united with his divine nature and contains all creation. However, we have to ask how his human reality is related to his divinity in the cosmic dimensions of the union and how the humanity and the divinity maintain the union of composition without falling into a union of predominance, or some other, less than satisfactory explication of the union.

The second question considers how all creation is sustained and unified in the cosmic humanity of Christ. Some might argue that it is enough to say that all creation exists in the divine nature of Christ, not in his humanity, for the reason that we can find a stable foundation of all creation in Christ’s divinity. However, in order to embrace a fully incarnational view of the cosmos, we have to ask how it is that all particular beings, given their material reality, stand in the universal humanity of Christ, and how they are unified in Christ’s cosmic human body, which is unified with the divinity in the hypostasis of the Logos. In addressing this question, we discover the meaning of his cosmic physical
reality as the foundation of all particular beings.

The third question concerns how the divine hypostasis of the Logos and the human hypostasis of each individual are related in the cosmic dimensions of the union. All human hypostaseis exist in the cosmic body of Christ, which is sustained by the divine hypostasis of the Logos. The divine hypostasis is the foundation of the single subjectivity of Christ and is the immediate eternal being of the Logos of God. This divine hypostasis transcends the union of the divine consciousness and the human consciousness on the ontological level. In contrast, the human hypostasis is each individual person and has a self-reflexive structure because the human hypostasis contains the activity of the finite spirit, which comes from and returns to the being of God. This self-returning structure of the human spirit is the basis of the self-exercise of its human being, and sustains the activity of the human self-consciousness. Thus, the human hypostasis of each individual has a transcendental foundation in the divine hypostasis of the Logos in the cosmic dimensions of the union. We must thus think in terms of the relation between Christ’s divine hypostasis and the human hypostasis of each individual.

I explicate the answers to the first and second questions by exploring Teilhard de Chardin’s cosmic Christology. I will seek the answer to the third question by exploring Karl Rahner’s transcendental Christology.

2.2 The Relation between the Human Nature and the Divine Nature in the Cosmic Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union

2.2.1 Teilhard de Chardin’s cosmic and evolutionary Christology

In this segment, I explore the relation between the human nature and the divine nature in the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union through an explication of Teilhard de Chardin’s cosmic Christology. In particular, I explicate how Teilhard understands the connection between the cosmic humanity and the divinity in Christ.
First, Teilhard explores Christ’s cosmic humanity from the perspective of evolution. This is his creative approach to Christ’s human nature. There are three steps in Teilhard’s christological vision of the evolutionary process. The first step consists of developing a correct physics and metaphysics of evolution. A new interpretation of scientific thought leads not to a purely materialistic evolutionism, but to an evolution in terms of spirit. The world is dominated by a Personal Centre of universal convergence.¹

The second step consists of “formulating a Christology proportionate to the dimensions now attributed to the universe.”² Teilhard holds that “Christ possesses ‘universal’ or ‘cosmic’ attributes in addition to his strictly human and divine attributes… and it is precisely those attributes that make him the personal Centre which the physics and metaphysics of evolution feel must exist and for which they are looking.”³

The third step consists of “developing a gospel of human conquest.”⁴ We can see Christ as the peak of universal evolution by disclosing more clearly the supernatural value of human effort in the evolutionary process. The universal Christ “makes us understand that heaven can be attained only through the completion of the earth and the world.”⁵

In Teilhard’s view, the union of the human and divine natures in the divine person is related to the evolution of all beings in the cosmos, which are sustained by the universal center of Christ. Teilhard holds that Christ’s human nature contains all beings, which are in the process of evolution. The reason is that humanity is the peak of natural evolution and thus can contain all beings, which are in the earlier stages of evolution.

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid., 123.
Therefore, when we think of Christ’s cosmic humanity, we must explore the process of natural evolution.

2.2.2 Process of natural evolution

Teilhard holds that natural evolution is oriented towards the “Omega Point,” which is Christ himself. The process of evolution culminates in “hominization,” in which each human has reflective consciousness, possesses its person, and seeks interconnection with other persons. This personalization and socialization of persons is connected with the action of God in creation, Incarnation, redemption, and in the Parousia, which is the collective consummation. Therefore, Christ’s humanity contains a cosmic dynamic reality, which consummates an evolution of natural beings and a development of spirit within human persons.

In the Human Phenomenon, Teilhard explores the process of natural evolution from a phenomenological perspective. First, he considers the evolution of matter. Matter has its own energy and begins its evolution in the phase of granulation, which abruptly gives birth to the constituents of the atom, and to the atom itself. Thereafter, matter pursues its course of evolution according to a process of growing complexity.\(^6\) Teilhard observes matter both from the outside and from within. All things have a minimum degree of consciousness and interiority.\(^7\) The elements of consciousness inside the matter continue to complexify and differentiate their nature in the course of evolution.\(^8\)

Consciousness has three characteristics: (1) “of partially centering everything around itself,” (2) “of always being able to center further on itself,” and (3) by this very

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\(^7\) Ibid., 23-24.

\(^8\) Ibid., 26.
supercentration, of realizing the union with all the other centers surrounding it.\(^9\) When the structure of matter becomes more complex, its inner consciousness increases concentration by its energy.\(^10\) All energy is psychic, and this fundamental energy is divided into two distinct energies. One is a tangential energy, which makes “the element interdependent with all elements of the same order in the universe as itself.”\(^11\) The other is a radial energy, which propels the element in the direction of an ever more complex and centered state towards what lies ahead.\(^12\)

The appearance of life begins with a cell. The cell is “the natural grain of life, just as the atom is the natural grain of unorganized matter.”\(^13\) In the cellular revolution, the cell incorporated a larger mass of matter in itself and an increasingly complex structure, and gained “a higher degree of interiority, that is, of consciousness.”\(^14\) The cell has a vital mechanism of reproduction. Every cell divides itself and gives birth to a new cell like itself. The structure of a cell in life becomes more complex and ordered. Tangential energy continued to cause living cells to reproduce themselves on the same level, but radial energy began immediately to take the form of biological evolution, drawing life forward towards a new phase of evolution. Consequently, many kinds of living beings appeared as various species of plants and animals in the process of evolution. The biosphere spreads over the earth.\(^15\)

Thereafter, human being appears in the course of natural evolution. The human

\(^9\) Ibid., 184.
\(^10\) Ibid., 27-28.
\(^11\) Ibid., 30.
\(^12\) Ibid.
\(^13\) Ibid., 42.
\(^14\) Ibid., 49.
\(^15\) Ibid., 77.
possesses reflective thought, which is “a consciousness of turning in on itself and taking possession of itself as an object endowed with its own particular consistency and value.”

The human can know itself and know that it knows, while the animal can know something, but not know that it knows. Moreover, the person is endowed by personalization with an indefinite power of evolution. The cell becomes “someone” as a grain of thought. In the development of human thought, the sphere of mind and spirit is called the “noosphere.” The noosphere is also called the “thinking layer.” This is a sphere of reflective human consciousness that transcends the biosphere of animals. In the appearance of reflection within the individual person, co-reflection of other individuals is also included. All humans have interconnection in their reflective consciousnesses. The noosphere contains the development of individuals as persons and with society on the level of interpersonal relationships.

Teilhard holds that “‘complete’ being is conscious being.” It is “better to be conscious than not to be conscious.” It is “better to be more conscious than less conscious.” He reasons that “since the world is a success… and since success consists in becoming more conscious…, the universe ripens within itself the fruit of a certain consciousness.” Finally, human reflexive consciousness emerges as a higher development of consciousness. Human reflexive consciousness has its consummation in

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16 Ibid., 110.
17 Ibid., 110-111.
18 Ibid., 117.
19 Ibid., 123.
20 De Chardin, Science and Christ, 40.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., 41.
Christ’s cosmic consciousness, which contains all creatures in the universe. Teilhard affirms the value of reflexive, personalizing thought; universal consciousness; and Christ as the center of total convergence.\textsuperscript{24}

2.2.3 Christ as the “Omega Point”

Teilhard holds that the “Omega Point” is the end of the process of evolution. Omega is the principle of the advance of things toward higher consciousness.\textsuperscript{25} The quantity of consciousness in the noosphere is gathered in realizing integrity in the Omega Point.\textsuperscript{26} Emile Rideau explains that Teilhard regards Omega as the assembler of consciousness, as the absolute condition of final unity, and as the focus of personalization.\textsuperscript{27}

The universal Christ is identified with the Omega. He is the cosmic physical reality, which contains all creation and leads the convergence of all beings as the end of their evolution. The Christ animates and gathers up all the biological and spiritual energies developed in the universe. He is the subjectivity behind the evolution and the evolver of all creation.\textsuperscript{28} Teilhard describes Christ as

the alpha and the omega, the principle and the end, the foundation stone and the keystone, the Plenitude and the Plenifier. He is the one who consummates all things and gives them their consistence. It is towards him and through him, the inner life and light of the world, that the universal convergence of all created spirit is effected in sweat and tears.\textsuperscript{29}

Christ dominates and assimilates the universe by the three essential characteristics

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 149.

\textsuperscript{25} De Chardin, \textit{The Human Phenomenon}, 193.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 185.


\textsuperscript{28} De Chardin, \textit{Science and Christ}, 167.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 34-35.
of his traditional truth: the personal nature of the Divine, the manifestation of the supreme personality in the historical Christ, and the super-terrestrial nature of the world consummated in God. The universalized Christ takes over, correcting and completing the energies that lie hidden in modern forms of pantheism.\footnote{Ibid., 124.} In this statement, Teilhard suggests that the universal Christ is identical with the historical Christ, and the supreme divine personality is manifest in the historical Christ. Thus, Christ’s divinity is immersed in the world through his historical humanity. Furthermore, the universe itself has its self-transcendental nature (the super-terrestrial nature of the world) and is consummated in Christ. Therefore, the universal Christ is assimilated in this world and the world moves closer to Christ for its perfection.

Teilhard holds that the universal Christ is the organic center of the entire universe. “Organic center” means “the centre on which every even natural development is ultimately physically dependent.” By “of the entire universe,” Teilhard indicates that Christ is “the centre not only of the earth and mankind, but of Sirius and Andromeda, of the angels, of all realities on which we are physically dependent, whether in a close or a distant relationship.”\footnote{Ibid, 14.}

He argues further that “if Christ is universal… it follows that his kingdom, in its essence, goes beyond the domain of the life that is, in strict sense, called supernatural. Human action can be related to Christ, and can co-operate in the fulfillment of Christ, not only by the intention, the fidelity, and the obedience in which… it is clothed, but also by the actual \textit{material content} of the work done.”\footnote{Ibid, 16-17.}

Teilhard suggests that the Omega Christ “is placed at the upper term of conscious
spiritualization, his universal influence, far from dissociating, consolidates; far from confusing, differentiates; far from allowing the soul to wallow in a vague, supine union, it drives it ever higher along the hard and fast paths of action." He holds that the Omega Christ is gradually manifest in our human consciousness in the process of spiritual evolution. This point of view is the opposite of Chalcedonian Christology in terms of approaching Christ. Teilhard’s view presents an approach from below, whereas Chalcedonian Christology approaches Christ from above.

In my view, the Omega itself has infinite power, which connects and gives order to all beings and causes spiritual subjects to become more self-conscious in the evolutionary process. This is because the Omega itself is the highest stage of the development of consciousness. However, in this context, we have to ask several questions. Does the Omega transcend the world as the end of evolution? Or does the Omega exist inside the process of evolution? According to Teilhard, as the Omega point, Christ is transcendent being, but he also penetrates the universe in the mystery of the Incarnation. The universe is physically impregnated to the very core of its matter by the influence of his super-human nature. Teilhard argues that “the presence of the Incarnate Word penetrates everything, as a universal element. It shines at the common heart of things, as a centre that is infinitely intimate to them and at the same time (since it coincides with universal fulfillment) infinitely distant.” This means that God while completely transcends the world, God is thoroughly immersed at the core of all things in the universe because the Incarnated Word, in its humanity, has a direct relation to matter.

This issue is related to ancient theological discussion between the Stoics and Athanasius. In the Stoic doctrine, the *logoi spermatikoi* (seminal logos) are immanent in

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33 Ibid., 59.

34 Ibid., 57.

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all things and are contained in the one \textit{logos spermatikos}, which is in the world. In contrast, Athanasius holds that the Logos transcends all creation. The Logos exists as its own singular entity and the only Word of the Father, who ordered the universe and illuminates it.\textsuperscript{35} The eternal Logos transcends the \textit{logoi spermatikoi} of all beings, but at the same time, is connected with them and orders them within the universe.

The Incarnation of the transcendent Logos transforms all beings in the world. Teilhard suggests that “as a consequence of the Incarnation, the divine immensity has transformed itself for us into \textit{the omnipresence of christification}.”\textsuperscript{36} In other words, “everything around us is physically ‘Christified.’”\textsuperscript{37} By “christification,” Teilhard indicates that all beings in the universe emerge from the cosmic body of Christ and participate in this cosmic reality. According to Teilhard, then “everything that is good in the universe… is gathered up by the Incarnate Word as nourishment that assimilates, transforms, and divinises.”\textsuperscript{38}

Teilhard also describes the cosmic Christ as the Super-Christ, which is linked with Super-humanity.\textsuperscript{39} The “Super-Christ” signifies “the Christ of all time, revealing himself to us in a form and in dimensions, with an urgency and area of contact that are enlarged and given new force.”\textsuperscript{40} The appearance of the Super-Christ in our human consciousness will result in the appearance of Super-humanity in human consciousness. In his Super-humanity, “Christ gathers up in himself and consummates the totality and the


\textsuperscript{36} De Chardin, \textit{The Divine Milieu}, 101.

\textsuperscript{37} De Chardin, \textit{Science and Christ}, 59.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39} In Teilhard, “super” does not indicate a difference of nature, but a degree of more advanced realization and perception. Christopher F. Mooney, \textit{Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ} (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 46.

\textsuperscript{40} De Chardin, \textit{Science and Christ}, 164.
fullness of humanity.” The term “Super-Christ” expresses “that excess of greatness assumed in our consciousness by the Person of Christ in step with the awakening of our minds to the super-dimensions of the world and of mankind.” “Super-humanity” indicates “the higher biological state that mankind seems destined to attain if it succeeds in becoming completely totalized upon itself, body and soul.” In Teilhard’s understanding, “Super-humanity” is not “a dream or an utopia . . . but it already represents a reality, or at least the immanence of a reality of the scientific order.”

Consequently, we can say that the Omega point is the Super-Christ, which has material reality in his Super-humanity. The Omega is transcendent reality, which is the end of evolution and is the evolver itself. However, on the other hand, the Omega is manifested within the universe in Christ’s humanity because his humanity is immersed in the matter of all beings.

2.2.4 Problem of sin: physical evil and moral evil

Teilhard speaks of sin in relation to the process of evolution, which is oriented towards the Omega Point. He recognized the problem of sin as that of evil, which prevents us from union with God in the process of evolution. According to him, “the powers of evil, in the universe, are not only an attraction, but also a deviation, a minus sign, an annihilating return to plurality.” In the Human Phenomenon, Teilhard analyzes several forms of evil. He explains that there is “evil in the form of disorder,” the “evil of decomposition,” “evil in the form of solitude and anguish,” and “evil in the form of growth.” In particular, “evil in the form of growth” is deeply related to the process of

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41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 167.

43 Ibid., 152-153.

44 De Chardin, The Divine Milieu, 129.

45 De Chardin, The Human Phenomenon, 224-225.
evolution. When the universe evolves, beings in the universe are interiorized in the noosphere. In the same process of evolution, toil, sin and suffering also develop in the universe.46 “Physical suffering, moral wrong, tears and blood are . . . the many byproducts” which are “generated by noogenesis.”47

Teilhard also poses two other kinds of evil, a physical evil and a moral evil. First, physical evil means death and suffering. In the Divine Milieu, Teilhard holds that death is “the sum and consummation of all our diminishments” and is thus “physical evil.”48 Death reflects our material plurality. However, Christ is victorious over death and transforms death’s “universal power of diminishment and extinction” into “an essentially life-giving factor.”49 Teilhard writes, “The function of death is to provide the necessary entrance into our inmost selves.”50 Death is “empty and void, a return to plurality” by nature, but it can become “plenitude and unity in God” in each human existence.51 We can overcome death by finding God. In doing so, we find “the divine which is established in our inmost hearts.”52

He also explains the meaning of physical suffering, which is a part of physical evil. The suffering “originates from sin and makes reparation for sin.” Thus, suffering is effective as a means to “self-mastery, self-conquest,” and “self-liberation.” Physical evil and moral evil originate from “a process of becoming.” Everything which evolves is experiencing physical suffering and moral failure. Therefore, the cross of Christ is the

46 Ibid., 225.
48 De Chardin, The Divine Milieu, 54.
49 Ibid., 61.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 54.
symbol of the pain and toil of evolution rather than the symbol of expiation.\textsuperscript{53}

Second, moral evil is a “disordered plurality” and “the source of all strife and all corruption” and comes from “the wrong use of our liberty.”\textsuperscript{54} Teilhard explains moral evil in relation to the Omega. He holds that moral evil is the refusal on our part of the Omega in the process of evolution.\textsuperscript{55} The moral evil prevents us from uniting with the Omega, but this evil is finally overcome by the redemptive power of Christ’s cross, which restores our relationship with the Omega.

\subsection*{2.2.5 Consummation of all beings in the universe: the Pleroma}

Christ is the person who consummates all created things, “the plenitude of the world being finally effected only in the final synthesis in which a supreme consciousness will appear upon total, supremely organized, complexity.”\textsuperscript{56} Teilhard explains that “the concentration of the Multiple in the supreme organic unity of Omega” constitutes the greatest task. While “every element, according to its degree, shares in this laborious synthesis . . . the effort called for from the upper term of unification has necessarily had to be the hardest of all. That is why the Incarnation of the Word was infinitely painful and mortifying—so much so that it can be symbolized by a cross.”\textsuperscript{57} Christ’s task of synthesis and unification in himself is infinitely difficult, and this difficulty is represented in the Incarnation and the death on the cross because both these events represent the maximum humility of the divine Logos in the world.

The consummation of all beings is linked with Christ’s redemptory actions, which are his death on the cross and the resurrection. When he emptied himself and died on the

\textsuperscript{53} De Chardin, \textit{La Vie cosmique}. I refer to English translation in Mooney, 134.

\textsuperscript{54} De Chardin, \textit{The Divine Milieu}, 54.

\textsuperscript{55} De Chardin, \textit{Human Phenomenon}, 207.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 166.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 60.
cross, he also emptied all creation, which is contained in his humanity. Teilhard argues that “when Christ has emptied all created forces . . ., he will consummate universal unification by giving himself, in his complete and adult Body, with a finally satisfied capacity for union, to the embrace of the Godhead.”

In his resurrection, he realizes the way of convergence and consummation of all beings in the universe.

Teilhard asserts that the resurrection is not only an isolated event in time and a small individual triumph over the tomb won by Christ, but also a tremendous cosmic event. It marks Christ’s effective assumption of his function as the universal centre. Until that time, he was present in all things as a soul that is painfully gathering together its embryonic elements. Now he radiates over the whole universe as a consciousness and activity fully in control of themselves.

The *Pleroma* is the qualitative consummation of all things. In the *Pleroma*, “the substantial *One* and the created *many* fuse without confusion in a whole, which, without adding anything essential to God, will nevertheless be a sort of triumph and generalisation of being.” Teilhard holds that “the active centre, the living link, the organizing soul of the Pleroma” is Christ, “in whom everything is reunited, and in whom all things are consummated” through his death and resurrection.

2.2.6 Communion in Christ’s cosmic body

Teilhard holds that all beings have a true communion in their interdependent relationship in the universe, which is contained in the cosmic body of Christ. In the relationship with other beings, the “personalization” and “socialization” of humans are

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58 Ibid., 85.
59 Ibid., 64.
60 De Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, 100.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 101.
deeply connected. Teilhard explicates the relation between personalization and socialization as “union differentiates.” When humans have a deeper inter-connection with one another, this interrelation differentiates each human person because each becomes more interiorized and personalized in their respective self-relation. Teilhard provides a universal view of the interconnection of all beings as totalization, but at the same time, he never abolishes the singular nature of each being, and preserves this difference as personalization. He holds that we should not confuse individualization with personalization. In individualization, the individual deepens his/her difference from others, but is not connected to them. In contrast, with personalization, each person has his/her own integrity and difference from others, but at the same time, is deeply interconnected with them. When one distinguishes oneself as much as possible from others, the one individualizes itself. This is the process of individualization. At the same time, when we become fully ourselves, we move in the direction of convergence with others. This is the process of personalization.

As a result, the end (telos) of the self and the culmination of our originality lies not in our individuality, but in our person. The only way we can find our authentic person is by uniting with another. When one perceives a dichotomy between totalization and personalization, such perception is the result of confusing individuality with personalization. When totalization is opposed to personalization, it is not true totalization, because in such a false totalization, one principle dominates all things and finally denies their difference and individual integrity. True union does not fuse individual elements, but rather differentiates them more fully. Totalization and personalization are

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65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
“two manifestations of a single movement.”\textsuperscript{67} This single movement emerges in the process of the evolution of consciousness and culminates in the development of human self-consciousness.

Teilhard thus holds that true totalization never annihilates but rather preserves difference. This argument can be traced to differing views among ancient theologians. On the one hand, Origen denies the difference among beings in the world. According to him, all souls preexisted before their physical creation and are united with God. Nevertheless, in their free will, they moved away from God. God finally created this world, including the body, to which the soul was bound as punishment.\textsuperscript{68} Thus, multiple beings and their differences emerged as the result of the fall of souls. Nevertheless, in the end, all things are consummated and return to their beginning, in which all souls are united with God.\textsuperscript{69} These souls abandon their physical differences and regain their original unity with God.

In contrast, Maximus the Confessor preserves the difference among beings in the Logos, which is related to the hypostatic union of Christ. First, he finds a difference (\textit{diaphora}) of substance between the divine nature and the human nature of Christ. The difference of the two natures is preserved without division and confusion. Each nature keeps its own nature according to one \textit{hypostasis} of the Logos.\textsuperscript{70} Second, he observes the difference of all beings, which he relates to the difference of the two natures of Christ. He holds that the Logos contains preexisting \textit{logoi} (principles) of created beings before creation. A \textit{logos} of these beings preceded their creation, in which they receive their beings from God. God creates all \textit{logoi} through God’s Logos and continues to create all

\begin{itemize}
\item De Chardin, \textit{Science and Christ}, 137.
\item Ibid., Book III, 6, trans. G. W. Butterworth, 253.
\item Maximus the Confessor, Ep 15; PG 91 556 A-B.
\end{itemize}
things. In the creation, the difference of the logoi of beings is preserved and at the same time they are united in the one eternal Logos. The Logos consists of many logoi and the many logoi together constitute one Logos. Humans are called “portion of God because of the logoi of our being that exist eternally in God.” As the principle (logos) of the individual, substance (ousia) or nature (physis), preserves itself undiminished (ameiôtos), unchanged (atreptos), unconfused (aphrptos), and unmixed (asynchutos) in all beings. Maximus holds that the difference of the beings is sustained by the difference of the two natures of Christ, and the individual unity of each being and the union of all beings are sustained by the one eternal Logos.

In Teilhard’s view, there are three dimensions of the progress leading us forward: Futurism, Universalism and Personalism. The progress of all being in the world proceeds in the anticipation of the final consummation in the future. In the course of the evolutionary process, one recognizes oneself and realizes his/her person, while at the same time, is united and interconnected with others in a more universal way. Personalism necessarily involves Universalism. If personalism does not influence the universalism, it is not real personalization, but mere individuation of the human.

Teilhard also holds that a true communion of all beings is manifested by the Eucharist. From the beginning of the Messianic preparation, up to the Parousia, passing through the historic manifestation of Jesus and the phases of growth of his Church, the

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73 Ibid., 7; PG 91 1081 C. in ibid., 103.

74 Maximus the Confessor, *Opuscula theological et polemica* 14; PG 91, 149 D.

75 De Chardin, *Science and Christ*, 137.
event of the Incarnation has been developing in the world and is realized in each individual person through the Eucharist. Teilhard suggests that “all the communions of a life-time are one communion. All the communions of all men now living are one communion. All the communions of all men, present, past, and future, are one communion.” In a true communion, all beings, past, present, and future, gather together in the cosmic Body of Christ. They all celebrate the Eucharist, share the Holy Host, and deepen their mutual union. This communion is the only communion, held by Christ. From this perspective, Teilhard sees a real, mutual relation of all beings in the cosmic body of Christ.

2.2.7 Problems with Teilhard’s Christology

When we think of Teilhard’s Christology from the perspective of the hypostatic union, we find several problems. First, because Teilhard does not clearly explicate the divine hypostasis in his Christology, it is not entirely apparent where he places the locus of the union of the two natures of Christ. He regards Christ as the Omega point, which is the end of evolution. Does the Omega indicate Christ’s divine hypostasis or his divine nature? Teilhard holds that the Omega has four attributes, including autonomy, actuality, irreversibility and transcendence. Although those attributes could be applied to the divine hypostasis, the Omega seems to function, in Teilhard’s thought, as the self-manifestation of the divine nature as the divine energy. My reasoning here is that Teilhard explores the Omega in the dimension of Christ’s cosmic divine consciousness. However, the hypostasis of Christ is the divine Word itself and the foundation of subjectivity, which transcends both his divine and human consciousnesses. Therefore, we

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77 Ibid.

cannot apply Teilhard’s Omega to the divine hypostasis, but to the divine consciousness.

Second, the distinction between the divine nature and the human nature is not entirely clear in his Christology. As Christopher Mooney points out, Teilhard identified a “Christic third nature” of Christ, comparing the union between Christ and the human with the union of the two natures (divine and human) of Christ. Mooney translates one of Teilhard’s texts from the French in this regard:

Between the Word on the one hand and Jesus the Man on the other, a sort of Christic third nature comes into being, if I dare use the term. One can see the idea everywhere in the writing of St. Paul, that of the total Christ who totalizes, in whom the individual human element born of Mary is transformed by the Resurrection into the state not simply of a cosmic Element (or Milieu or Compass) but of an ultimate psychic center for the gathering together of the universe….In the total Christ (and on this point Christian tradition is unanimous) there is not just Man and God; there is also he who in his ‘theandric’ being gathers together the whole of creation: in quo omnia constant (in whom all holds together).79

Teilhard’s Christology is based on the fact that Christ is the physical center of the universe in and through his human nature.80 In my view, Teilhard focuses on Christ’s cosmic physical body and on one “theandric” nature, and does not consider the clear distinction between the divine and the human nature. In a word, his seems to be a sort of union of mixture. This is due in large part to the fact that, as noted above, there is no clearly identified divine hypostasis which transcends the two natures, and thus no clear locus of the union of the two natures.

As a consequence, Christ’s cosmic body seems to represent his human nature, but in reality this cosmic body is only the instrument of the divine energy, which leads and consummates the evolution as the Omega Point. Consequently, the theandric nature of


80 Mooney, 179.
Christ can indicate his divine nature. This christological view is very similar to the Monophysite position. This Monophysite tendency is also found in the Christology of Pseudo-Dionysius, who speaks of the single “theandric activity” of Jesus. Jesus is truly man among all humans, while he transcends all beings and is the cause of the human in terms of creation. Though “humanly born he was superior to man, and being above men he yet truly did become man.” He accomplished “something new in our midst” in the economy of human salvation by “the activity of the God-man,” neither by the divine activity alone nor by human power alone.81

Jesus is transcendent divine mind; he is “the source and the being underlying all hierarchy, all sanctification, all the working of God, who is the ultimate in divine power.”82 In the Incarnation, “the most divine Jesus came down among us to make us holy” and “he in his divine and unspeakable goodness became one of us.” He is sanctified in human form by the Father, by himself, and by the Spirit. His divinity remains essentially unchanged.83

The fundamental problem of here is finding the real divine hypostasis in this view of the cosmic Christ, and how the human nature may be distinguished from the divine nature; more to the point, how do Teilhard and Pseudo-Dionysius prevent the divine nature from swallowing up the human nature in Christ?

Third, it is not clear precisely how Christ functions as the basis of the evolutionary movement toward the Omega Point. Christ’s humanity is assimilated into all the individual elements of material creation in the Incarnation. The reason is that the Logos of God is assimilated into matter in his physical human body and so he can share material


83 Ibid., 484A, in ibid., 231.
reality with all other beings in his humanity. Nevertheless, how can he act as both the
evolver and the end of their evolution as the Omega Point? In the process of evolution,
simple matter, cells, plants, animals, and humans, all emerge in accordance with the
development of their particular entelechy. Christ’s humanity shares matter with all those
beings and so we can say that he has a cosmic physical body, which contains all beings in
the universe. We can also say that the human has the highest level of development of
consciousness relative to all other forms of being. Thus, Christ’s human nature can
contain other, inferior species.

In my view, however, we cannot say that his humanity leads the process of
evolution in history. Furthermore, human being emerges as a result of a long course of
evolution. Given this, how could Christ’s humanity both contain and lead the natural
evolutionary process from the emergence of matter? In my view, it is the divine energy
that leads the course of evolution, working on all natural beings through Christ’s
humanity in the world. Moreover, the natural evolutionary process anticipates the
development of itself into the human, which has a higher form of consciousness. Thus,
the natural evolution proceeds to the center of Christ’s humanity, who is the universal
consciousness as the end of the evolutionary process.

Moreover, the human self-consciousness is sustained by the divine hypostasis,
which transcends human consciousness. This means that one can find the end of the
development of self-consciousness in the divine hypostasis of Christ by
self-transcendence from the level of self-consciousness. Thus, we cannot find the real
Omega Point in Christ’s universal consciousness. However, we can find the real end of
the evolutionary process in the immediate being of the divine Logos.

Fourth, what is the basis of “union differentiates” in the interdependent relation
between all beings in the cosmic body of Christ? When humans realize deeper
inter-connection with one another, this interrelation differentiates each human person because each becomes more interiorized and personalized in their self-relation. Nevertheless, when we think of the personalization of each individual human person in the cosmic body of Christ, we have to identify the hypostasis of Christ in a deeper way, something Teilhard does not do. The reason we must identify the divine hypostasis of Christ is that it sustains the integral unity of personhood in each human. His divine hypostasis keeps its internal unity as the being of the Logos of God and in turn enables each human person (each with its own unity) to participate in the higher unity of the divine hypostasis.

Teilhard, however, does not indicate a deep insight into the divine hypostasis as the foundation of Christ’s subjectivity and thus it is not clear how we are to think of the real basis of personalization of each human. But I contend that if we do not find the real basis of personalization of each human, we also cannot explore the basis of difference among humans, as we cannot find the real difference of each human person without finding the basis of its personalization.

Consequently, we can ask what the basis of the union which connects all beings is. In my view, the “union differentiates” must be based on the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures of Christ. Christ’s humanity is assimilated into all beings by sharing matter with them. Thus, Christ’s humanity is the basis of the union of all beings in their difference.

Teilhard explores a deeper dimension of the human body as universal matter. He contends that the human body consists not of the cells that belong exclusively to each person. He says that “my matter is not a part of the universe that I possess totaliter, but it is the totality of the Universe possessed by me partialiter.”\textsuperscript{84} This means that each

\textsuperscript{84} De Chardin, \textit{Science and Christ}, 13.
human consciousness is open to the whole universe and the matter of each human body possesses the totality of the universe because the body shares matter with all other beings. Thus, each human person possesses the totality of the universe as the center of the universe. Teilhard posits that “the world is no longer like an aggregate of inter-fused elements, but a single sphere with countless centres from which it can be observed and from which action can emanate.” The universal world is “the world centred on Peter” and “the world centred on Paul and so on.” 85

In my view, however, each human person is the center of the universe in his/her human consciousness and body, but not the self-contained center of the universe, because each center of the universe can communicate with other centers in Christ’s cosmic body. A human hypostasis cannot have real personal interaction with other persons only by the sharing of the same material reality. Christ’s divine hypostasis sustains the identity of each human hypostasis. In the relation with the divine hypostasis, the human hypostasis animates the finite human spirit, which opens the relationship with all other beings and passes through matter in the world and returns to itself. This activity is sustained by the divine energy of Christ. Nevertheless, the spirit passes through matter, in which Christ’s cosmic humanity is deeply immersed. Thus, the activity of the human spirit is sustained by both the cosmic divinity and the humanity of Christ. This activity is the foundation of human self-consciousness and the relation with other beings. Each human hypostasis is opened to the unification of all beings through the activity of human spirit. Therefore, we can say that the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures sustains the basis of uniting different human persons. Those two natures are united with one another even though they are sharply distinguished.

Without positing the hypostatic union, the human nature is swallowed up by the

85 Ibid., 13.
divine nature, and thus we cannot identify Christ’s human nature, which is material. As a result, Christ cannot be assimilated into the universe without his humanity and we cannot find the common material basis of the unity of all beings. Further, if the two natures are confused with one another, there is neither divinity nor humanity and the mixed nature has access neither to God nor the world. Finally, if the two natures are completely divided, the divinity cannot be communicated to humanity, which is connected with the universal matter in the world. As a result, we cannot find the possibility of the personal interaction in the cosmos given that the interaction can only be sustained by Christ’s cosmic divinity and humanity.

Teilhard thinks of the union differentiates from the perspective of the one theandric nature of Christ. In this case, we can find the basis of union of the different human persons in Christ’s cosmic body. However, we cannot find the real hypostasis of each human person in the union of the human persons for the reason that human hypostasis is sustained by the divine hypostasis. It seems that Teilhard lacks a real understanding of the divine hypostasis and thus a deeper understanding of the human hypostasis.

Teilhard explores the relation between Christ’s human consciousness and the consciousnesses of human persons. He holds that Christ experienced in himself the individual human consciousness. At the same time, in Christ there was not simply an individual man, but also the man who gathered together the consciousnesses of all humans in the depth of his human consciousness. Therefore, Christ’s human experience had to extend to universal human experience. The reason is that Christ assumes universal humanity and thus can know the full range of universal human experience.

However, in my view, Teilhard does not explain adequately why Christ’s human

consciousness can contain all human consciousnesses. Christ’s human consciousness itself is only the human nature and not the divine hypostasis, which transcends the human consciousness on the ontological level. When we think of the relation between Christ’s human consciousness and all human consciousnesses, we have to explore the relation between Christ’s divine hypostasis and each human hypostasis. Nevertheless, despite the aforementioned issues with Teilhard’s work, which essentially boils down to a distinct tendency toward a Monophysite form of Christology, his evolutionary vision of the interdependence of all beings in the cosmic nature of Christ is indispensable to the comparative and synthetic nature of my project.

2.2.8 A new perspective of the cosmic dimensions of the unity of the divine nature and the human nature of Christ in Teilhard’s Christology

In the context of his time, Teilhard provided a radical new perspective on the unity of the divine and the human natures of Christ, regarding Christ as the Omega Point—the end of the process of evolution. At the same time, Omega is the evolver, which orients the evolution of all beings toward higher consciousness. As the Omega point, Christ is transcendent being, but he also penetrates the universe in the mystery of the Incarnation. The universal Christ is the cosmic physical reality, which contains all creation and leads the convergence of all beings as the end of their evolution. He is the person who consummates all created things.

As noted above, Teilhard explains the evolutionary progress of all beings in terms of three dimensions; namely, Futurism, Universalism and Personalism. The progress of all being in the world proceeds in the anticipation of the final consummation in the future. In the course of the evolution, one recognizes oneself and realizes one’s person, while at the same time, is united with others in a more universal way. Thus, Personalism contains Universalism, and the two elements mutually influence one another in their development.
Prior to the dawn of Teilhard’s Christology, theologians had generally interpreted the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union from the spatial perspective. The “spatial” perspective indicates that all beings are contained in the cosmic body of Christ in one space. However, Teilhard introduces the historical perspective (creation, Incarnation, redemption, and the Pleroma) and the evolutionary perspective, in the cosmic understanding of the unity of divinity and humanity in Christ. In doing so, he tries to integrate the spatial understanding of the cosmic body of Christ with a soteriological and scientific view of evolution. As a result, we can see the dynamism of the development of the cosmic body of Christ in history. This is Teilhard’s original contribution to deepening the cosmic understanding of Christology.

Furthermore, Teilhard asserts the interdependent relation of all beings, which are united in “the union differentiates” in the cosmic body of Christ. All beings have a true communion in their interdependent relationship in the universe, which is contained in the cosmic body of Christ. The true communion consists of all beings in the past, present, and future. Paradoxically, when humans attain a deeper inter-connection with one another, this interrelation differentiates each human person because each becomes more interiorized and personalized. True union does not fuse elements together, but rather differentiates them more fully.

As I will show in Chapter Five, such an interrelation is analogous to the interdependent view of all beings in Buddhism. Because in Mahāyāna Buddhism, all beings are interdependent (pratītyasamutpāda: dependent origination) each lacks substance within this interdependence (a state known as śūnyatā: emptiness). All beings are contained in the dharma body of the Buddha, which is the ultimate reality, Tathāgata. Thus, Teilhard’s cosmic Christology corresponds in significant ways to the interdependent view of all beings in the cosmic body of the Buddha in Mahāyāna.
Buddhism, even though they are not exactly identical because Mahāyāna Buddhism holds a non-substantial view of being.

In the next segment, I will consider the relation between the divine hypostasis of Christ and the human hypostasis of each human person by exploring Karl Rahner’s Christology. In his transcendental Christology, Rahner identifies the real divine hypostasis of Christ and explores the relation between the divine hypostasis and each individual human hypostasis.

2. 3 The Relation between the Divine Hypostasis of Christ and the Individual Human Hypostasis

2.3.1 The unity of the human consciousness and the divine consciousness in the divine hypostasis of Christ in Karl Rahner’s Christology

In this segment, I explore Karl Rahner’s understanding of the relationship between the divine hypostasis of Christ and the individual human hypostasis. First, I explicate Rahner’s understanding of the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union. Second, I explore his understanding of the cosmic dimensions of the union and the relation between the divine hypostasis of Christ and the human hypostasis of each individual person in Christ’s cosmic body.

Rahner holds that the hypostatic union is based on the self-communication of the absolute Being of God. In this “uncreated Grace” of God, Jesus’ human self-consciousness and knowledge are both united with the Logos.87 His self-consciousness is located in the immediate presence of God, which indicates his direct vision of God. This vision is the original un-objectified consciousness of divine sonship.88

This consciousness of divine sonship and the immediate presence of God cannot be

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88 Ibid., 207-208.
objectified; rather it is situated at the subjective pole of the Lord’s consciousness as a transcendent condition of Christ’s human consciousness. Therefore, the divine consciousness is the un-objectified transcendental condition which makes Christ’s recognition of objectivity and his exercise of freedom possible in his self-consciousness.

In Rahner’s view, Christ has both human self-consciousness and divine consciousness. However, Jesus’ human self-consciousness cannot be identified with the consciousness of the divine sonship. Human self-consciousness is sustained by the self-returning movement of the finite spirit, which becomes conscious of itself in absolute presence to itself. Jesus’ self-consciousness creates a distance from God in his freedom, in obedience, and in worship, and cannot be understood as a double of the divine consciousness.

From my perspective, there are several problems in Rahner’s view. The first problem concerns how these two distinct consciousnesses can be juxtaposed in his person. When we think of his freely chosen obedience to the divine will, we can say Christ has a divine and a human will, which rely on his divine and human natures, respectively. Rahner goes further, however, holding that there are two distinct consciousnesses in him, one human and one divine. Each consciousness has an autonomous and self-contained character. Some might plausibly interpret the two consciousnesses as two individual subjects in Christ.

The second problem is that his divine consciousness, or his divine person, can be meaningful as the transcendental aspect of his human self-consciousness. When one thinks that the divine consciousness is the transcendental condition for human

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89 Ibid., 208.
90 Ibid., 183.
consciousness, the divine consciousness is only the transcendental part of human consciousness. Thus, some might regard human consciousness as “human hypostasis” and think that the human hypostasis carries the divine nature. Such an idea is the opposite of Leontius' notion of anhypostasis, which means the divine hypostasis substantiates the human nature. In this case, the role of divine consciousness or divine personhood, which has an independent existence from human consciousness, becomes unclear.

The third problem is that the distinction between the divine nature and the divine person is not clear in the divine consciousness and Logos. Rahner applies the two-story structure (transcendental and categorical) of his theology to the hypostatic union and in so doing risks destroying the balance between the two natures in one person in Christ.

Nevertheless, I can say that Rahner’s transcendental understanding of the hypostatic union is still helpful in exploring the subjective structure of the union and the relation between Christ’s subjectivity and other human subjects. Therefore, I explore the transcendental structure of Rahner’s view of the hypostatic union, and attempt to address the three foregoing problems.

2.3.2 The transcendental structure of recognition

Rahner explores the structure of human self-consciousness from his transcendental perspective. “Transcendental” means the necessary conditions which make one’s freedom and recognition of objectivity possible within one’s subjectivity. These conditions can be found in the structure of one’s subjectivity and constitute one’s experience. For Rahner, the transcendental condition for the possibility of both finite knowledge and human freedom is the pre-apprehension of Being (Vorgriff auf das Sein) by the human spirit. Spirit already has pre-apprehension of Being itself (Sein shlechthin, esse) and this opens the horizon of the recognition of other beings. Spirit can

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92 Ibid., 33.
understand the whole reality of being (Sein überhaupt, ens commune) in the condition in which the spirit has pre-apprehended Being itself. 93 Thus, when the spirit deeply pre-apprehends Being itself, the spirit can understand the whole reality of all beings more deeply. The movement of the spirit comes from Being and is oriented towards Being as a goal (Woraufhin) in its anticipation of Being. The spirit enters the universal reality of beings in the world and returns to itself in self-recognition. When the spirit returns to itself, it goes by way of matter, which is the condition that makes the objectification of others possible. 94 Thus, the spirit objectifies beings in the reflexive movement to itself and recognizes them as individual others in time and space. Human self-consciousness relies on this reflexive movement of the spirit.

Rahner is deeply influenced by Joseph Maréchal’s transcendental Thomism and Martin Heidegger’s philosophy. Maréchal opened the way of understanding Thomas Aquinas’ theology from the transcendental perspective, in which an intellectual dynamism toward Being is the immanent condition of objective knowledge. 95

Immanuel Kant originally began the transcendental investigation of the structure of recognition in modern philosophy. In The Critique of Pure Reason, Kant defines the term “transcendental,” explaining, “I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our a priori concepts of objects in general.” 96 In brief, he observes the transcendental preconditions of experience and objective knowledge in the structures of subjectivity. Subjectivity receives sensual data from


objects in space and time, which is the a priori form of sensibility. Then, for making judgments, the subjectivity uses categories, which is the a priori form of understanding. Subjectivity applies the categories to those data and makes objective judgments. This structure of knowledge is thus clarified in the analysis of the structures of subjectivity.

Maréchal applies the Kantian transcendental perspective to Thomistic epistemology. He explains that if the relation of the empirical data to the ultimate end of the intellect is “an a priori intrinsically ‘constitutive’ condition of every object in our thought,” then “the analogical knowledge of Being enters ‘implicitly’ into our immediate consciousness of every object as object. In Thomistic epistemology, the agent intellect has its own internal dynamism to constitute recognition in the relation to Being. Thus, when the intellect makes judgments, they contain the implicit knowledge of Being, analogically. This is the basis of Maréchal’s transcendental Thomism.

Rahner applies this transcendental Thomistic perspective to his theology and also adopts Heidegger’s terms “Vorgriff” (pre-apprehension), and “Woraufhin” (toward which). In Being and Time, Heidegger explains that “Vorgriff” means “something we have in advance.” When we understand something, the interpretation is founded on “fore-having,” “fore-sight,” and “fore-conception.” Thus, “Vorgriff” is a fore-structure of understanding. Rahner uses this notion for describing the movement of the agent intellect toward Being, which opens the precondition of recognition, which makes our act of recognition possible. These are the philosophical foundations of Rahner’s theology.

97 Ibid., A 20-21/B34-B35, in ibid., 172-173.

98 Ibid., A 77-81/B103-B107, in ibid., 210-212.


In the christological context, Rahner holds that Jesus possesses a human self-consciousness which is the same as ordinary humans. Jesus has a finite spirit which has transcendental openness to the whole of reality and to God. His spirit becomes self-conscious by the reflexive movement which passes through other beings. This movement makes his self-consciousness possible. The reflexive movement of the spirit is normally the basis of the human consciousness. Nevertheless, Christ also has a divine consciousness, which is the transcendental condition of his human consciousness. Does this mean that Jesus is both a human and a divine person? Rahner does not explain this problem clearly. In my view, the fact that Christ possesses a human self-consciousness does not mean that he is a human person even though this consciousness has a reflexive structure. I understand this as follows.

Our finite human spirit is not fully open to Being itself because of our sinfulness and has only limited apprehension of Being. Thus, the finite spirit has a self-contained character in itself in its limited capacity to fully embrace Being itself. In contrast, Jesus’ spirit is fully opened to the Being of God the Father and fully comprehends Being itself. Hence, his spirit is fully able to open to the Logos of God and thus the divine Logos can fully reform Christ’s spirit and make the range of his self-recognition broader. Therefore, his human self-consciousness cannot indicate a distinct human person because his spirit is not a self-contained faculty. It means that his spirit is fully opened to the Being of God and relies on the activity of Being. His spirit can be freely reformed by the divine Logos, which is the true person of Christ. Nevertheless, his spirit has limitations because it has to return to itself by way of objective matter. This structure is the same as that of ordinary humans. The range of his human recognition is conditioned by his participation in the categorical realities of time and place.

When his spirit faces difficult situations (e.g., Gethsemane), the divine Logos is
opened in his inmost consciousness as his fullest subjectivity. The divine Logos moves his spirit to accept a difficult situation. Such a relation between his spirit and the divine Logos becomes clearer in the transcendental structure of human freedom.

2.3.3 The transcendental structure of freedom

Rahner argues that freedom is situated at the subjective pole of human existence and experience. In this freedom, the subject exercises its own being fully in the act of choosing. The freedom cannot be limited to the action of choosing this or that by our free decision. The fundamental freedom is the exercise of being of the subject. The subject exercises its being in freedom through choosing something in the world. This subjective freedom is sustained by the reflexive movement of the spirit, which is connected with Being itself and acts within the horizon of other beings. The range of the exercise of freedom is conditioned by the extent to which the spirit grasps the whole of being.

In Rahner’s view, freedom has two dimensions: transcendental freedom and its categorical objectification. “Transcendental” and “categorical” are clearly Kantian terms. In Rahner, “categorical” indicates the objectification of the transcendental horizon through human subjectivity. First, transcendental freedom means subjective freedom itself. In this freedom, the subject can decide how to exercise its being, self-recognition, and freedom. This subjective freedom is sustained by the reflexive movement of the finite spirit which comes from and returns to absolute Being itself. Transcendental freedom cannot be objectified because this freedom is directly united with the transcendental horizon which makes one’s experiences and actions possible in the activity of finite spirit. Thus, the activity of transcendental freedom cannot be objectified in the

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102 Ibid., 94.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., 96.
subject. In this freedom, the subject can decide whether to accept God or not. The self-communication of God is the transcendental horizon of our freedom and sustains our exercise of freedom. Nevertheless, the horizon of freedom is also the object of freedom for the subject. This is the absolute contradiction. Human freedom can accept or reject its transcendental foundation. The transcendental horizon of freedom makes possible the freedom in which one accepts or rejects this horizon.

Second, categorical objectification of freedom is the objectified freedom in the world. The finite spirit becomes itself by going through matter; thus the transcendental freedom has to be mediated by the categorical realities in the world. As a result, freedom takes several forms within categorical reality: the freedom of choosing objects, the liberation from hardship, and so forth. This is the freedom which we experience in daily life, and in the exercise of this freedom it is easy to forget the transcendental freedom because it cannot be objectified.

Applying Rahner’s theory of freedom to the context to Jesus’ life, Jesus has transcendental freedom, which is sustained by the transcendental horizon of the divine Logos. He exercises this existential freedom through objectified categorical freedom. In Gethsemane, he faces an absolute contradiction of freedoms. When, in his human nature, he wishes to avoid the terrible cup he must drink as a consequence of his fidelity to the will of God, his free will is tempted to turn away from the transcendental horizon of the divine Word even though his freedom is sustained by the horizon of the Logos. This is the crucial moment in his life. Nevertheless, he chooses to accept the will of God because the transcendental Logos transforms Jesus’ human consciousness and leads his human freedom to accept the Word of God.

Therefore, I can address the three problems I see with Rahner’s view of the

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105 Ibid., 99.
106 Ibid., 97.
hypostatic union. First, Jesus’ human self-consciousness does not indicate a human person, but a human nature. The reason is that his finite human spirit exercises his freedom in complete openness to God and his spirit can choose complete acceptance through the Logos of God even though his human consciousness can make a free decision by itself. Thus, his human consciousness cannot be an individual self-contained faculty in his person. The divine Logos is the real subject of Christ and sustains his human spirit.

Second, the divine consciousness cannot be part of the transcendental structure of human consciousness. The reason is that the divine consciousness is the self-determination of the divine Logos, and its divine consciousness belongs to the divine person. Hence, the divine consciousness cannot be subjected to the transcendental dimension of human consciousness.

Third, Jesus has un-objectified consciousness of divine sonship. This divine consciousness has a direct vision of God. In my view, this divine consciousness does not indicate the divine person itself, but the divine nature. The reason is that his divine consciousness is the self-determination of the divine Logos. The divine Logos is the ultimate subject of Christ and the very self-communication of God. Christ recognizes the divine Logos as his subject and also apprehends it as an object because he must listen to the Word of God the Father. Thus, his divine consciousness is the subjective aspect of the self-determination of the Logos. His divine consciousness is not self-contained because he still has to listen to the Word of God as object. In my view, the divine Logos is the true person of Christ and the transcendental horizon itself. The horizon of the Logos undergoes self-determination and becomes the divine consciousness in the subjective aspect of Christ and the Word of God to which he listens in his objective dimension. Thus, the divine consciousness is still the divine nature. Rahner holds the unity of the human
nature and the divine nature in one divine person as the unity between human consciousness and divine consciousness in the transcendental horizon of the divine Logos.

2.3.4 Cosmic dimension of the hypostatic union in Karl Rahner

2.3.4.1 Intercommunication of spiritual subjects in the cosmos

Rahner also treats the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union. The self-communication of God imparts a grace in which all humans and the cosmos become united with God in Christ’s hypostatic union. This is the climax of the development in which the world comes to itself absolutely and comes to the immediacy of God absolutely.\(^{107}\) In the hypostatic union of Christ, the self-transcendence of the world to the absolute closeness to God is accomplished.\(^{108}\) However, we can ask what the self-transcendence of the world to God means and how such a self-transcendence takes place.

Rahner explains that God’s self-communication is a disclosure to the inter-communication of the many cosmic subjects.\(^{109}\) Each spiritual subject becomes self-conscious and united with the self in God’s self-communication. When each individual becomes self-conscious, the spirit is opened to the transcendental horizon, which includes the whole of being and returns to the self through objective matter. This transcendental horizon is directly united with God’s self. Thus, each individual person can have a self-consciousness which is open to the whole of reality in the world and to God. Such self-conscious persons have intercommunication among themselves. Together they constitute a universal concrete corporeality in their inter-communications.

Rahner holds that the cosmic corporeality of countless personal

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\(^{108}\) Ibid., 181.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 193.
self-consciousnesses can become present to itself in the freedom of individual persons. \textsuperscript{110} The process by which the cosmos becomes conscious of itself in spiritual subjects must imply an inter-communication among these subjects in which the whole is present to itself in its own unique way within each subject. \textsuperscript{111} In my view, when self-conscious persons form a collective corporeality in their mutual relationships, each individual person can see that all different spiritual beings become self-conscious in the transcendental horizon, and they open up in self-transcendence to God. In this moment, one can see that the cosmos itself becomes self-conscious and undergoes self-transcendence. This is the structure of the self-transcendence of the cosmos to God.

2.3.4.2 Difference between the self-conscious movement of finite spirit and cosmos

I find a problem with Rahner’s view here in that he does not distinguish between the self-conscious movement of finite spirit and that of the cosmos. Each finite spirit becomes self-conscious by its reflexive movement through matter, which consists of individual others. These others are the media for the self-returning movement of the spirit. Nevertheless, when the cosmos itself becomes self-conscious, it is not clear how the whole cosmos returns to itself through others. For the self-returning movement of the cosmos, there must be a transcendent being through which the cosmos returns to itself. The cosmos returns to itself through the being of transcendence. Otherwise, we risk sliding into pantheism if the cosmos does not return to itself through transcendental being in the world.

The whole reality of the cosmos consists of many finite spirits, but the cosmos’ self-consciousness is different from the individual person’s self-consciousness. Thus, the whole of the cosmos can return to itself only through God, who is the “other” for the cosmos. In my view, one can see the whole reality of the cosmos in the transcendental

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 189.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 193.
horizon, which is the divine sonship of the Logos. This cosmic corporeality is the body of the Son and it has direct openness to God the Father. Thus, it can become self-conscious through the relationship with the Father. Therefore, the structure of self-conscious movement is different between finite spirit and cosmos even though the cosmos is the collective reality of finite spirits.

2.3.4.3 Relationship between the individual and cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union in Rahner

Here I elucidate the relationship between the individual and cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ in Rahner’s transcendental Christology. Rahner holds that the individual and cosmic dimensions of the union are related in the common transcendental horizon of the Logos. This horizon sustains Christ’s individual human self-consciousness and the cosmic corporeality of Christ, which consists of many spiritual subjects. Thus, the individual Christ, individual subjects, and the cosmos itself undergo self-transcendence in the grace of the self-communication of God.

The individual dimension of the hypostatic union of Christ is the unity between Christ’s human self-consciousness and the divine consciousness of the divine sonship. His human self-consciousness is sustained by the reflexive movement of his human spirit, which must pass through objective matter. His divine consciousness of the divine sonship is the transcendental horizon which is the condition of his human self-consciousness, and opens to the direct vision of God.

The cosmic dimension of the hypostatic union consists of the unity between the concrete universal reality of all spiritual subjects and the transcendental horizon of the divine Logos. God’s self-communication is the inter-communication of all individual self-conscious subjects, each of whom is opened to the whole of being. In this cosmic consciousness, each spiritual person recognizes that all spiritual subjects in the cosmos
become self-conscious within the transcendental horizon and realize self-transcendence to God as a whole. They constitute a collective corporeality in their mutual relationships and this corporeality is the universal body of Christ. When one realizes that each spiritual subject returns to itself and becomes self-conscious in the cosmos and undergoes self-transcendence to God, one can see that the cosmos itself becomes self-conscious and moves toward self-transcendence to God. Nevertheless, when the cosmos returns to itself, it is not clear precisely what Rahner considers the medium for the self-return. The cosmos includes all relative beings and thus no relative being exists outside of the cosmos. However, the cosmic body of Christ needs an other being as the medium of self-return. Hence I suggest that the cosmic body returns to itself by way of God the Father.

Both the individual and the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union are connected in the transcendental horizon of the divine Logos. In the self-communication of God, this infinite horizon leads the individual Christ, all spiritual subjects, and the cosmos itself to absolute closeness to God in their self-transcendence.

2.3.5 Relation between Christ’s divine hypostasis and the human hypostasis of each person

In this segment, I explore the relationship between Christ’s divine hypostasis and each human hypostasis, and present my understanding of the relationship between them. Christ’s divine hypostasis is the Logos of God itself, which comprises his individual existence and the foundation of his subjectivity. Christ’s enhypostatized human nature is his individual and concrete humanity. Thus, his human nature is not limited to human intellectual and volitional faculties, but also contains a concrete human body. Such humanity subsists in the divine hypostasis (enhypostasis) and cannot exist without the hypostasis (anhypostasis). The divine hypostasis activates the enhypostatized human nature.
Each ordinary human has its own human *hypostasis*, which is its individual existence and the foundation of its subjectivity. As Leontius of Byzantium and Maximus the Confessor explained, the human *hypostasis* consists of the substances of soul and body. The human *hypostasis* *enhypostatizes* the soul and body. That means that the human *hypostasis* sustains the human consciousness, human will, and human bodily activity. The soul and body are *anhypostasis* (cannot exist) without the human *hypostasis*. Thus, the relation between the divine *hypostasis* and the divine and human natures of Christ is analogous to the relation between the human *hypostasis* and the human soul/body.

When I reflect on the relation between Christ’s divine *hypostasis* and our human *hypostasis*, the divine *hypostasis* sustains the personal unity in each human *hypostasis*. This is because the oneness and individuality of the divine *hypostasis* can sustain the oneness and individuality of the human *hypostasis*. Nevertheless, the human *hypostasis* is mutable and destructible by human death. This is not compatible with the divine *hypostasis* of the Logos, which shares the unchangeable and indestructible character of the divine nature with the other divine *hypostases* in the Trinity.

Leontius and Maximus’ idea of the composite *hypostasis* of Christ sheds light on the relation between our human *hypostasis* and Christ’s divine *hypostasis*. The human *hypostasis* is sustained by the divine *hypostasis* in terms of its oneness and individuality. However, the human *hypostasis* subsists in the cosmic *enhypostatized* humanity of Christ. This is why the human *hypostasis* has a mutable character, which is affected by Christ’s humanity. On the other hand, the human *hypostasis* exists in the cosmic *enhypostatized* divinity of Christ. Thus, the human *hypostasis* can also participate in the divine energy through Christ.

Therefore, the human *hypostasis* has a direct relation with the divine *hypostasis* of
the Logos. As the divine hypostasis, the Logos transcends the two natures in Christ’s hypostatic union. The Logos enables his divine and human consciousnesses within its transcendental horizon. In the cosmic dimensions of the union, the transcendental horizon of the divine Logos is the connecting point between the divine hypostasis of the Logos and each human hypostasis in the cosmic body of Christ. The divine hypostasis is an immediate being of the Logos, which can sustain each human hypostasis.

At the same time, the human hypostasis inheres in the composite hypostasis of Christ. Thus, the human hypostasis has matter, which is mutable and destructible in the relation with Christ’s humanity. On the other hand, the human hypostasis makes the activity of the human spirit possible in the relation with Christ’s enhyponostatized divine activity. The Logos gives being to each individual human person and creates the conditions for the finite human spirit, which has a self-reflexive character. When the finite human spirit undergoes the movement of self-return, this movement is sustained by the divine energy of Christ. However, the self-returning activity of the finite spirit passes through matter in the cosmic humanity of Christ. Thus, the cosmic humanity of Christ helps the finite spirit to accomplish its movement of self-return. This is the foundation of human self-consciousness, which is opened to other beings in the world.

In this regard, Rahner and Teilhard overlap significantly. The aggregate of self-conscious persons forms a collective corporeality in their mutual relationships. As noted, Teilhard describes this mutual relationship as “the union differentiates.” When each of them is more personalized (not individualized) in relation to the divine hypostasis of the Logos, their mutual interconnection is deepened (not in terms of totalization). When the personalization is deepened, each individual person can see that my person is opened to all beings in the universe. Moreover, one can also see that all spiritual beings become self-conscious in the transcendental horizon and open up in self-transcendence to
God. In the state of personalization, one can recognize that there are innumerable self-conscious individuals in the universe, who, despite the infinite number, realize deeper interconnection in Christ’s cosmic body. When one recognizes that the divine hypostasis makes one’s human hypostasis possible, one can see that the other’s human hypostasis is also sustained by the same divine hypostasis. When one finds the foundation of the individual person, one can also find the foundation of the unification of all. Thereafter, when one recognizes that the human consciousness and body are opened to all beings in the cosmic body of Christ, one can also see that others’ human consciousness and body contain all beings in same body of Christ. Consequently, each human person can communicate with every other in the cosmic body of Christ. Therefore, the journey of personalization makes possible the unification of all beings in the cosmic body of Christ.

Moreover, in this movement, one can see that the cosmos itself becomes self-conscious and realizes self-transcendence. This is the structure of the self-transcendence of the cosmos to God. This is the movement of the self-transcendence of Christ’s cosmic humanity to the Father. When each spiritual subject deepens its self-recognition and mutual relationship with others, Christ’s cosmic human soul and body is developed and undergoes self-transcendence to God the Father in the dynamics of Christ’s cosmic body.

2.4 Conclusion

As noted, there are three fundamental problems in the interpretation of the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union. The first concerns how Christ’s human nature is connected with the divine nature in the cosmic dimensions of the union. The second concerns how all beings exist and are unified in the cosmic humanity of Christ. The third considers how the divine hypostasis of the Logos and the human hypostasis of each individual human are related in the cosmic dimensions of the union.
First, Christ’s cosmic humanity is united with his divinity in the union of composition rather than in the union of predominance or other types of union. In the union of composition, the human nature and the divine nature are distinct, but juxtaposed and united in the divine hypostasis of the Logos. This means the divine hypostasis transcends the two natures and sustains the two natures as the locus of union. In this case, the divine hypostasis has a different ontological status from the divine consciousness, which is part of the divine nature. Thus, the divine hypostasis cannot be confused with the divine consciousness. This is the foundation of the cosmic dimensions of the union. If the human nature is swallowed by the divine nature in the union of predominance, Christ cannot be immersed in the physical reality of the cosmos because he cannot share in matter with all beings. If the two natures are confused with one another, there is neither divinity nor humanity and they cannot be connected either with God or humans in the world. If the two natures are completely divided, the divine nature cannot ultimately communicate with human reality. Therefore, the union of composition is the most appropriate for describing the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union.

Second, all particular beings stand in the universal humanity of Christ and are connected with one another in the cosmic physical body of Christ, which is the eternal Logos. There is a union of all beings in the cosmic body of Christ because the human nature of Christ is immersed in matter and thus his humanity shares matter with other beings. Therefore, the cosmic body of Christ sustains the union of all creatures. However, human persons do not have real, personal interaction with other individuals merely by sharing the same material reality. We need to identify the foundation of the human person, which is the center of the interaction.

This foundation is Christ’s divine hypostasis, which sustains each human person. Christ’s divine hypostasis grounds the personal identity of each human hypostasis. In the
relation with the divine hypostasis, the human hypostasis makes the activity of the finite human spirit possible. The human spirit is the basis of self-consciousness and relationship with others because it opens the precondition of relationship with others, passes through matter in the world, and returns to itself. This activity is sustained by the divine energy of Christ. Nevertheless, the spirit passes through matter, in which Christ’s cosmic humanity is immersed. Thus, the activity of the human spirit is sustained by both the cosmic divinity and the cosmic humanity of Christ. Each human hypostasis has the same structure and each human spirit makes possible the personal mutual relationship.

Moreover, Teilhard holds that Christ’s human nature contains all beings in the universe, which are in the process of evolution. In this process, humanity is the peak of natural evolution and thus contains all other species, which are, in varying degrees, in the earlier stages of evolution. The universal Christ is the Omega Point. He is the cosmic physical reality that contains all beings and effects their convergence with one another as all move toward ultimate convergence in Omega as the end of their evolution. He animates and gathers up all the biological and spiritual energies developed by the universe. The cosmic humanity of Christ contains the whole process of evolution and the divine creative energy leads the course of natural evolution through Christ’s humanity.

However, in Teilhard, the Omega is not the divine hypostasis, but the self-manifestation of the divine nature as the divine energy because Teilhard explores the Omega in the dimension of Christ’s cosmic consciousness. In my view, however, the hypostasis of Christ is the foundation of his subjectivity as the divine Logos, which transcends his divine and human consciousnesses. Teilhard, however, cannot ultimately discover the divine hypostasis of Christ. As a result, he falls into a form of Monophysite Christology by emphasizing the theandric nature of Christ. In this view, Christ’s cosmic body represents his human nature, but his cosmic humanity is only the instrument of the
divine energy, which leads and consummates the evolutionary process as the Omega point. Consequently, the theandric nature of Christ can only indicate the superiority of the divine nature working through the human nature. Moreover, this “Monophysite” view of Christ cannot explain the foundation of the interconnection of all human persons because there are no conditions for the existence of the human person without the divine hypostasis. His perspective also fails to explain the real end of the evolutionary process because the ultimate end of evolution is the divine hypostasis, which transcends Christ’s cosmic consciousness. The self-consciousness of the human is the highest development of consciousness, but the development of self-consciousness can be consummated in the being of Logos, which is beyond our human consciousness. Therefore, the real end of evolution should transcend human self-consciousness itself. Therefore, we must identify the divine hypostasis as the locus of the union of the two natures, the foundation of the unity of all beings, and the real end of the evolutionary process in Christ’s cosmic body.

Third, the divine hypostasis of the Logos sustains the human hypostasis of each individual human in the cosmic dimensions of the union. Rahner holds that the individual and cosmic dimensions of the union are related in the common transcendental horizon of the Logos. This horizon sustains Christ’s individual human self-consciousness and the cosmic corporeality of Christ, which consists of all spiritual subjects. Thus, the individual Christ, individual subjects, and the cosmos itself realize self-transcendence in the grace of the self-communication of God.

The individual dimension of the hypostatic union of Christ is the unity between Christ’s human self-consciousness and the divine consciousness in the transcendental horizon of the divine Logos. His human self-consciousness is sustained by the reflexive movement of his human spirit, which must pass through objective matter. His divine consciousness of the divine sonship is the transcendental horizon, which is the condition
of his human self-consciousness. The cosmic dimension of the hypostatic union consists of the unity between the concrete universal reality of all spiritual subjects and the transcendental horizon of the divine Logos. God’s self-communication is the inter-communication of all individual self-conscious subjects, each of whom is opened to the whole of being. All spiritual subjects in the cosmos become self-conscious within the transcendental horizon and realize self-transcendence to God as a whole. They constitute a collective corporeality in their mutual relationships and this corporeality is the universal body of Christ. Finally, the cosmos itself realizes self-transcendence to God.

In finding the divine hypostasis, we discover the real human hypostasis. This is the basis of the mutual relationship as the union differentiates. When each human hypostasis is more personalized in relation to the divine hypostasis of the Logos, their mutual interconnection becomes deeper. When the personalization is accomplished, each individual person can see that my person is opened to all beings in the universe. Further, one can also see that all different spiritual beings become self-conscious in the transcendental horizon and realize self-transcendence to God. In the personalization, one can recognize that there are innumerable self-conscious persons in the universe, who also form a deeper interconnection with one another in Christ’s cosmic body. When one realizes that the divine hypostasis makes possible the human hypostasis, one can see the other’s human hypostasis is also sustained by the same divine hypostasis. When one finds the foundation of the person, one can also find the foundation of the unification of all. Thereafter, when one recognizes that one’s human consciousness and body are opened to all beings in the cosmic body of Christ, one can also see that other’s human consciousness and body contain all beings in the same body of Christ. Eventually, each human person can communicate one with another in the cosmic body of Christ.

Finally, the cosmos itself undergoes self-transcendence to God in Christ’s cosmic
body through the collective self-transcendence of human persons, which forms (and furthers) the cosmic body of Christ. The activity of his cosmic humanity is sustained by the divine hypostasis of the Logos. The cosmic body of Christ moves toward God the Father and undergoes self-transcendence in order to realize the full perfection of its cosmic humanity. The next chapter explicates the structure of the cosmic dimensions of the Buddha body in Shin Buddhism, which as I ultimately demonstrate, is analogous in many respects to the cosmic dimensions of Christ’s hypostatic union.
III. Cosmic dimension of the Buddha Body in Shin Buddhism:

Amitābha Buddha

3.1 Fundamental Issues of the Cosmic Body of Amitābha

This chapter explicates the structure of the cosmic dimensions of the Buddha body, Amitābha, in Shin Buddhism. In the Buddha body theory of Shin Buddhism, Dharmākara bodhisattva and his subsequent enlightenment as Amitābha are regarded as the self-manifestation of the formless, ineffable Buddha body, Tathāgata. In its self-manifestation, Tathāgata becomes the dharma body of the Buddha as compassionate means of salvation. In this eternal movement, the Dharmākara bodhisattva took vows to save all sentient beings. Through many ages of rigorous practice, Dharmākara finally attained true enlightenment as Amitābha, who has a fulfilled spiritual body (sambhoga-kāya). The fulfilled body of Amitābha is in turn incarnated into countless transformed and assumed historical bodies (nirmana-kāya).¹ Shakyamuni (Gautama) is the preeminent historical Buddha among the transformed bodies of the Buddha.

According to Shinran, the body of Amitābha and his Pure Land are the fulfilled body and Land of the Buddha, which is realized through the vows and practices of Dharmākara. This body of Amitābha is none other than the Land, which is the infinite horizon that contains all sentient beings. This cosmic body leads all sentient beings to attain the faith, recite Namu-Amida-Butsu, and be reborn in his Pure Land. Those who are born in the Pure Land aspire to save others in the power of Amitābha and thus, under his direction, return to the world to save others who are still suffering.² As cosmic principle of salvation, Amitābha is embodied within the entire web of interdependent relationships within the cosmos, saving all sentient beings and bringing them to the Pure Land. In this


paradigm, personal and cosmic salvation are thus inextricably bound: “salvation” must include the salvation of all sentient beings. In Shin Buddhism, the Buddha body theory is deeply connected with soteriology.

This chapter identifies three key issues in relation to the cosmic body of Amitābha. The first explores how the Dharmākara is related to his fulfilled body, Amitābha. Considering that in Mahāyāna Buddhism, one can attain true enlightenment only when all sentient beings are saved, the question arises: how did Dharmākara bodhisattva attain final enlightenment as Amitābha even though all sentient beings are not yet saved? Did Dharmākara “graduate” from the stage of bodhisattva when he became Amitābha? Does Dharmākara endure in Amitābha even though he attained final enlightenment? Does Amitābha remain as Dharmākara in some way? Thus, I seek to elucidate the relationship between Dharmākara and Amitābha.

The second issue revolves around the relation between the Buddha nature and karmic human nature in Amitābha. Dharmākara consists of the Buddha nature and karmic nature, through which he is involved in the cycle of birth and death with other sentient beings. How do the Dharmākara’s karmic human nature and the Buddha nature relate to both natures of the fulfilled body of Amitābha? How can Amitābha relate himself to karmic human nature?

The third issue is how the Dharmākara’s vow mind is connected to the establishment of the Pure Land. The Pure Land has its “adornments.” The adornments mean the forms of the Land, which consist of Amitābha, bodhisattvas, and the Land itself. When Dharmākara becomes Amitābha, he establishes the Land with his enlightenment. The vow mind attains self-realization in the Pure Land as the adornments of the Land. The fulfilled body of Amitābha is the master of the Land and there are many bodhisattvas surrounding Amitābha, living in the same Land. Amitābha, Dharmākara, and the Land
are inseparably related. I elucidate how Dharmākara’s vow mind generates these adornments of the Land. These three questions will occupy this chapter.

3.2 Relationship between Dharmākara Bodhisattva and Amitābha

3.2.1 The Salvific Vow of Dharmākara bodhisattva and his Enlightenment in the Larger Sutra

The Larger Sutra discloses the story of the Dharmākara bodhisattva. Originally, he was a king and heard the teaching of the Buddha. He was greatly inspired by it and aspired to perfect enlightenment. Thereafter, he abandoned his kingdom and gave up his throne and became a monk (bhiksu), taking the name of Dharmākara. He went to see the Tathāgata Lokeśvara (the name of Buddha) and praised the Tathāgata as his master.

Lokeśvara asked Dharmākara to proclaim his vow for establishing the true Pure Land and the pure practices for saving all beings in the Land and in so doing, invite others to do the same. As Tathāgata exhorts him, “Encourage and delight the entire assembly. Hearing this, other bodhisattvas will practice this Dharma and so fulfill their innumerable great vows.” Lokeśvara thought that Dharmakara’s vows would help other bodhisattvas in their practice of fulfilling their vows and likewise becoming the Buddha. Thereafter, Dharmākara proclaimed his forty-eight vows. Among these, I highlight ten important vows which pertain to Shin Buddhism.

If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not dwell in the Definitely Assured State and unfailingly reach Nirvana, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the eleventh vow).

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4 Ibid., 28.

5 Ibid., 32.

6 Ibid., 33.
If, when I attain Buddhahood, my light should be limited, unable to illuminate at least a hundred thousand kōtis of nayutas of Buddha-lands, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the twelfth vow).  

If, when I attain Buddhahood, my life span should be limited, even to the extent of a hundred thousand kōtis of nayutas of kalpas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the thirteenth vow).

If when I attain Buddhahood, innumerable Buddhas in the lands of the ten directions should not all praise and glorify my Name, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the seventeenth vow).

If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and call my Name even ten times should not be born there, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five gravest offences and abuse the right Dharma (the eighteenth vow).

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7 Ibid.  
Nayuta means “a large unit of numerical measurement, said to be equal to ten million or one hundred billion.” Inagaki Hisao, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 386.

8 Hisao Inagaki, trans. The Larger Sutra on Amitayus, 33.  
Kalpa signifies “An eon, an immensely long period of time; its length is metaphorically explained, for instance, as the period required for one to empty a castle full of poppy seeds by taking away one seed every three years. Kalpa is also a period of great cosmic change.” Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 378.

9 Hisao Inagaki, trans., The Larger Sutra on Amitayus, 34.

10 Ibid.  
a) “Ten directions” signifies the eight directions, comprised of the four cardinal directions (north, east, south, and west), the four intermediate directions (northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest), plus the zenite and nadir. As a general term, it refers to the entire sphere of reality; everywhere. Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 403.

b) The “five grave offences” represents the most serious offenses of Buddhist followers, the commission of which consigns one to the Avīci hell (the lowest and most permanent level of Hell). They are interpreted in slightly different ways in the Early Buddhist and Mahayana schools. The most commonly used version is that of the Early Buddhist School: 1) killing one’s father, 2) killing one’s mother, 3) killing an arhat, 4) causing the Buddha’s body to bleed, and 5) causing disunity in the Buddhist order (sangha). The Mahayana version is 1) destroying stupas, burning sutra repositories, or stealing property belonging to the Three Treasures; 2) slandering the teaching of the three vehicles by saying that it is not the sacred teaching of Buddha, obstructing and depreciating it, or hiding it; 3) beating and rebuking monks and nuns, whether they observe the precepts, have received no precepts, or have broken the precepts; enumerating their
If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who awaken aspiration for Enlightenment, do various meritorious deeds, and sincerely desire to be born in my land should not, at their death, see me appear before them surrounded by a multitude of sages, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the nineteenth vow).  

If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who, having heard my Name, concentrate their thoughts on my land, do various meritorious deeds, and sincerely transfer their merits toward my land with a desire to be born there should not eventually fulfill their aspiration, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the twentieth vow).  

If, when I attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas in the Buddha-lands of the other directions who visit my land should not ultimately and unfailingly reach the Stage of Becoming a Buddha after One More Life, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment. Excepted are those who wish to teach and guide sentient beings in accordance with their original vows. For they will wear the armor of great vows, accumulate merits, deliver all beings from birth-and-death, visit Buddha-lands to perform bodhisattva practices, make offering to Buddhas, Tathagatas, throughout the ten directions, enlighten uncountable sentient beings as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, and establish them in the highest, perfect Enlightenment. Such bodhisattvas transcend the course of practice of the ordinary bodhisattva stages and actually cultivate the virtues of Samantabhadra (the twenty-second vow).  

transgressions, confining them, forcing them back into secular life, forcing them to do menial work, levying tax duties on them, or putting them to death; 4) killing one’s father, killing one’s mother, causing blood to flow from the body of Buddha, destroying the harmony of the sangha, or killing an arhat; 5) rejecting the law of causality and constantly performing the ten evil acts throughout one’s life.  

Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 368.  


11 Ibid.  

12 Ibid.  

13 Ibid., 35. Samantabhadra is “the name of a great bodhisattva who represents the ultimate principle, meditation, and practice of all Buddhas; also the right-hand attendant of Śākyamuni; often portrayed mounted on a white elephant.” Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 395.
If, when I attain Buddhahood, my land should not be resplendent, revealing in its light all the immeasurable, innumerable, and inconceivable Buddha-lands like images reflected in a clear mirror, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the thirty-first vow).  

If, when I attain Buddhahood, all the myriads of manifestations in my land, from the ground to the sky, such as palaces, pavilions, ponds, streams, and trees, should not be composed both of countless treasures that surpass in supreme excellence anything in the worlds of humans and devas and of a hundred thousand kinds of aromatic wood whose fragrance pervades all the worlds of the ten directions, causing all bodhisattvas who sense it to perform Buddhist practices, then may I not attain perfect Enlightenment (the thirty-second vow).

_Dharmākara_ made all vows beginning with the phrase, “If, when I attain Buddhahood.” In all these vows, he proclaims what he shall realize in the Pure Land for saving all sentient beings. If he is unable to realize these vows, he will not attain enlightenment and shall not become Buddha (“may I not attain perfect Enlightenment”). The reason is that he can attain true enlightenment and become Buddha only when he saves all sentient beings.

His vows consist of five elements. First, he describes what kind of Buddha body he would attain (infinite light and life). Second, he describes the true practices of sentient beings who shall be saved (sincere and joyful trust, desire to be born in the Land, calling the Name even ten times, aspiration for Enlightenment, various meritorious deeds, and transferring of merits toward the Land). Third, he describes the situation of those who are saved (dwelling in the Definitely Assured State and unfailingly reaching _Nirvāṇa_).

Fourth, he describes the situation of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in his Pure Land (praising and glorifying the Name and ultimately reaching the “Stage of Becoming a Buddha after One More Life”). Fifth, he depicts the features of the Pure Land itself

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14 Hisao Inagaki, trans., _The Larger Sutra on Amitayus_, 36.

15 Ibid.
After proclaiming these vows, as a bodhisattva, Dharmākara was engaged in rigorous practice for innumerable kalpas. He did not harbor any ideas of “greed, hatred, or cruelty.” He did not attach to “any form, sound, smell, taste, touch or idea.” He was possessed of the power of perseverance and “did not avoid undergoing various afflictions” of the people. He had “little desire for his own sake,” and knew contentment. He was “courageous and diligent” and “strong-willed and untiring.” He “devoted himself solely to the pursuit of the pure Dharma, thereby benefiting a multitude of beings.” He revered the Three Treasures (Buddha, dharma, and sangha [Community of Buddhist monks]), and respected his teachers and elders. He “adorned his practices with a great store of merits” and “enabled sentient beings to partake of them.” He dwelt “in the realization that all dharmas are empty, devoid of distinctive features, and not to be sought after, and that they neither act nor arise.” He avoided “all wrong speech that would bring harm upon himself or others or both,” and “engaged in right speech that would bring benefit to himself or others or both.” He “practiced six paramitas and taught others to do the same. In doing so, he “accumulated merits and amassed virtues” for innumerable kalpas. Furthermore, “wherever he was born, an immeasurable stock of treasure spontaneously appeared as he wished. He taught countless sentient beings and

16 Ibid., 41.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 41-42.
20 Ibid., 42.
21 Ibid.

Pāramitās signifies six pāramitās (six perfections). Six pāramitās means “the six types of practices to be perfected by bodhisattvas on the path to Buddhahood. They are: 1) generosity (dāna), 2) observance of the precepts (śīla), 3) patience (ksānti), 4) effort (vīrya), 5) meditation (dhyāna), and 6) wisdom (prajñā).” Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 398.
guided them on the path of the highest, true Enlightenment.”

Finally, Dharmākara bodhisattva attained supreme enlightenment as Amitābha Buddha and realized his Pure Land. Since he attained enlightenment, ten kalpas have passed.

His Pure Land is filled with “seven jewels, namely gold, silver, beryl, coral, amber, agate, and ruby” of the earth. The Land is “so vast, spreading boundlessly to the farthest extent, that it is impossible to know its limit” and “all the rays of the light from those jewels intermingle and create manifold reflections” and produce “a dazzling illumination.” Moreover, “those pure, superb, and exquisite adornments are unsurpassed in all the worlds of the ten directions.”

This is the story of Dharmākara bodhisattva in the Larger Sutra. In the tradition of Pure Land Buddhism, many Pure Land scholars in India, China, Korea, and Japan have considered the meaning of the vows of Dharmākara and the relation between Dharmākara and his final enlightenment as Amitābha. Amitābha is inseparable from its Pure Land.

3.2.2 Shinran’s view of Amitābha and the Pure Land

When we think of Amitābha as the enlightenment of Dharmākara, we are able to comprehend the fundamental character of Amitābha. In the Larger Sutra, in the twelfth and the thirteenth vows, the Dharmākara elucidates the character of Amitābha. Shinran quotes the vows in The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way.

If, when I attain Buddhahood, my light not be infinite and not illuminate even a hundred thousand nayutas of kotis of Buddha-lands, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment [the twelfth vow].

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22 Hisao Inagaki, trans., The Larger Sutra on Amitayus, 42.
23 Ibid., 42-43.
24 Ibid., 43.
If, when I attain Buddhahood, my life not be infinite and not span even a hundred thousand nayutas of kotis of kalpas, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment [the thirteenth vow].

Shinran holds that infinite light and life are the fundamental characteristics of Amitābha. Thus, these two vows describe the character of the Buddha body. Further, in vows thirty-one and thirty-two of the Larger Sutra, the Dharmākara describes the form of the Pure Land. In these vows, he declares the purity of the Land and portrays it as full of beautiful pavilions, ponds, streams, and trees, and a hundred thousand kinds of aromatic wood. Nevertheless, Shinran does not think that these vows describe the fundamental characteristics of the Pure Land. Rather, he holds that it is the twelfth and the thirteenth vows that describe both the character of Amitābha Buddha and the Pure Land.

He writes, “I find that the Buddha is the Tathagata of inconceivable light and that the land also is the land of immeasurable light. Because they have arisen through the fulfillment of Vows of great compassion, they are called true fulfilled Buddha and Land.”

Shinran also regards Amitābha as “immeasurable life.”

The original sentence of the twelfth vow in the Larger Sutra is as follows. Hisao Inagaki trans., The Larger Sutra on Amitayus (The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life) 33. “If, when I attain Buddhahood, my light should be limited, unable to illuminate at least a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of Buddha-lands, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment.” “Nayutas of kotis” in this context signifies an indefinitely large number.

The original sentence of the thirteenth vow in the Larger Sutra is as follows. Hisao Inagaki trans., The Larger Sutra on Amitayus (The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life) 33. “If, when I attain Buddhahood, my life span should be limited, even to the extent of a hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of kalpas, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment.”

Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, 177.

Ibid., 36. “If, when I attain Buddhahood, my life span should not be resplendent, revealing in its light all the immeasurable, innumerable, and inconceivable Buddha-lands like images reflected in a clear mirror, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment [the thirty-first vow].” “If, when I attain Buddhahood, all the myriads of manifestations in my land, from the ground to the sky, such as palaces, pavilions, ponds, streams, and trees, should not be composed both of countless treasures that surpass in supreme excellence anything in the worlds of humans and devas and of a hundred thousand kinds of aromatic wood whose fragrance pervades all the worlds of the ten directions, causing all bodhisattvas who sense it to perform Buddhist practices, then may I not attain perfect Enlightenment [the thirty-second vow].”

Ibid.

Ibid.
here that Shinran’s identification of the Buddha body and the Pure Land as infinite life and light is unique and in my view highly creative. He departs from the traditional understanding of the relationship between the Buddha body and the Pure Land, in which *Amitābha* is personified, and dwells in the Land as characterized by many beautiful palaces, streams, and lush gardens.

3.2.3 Shinran’s view of Buddha body: The dharma body as suchness (*hosshō-hosshin* 法性法身) and the dharma body as compassionate means (*hōben-hosshin* 方便法身)

Shinran recognizes two dimensions of the dharma body (*dharmakāya*) of the Buddha. One dimension is the dharma body as suchness (*hosshō-hosshin* 法性法身), the formless and ineffable *Tathāgata*. Our minds cannot grasp or describe this reality as it is beyond concepts or words. The other dimension is the dharma body as compassionate means (*hōben-hosshin* 方便法身), the self-manifestation of *Tathāgata*, whose name is *Dharmākara* bodhisattva and *Amitābha*.\(^{30}\) This dharma body takes form in *Dharmākara*, which approaches finite beings in order to save them. *Dharmākara* established the forty-eight great vows and after innumerable *kalpas* more, he achieved full enlightenment as *Amitābha* Buddha, which is the fulfilled body of *Dharmākara*’s vow. Therefore, *Dharmākara* bodhisattva and its enlightened form, *Amitābha* Buddha, both constitute the dharma body as compassionate means. Shinran explicates the meaning of “compassionate means,” explaining that it “refers to manifesting form, revealing a name, 

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\(^{30}\) Shinran, *Notes on ‘Essentials of Faith Alone’*, trans. Dennis Hirota in vol. 1 of *The Collected Works of Shinran*, 461. “Since it is with this heart and mind of all sentient beings that they entrust themselves to the Vow of the dharma-body as compassionate means, this shinjin (faith) is none other than Buddha-nature. This Buddha nature is dharma-nature. Dharma-nature is dharma-body. For this reason there are two kinds of dharma-body with regard to the Buddha. The first is called dharma-body as suchness and the second, dharma-body as compassionate means. Dharma-body as suchness has neither color nor form; thus, the mind cannot grasp it nor words describe it. From this oneness was manifested form, called dharma-body as compassionate means. Taking this form, the Buddha announced the name Bhiksu Dharmākara and established the Forty-eight great Vows that surpass conceptual understanding. Among these Vows are the Primal Vow of immeasurable light and the universal Vow of immeasurable life, and to the form manifesting these two Vows Bodhisattva Vasubandhu gave the title, ‘Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters.’ This Tathagata has fulfilled the Vows, which are the cause of that Buddhahood, and thus called ‘Tathagata of the fulfilled body.’ This is none other than Amida Tathagata.”
and making itself known to sentient beings. It refers to Amida [Amitābha] Buddha.\textsuperscript{31}

The dharma body as compassionate means is manifested as Dharmākara and Amitābha to sentient beings through the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu (I take refuge in Amitābha Buddha). Thus, the Name itself is also an integral part of the dharma body as compassionate means.

Shinran took this theory of the two Buddha bodies from an old Chinese Pure Land school master, T’an-luan (曇鸞 476–542). In his famous work, The Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land (往生論註: T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasbandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land A Study and Translation), T’an-luan says that Buddhas and bodhisattvas have two dharma bodies: the dharma body as suchness ("dharmakāya of the dharma nature") and the dharma body as compassionate means ("dharmakāya of expediency"). From the dharma body as suchness originates the dharma body as compassionate means. On the other hand, through the dharma body as compassionate means, the dharma body as suchness is revealed. They are two but not different; one but not the same.\textsuperscript{32} Shinran brought these two dharma bodies into his view of the Buddha bodies. He applied the dharma body as suchness to the formless Tathāgata, and the dharma body as compassionate means to Dharmākara bodhisattva, Amitābha, and the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu, as the self-manifestations of the formless Tathāgata. This is Shinran’s creative view of the Buddha body.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} Shinran, Notes on One-Calling and Many-Calling, trans. Dennis Hirota in vol. 1 of The Collected Works of Shinran, 486.

\textsuperscript{32} T’an-luan, Ōjōronchū 往生論註: T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasbandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land A Study and Translation, trans. Hisao Inagaki (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1998), 264-265.

\textsuperscript{33} Shinran also makes another distinction of Buddha bodies and applies it to Tathāgata. One is the body of true reality (Jissō-shin 実相身). This Buddha body knows self-satisfaction in its enlightenment. The other is the body for the sake of beings (Imotsu-shin 為物身). This Buddha body is always manifesting itself to sentient beings and benefiting others. Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, trans. Dennis Hirota in vol. 1 of The Collected Works of Shinran, 82. The body of true reality and the body for the sake of beings correspond to the Dharma-Body as suchness and the Dharma-Body as compassionate means, respectively. This distinction also came from T’an-luan’s Commentary. T’an-luan, Ōjōronchū 往生論註: T’an-luan’s Commentary on Vasbandhu’s Discourse on the Pure Land A Study and Translation, 209.
3.2.4 Ryōjin Soga’s understanding of the relationship between Dharmākara and Amitābha

In this segment, I elucidate the relationship between Dharmākara and Amitābha from the perspective of Ryōjin Soga. Soga is a preeminent modern Shin-Buddhist thinker, who developed a subjective and personal approach to Shin Buddhist studies. This trajectory is prominent in his creative understanding of Dharmākara. From the 13th to the 20th century, most Shin Buddhist thinkers regarded Dharmākara bodhisattva’s story as pure “myth” rather than as embodied principle of salvation. As a result, they neglected Dharmākara and focused on Amitābha (the fulfilled body of Dharmākara), the merciful savior of all sentient beings. However, Soga focuses on the salvific role of Dharmākara in his rigorous practice as bodhisattva to save sentient beings. He demythologizes Dharmākara’s enlightenment as Amitābha by interpreting Dharmākara as center of our true subjectivity. Soga explains that “The Tathāgata becoming me saves me,”34 and “when the Tathāgata becomes me, it signals the birth of Dharmākara bodhisattva.”35 In my view, this statement indicates that the formless Tathāgata undergoes self-negation, assumes our humanity, and becomes our true self as Dharmākara. Though Dharmākara is not an historical person, he becomes our true self at the core of our consciousness, taking on our sinful humanity within the karmic cycle of evil. He takes the original vow and engages in rigorous practice to save us in the inmost dimension of our consciousness. Soga holds that although Jesus Christ is the historical human person who appeared as a mediator between God and humans, Christ is still object for us. In other words, we see Christ as external object of our recognition and pray for his mercy. Then, Christ


35 Ibid.
approaches and saves us. Soga writes, “He (Christ) is and remains himself, while I am and remain myself.” In contrast, Dharmākara was born in the heart-mind of human beings and thus salvation of all sentient beings arises from the dark breast of human suffering. This means that Dharmākara is not an external object, but an internal being, which sustains our subjectivity. Soga emphasizes that Dharmākara arises from the earth, which represents sinful human darkness and does not come from heaven.

In my view, Soga’s understanding of Dharmākara as a true self on earth has its background in relation to his master, Manshi Kiyozawa (清沢満之 1863-1903), the pioneer of the modern interpretation of Shin Buddhist doctrine. Kiyozawa is the founder of the “Seishinshugi” (精神主義) movement in modern Japanese Buddhism. Mark Blum, professor of Japanese studies at UC Berkeley and scholar of modern Shin Buddhism, translates “Seishinshugi” into “Cultivating Spirituality.” Blum explains that it was “the name given to a set of principles that prioritized personal, subjective experience as the basis for religious understanding, as well as praxis that ideally brought about realization.” Kiyozawa’s Seishinshugi laid the foundation of the modern interpretation of Shin Buddhism, which understands Shinran’s perspective on faith through our subjective and personal experiences. In particular, he understands the faith in Amitābha as self-awareness, in which one finds a final settlement (or realization) in this present moment, not in the future after death. He expresses this final settlement in terms of self-awareness: “This myself is none other than that which, following the way of suchness and entrusting itself to the wondrous working that is absolute and infinite, has

36 Ibid., 111.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
settled down of itself in the present situation." The original word for “has settled down of itself” is “rakuzai” (落在), which literally means “fallen being.” Self is fallen (transcends) into this present situation, entrusting everything to the absolute infinite power of Amitābha. This self-awareness consists of (1) the individual self, (2) the interdependent relation between individual self and other sentient beings, (3) the darkness of one’s participation in the karmic cycle of evil, (4) the earth (present situation) where the self is placed, and (5) the absolute infinite power (Tathāgata or Amitābha), which saves the individual self. When I recognize myself deeply entangled in the darkness of the cycle of karmic evil on the earth (ki no jinshin 機の深信), paradoxically I find the final salvation in Amitābha (hō no jinshin 法の深信).

The self does not go to heaven and immediately receive the beatific vision, but goes down to the earth by deepening the self-recognition of one’s participation in karmic evil. In this context, the “falling” of self is the movement of self-transcendence downward into the present moment. Our true self finds a final settlement in the present situation by falling to the earth in our self-awareness. Furthermore, when the true self has final settlement in this present situation, it also recognizes the interdependent nature of its relation with all other sentient beings.

Soga deepens Kiyozawa’s view of self-awareness and finds Dharmākara in our true self on the earth, in the present moment. We can recognize Dharmākara in our self by the self-transcendence to the earth. When we believe deeply that we are foolish beings of karmic evil caught in the cycle of birth and death (samsāra), we can find that Dharmākara is living deep within our sinful human reality and carries our sins and sufferings as our true self. He saves us from the burden of sin by taking all people’s

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responsibility upon himself. This might be understood as the integration of the darkness of karmic reality into the self, allowing the self to attain wholeness. Thus Dharmākara was born in the heart-mind of human beings and his voice, saving all sentient beings, arises from the dark breast of the suffering of each human being. Dharmākara is individual reality, but also collective reality, which arises in the mind of each individual in its interconnection with other individual beings.

However, how are Dharmākara and Amitābha simultaneously present together? On the one hand, we find Dharmākara in our own subjectivity, which cannot be objectified. On the other hand, we can see Amitābha as an object of our faith. In The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life, eons (ten kalpas) ago, Dharmākara’s vow was fulfilled and he achieved true enlightenment, having become the fulfilled Buddha body of Amitābha, who is inseparable from the Pure Land. According to this progression, then, he can no longer be Dharmākara bodhisattva. Moreover, if we find the presence of Dharmākara in our subjectivity, it means that he could not simultaneously be Amitābha, because his enlightenment would not have been accomplished. In this view, then, Amitābha exists as the fulfilled body, having absorbed and then superseded Dharmākara.

Soga attempts to resolve this apparent dilemma by reference to Shinran’s notion of the “eternal Tathāgata.” According to Shinran, “it is taught that ten kalpas have now passed since Amida (Amitābha) attained Buddhahood, but he seems a Buddha more ancient than kalpas, countless as particles.” Though according to Pure Land tradition, Dharmākara bodhisattva became Amitābha ten kalpas ago, this timeframe is only taken in the literal sense by some interpreters of the Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life.

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41 Ryōjin Soga, Tannishō chōki 歌異抄聴記 (Lectures on Tannishō), in vol. 6 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), ed. Soga Ryōjin senshū kankōkai (Tokyo: Yayoi shobō, 1971), 156.

42 Ryōjin Soga, A Savior on Earth: The Meaning of Dharmākara Bodhisattva’s Advent, 111.

Shinran, however, found in this text the hidden meaning of the “eternal” Buddha, who is formless Tathāgata before the enlightenment of Dharmākara. Soga thus holds that the person of Dharmākara is the self-manifestation of the eternal Tathāgata.44 This Tathāgata becomes an embodied principle, assimilating itself into karmic reality as Dharmākara.

In my view, we should not apply the category of subject and object to the relation between Dharmākara and Amitābha. When one finds oneself deeply entangled in karmic evil and dwells on the earth (the present situation), this self cannot be objectified by any self-reflection. Moreover, the self has interdependent relations with other sentient beings in the sinful karmic darkness of this present situation. Such groundless selfhood is called Dharmākara. When one finds the true self as Dharmākara in such darkness, at the same time, one can see Amitābha, who is infinite light and life in our consciousness. Amitābha cannot be a mere object of our faith, however, but an infinite horizon which breaks the dichotomy of subject and object because he is the full self-determination of the infinite Tathāgata. As the self-realization of the formless Tathāgata, Amitābha is Dharmākara and Dharmākara is Amitābha. Amitābha cannot be Amitābha alone, but he contains Dharmākara, who enters the darkness of human reality for its universal salvation. Dharmākara opens the way to his enlightened body, Amitābha, and Amitābha cannot cease to be Dharmākara, because he desires to be assimilated into our sinful human reality as a bodhisattva in order to save us.

Dharmākara attained enlightenment as Amitābha because he found the way of saving all sentient beings in his Land. However, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, enlightenment does not mean graduation from bodhisattvahood. Rather, enlightenment means one’s

44 Ryōjin Soga, Kuon no Busshin no Kaikensha toshi no genzai no Hōzobiku 久遠の仏心の開顕者としての現在の法蔵比丘 (Dharmākara Bhikkhu as the one who opens the eternal Buddha mind in the present time), in vol. 2 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), ed. Soga Ryōjin senshū kankōkai (Tokyo: Yayoi shobō, 1971), 372.
liberation from the cycle of birth and death and further, one’s entry into endless work for
saving others in the world of birth and death. If we merely took a rest after achieving
enlightenment and did not heed the sufferings of others in the world, our enlightenment
would not be a true enlightenment. True enlightenment leads the bodhisattva to attain true
Buddhahood, and at the same time, leads the bodhisattva to attain true bodhisattvahood
because the Buddha must be completely engaged in the endless salvific activities of the
world. Therefore, though he dwells in the Pure Land and has reached full enlightenment,
Amitābha cannot stop being Dharmākara in his enlightenment because he is very eager
to enter the karmic human darkness as Dharmākara for the sake of all sentient beings.

The presence of Dharmākara/Amitābha is deeply connected with our human
self-recognition. What then is the relationship between Dharmākara/Amitābha and one’s
self-awareness? If the individual self is Dharmākara, can I thus say that “I am
Dharmākara”? Soga explicates the relationship between the presence of
Dharmākara/Amitābha and the individual’s self-awareness. According to Soga, my true
self is an internal reflection of Dharmākara’s vow mind, which is Dharmākara’s
self-recognition itself. Thus, the true “my-self” is “Tathāgata’s self.” However, I cannot
say that I am Tathāgata. Tathāgata calls me and turns me into “Thou.” Tathāgata’s vow
mind has initiative as true subjectivity. On the other hand, he calls me and turns me into
the internal object of the same subjectivity. Thus, Dharmākara’s vow mind is true self,
and my personal “I” is contained in the vow mind as “Thou” in the same subjectivity.45 Soga explains that when I recognize “my-self” as “Tathāgata’s self,” the “my-self” as
“Tathāgata’s self” cannot be my own self because the “Tathāgata” cannot be “my

45 Ryōjin Soga, Rongikyō to shiteno Shijū-hachigan 論議経としての四十八願 (The forty-eight vows as
the sutra of controversy) in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin
That means that the true individual self is "Tathāgata’s Tathāgata." However, the two aspects do not divide the reality of Tathāgata into two different realities. Originally, Tathāgata is emptiness, the ineffable reality. However, it is not a static reality, but engages in self-conscious activity. Tathāgata’s self indicates its self-recognition of Tathāgata. When Tathāgata’s self achieves its self-recognition, Tathāgata’s Tathāgata reveals itself as emptiness itself.

These two aspects of Tathāgata are analogous to the distinction of dharma body (dharma-kāya) in the dGe lugs tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Paul Williams explicates the dGe lugs Buddha body theory. Dharma body has two aspects, namely “the intrinsic body” (svābhāvika-kāya) and “the wisdom body,” or “the body of gnosis” (jnana-kāya). The intrinsic body indicates “the absence of intrinsic existence” (emptiness) in “the Buddha’s mind stream.” The wisdom body, or the body of gnosis, indicates “the Buddha’s omniscient nondual awareness,” which “perceives emptiness in all things.” This is the self-recognition of the Buddha body. The intrinsic body is emptiness itself and ground of self-perceiving activities. The self-conscious activity is revealed as the wisdom body. When the wisdom body accomplishes its self-recognition, the intrinsic body manifests itself as emptiness. The intrinsic body and the wisdom body are interdependent and are not separated from each other. This relationship is similar to the relationship between Tathāgata’s Tathāgata and Tathāgata’s self.

In my view, in one’s self-awareness, Dharmākara is “Tathāgata’s self,” which is

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46 Ryōjin Soga, Jishō no Sangan ni tsuite 自証の三願について (About the Three Vows of Tathāgata’s Self-Awareness), in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 64.


48 Ibid., 182-183.
found in our internal subjectivity. “Tathāgata’s Tathāgata” is Amitābha, which is an infinite horizon. We can find the Dharmākara as true individual self in the karmic darkness and at the same time, observe Amitābha, which is the universal reality of Tathāgata.

3.2.5 The activity of Tathāgata’s self-awareness from Soga’s perspective

In Soga’s view, the eternal Tathāgata undertakes self-conscious activity, which manifests itself as the salvific activity of Dharmākara and Amitābha. Soga analyzes Dharmākara’s vow in modern Shin Buddhist thought and regards the twelfth, thirteenth, and seventeenth vows as “the three vows of self-awareness of Tathāgata.”\(^{49}\) He holds that these vows illuminate the “eternal life of suchness” (the thirteenth vow) by “the light of wisdom” (the twelfth vow) and “produce the Name” (the seventeenth vow) and direct the self-awareness of Tathāgata to the world to save sentient beings.\(^{50}\) In my interpretation, his statement means that the eternal Tathāgata manifests itself as Dharmākara in the world, undergoes self-negation through bodhisattva practices, and delivers sentient beings to the Pure Land. Those who are settled in the Pure Land can become Buddhas. Finally, Dharmākara can accomplish his enlightenment as Amitābha when all other Buddhas (those who have settled and have attained Nirvāṇa in the Land) praise Amitābha by reciting Namu-Amida-Butsu, which is described in the seventeenth vow. Why is it that he can finally accomplish his enlightenment when all other Buddhas praise him? The reason is that he can become a true Buddha when all sentient beings are saved and praise him.

In my view, the eternal Tathāgata contains the eternal self-conscious activity in itself. This self-conscious activity is manifested in the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu, which

\(^{49}\) Ryōjin Soga, Jishō no Sangan ni tsuite (About the Three Vows of Tathāgata’s Self-Awareness), in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 61.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 62-63.
is the fundamental Word. This means that the formless Tathāgata always manifests its self-awareness in the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu. Tathāgata’s self is revealed in the Name and the Name forms the basis of the individuality of Dharmākara bodhisattva. Dharmākara works in the world to realize his self-awareness, which is sustained by the activity of the eternal Tathāgata. His self-awareness returns to itself by bringing sentient beings into the Land. When he returns to himself through the praise of all other Buddhas, the infinite Tathāgata is revealed and the cosmic body of Amitābha is realized. At this moment, Dharmākara accomplishes his enlightenment and becomes Amitābha.

In Soga’s view, Amitābha recognizes himself as “the one who vows an eternal self-recognition of its light and life,” not simply as “the Infinite [one] of light and life.” This means that his enlightenment is an eternal movement of his self-recognition, which is an infinite process. The activity of enlightenment never stops. If he simply says “I am the Infinite [one] of light and life,” this would indicate his enlightenment is already fixed and never moves to save sentient beings. Amitābha’s self-awareness is self-awareness of his original vow itself. Thus, his self-awareness always contains the activity of saving sentient beings.

3.3 The Relationship of the Buddha Nature and the Karmic Human Nature in Dharmākara and Amitābha from Shinran’s Perspective

3.3.1 Shinran’s understanding of the Buddha nature

In this segment, I elucidate the relationship between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature in Dharmākara and Amitābha. What is the meaning of the Buddha

51 Ryōjin Soga, Ōso no Rishō to Gensō no Kyoshō 往相の理証と還相の教証 (Enlightenment of the Amitābha’s directing virtues for our going forth to the Pure Land in the Principle of the Pure Land Buddhism and Enlightenment of the Amitābha’s directing virtues for our return to this world in the Teaching of the Pure Land Buddhism), in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 92-93.

52 Ibid., 93.
nature (仏性) in Shinran? In *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, he quotes several sentences of the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* and explains what the Buddha nature is.

Further, emancipation is called nothingness. Nothingness is none other than emancipation; emancipation none other than Tathagata; Tathagata none other than nothingness. It is the activity of nonacting… True emancipation is nonarising and nonperishing; hence, emancipation is Tathagata. Tathagata is also thus—nonarising, nonperishing, unaging, undying, indestructible, and incorruptible; it is not created existence. Because it has this significance, it is said Tathagata enters great nirvana…

To be free of desire and free of doubt is true emancipation, true emancipation is Tathagata… Tathagata is nirvana, nirvana is the inexhaustible, the inexhaustible is Buddha-nature, Buddha-nature is the unchanging, the unchanging is highest perfect enlightenment.  

The Buddha nature is indicated by emancipation, nothingness, non-arising, non-perishing, *Tathāgata, Nirvāṇa*, indestructibility, immutability, and so forth. In particular, Shinran recognizes that the Buddha nature is equivalent to *Tathāgata* and *Nirvāṇa*. He says, the “Buddha-nature is none other than Tathagata. This Tathagata pervades the countless worlds; it fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of all beings.”

The *Tathāgata* undertakes self-manifestation in the world and reveals itself as *Dharmākara* or *Amitābha* in order to save each sentient being.

Shinran explicates the meaning of *Nirvāṇa*, which is the Buddha nature itself. According to him, *Nirvāṇa* is “pure and genuine,” and there are the four aspects of the purity of *Nirvāṇa*. First, the recognition of objective beings is pure in *Nirvāṇa*. Shinran quotes several sentences of the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* and explains, “The twenty-five forms of existence are called impure; since they are severed forever, it can be called pure.”

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55 Shinran, *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, 184. This statement means that one can be liberated from false view of the world when one purifies one’s mind by their meditations.
this statement, “the twenty-five forms of existence” indicates all beings in the world of delusion from truth. When one “severs” all attachment to those beings in the world, one’s recognition becomes pure. Second, the activity is pure in Nirvāna. The acts of all sentient beings are impure. They possess nothing of Nirvāna. However, the acts of all Buddhas are pure, which indicates Nirvāna. Third, the body is pure in Nirvāna. The body of sentient beings is impermanent and so it is impure. However, the body of the Tathāgata is eternal and thus it is pure. Fourth, the mind is pure. The Buddha mind is undefiled and pure in Nirvāna. “When the mind is defiled, it is called “impure.” The Buddha-mind is undefiled; hence, it is called great purity.” This purity is the state one reaches in detachment from all forms of impure existence.

These characteristics of Tathāgata and Nirvāna are realized in the Buddha body of suchness and compassionate means. Further, Shinran explicates the difference between the physical body and the dharma body by quoting the Nirvāna Sutra: “The physical body is the transformed body of skillful means. This body is subject to birth, aging, sickness, and death, and the distinctions of long and short, black and white, this and that, learning, and nonlearning.” On the other hand, the dharma body is “eternity, bliss, self, and purity [常楽我浄]. It is forever free of all birth, aging, sickness, and death, of not-white and not-black, not-long and not short, not-this and not-that, not learning and not

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56 Twenty-five states of existence signifies that “the three worlds are divided into twenty-five states of existence, which include the four great continents, the four evil realms, the six heavens in the world of desire, the Brahmā Heaven, the Heaven of No-thought, the Heaven of Pure Abode, the Four Meditation Heavens, and the Four Heavens of Space-abodes.” Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 412.


58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.
non-learning.”

In my view, Tathāgata, the pureness of Nirvāṇa, and the characteristics of the Dharma body indicate the universal Buddha nature, which is common to all Buddhas. When the formless Tathāgata manifests itself as Dharmākara and Amitābha in the world in order to save all sentient beings, the universal Buddha nature is individualized in particular form.

3.3.2 Dharmākara’s threefold mind: the self-maniﬁestation of Tathāgata

The Tathāgata is eternally realizing the universal Buddha nature and individualizes itself as the pure mind of Dharmākara. Shinran maintains that the Dharmākara bodhisattva’s true mind is clearly manifested in the eighteenth vow of the Larger Sutra. This vow is directly connected with the establishment of the Pure Land.

Shinran quotes the Dharmākara’s vow from the sutra, interpreting it thus:

> If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, with sincere mind entrusting themselves, aspiring to be born in my land, and saying my Name perhaps even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offences and those who slander the right dharma.62

After taking the forty-eight vows, the Dharmākara attained enlightenment as Amitābha and the eighteenth vow was fulfilled as follows.

All sentient beings, as they hear the Name [and] realize even one thought-moment of shinjin [faith] and joy, which is directed to them from Amida’s

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61 Ibid., 188.
62 Ibid., 80.

The original eighteenth vow is described in the text of the Larger Sutra. Hisao Inagaki trans., The Larger Sutra on Amitayus, 34. “If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and call my Name even ten times should not be born there, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five gravest offences and abuse the right Dharma.”

Shinran read this original Chinese text in his own understanding. He changed the literal meaning of the original text, “sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves …” to “with sincere mind entrusting themselves, …” Shinran, The Collected Works of Shinran vol. II: Introductions, Glossaries, and Reading Aids (Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-Ha, 1997), 258.
[Amitābha’s] sincere mind, and aspiring to be born in that land, they then attain birth and dwell in the stage of nonretrogression. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offences and those who slander the right dharma.  

This means that when sentient beings hear the Name of Amitābha (Namu-Amida-Butsu) and recite the Name, they attain true faith from Amitābha, immediately join “the truly settled” (those in the state of non-retrogression) in the present time and are assured of attaining Nirvāṇa in the Pure Land in the future.  

Shinran holds that the capacity for sincerity of mind and the disposition of “entrusting themselves, aspiring to be born in [the] Land,” is not something which arises “from the hearts and minds of foolish beings of self-power”; rather, such sincerity and pure trust is given by the “the Vow of the Tathagata being true and real.” It is crucial to emphasize here that in Shinran, these three dispositions—sincere mind, entrusting mind, and aspiration for birth in the Land—are imparted through the compassion of Amitābha, unlike the traditional Pure Land School, in which these dispositions arise from within the sentient being’s own mind (initiative).

Shinran regards the elements of sincere mind, entrusting mind, and aspiration for birth in the Pure Land as the “threefold mind,” which means that these three dispositions

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63 Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, 80. The original sentence of the fulfillment of the eighteenth vow is found in the text of the Larger Sutra. The Larger Sutra on Amitayus, 54. “All sentient beings who, having heard his Name, rejoice in faith, remember him even once, and sincerely transfer the merit of virtuous practices to that land, aspiring to be born there, will attain birth and dwell in the Stage of Non-retrogression. But excluded are those who have committed the five gravest offences and abused the right Dharma.”

“Non-retrogression” is defined as “the stage in which a bodhisattva proceeds to the highest enlightenment without falling back to a lower stage.” Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to The Three Pure Land Sutras: BDK English Tripitaka 12-II, III, IV, 143. This is also referred to as the “definitely assured state,” which is “the state attained by those who have absolute faith in Amitābha and are thus assured of birth in the Pure Land and attainment of the Buddhahood.” Ibid., 129. Shinran read this original Chinese text in his own understanding. He change the literal meaning “…sincerely transfer the merit of virtuous practices to that land” to “which is directed to them from Amida’s [Amitābha’s] sincere mind…” In Shinran’s view, foolish beings cannot direct merit to others; rather, Amitābha alone can direct the merit to all sentient beings. Shinran, The Collected Works of Shinran vol. II: Introductions, Glossaries, and Reading Aids, 259.

64 Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, 153.

are united in one faith in Amitābha.

First, Shinran explains that the sincere mind is Dharmākara’s pure and true mind, which is the self-manifestation of Tathāgata. All sentient beings lack the mind of purity because of their karma. Thus, “the Tathagata [Dharmākara], in profound compassion for the ocean of all sentient beings in pain and affliction, performed bodhisattva practices for inconceivable millions of measureless kalpas” in order to save them. Finally, with this pure and true mind, he fulfilled “the perfect, unhindered, inconceivable, indescribable and inexplicable virtues.” The Tathāgata (Dharmākara) gives this sincere mind to all living beings, who are possessed of “blind passions, karmic evils, and false wisdom.” This mind is manifesting “the true mind of benefiting others and thus it is completely untainted by the hindrance of doubt” and has its essence in the Namu-Amida-Butsu, which is “the Name of supreme virtues.”

Shinran concludes that the sincere mind means “the true and real mind of benefiting others through directizing virtues, which originates from the inconceivable, indescribable, and inexplicable ocean of the Vow of great wisdom, the One Vehicle.” The term “true and real” means Tathāgata, boundless space and Buddha nature. In my view, in the sincere mind, Tathāgata manifests himself in the Name, and then

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66 Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, 95. “I find that all beings, an ocean of multitudes, have since the beginningless past down to this day, this very moment, been evil and defiled, completely lacking the mind of purity. They have been false and deceitful, completely lacking the mind of truth and reality. Thus, when the Tathagata, in profound compassion for the ocean of all sentient beings in pain and affliction, performed bodhisattva practices for inconceivable millions of measureless kalpas, there was not a moment, not an instant, when his practice in the three modes of action was not pure, or lacked this true mind. With this pure, true mind, the Tathagata brought to fulfillment the perfect, unhindered, inconceivable, indescribable and inexplicable supreme virtues. The Tathagata gives this sincere mind to all living things, an ocean of beings possessed of blind passions, karmic evil, and false wisdom.”

Dharmākara gives his sincere mind in innumerable practices to sentient beings because they cannot achieve a sincere mind by themselves. In the same way, he gives the mind of entrusting (98) and aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land (103) with his sincere mind.

67 Ibid., 95.

68 Ibid., 97.

69 Ibid.
Dharmākara (Amitābha) directs it to all sentient beings. Thus, the Name contains the virtues of enlightenment, and sentient beings can therefore directly access the reality of Amitābha and the virtue of his enlightenment. This is the manifestation of his sincere mind.

Second, Shinran indicates that “entrusting mind” means the oceans of faith, “perfect and unhindered, that is Tathagata’s consummately fulfilled great compassion.” Tathāgata (Dharmākara) has no doubt of saving all sentient beings and of the fulfillment of his enlightenment. The essence of entrusting mind is “the sincere mind of benefiting others and directing virtues.” Sentient beings lack a pure, true entrusting mind because of their karma. They can only perform “poisoned and sundry good,” and “false and deceitful practice.” Nevertheless, when Tathāgata (Dharmākara) undertook his bodhisattva practice, he made it without “hindrance of doubt.” This mind of pure trust is “the Tathagata’s mind of great compassion” and “it necessarily becomes the truly decisive cause of attaining the fulfilled land.” The Tathāgata (Dharmākara), “turning with compassion toward the ocean of living beings in pain and affliction,” has given pure faith to sentient beings.

Shinran quotes the Nirvāṇa Sutra and says that great love, great compassion, great joy, and “great even-mindedness” all belong to the Buddha nature. Buddha nature is Tathāgata. Buddha nature is also great faith and “the state of regarding each being as one’s only child.” Shinran holds that entrusting mind indicates Dharmākara’s pure trust in sentient beings even though they are immersed in karmic evil and have deviated from truth. Dharmākara has compassion for all sentient beings and saves them through

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70 Ibid., 97-98.
71 Ibid., 98.
72 Ibid., 99.
his practice without any doubt of their salvation in spite of their blind passions. In my view, Dharmākara’s pure trust in sentient beings contains his self-negation with regard to them. In his self-negation, Dharmākara imparts his compassion and truth to each sentient being. His self-negation makes sentient beings recognize their deviation from truth, negates their false understanding of rebirth in the Pure Land, and finally, opens a true understanding of rebirth in the Pure Land within their consciousnesses.\footnote{Shinran distinguishes the true fulfilled Buddha body and Land from the transformed Buddha body and Land. The true fulfilled Buddha body and Land are manifested in the faith which is given by Amitābha’s power. On the other hand, the transformed Buddha body and Land are manifested in various forms according to the different natures of the aspirants’ practices, which are performed by their own power. I explain them in the fourth chapter. Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 409.}

Third, Shinran explains that aspiration for birth in the Pure Land means “the command of Tathagata calling to and summoning the multitude of all beings. That is, true and real entrusting is the essence of aspiration for birth.”\footnote{Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, 103.} Sentient beings lack the true, real and pure mind of directing virtues. Thus, Tathāgata (Dharmākara) performed bodhisattva practices out of pity for all sentient beings and took the mind of directing virtues during his practice and thus realized the mind of great compassion.\footnote{Ibid.} He “directs this other-benefiting, true and real mind of aspiration for birth to the ocean of all beings. Aspiration for birth is this mind of directing virtues.” It is the mind of great compassion and “is untainted by the hindrance of doubt.”\footnote{Ibid., 103-104.} When one aspires to rebirth in the Pure Land, it is an aspiration given by Tathāgata (Dharmākara), who directs virtues in his practice and causes sentient beings to be born in his Pure Land. Shinran affirms that Tathāgata (Dharmākara) grants the aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land to all sentient beings in his calling. This calling is crucial for rebirth in the Land.
Finally, Shinran indicates the relation between the three minds. Sincere mind, entrusting mind, and aspiration for birth in the Pure Land are different from one another, but these three minds are all “untainted by the hindrance of doubt.” Thus, they belong to one single, true and real mind. It is crucially important to note that in Shinran, the threefold mind is contained in the one single mind. This single mind is called “the diamondlike true mind.” It is also called “true faith.” For Shinran, this one mind is realized through faith in Tathāgata, which Vasubandhu (4th-5th centuries) clarified.

Shinran quotes Vasubandhu’s statement of the Discourse on the Pure Land.

O World-honored one, with the mind that is single
I take refuge in the Tathagata of unhindered light
Filling the ten quarters
And aspire to be born in the land of happiness.

Moreover, the faith is always accompanied by the Name, Namu-Amida-butsu. Shinran explicates the relationship between the faith and the Name, quoting Tan’luan’s Commentary. When one hears and recites “the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light,” the Name “dispels ignorance of the sentient beings of ten quarters.” In such state of mind, we can say that one practices reciting the Name in accord with reality

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77 Ibid., 107.
78 Vasubandhu is a prominent scholar of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism. He belonged to the Yogācāra School. This school had its origin in serving monks dedicated to the practice of yoga, which here means meditation. From the fourth to the sixth centuries C. E., they developed the idea of “Consciousness Only” by reflection on the working of their mind in meditation. In particular, Asanga (310-390?) and Vasubandhu are important scholars in that school. Asanga is the author of Mahāyānasamgraha (The Mahāyāna Compendium) and Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra (The Stages of Yogācāra), which are important treatises of the Yogācāra school. Vasubandhu, who is Asanga’s younger brother, established the system of the Yogācāra school and had a great influence on many scholars of Mahāyāna Buddhism. He was the author of Vimsatikā-vijñaptimātratāsiddhi (The Twenty Verses of Consciousness Only), Trimśikā-vijñaptimātratāsiddhi (The Thirty Verses of Consciousness Only), and so forth. He was also a practitioner of Pure Land Buddhism and wrote the Discourse of the Pure Land, which had a great influence on later generations. Paul Williams, Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations, Second edition (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), 87.
(Tathāgata) and corresponds with the significance of the Name, which dispels the ignorance. However, if one’s ignorance still remains and one’s aspirations are not fulfilled even though one recites the Name, this means that one does not practice in accord with reality and fails to correspond to the significance of the Name. Why might one’s practice not be in accord with the reality and fail to correspond with the significance of the Name? The reason is that one does not know that the Tathāgata is the body of true reality and the body for the sake of beings." For Shinran, Tathāgata manifests its very self in the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu, for sentient beings. However, if one forgets this true meaning and significance of the Name, one cannot practice reciting it in accord with Tathāgata.

3.3.3 Hearing and reciting the Name as “great practice” in Shin Buddhism

Shinran holds that hearing and reciting “the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light” is “the great practice” in Shin Buddhism. He states,

to say the Name of the Tathagata of unhindered light. This practice, embodying all good acts and possessing all roots of virtue, is perfect and most rapid in bringing them to fullness. It is the treasure ocean of virtues that is suchness or true reality." The Name comes from “the Vow of great compassion, which is known as ‘the Vow that all the Buddhas say the Name.” This is the seventeenth vow, in which, as noted, the Dharmākara says, “If, when I attain Buddhahood, innumerable Buddhas in the lands of the ten directions should not all praise and glorify my Name, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment.”

Dharmākara engages himself in the salvific activities in the world as a}

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82 Ibid.

83 Hisao Inagaki trans., The Larger Sutra on Amitayus, 34.
bodhisattva and gives himself as *Namu-Amida-Butsu* to sentient beings in order to save them. Shinran notes that reciting *Namu-Amida-Butsu* is not a self-power practice initiated by the sentient beings themselves. Therefore it is called, “non-directing virtue.”

In my view, this indicates that *Tathāgata (Dharmākara)* gives the practice to all sentient beings when he directs his merits and virtues to sentient beings, giving his very self to them through the Name. He is calling us through *Namu-Amida-Butsu*, seeking to deliver us from our embeddedness in karmic reality to rebirth in the Pure Land. Shinran explains,

> Saying the Name breaks through all the ignorance of sentient beings and fulfills all their aspirations. Saying the Name is the right act, supreme, true, and excellent. The right act is the nembutsu (reciting the *Namu-Amida-Butsu*). The nembutsu is Namu-amida-butsu. Namu-amida-butsu is right-mindedness.

Because of their karma and blind passions, ordinary sentient beings cannot, by their own power, extricate themselves from the cycle of birth and death and attain *Nirvāṇa*. Thus, hearing and reciting “*Namu-Amida-Butsu*” is the best practice for them because they are able to be immediately released from the cycle of birth and death.

Finally, this vow is fulfilled in these sentences in *the Larger Sutra*: “All Buddhas, Tathāgatas, in the ten directions, as numerous as the sands of the River Ganges, together praise the inconceivable, supernal virtue of Amitāyus.”

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85 Ibid., 17-18.

86 Karl Barth compares Shin Buddhism with Protestant Christianity. According to his interpretation, in Shin Buddhism, “everything rested on the primal promise of the compassionate redeemer Amida and on faith in him.” Shinran denied “the possibility of meritorious works.” He held that “we are too firmly embedded in fleshly lusts to be able to extricate ourselves from the vicious circle of life and death by any form of self-activation. All that we can do is simply to give thanks for the redemption assured by Amida without any activity at all on our part.” Barth finds that Shinran’s doctrine is very similar to Christian Protestant thought, which emphasizes the “doctrine of original sin, representative satisfaction, justification by faith alone, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and thankfulness.” He regards the existence of Shin Buddhism as “providential disposition.” Nevertheless, he holds that grace and truth are only revealed in Jesus Christ and so conditioned by his name, not other names. “Christian Protestantism is the true religion to the extent that the Reformation was a reminder of the grace and truth determined in this name [Jesus Christ].” Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. I, chap. 2, trans. G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1956), 340-344.

Buddha’s Original Vows, all who hear his Name and desire birth will, without exception, be born in his land and effortlessly enter the Stage of Non-retrogression.”

This means that when sentient beings hear and recite the Name of Namu-Amida-Butsu, they attain faith within the stage of non-retrogression, which assures the attaining of Nirvāṇa in the future. They become Buddhas and praise Amitābha by reciting the Name. Within this eternal movement, Dharmākara is attaining the supreme enlightenment as Amitābha and accomplishing the cosmic fulfilled Buddha body, which has the fullness of merits and virtues in this enlightenment.

Here we may ask several questions. Why does he give his merits and virtues to all sentient beings through the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu? What is the relation between Dharmākara’s bodhisattva practices and the giving of the Name to sentient beings?

In The Discourse on the Pure Land, Vasubandhu explains the five ways of the Pure Land School practices, which are to accomplish both self-benefit and benefit for others, thereby allowing one to reach the highest, perfect Enlightenment. These five practices are called “the Five Gates of Mindfulness.” When one practices them, one can attain the five kinds of virtue, which are called “the Five Gates of Virtue.”

The first practice is “the Gate of Worship.” One worships Amitābha with one’s bodily actions and the intention of being born in the Land. Performing these practices, one can attain the virtue of “the Gate of Approach,” which means that one can approach the Pure Land. The second practice is “The Gate of Praise.” “One praises with one’s words” and “calls the Name of Tathāgata [Amitābha] in accordance with that Tathāgata’s Light, which is the embodiment of Wisdom, and in accordance with the significance of

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88 Ibid., 58.
89 Vasubandhu, Jōdoron 淨土論: Discourse on the Pure Land, 39.
90 Ibid.
the Name.”91 Performing this practice, one can attain the virtue of “the Gate of the Multitudes of the Great Assemblage,” which means obtaining “entry into and [being] numbered among the multitudes of the great assemblage” in the Pure Land.92 The third practice is “the Gate of Aspiration.” One aspires to be born in the Pure Land with single-mindedness, concentrating one’s thoughts (samatha).93 Performing this practice, one attains the virtue of “the Gate of the House,” which means that one can “obtain entry into the Lotus-Storehouse World.”94 The fourth practice is “The Gate of Contemplation.” With wisdom, one contemplates the virtues of the adornments of the Pure Land, the Buddha, and the bodhisattvas (vipasyana).95 Performing this practice, one can attain the virtue of “the Gate of the Room,” which means that one can reach the Pure Land and enjoy the happiness of the various tastes of dharma.96 The fifth practice is “the Gate of Merit Transference.” When one has performed the four practices, one develops wisdom and accumulates merits and virtues. Finally, one transfers the merits and virtues to all sentient beings for saving them from samsāra through rebirth in the Pure Land.97 Performing this fifth practice, one can attain the virtue of “the Gate of Playing in the Garden and Forest,” which means that one can “enter into the garden of birth and death and the forest of blind passions, playing with miraculous powers and thereby reaching the

91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid. The Lotus-Storehouse World originally signifies Vairocana’s Buddha land; also used to refer to Amida[Amithaba]’s Pure Land. Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 382.
95 Vasubandhu, Discourse of the Pure Land, 39.
96 Ibid. “The various tastes of Dharma” means one’s experiences of various kinds of joy when one recognizes truth.
97 Ibid.
stage of teaching.” This indicates that those who reach this stage are enabled to participate in the saving work of the bodhisattva to bring others to rebirth in the Pure Land.

The bodhisattva undertakes the first four practices for self-benefit (for entry into the Pure Land from the samsāric world) and the last, fifth practice for the benefit of others in attaining perfect Enlightenment (returning from the Pure Land back to the samsāric world).

Nevertheless, we can also say that ultimately, the bodhisattva performs all those five practices for the benefit of others. The first four practices cannot be limited to practices of self-benefit. The reason is that he cannot save others without establishing the Pure Land through the first four practices. These four practices contain salvific intention in establishing the Pure Land and finally direct the bodhisattva’s merits to others in the fifth practice in order to save them in the Land.

Shinran holds that ordinary sentient beings cannot on their own undertake these practices due to their karma. Thus, in his view, only Dharmākara bodhisattva can perform these five practices and accomplish the five virtues. In particular, Shinran affirms that ordinary sentient being cannot transfer its merits and virtues to other beings because sentient beings are all involved in the cycle of karmic evil; Dharmākara (Amitabha) alone can give merits to them for their salvation. However, for giving such merits to all sentient beings, Dharmākara (Amitabha) gives us “Namu-Amida-Butsu” as a great practice, which contains all virtues. After we receive faith and attain the stage of non-retrgression, we can be engaged in the work of saving others in the world by the power of Dharmākara (Amitabha).

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98 Ibid.

3.3.4 Two aspects of Amitābha’s directing of virtue to sentient beings: for our going forth to the Pure Land and for our return to this world

Shinran holds that the cosmic body of Amitābha realizes the pure supreme enlightenment, which is described as Tathāgata, emancipation, incorruptibility, and indestructibility. It completely transcends the karmic cycle of birth and death as true emptiness and nothingness. Nevertheless, Amitābha’s cosmic body seeks relationship with the karmic world because he wants to save all sentient beings and perfect his enlightenment. As Amitābha, the cosmic body transcends the karmic world, but at the same time, his body is immersed in each person’s karmic reality as Dharmākara.

When we observe the dynamic activity of his cosmic body, we see the way Amitābha directs his virtues. Shinran uses the Chinese word, “ekō” (廻向) to indicate the directing of one’s virtues to others. Shōtō Hase, who is a contemporary Shin Buddhist scholar, explains that Shinran made a creative interpretation of this term. In Shinran, ekō implies “self-negation of the Absolute.” The Buddha is not only transferring his merits to sentient beings, but also Tathāgata itself negates itself and undertakes self-manifestation as Dharmākara/Amitābha for the salvation of those beings.

In this context, Shinran notes that there are two aspects of Amitābha’s directing of his virtues to sentient beings. One aspect consists of leading sentient beings to the Pure Land (ōsō-ekō 往相廻向). Amitābha directs its mind to them and saves them in the Pure Land. They receive the mind of Amitābha as faith in him and become settled in the present situation, which assures them of attaining Nirvāṇa in the future. The power of Amitābha is always working in the world and enables the salvation of sentient beings in

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100 Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, 181.

the Land.

Concerning the other aspect, *Amitābha* directs his virtues toward the return of sentient beings to the world for the salvation of other beings who are still suffering (*gensō-ekō* 還相廻向). *Amitābha* works on the beings who are reborn in the Pure Land and enables them to undertake salvific activities in the world. Thus, those who are born in the Pure Land do not take a rest, but labor in endless salvific activities. These beings, once born in the Pure Land, later wish to be born in “the three realms to teach and guide sentient beings.” They “abandon their life in the Pure Land” and are born into “the flames of various births in the three realms.”103 Each of them observes sentient beings in pain and affliction, and takes on a body in order to guide these beings, entering the garden of birth-and-death and the forests of blind passions, and freely (sporting) there with the support of transcendent powers, teaching and guiding others.104

Their salvific activities are sustained by *Amitābha*’s power. *Amitābha* sustains the initiative of their activities in the world and enables them to save other beings. Their activities are equivalent to the activity of a bodhisattva, who strives to save all beings in order to attain true enlightenment. The bodhisattva vows: “If there is even one sentient being who does not attain Buddhahood, I shall not become Buddha.”105 Shinran holds that the mind that aspires to attain Buddhahood is the mind directed toward saving all sentient beings, grasping them and bringing them to birth in the land where the Buddha is.106

These two aspects of *Amitābha*’s power of directing his virtues are based in the

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103 Ibid., 155.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., 168.
106 Ibid.
activity of his self-awareness. When he sees the suffering of sentient beings in the karmic world, he enters the world and delivers them to the Pure Land and returns to himself in self-awareness. When they become Buddha and praise his name, Tathāgata embraces his self-recognition and returns to himself and, through Dharmākara, accomplishes his enlightenment as Amitābha. Thereafter, he sends those who are saved in the Pure Land to the karmic world in order to save other beings. The activity of the self-recognition of Dharmākara and the self-return of Tathāgata are thus endlessly recurring, one after another, for fulfilling his enlightenment as Amitābha. This is the dynamic movement of the cosmic body of Amitābha.

Why do those in the Land desire to return to the world to save other sentient beings by the power of Amitābha? Within the structure of the universal body of Amitābha, which contains all who dwell in the Pure Land, each individual being who attains the faith in Amitābha recognizes the infinite horizon where all sentient beings dwell. All subjects possess this universal consciousness and inter-communication with one another in the karmic world. Even in the Pure Land, they are conscious of other beings who are suffering in the world. For this reason, they are compelled to return to the world in order to save them by the power of Amitābha.

In this view, the person is not an autonomous or isolated entity, but exists in an interdependent relationship with other sentient beings, aspiring to save them by the power of Amitābha. Though the person exercises individual freedom in this regard, his/her salvific action is led by the power of Amitābha spontaneously and naturally. Even if he/she has no explicit intention of saving other people, other people can be automatically saved through him/her by the power of Amitābha. Shinran explains this through the parable of Asura’s harp: no one strokes this harp, but it spontaneously gives forth
Likewise, many people are saved by the bodhisattva even though the bodhisattva may not intend any salvific activities at a given moment in time. Those who come back from the Pure Land carry out the salvific works of the bodhisattva. In these salvific activities in the world, innumerable people are delivered to the Pure Land. In turn, these will be sent to the world to save others in an eternal soteriological cycle.

In this dynamic of the salvific activity of each person, each subject has self-awareness and universal consciousness in the interrelation with others. When all subjects attain the final settlement in the Land and praise Amitābha as a true Buddha, through that activity, Tathāgata achieves self-determination and self-conscious and forms the universal body of Amitābha.

3.3.5 The relationship between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature in both Dharmākara and Amitābha

As already mentioned, the eternal Tathāgata manifests its very self in the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu. The Name forms the individual reality of Dharmākara. As the human-formed Tathāgata, Dharmākara consists of the Buddha nature (Tathāgata) and the human nature, partaking of the cycle of life and death in karmic reality (samsāra). Dharmākara individualizes the universal Buddha nature in his threefold mind. His individual reality individualizes the universal Buddha nature and serves as a connecting point between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature.

When Shinran describes Dharmākara’s activities, he always says that “Tathāgata” undergoes bodhisattva practices. This means that Shinran holds that the subjectivity of Dharmākara’s activities is Tathāgata itself. However, it must be noted here that by characterizing Dharmākara as the “self-manifestation” of Tathāgata, Shinran does not mean mere “appearance,” as some might hold. If Dharmākara is only the manifestation of Tathāgata, this seems, in terms of Christian tradition, to be akin to “Docetism.” Further,
if Dharmākara is only the manifestation of the single Buddha nature and the instrument of Tathāgata, this seems to parallel “Monophysitism.” If we recognize Dharmākara in Docetic or Monophysitic terms, we cannot see him as the foundation of true individual human salvation. The subjectivity of Dharmākara is the individualized Tathāgata, but he is also immersed in the karmic human nature and thus he has his own autonomous human consciousness in his individual reality. He recognizes himself as Tathāgata through the karmic human nature. Thus, he accomplishes his self-recognition through the interaction with sentient beings in the world. I explicate the structure of the individual reality of Dharmākara in the next chapter.

When Dharmākara attains enlightenment, and then the cosmic body of Amitābha is realized. When Dharmākara recognizes himself as Tathāgata’s self, the eternal Tathāgata’s Tathāgata is revealed as the cosmic body of Amitābha. This cosmic body is realized when all Buddhas praise Amitābha’s Name. The cosmic body of Amitābha is always expanding through the movement of Dharmākara’s self-recognition and realization of his enlightenment.

To sum up, the Tathāgata works as the subjectivity both in the individual reality of Dharmākara and the cosmic reality of Amitābha. In Dharmākara, the Tathāgata’s self is the subjectivity, which is the locus of the union of the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature. In Amitābha, the universal Tathāgata is the locus of the union of the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature. The Buddha nature of Amitābha’s body contains all saved sentient beings, who, in turn become Buddhas and praise the Name in the Pure Land. Amitābha returns them to the world to save others. The karmic human nature of Dharmākara/Amitābha’s body contains those who will be saved by Amitābha’s directing of merits in the world. The cosmic body does not have a self-contained character, but enters into the karmic cycle of the world in order to save suffering people.
3.4 The Character of the Pure Land

3.4.1 True Buddha body and the Land, which consists of adornments of the Pure Land

Shinran explicates “the true Buddha and the true land,” and describes the Buddha as “the Tathagata of inconceivable light.” He also describes the fundamental character of the Pure Land as the land of immeasurable light, where Amitābha dwells as immeasurable light and life. Shinran understands the Pure Land as the self-realization (fulfillment) of the Dharmākara’s vow mind.\(^\text{108}\)

The adornments of the Pure Land are accomplished by the realization of the vow of Dharmākara. How does Shinran conceive of the adornments as the self-realization of the Dharmākara’s vow mind? These adornments constitute the fundamental characteristics of the Pure Land itself.

Vasubandhu made a great contribution to developing the view of the adornments of the Pure Land. He identified twenty-nine adornments of the Pure Land: seventeen adornments of the Land, eight adornments of the Buddha, and four adornments of the bodhisattva in the Pure Land.\(^\text{109}\) He proposed a practice of visualization and meditation on those adornments for Buddhist monks seeking to draw closer to the Pure Land.

Thereafter, T’an-luan wrote the Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land and

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 177.


2. Eight adornments of the Buddha: virtues of (1) Seat 座徳, (2) physical glory 身業徳, (3) Speech 口業徳, (4) Mental activity 心業徳, (5) congregation 大衆徳, (6) sovereign power 上首徳, (7) lordship 主徳, (8) unfaithing sustenance 不仮作住持徳
3. Four adornments of the Bodhisattva: virtues of (1) appearing in other lands while dwelling motionless 不動而至徳, (2) visiting other Buddhas simultaneously and in a flash of thought 一念遍至徳, (3) making offerings to all Buddhas without discriminative thoughts 無相供養徳, (4) Preaching the Dharma as do the Buddhas 示法如佛徳
analyzed Vasubandhu’s idea of the adornments. Shinran often draws on Vasubandhu and T’an-luan in explicating the adornments of the true Pure Land. Nevertheless, Shinran understands the adornments as the self-realization of the Dharmākara’s vow mind from the perspective of the Dharmākara’s subjectivity, not as a tool for our visualization practices. Soga interprets Shinran as holding that the vow mind effects the adornments in the Land as its self-realization and furthermore adorns and purifies the vow mind itself in the activity of Dharmākara’s self-recognition. This dynamic activity of the self-recognition enables the union of the adornments of the Land in the one dharma of Tathāgata. The twenty-nine adornments constitute the process of his self-recognition, which adorns and purifies itself. Soga also holds that the original vow of Tathāgata makes the adornments internal objectifications in the activity of self-recognition. The adornments are opened in the Land and are developed in the Buddha, and bodhisattvas. Finally, they return to the ocean of the vow mind, which is the one dharma of Tathāgata.

Shinran explains the adornments of the Buddha, the bodhisattva, and the Land, quoting T’an-luan’s Commentary. First, Shinran focuses on “the fulfillment of the adornments of the virtue of purity,” which is one of the adornments of the Land. “Purity” means the absolute purity of the Pure Land, which transcends the samsāric world. Shinran quotes Vasubandhu’s gatha: “contemplating the features of that world, I see that it transcends the three realms.” The Pure Land is the place of perfect pureness and

110 Ryōjin Soga, Ganshin no Jiko-Shogon 願心の自己荘厳 (Self-Adornment of the Vow Mind), in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 40-41.

111 Ryōjin Soga, Shukyo teki Genti toshite no Mida no Hongan 宗教的原理としての弥陀の本願 (Amitābha’s original vow as religious principle) in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 125.

112 Ryōjin Soga, Ganshin no Jiko-Shogon 願心の自己荘厳(Self-Adornment of the Vow Mind), in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 42.

113 The “three realms” signify the three forms of life within unenlightened, samsaric, existence, consisting of
transcends the karma of the three realms. The purity is realized in the Tathāgata of the Dharmakāra’s vow mind. The purity has two aspects. One is “purity of the world as environment,” which corresponds to the adornments of the Pure Land. The other is “the purity of the world as sentient beings,” which corresponds to the adornments of the Buddha and the bodhisattvas. Therefore, the purity contains the three types of adornments as general principle, which is Tathāgata.

Second, Shinran focuses on “the fulfillment of the virtue of sustaining without any futility,” which is one of the eight adornments of the Buddha. This means that the power of the Dharmākara’s primal vow never abandons any sentient being and “quickly brings [all beings] to fullness and perfection.” Amitābha is working on those who are saved in the Pure Land, preparing them to return to the world to save others. This adornment means that Dharmākara (Amitābha) sustains his vow mind itself, which contains and saves all sentient beings. Therefore, the adornment of fulfillment of the virtue of sustaining without any futility is deeply connected with the Dharmākara’s self-recognition.

From Shinran’s perspective, these two adornments are fundamental adornments of the Pure Land. Moreover, he explicates four other adornments of the Land. These are “the virtue of the lord,” “the virtue of fellow beings,” the virtue of “wondrous sound,”

the realm of desire (kāma), form (rūpa), and formlessness (ārūpya), each with its upper, middle, and lower regions. Glossary of Shin Buddhist Terms, in Shinran, The Collected Works of Shinran vol. II: Introductions, Glossaries, and Reading Aids, 212.

114 Shinran, The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization, 165. The purity of the Land is described in Vasubhandu’s Treatise on the Pure Land. “Contemplating the features of that world, I see that it transcends the three realms.”

115 Ibid., 166.

116 Ibid., 194.

117 Ibid.
and “the virtue of the gate of the great principle.”

In my view, these adornments are deeply related to the Dharmākara’s self-recognition in the Pure Land.

“The virtue of the lord” means that Amitābha has attained perfect enlightenment and sustains his goodness in the Pure Land. Those who are born in the Pure Land can abandon their life in the Land and be born in the world to save other sentient beings. They will not lose their supreme enlightenment because they are sustained by Amitābha’s goodness.

When the Dharmākara makes the return to himself, he attains the perfect enlightenment as Amitābha. This enlightenment contains all those who are saved in the Pure Land, who in turn go forth from the Pure Land and engage in salvific activities in the karmic world. When Amitabha sustains his goodness in the Pure Land as “the lord,” this means that in his self-recognition he also sustains all beings in the Pure Land.

“The virtue of fellow beings” means the virtue of those who are reborn in the Pure Land. All who recite Namu-Amida-Butsu within the four seas are brothers and sisters. They are included in the activity of Amitābha’s self-awareness.

In Shinran, “wondrous sound” means Amitabha’s name, as in Namu-Amida-Butsu, which humans can hear in the Pure Land. Shinran thus understands the Land’s very name as Namu-Amida-Butsu, which opens the Pure Land to sentient beings. He cites T’an-luan: “The land’s very name performs the Buddha’s work [of saving others].” In his understanding of the Pure Land, the Dharmākara, in his practice as bodhisattva, directs the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu, to sentient beings for their salvation. When they hear the wondrous sound of the Name, they attain faith and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression.

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118 Ibid., 154-156.
119 Ibid., 155.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
Thus, “wondrous sound” means the practice of Dharmākara, who opened the Pure Land in his Name.

The “gate of the great principle” signifies that there are no distinctions or discrimination in the Pure Land. This formed equality is similar to “the waters of the Tzu and Sheng becoming one in taste upon entering the sea.”

Shinran holds that the adornment of pureness and those four adornments of the Land clarify the fundamental characteristics of the Land. These five adornments of the Land also characterize the Buddhist community at its best.

3.4.2 The relation between the adornments of the Land and Dharmākara’s pure vow mind

Following Ta ’n-luan, Shinran explicates the relationship between the Dharmākara’s vow mind and the adornments of the Pure Land. The adornments are the realization of the vow mind. The three types of adornments are originally accomplished by the activity of the pure vow-mind of Dharmākara, which is expressed in his forty-eight vows. Citing Ta ’n-luan, Shinran asserts: “The cause [the vow mind] is pure, the fruition [the adornments] is pure.”

The pure vow mind manifests itself under various forms in the Pure Land. These adornments are the “extensive” presentation of Tathāgata. They have various, particular, effable and distinct forms as the adornments, which are self-presentations of the vow mind. On the other hand, there is a “brief” presentation of Tathāgata. It means that various forms of adornments return to the original pure vow mind, which is the one, absolute, formless and equal state of Tathāgata. These return to the one pure vow mind as the brief presentation. Therefore, the extensive

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123 Ibid., 156.
124 Ibid., 165.
125 Ibid.
In relationship to the Buddha body theory, the extensive presentation corresponds to the dharma body as compassionate means. The brief presentation is equivalent to the dharma body as suchness. The extensive presentation enters into the “brief” presentation of Tathāgata, which is condensed in “one dharma.” The phrase “one dharma” means “purity” and “true and real wisdom or uncreated dharma body.” These realities interpenetrate one another. “Uncreated dharma-body is the body of dharma-nature” because dharma-nature is tranquility, dharma-body is formless. Though the dharma body itself is formless, it never fails to manifest every kind of form. Thus, the adornments are the dharma body itself. The uncreated dharma body is “neither form nor non-form.” It is neither relative affirmation nor relative negation. No negation can disclose the dharma body. Thus, the dharma body is called “pure.”

Shinran observes the interpenetration of the extensive presentation and the brief presentation of the pure vow mind from the perspective of the self-recognition of the Dharmākara’s vow mind. As Soga notes, when the vow mind recognizes itself in the one dharma of Tathāgata, it finds the basis of the adornments in the vow mind of Tathāgata.

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126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid.
131 Ryōjin Soga, Ganshin no Jiko-Shogon 頼心の自己荘厳(Self-Adornment of the Vow Mind), in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 42.
3.4.3 Time in the Pure Land

Soga explains that there are two types of time in Buddhism. One is that which begins in the past, passes through the present, and ends in the future. This time frame is the way in which the law of karma is normally understood. The other sense of time is the inverse of the former, beginning in the future, passing through the present, and ending in the past. This perspective depends on the dharma nature.\(^{132}\) We usually think of the flow of time in the former sense, past-present-future. When one has committed an evil action in the past, it results in a negative consequence in the present time. Thus, one tries to perform good actions in order to reap a positive result in the future. Accordingly, in Pure Land Buddhism, many adherents believed they suffered in the cycle of birth and death because of the karmic reality accrued from innumerable past actions and so recited Namu-Amida-Butsu in the present, anticipating going to the Pure Land in the future after their death.

However, Soga asserts that time flows in the opposite direction. The true future is Tathāgata, who sustains the present time and thus there is no real past in this perspective.\(^{133}\) In this view, one finds the true future as the basis of the present time. Hence we recognize the Pure Land as the true future, which is the foundation of the present, not as the future following on the present time. When one receives the faith in the present time, one can see the future of the Land as the foundation of the present time and be settled in the present time in the stage of non-retrogression. We are ordinarily living in the time of karma, past-present-future. Tathāgata's time flow, however, is sustained by the time of the dharma nature, which flows future-present-past.\(^{134}\)

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\(^{132}\) Ryōjin Soga, Hongan no Bucchi 本願の仏地 (Buddha’s Earth of the Original Vow) in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 353-354.

\(^{133}\) Ibid., 356.

\(^{134}\) Shinran explicates the time of the Buddha nature by quoting the Nirvāṇa Sutra.

“Buddha- nature is like boundless space; it is not in the past, or future, or present. All sentient beings have
3.4.4 The transformed Buddha body and Land

Shinran describes *Amitābha* as infinite light and life and recognizes the true Pure Land as the Land of immeasurable light.\(^{135}\) He understands that the *Amitābha’s* Buddha body and the true Buddha Land are the fulfilled Buddha body and the Land, which are realized by the *Dharmākara’s* vow mind. Shinran has a broad view of the fulfilled Buddha body and the Land. He distinguishes “the true Buddha body and Land” from “the transformed fulfilled Buddha body and the Land.” The true Buddha body and Land are realized when *Amitābha* gives his mind to sentient beings as faith in him, leads them to the state of non-retrogression, and effects their rebirth in the Pure Land by his power. In this way, they can experience the true Buddha body and Land. On the other hand, the “transformed” version of the fulfilled Buddha body and Land is based on an incorrect understanding of the Buddha body and Land, which is rooted in the self-attachment of sentient beings. In this regard, Shinran quotes the *Dharmākara’s* nineteenth vow,

If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters—awakening the mind of enlightenment and performing meritorious acts—should aspire with sincere mind and desire to be born in my land, and yet I should not appear before them at the moment of death surrounded by a host of sages, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.\(^{136}\)

This vow refers to those who practice meritorious deeds (meditation, contemplation, ethical actions, and so forth) in order to be born in the Pure Land; at the moment of their death, *Amitābha* appears before them and takes them to the Pure bodily existences of three aspects—the past, future, and present. In the future, they will attain the body adorned with purity and be able to see the Buddha-nature. For this reason, I have spoken of Buddha-nature as belonging to the future.” Shinran, *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, 185.

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\(^{135}\) Shinran, *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, 177.

\(^{136}\) Ibid., 208. The original sentence of the nineteenth vow in the Larger Sutra is as follows. “If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten directions who awaken aspiration for Enlightenment, do various meritorious deeds, and sincerely desire to be born in my land should not, at their death, see me appear before them surrounded by a multitude of sages, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment.” Hisao Inagaki trans., *The Larger Sutra on Amitayus*, 34.
However, Shinran holds that they cannot be reborn in the true Buddha Land because they are bound by self-attachment and practice good deeds by their own power in order to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land. In this way, they fail to rely completely on Amitābha’s power and so cannot attain true salvation. They can only attain rebirth in the transformed Buddha Land, which is a “false” Pure Land. Shinran calls this “the falsely settled birth attained beneath twin Śāla Trees.” They achieve rebirth in the “womb palace,” which means they cannot extricate themselves from a certain doubt in the wisdom of Buddha because they do not trust wholly in Amitābha’s wisdom and compassion, but rely on their own power.

Nevertheless, Shinran does not simply eliminate this false way of rebirth in the Land, but regards it as a provisional means of leading people to the true Buddha Land. He calls it the “essential” gate to the Pure Land path. The essential gate consists of meditative and non-meditative practices. Meditative practice means ceasing thought and focusing the mind. Non-meditative practice means abandoning evil and performing good. Sentient beings attempt to direct the merits of these two practices toward rebirth in the Land by their own power. Though they will attain rebirth in the false Pure Land, this way of rebirth can be the means to lead them to birth in the true Pure Land if they receive true faith from Amitābha in the future. Meditative practice contains visualization practice, which contemplates the Buddha body and the beautiful ornaments of the Land. Such visual practice cannot directly lead sentient beings to the true Pure Land. Nevertheless, it

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137 Shinran, *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, 207. Shinran calls the nineteenth vow “the Vow of performing meritorious acts,” “the Vow of Buddha’s appearance at death,” “the Vow of Buddha’s coming to receive,” “the Vow of sincere mind and aspiration.”

138 Ibid., 206.

139 Ibid., 207.

140 Ibid., 214.

141 Ibid., 207.
can work as a provisional means to lead them to recite *Namu-Amida-Butsu* and attain faith and rebirth in the true Land.

Many Pure Land practitioners before Shinran undertook visualization practices, in which they contemplated the adornments of the Pure Land by observing the beautiful form and features of the Buddha body and the Land as objects. Nevertheless, when Shinran explains the adornments of the Pure Land, he does not explicate certain adornments of the Land key to the visualization practice: the manifold precious adornments, supreme sensations, water, earth, sky, rain, light, and nourishment. In my view, Shinran holds that while these adornments are included in the products of the self-realization of the *Dharmākara*, they are nevertheless secondary. They are visualized by humans and used as tools of the practice of meditation. Shinran does not focus on the beautiful ornaments of the Pure Land. He holds that these adornments are related to the satisfaction of human desire (the fulfillment of all aspirations from the human rather than the Buddha’s perspective) and thus cannot be essential adornments of the Land.

In his view, the palaces, ponds, and beautiful trees of the Pure Land are not the essential features of this Land because these ornaments are only objects of the sentient beings’ visualization and therefore are not related fundamentally to *Dharmākara*’s self-recognition itself. Shinran always describes the adornments of the Pure Land as the self-realization of the *Dharmākara*’s vow mind, not as the object of sentient beings’ recognition.

Moreover, Shinran explicates another kind of provisional way of rebirth in the Pure Land. He quotes the *Dharmākara*’s twentieth vow:

> If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, on hearing my Name, should place their thoughts on my land, cultivate the root of all virtues, and direct their merits with sincere mind desiring to be born in my land, and yet not ultimately attain it, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment.\(^{142}\)

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\(^{142}\) Ibid., 229. The original sentence of the twentieth vow is “If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings
According to this vow, those who hear and recite Namu-Amida-Butsu and direct its merits to Amitābha with sincere mind, desiring to be reborn in the Pure Land, can go to the Land. In this case, they concentrate on reciting Namu-Amida-Butsu as the best practice for their birth in the Land, but they make the effort to recite it by their own power, not by Amitābha’s power.\textsuperscript{143} Their sincere mind is their own serious mind, not Amitābha (Dharmākara)’s mind. In such a case, they cannot achieve true settlement and true rebirth in the Land. Shinran recognizes their rebirth as “The unsettled birth that is non-comprehensible.”\textsuperscript{144} He calls this way of rebirth in the Land the “true” gate, which, although only a provisional means, can lead sentient beings to the true rebirth in the true Land in the future if they receive the true faith given by Amitābha.\textsuperscript{145}

Finally, Shinran clarifies the process of attaining true faith and true rebirth in the true Pure Land.

Thus I, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni …, departed everlastingly from the temporary gate of the myriad practices and various good acts and left forever the birth attained beneath the twin šāla trees. Turning about, I entered the “true” gate of the root of good and the root of virtue, and wholeheartedly awakened the mind leading to the birth that is noncomprehensible. Nevertheless, I have now decisively departed from the “true” gate of provisional means, and [my self-power] overturned, have entered the ocean of the selected Vow. Having swiftly become free of the mind leading to the birth that is noncomprehensible, I am assured of attaining the birth that is inconceivable. How truly profound in intent is the Vow that beings ultimately attain birth!\textsuperscript{146}


\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 206.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 226.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 240.
In sum, there are three processes of attaining true faith and rebirth in the true Pure Land. First, we perform meditative practices (meditation and contemplation [visualization]) and good deeds by our own power in order to reach the Pure Land. However, in that way, we can only go to the false Land, which is called the “womb palace” and achieve “the birth attained beneath the twin śāla trees.” The reason is that we imagine that we attain rebirth by our own power and do not rely on the power of Amitābha. We attempt to practice meditative and non-meditative practices, but consequently, we recognize that we cannot accomplish such practices because our practices are hindered by blind passion.

Second, we realize that reciting Namu-Amida-Butsu is the best practice for attaining rebirth in the Land because it is easy for us to practice. In this form of practice, we make the effort to recite Namu-Amida-Butsu with our sincere mind, by our own power, and direct our merits to Amitābha. We can experience the rebirth that is non-comprehensible. However, we come to realize that we cannot attain true rebirth in the Land by our own initiative because we are deeply imbedded in the cycle of karmic evil.

Third, when we recognize our own limitation and powerlessness, entangled as we are in karmic reality, our mind is overturned and completely enters the power of Amitābha. Amitābha gives his mind to us as faith, leading us to the truly settled state and rebirth in the Pure Land as described in the eighteenth vow. Shinran calls this true rebirth “the birth that is inconceivable.” In this faith, we hear the Name of Namu-Amida-Butsu and recite it by Amitābha’s power.

We may wonder why our self-power practices cannot lead us to the true Pure Land, but lead us instead to the false Land, which has a self-contained character. In Shinran’s interpretation of the nineteenth vow, when one practices meditation and does...
non-meditative practices, one recognizes Amitābha and the Pure Land as objects and tries to approach them by one’s own cognitive and physical power, not knowing one’s very recognition and experience themselves are founded and sustained by Amitābha’s power. In such a view, one fails to recognize that it is the power of Amitābha which enables the practice itself. As a result, one becomes arrogant and imagines that he/she is in the Pure Land as a righteous person. However, he/she is not living in the true Pure Land. The reason is that he/she thinks to have attained rebirth in the beautiful Land by his/her own effort. Furthermore, in the twentieth vow, we recognize that reciting Namu-Amida-Butsu is the best practice for attaining rebirth in the Pure Land. If we recite the Name by our own power, we cannot go to the true Land for the reason that we see Amitābha as an object of recognition and do not understand that our subjective practice of Namu-Amida-Butsu is sustained by Amitābha. In such a case, we rely on our own power and cannot see the true form of Amitābha and his Land. Amitābha cannot be a mere object of our recognition, but is rather the foundation of our subjective recognition. In the practice of reciting the Name by our own power, we ask Amitābha to accept us by our own effort. At the moment of death, we could see that Amitābha welcomes us in the Pure Land, but this is a false rebirth in the false Land. In such a case, we cannot escape from the beautiful but small world, which is filled with self-righteous people.

Finally, we recognize that we cannot practice reciting Namu-Amida-Butsu by our own power. At that moment, we are opened to the new dimension of Amitābha and the Pure Land. When we receive the Amitābha’s mind as faith, we recognize that Amitābha enables our recognition and experience as the foundation of our subjectivity. The reciting of Namu-Amida-Butsu is sustained by Amitābha’s power. Moreover, we can experience the Pure Land at the very moment of receiving faith and attaining the stage of non-retrogression. Thus, we do not need to wait until the moment of death to see the
Land. The true Land is opened to all who recognize their inability to observe any Buddhist practice by their own power.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In the beginning of this chapter, I posed three questions. The first considered how the Dharmākara is connected with the fulfilled body of Amitābha. In my view, Dharmākara bodhisattva and Amitābha are united as the self-determination of the formless Tathāgata. Tathāgata manifests itself in the Name, and through the Name becomes Dharmākara, which is Tathāgata’s self. He is on earth and deeply embedded in karmic reality. Dharmākara is living as our true self in the foundation of our human consciousness. He attains his enlightenment when he saves all sentient beings in the Land. When he returns to himself with the sentient beings, they become Buddha and praise the Name of Amitābha, reciting Namu-Amida-Butsu. The self-recognition of Dharmākara and the praise of all sentient beings open the infinite Tathāgata and realize the cosmic body of Amitābha. Consequently, Dharmākara accomplishes his enlightenment and becomes Amitābha.

In Shinran’s view, Amitābha is the infinite light and life itself as the enlightened Buddha. However, from Soga’s perspective, Amitābha does not abandon his bodhisattvahood as Dharmākara since when one attains enlightenment as Buddha, one can freely enter the karmic world in order to save others. The Buddha can fully live in bodhisattvahood, immersed in the world, while paradoxically being in the state of full enlightenment.

The second question of this chapter explored the relation between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature in Dharmākara and Amitābha. The universal Buddha nature is described as Tathāgata, emptiness, or nothingness. When the Tathāgata manifests itself as Dharmākara, his individual reality individualizes the universal Buddha
nature as the threefold mind. After the Dharmākara’s enlightenment, Amitābha also has the threefold mind and the Name in his cosmic body. The Tathāgata is the true subjectivity of both Dharmākara and Amitābha. It works as a connecting point between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature. In the individual reality of Dharmākara, he is living in the threefold mind, which is individualized Buddha nature and also immersed in the karmic reality of sentient beings with others. In the cosmic reality of Amitābha, he lives in the Buddha nature, which contains all Buddhas praising him in the Pure Land. He is also relationship with the karmic human nature for saving suffering beings by directing his virtue.

The third question raised was how the Dharmākara’s vow mind is connected with the establishment of the Pure Land. Shinran describes the fundamental character of the true Pure Land as the Land of immeasurable light. Amitābha as immeasurable light and life has an inseparable relationship with the Land.

Shinran understands the Pure Land to be the self-realization (fulfillment) of the Dharmākara’s vow mind. The pure vow mind realizes itself by taking various forms in the adornments of the Pure Land. These adornments are the “extensive” presentation of Tathāgata. They have various, particular, effable and distinct forms as the adornments, which are the self-presentation of the vow mind. On the other hand, there is a “brief” presentation of Tathāgata. This means that various forms of adornments return to the original pure vow mind, which is the one, absolute, formless and equal state of Tathāgata. The pure vow mind undergoes eternal movement, which manifests itself as various forms of the adornments in the extensive presentation and return to the one pure vow mind in the brief presentation. Therefore, the extensive presentation and the brief presentation interpenetrate one another. In the relationship to the Buddha body theory, the extensive presentation corresponds to the dharma body as compassionate means. The brief
presentation is equivalent to the dharma body as suchness.

Soga observes the interpenetration of the extensive presentation and the brief presentation of the pure vow mind from the perspective of the self-recognition of the Dharmākara’s vow mind. When we observe the Buddha body and the Land from the perspective of the Dharmākara’s self-recognition, we can attain true understanding of the body and the Land. However, if we see the body and Land from our own subject-object framework of recognition, we fall into the false understanding of the Buddha body and the Land. When we observe Amitābha and the Land as object of our consciousness, we try to go to the place in the future by our own power through the practice of meditation and good deeds or by reciting Namu-Amida-Butsu in the present time. However, in that way we can only see the provisional form of Buddha and the Land because our self-attachment distorts their true form.

When we recognize that our human consciousness and recognition are sustained by the Dharmākara’s self-recognition in the vow mind, we receive faith in Amitābha by his power and attain true settlement in the present time. The Pure Land does not come after the present time, but rather emerges from the future as the foundation of the present time. One can dwell in the Pure Land of the future when one receives the faith and the state of non-retrogression in the present time. The Land as the pure future sustains the present time and enables us to be settled in the “here and now.”

In the next chapter, I explore the individual body of Dharmākara. The Tathāgata self-manifests as the individual reality of Dharmākara. As true individual, Dharmākara is immersed in karmic reality with other sentient beings. He is also living in the human consciousness and recognizes himself as Tathāgata through the human consciousness. Thus, I explicate the internal structure of Dharmākara, which is the foundation of individual salvation for sentient beings.
IV. The Individual Dimensions of the Buddha Body in Shin Buddhism: 

*Dharmākara* Bodhisattva

4.1 The Fundamental Issues of *Dharmākara* Bodhisattva as the Foundation of Personal Salvation

This chapter explicates the structure of the individual dimensions of the Buddha body, the *Dharmākara* bodhisattva. I will address three main issues in the fundamental structure of the *Dharmākara* bodhisattva that are deeply connected to the salvation of all sentient beings.

The first issue pertains to how the individual reality of *Dharmākara* is immersed in karmic human nature. *Dharmākara* is the self-manifestation of *Tathāgata*, while *Tathāgata* is the subjectivity of *Dharmākara*. However, *Dharmākara* is not the mere instrument of *Tathāgata*. He is a true individual reality who possesses human nature and is deeply immersed in karmic reality with all sentient beings while at the same time possessing the Buddha nature and transcending karmic reality and *samsāra*. Since *Dharmākara* is formed in karmic human nature, he lives in the autonomous human consciousness and engages in bodhisattva practices in the world by way of the human consciousness, together with the Buddha mind. He recognizes himself as *Tathāgata* through his human consciousness in the karmic world. Thus, I will explore the structure of the karmic human nature of *Dharmākara*’s individual reality.

The second issue revolves around the structure of *Dharmākara* as true self. Soga recognizes *Dharmākara* as our true subjectivity. I will explicate how *Dharmākara* works as the fundamental consciousness in our subjectivity.

The third issue relates to the way in which the structure of *Dharmākara* is connected to the structure of the salvation of all individuals. In my view, *Dharmākara* is the basis of the salvation of the individual in Shin Buddhism. How can *Dharmākara*
possess individuality in his enlightenment? How is his individuality related to all individuals in the world? It is crucial to address this problematic as his individuality in relation to each individual is the foundation of soteriology in Shin Buddhism. I address these three issues with reference to Shinran’s and Soga’s interpretations.

4.2 The Karmic Human Nature of Dharmākara

4.2.1 The basis of Dharmākara bodhisattva’s individual reality

In this segment, following Shinran and Soga’s views, I explore the internal structure of the karmic human nature of Dharmākara bodhisattva. Though Dharmākara bodhisattva is not an historical human, he is nevertheless an individual reality as the self-manifestation of the infinite Tathāgata. How is this individual reality possible in the self-manifestation of the Tathāgata? In my view, the individuality of Dharmākara is based on the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu. The eternal Tathāgata has self-recognition. The Tathāgata’s self is the internal Word, Namu-Amida-Butsu. The Name itself is active, revealing itself to sentient beings as true reality. We often recognize each individual as an independent, static reality, but this is a false understanding of objective beings. When the Name works in the world, it negates such false understanding of objective beings and unearths a true understanding of the individual, who is inescapably bound in relationship to others. This interdependent reality is connected to the formless, infinite reality, Tathāgata. When the Tathāgata manifests itself in the world, Tathāgata’s self, which is indicated by the Name Namu-Amida-Butsu, becomes Dharmākara as the Dharma body of compassionate means. Thus, the Name is the basis of the individuality of Dharmākara.

Dharmākara is personal reality, but does not exist by itself; rather the Dharmākara negates its self-subsistence in its interdependent relation with others. Thus, we cannot say, “At first, there is Dharmākara’s individual reality and then it starts working in the world.” The reason for this is that his individuality cannot subsist alone
outside of its interdependent relations with others. His individuality is based on the Name, but Dharmākara becomes true individual when he is immersed in karmic reality with other beings and works for their salvation.

This view has its background in the Mādhyamika School of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mādhyamika (literary ‘Middling’ or ‘Middle way’) is one of the important traditions of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism. This tradition began with Nāgārjuna (c. 150 – c. 250 CE). In his main philosophical work, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way), Nāgārjuna holds that the “dependent origination” of all beings is “emptiness.” Emptiness is “a dependent concept,” which is a “middle path.”\(^1\) Everything is empty, which means it has no intrinsic existence of its own because everything originates in the relationship of the causes and conditions of others. Nāgārjuna thus denies the intrinsically independent or self-contained nature (svabhāva) of the individual being.\(^2\)

He also holds that there are the two kinds of truth: “conventional truth” and “ultimate truth.”\(^3\) Conventional truth indicates that everything exists in an interdependent relationship. The ultimate truth indicates that everything is empty because nothing has its own intrinsic nature. Nāgārjuna holds that when one is unable to distinguish the two truths, one cannot understand the profound teaching of the Buddha. One can recognize the ultimate truth and attain Nirvana through the conventional truth.\(^4\)

In Shin Buddhism, as a part of Mahāyāna Buddhism, everything is interdependent within the same karmic reality and thus no being has independent existence in itself. In this context, the individual reality of Dharmākara shares interdependence with others and

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2. Ibid., 24. 16. in ibid., 276.
3. Ibid., 24. 8. in ibid., 272.
4. Ibid., 24. 9-10. in ibid., 273.
so is living within the conventional truth with them. At the same time, Dharmākara is also the manifestation of the formless Tathāgata and is thus opened to the ultimate truth, which is emptiness.

4.2.2 The union of the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature in Dharmākara: his self-recognition of true individuality through his human consciousness

The individual reality of Dharmākara is the locus of interpenetration between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature and individualizes both natures in itself. Shinran says consistently that, “the Tathagata, in profound compassion for the ocean of all sentient beings in pain and affliction, performed bodhisattva practices for inconceivable millions of measureless kalpas,” and emphasizes that the Tathāgata performs these practices with a pure and true mind in the world. The Tathāgata as Dharmākara’s subjectivity is predicated of both the activities of the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature. The Tathāgata is manifested in the Dharmākara’s individuality and this individuality is the locus which connects both natures. This means that Dharmākara’s individuality is receiving the Buddha nature and the human nature at the same time in the self-manifestation of Tathāgata in the world. The two natures are not mixed with one another, however, but are related as distinct natures.

In the first chapter, I explicated Leontius of Byzantium’s understanding of the hypostatic union of Christ. He held that the Logos took the universal human nature and enhypostatized it as an individualized, concrete human nature of Christ. The human nature of Christ subsists in the Logos (enhypostasis), but cannot exist without the Logos (anhypostasis). In this context, Leontius explains that hypostasis indicates “being-by-oneself” (tou kath’ heauto einai). Nature (physis) is a common reality, which

“presents the character of genus, but hypostasis expresses individual identity.”

Self-subsistent hypostasis enchypostatizes the human nature.

In the previous chapter, I explained that the individual reality of Dharmākara individualizes the universal Buddha nature as the threefold mind. He also individualizes the universal karmic human nature by taking on the human nature, which consists of the human mind and body. He is immersed in karmic reality and shares karma with other sentient beings. Without this interdependent relationship, he cannot embody karmic reality in its individual form. Shinran cites the Sutra of the Tathagata of Immeasurable Life:

He [Dharmākara] performed bodhisattva practices in this way, passing innumerable, countless, incalculable, unequaled kotis of nayutas of millions of kalpas. During that time, he never harbored a single thought of greed, anger, or folly, nor any impulse of desire, harmfulness, or wrath; he cherished no thought of form, sound, smell, taste, or tangible thing. The constant warmth of affection and respect he felt for all sentient beings was like that for close relatives.

Thus, when he undertook bodhisattva practice to save others, he lived with them as “close relatives,” and shared with them a human consciousness while never harboring thoughts of greed, bad intention, or impurity of any kind. Because of his Buddha nature, he did not succumb to carnal desire and blind passion.

Dharmākara individualizes the universal karmic human nature in his self-awareness of karmic reality. Shinran quotes Shan-dao’s famous expression of the self-awareness of karmic evil: I am “a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, ever sinking and ever wandering in transmigration from innumerable kalpas in the past, with never a condition that would lead to emancipation.”

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8 Ibid., 85.
expression, Soga interprets the “I” to indicate Dharmakara himself, not our ego. If this “I” did in fact indicate our ego, then this self-recognition would come from self-power, which would indicate self-repentance by our own self-effort, which is not possible.9

It is crucial that one recognize oneself as a true individual involved in karmic reality with other sentient beings. Soga holds that the self-recognition of each individual is based on Dharmakara’s own self-recognition. In my view, Dharmakara has no blind passion in himself because of his Buddha nature, which is based on his subjectivity, Tathāgata. However, through his human consciousness, he recognizes his subjectivity as a true individual—as the one who shares karmic reality with others, none of whom can find the way of liberation from the karmic cycle by their own power. Through this self-awareness, he recognizes his subjectivity as Tathāgata, which embraces karmic reality.

4.3 Dharmakara as True Self: Soga’s View of Dharmakara from the Perspective of the Theory of “Consciousness Only”

4.3.1 The theory of “Consciousness Only” in Mahāyāna Buddhism

In this segment, I explore the internal structure of Dharmakara as the true self.

Soga developed his own perspective on Dharmakara as true subjectivity, finally holding that Dharmakara is the store consciousness,10 which is the fundamental consciousness in the theory of “Consciousness Only” (vijñapti-mātrata) in the Indian tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The fundamental view of the theory of “Consciousness Only” is that there is only consciousness and everything appears in the transformation of consciousness.

9 Ryōjin Soga, Nyorai hyōgen no Hanchu toshūteno Sanshinkan 如来表現の範疇としての三心観 (View of Threefold Mind as category of manifestation of Tathagata), in vol. 6 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 203.

10 Ibid., 157.
In *The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only*, Vasubandhu summarized the main doctrine of the theory of “Consciousness Only.” He notes that subject (ātman) and object (dharma) arise in the transformation of consciousness.\(^\text{11}\) There are no real external objects of perception or unchanging inner self who perceives these things. One does not perceive objects outside the subjectivity, but only perceives the things which are projected by consciousness. The division of the subject and object of recognition is only an illusion. In reality, the subject and the object of recognition are empty.

Consciousness (vijñāna:識) is divided into eight parts or functions, namely the first five sense consciousnesses (of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body), mental consciousness, thought (manas: 末那識), and the store consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna:阿頼耶識).\(^\text{12}\) The store consciousness is the fundamental consciousness. Vasubandhu notes that the store consciousness is a holder of all “seeds” (bīja) and makes “maturation” (vipāka:異熟).\(^\text{13}\) The term “seed” means “the inner habit energies,” which produce specific action in the future. The term “maturation” means “the matured results of previous action.”\(^\text{14}\) When one performs a good action (karma) or evil action in the world, the store consciousness is “perfumed” (vāsāna:薰習) by the karma and the impression of the action is stored as seeds in the store consciousness.\(^\text{15}\) This seed becomes “the habit energy” (習気) of action and emerges as different action in the future. This phenomenon is called “maturation,” whose literal meaning is “differently ripen.”


\(^\text{13}\) Vasubandhu, *The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only*, 378. Francis H. Cook uses a word, “retribution” as translation for vipāka. However, “retribution” signifies revenge or punishment for doing something wrong. In my view, it is not an appropriate translation and thus I use a word, “maturation” because it reflects the content of vipāka.


\(^\text{15}\) In the seeds of store consciousness, “Cause is good or evil, but result is neither good nor bad.”(因是善惡, 果是無記). We can say that seeds are good or bad, but the result is not good or bad.
Vasubandhu holds that the store consciousness is undefiled and morally neutral, neither good nor evil.\(^\text{16}\) This consciousness arises and disappears at every moment, but there is continuity of consciousness between one moment and another. There is neither past nor future in the store consciousness itself because it proceeds from present to present. It is like “a flowing stream.”\(^\text{17}\) Thus, there is no unchanging self. However, the individual self does not disappear because the experiences of the individual are stored in its store consciousness.

Seventh-century Chinese monk Hsüan-tsang (玄奘 600–664) wrote the Demonstration of Consciousness Only (成唯識論 Ch‘eng wei-shih lun), which is the commentary on Vasubandhu’s Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only.\(^\text{18}\) He held that that when seeds produce a specific action, “at the same time” the information of this action is stored in the store consciousness as a new seed (種子生現行、現行薰種子). He notes that three phenomena, a seed which produces an action, consciousness in action, and creating new seeds by influence of past action, happen together at the same time. These three phenomena “act as simultaneous causes and results of each other” (三法展転、因果同時).\(^\text{19}\)

Hsüan-tsang also distinguishes three aspects of the store consciousness: “the specific character of the consciousness” (自相), “the fruit of the consciousness” (果相),

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\(^{16}\) Vasubandhu, *The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only*, 378.

\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) Hsüan-tsang studied in the Buddhist University of Nālandā in India from 633 to 638 CE. In Nālandā, he discovered the Sanskrit text of Vasubandhu’s *The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only*, along with ten prose commentaries on these “The Thirty Verses” by ten scholars, Dharmapāla, Sthiramati, Nanda, Citrabhānu, Gunamati, Jinamitra, Jñānacandra, Bandhusrī, Suddharacandra, and Jinaputra. These ten commentaries became the basis for Ch‘eng wei-shih lun. After Hsüan-tsang returned to China in 645, he translated these Sanskrit commentaries to Chinese. He chose Dharmapāla’s commentary as the correct interpretation of Vasubandhu’s *The Thirty Verses*, and composed *Ch‘eng wei-shih lun*. Francis H. Cook, *Introduction to Hsüan-tsang, The Demonstration of Consciousness Only*, trans. Francis H. Cook, in *Three Texts on Consciousness Only: BDK English Tripiṭaka* 60-I, II, III, 1.

\(^{19}\) Hsüan-tsang, *The Demonstration of Consciousness Only*, 59-60.
and “the causal aspect of the consciousness” (因相). The specific character of consciousness indicates the store consciousness itself, which changes itself in various ways. The fruit of the consciousness indicates the maturation of past karma in the store consciousness. Maturation contains the reality which is produced by the seeds. This reality has a different form from the original seed, which is the impression of the action of the past. Thus, the reality of maturation of past karma is realized as the fruit, which comes from experiences of the past and hence the fruit of consciousness is deeply related to the past. The causal aspect of the consciousness indicates all seeds in the self-consciousness. As cause, the seeds make experience possible in the future. Thus, the causal aspect of the consciousness is connected with the future.

Vasubandhu states that the store consciousness is not perceptible because it works on the basis of ordinary consciousnesses. This store consciousness has “that which it grasps and holds” (執受), “its location” (住処), and “its perception” (了). Hsüan-tsang posited that consciousness transforms itself and evolves to appear as two parts. The two parts consist of the seeing part (an apparent subject 見分) and the seen part (an apparent object 相分). Both parts appear by the transformation of consciousness. The seeing part and the seen part are not divided from one another because they are two aspects of one consciousness. Thus, we cannot apply the division of subject and object to the relation of the two parts.

The store consciousness also consists of the seeing part and the seen part. Hsüan-tsang posits that the seeing part of the store consciousness is “its perception” of

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20 Ibid., 48.
21 Ibid.
22 Vasubandhu, The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only, 378.
23 Hsüan-tsang, The Demonstration of Consciousness Only, 61.
the store consciousness. The seen part of the store consciousness is “that which it grasps and holds” and the “location” of the store consciousness. In Hsüan-tsang’s interpretation, “that which it grasps and holds” is divided into two parts; “the [impure] seeds” (種子) and “the body provided with organs” (有根身). Its “location” means the “place,” where one lives. Moreover, Hsüan-tsang also says that the consciousness is divided into three parts: the seeing part, the seen part, and the “self-authenticating part” (自証分). The self-authenticating part recognizes that the seeing part perceives the seen part. This is the self-awareness of the consciousness. He also notes, according to another perspective, that the consciousness is divided into four parts: the seeing part, the seen part, the self-authenticating part, and “the part that authenticates self-authentication” (証自証分). This function of consciousness recognizes that the self-authenticating part of consciousness knows that the seeing part is seeing the seen part. In my view, this is the activity of Tathāgata, which sustains the activity of self-awareness.

However, there is the second, transforming consciousness, which is called manas (thought) consciousness. It is sustained by the store consciousness, but objectifies the store consciousness and interprets the two parts of the store consciousness as an inner self and an external world. Moreover, manas consciousness tries to possess the seeds as its own properties. It is the source of self-possession, which is associated with “delusion about self, view of self, self-conceit, and love of self.” It is defiled, but morally

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 60.
26 Ibid., 62.
28 Hsüan-tsang, The Demonstration of Consciousness Only, 62.
30 Vasubandhu, The Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only, 378.
neutral. Therefore, in the activity of manas, one makes a division of subject and object. Moreover, one recognizes its subjectivity as “ego” in self-possession and also possesses the content of objective recognition as “my understanding,” or “my idea.” This is the source of deviation from truth.

In the Demonstration of Consciousness Only, Hsüan-tsang holds that when one attains enlightenment, these eight kinds of consciousnesses are transformed into four kinds of wisdom.

First, the store consciousness is transformed into the knowledge of “a great, perfect mirror” (mahā-ādarśana-jñāna 大円鏡智). This transformation is called the “reversal of the basis” (āśraya-parāvrtti 転依). It means that when the store consciousness becomes the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror, “seeds of delusion are destroyed and seeds of enlightenment are nourished and made to mature.” This transformation is “the culminating act during the spiritual practices of the bodhisattva.”

The nature and characteristics of the supreme knowledge are “pure and separated from all defilement.” This knowledge “can manifest bodies and lands and generate images of knowledge.” Therefore, it is like “a great, perfect mirror manifesting multitudes of images of forms.” When the store consciousness becomes the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror, the knowledge comes to bear “the pure seeds” and manifest “the [Buddha] body of personal enjoyment,” and “the Pure Land” in the seen part of the

31 Ibid.

32 Soga makes a creative interpretation of manas. He holds that when manas undergoes self-negation, the store consciousness emerges. Soga Ryōjin, Daimuryojuhyō chōki 大無量寿経経記, in vol. 7 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), ed. Soga Ryōjin senshū kankōkai (Tokyo: Yayoi shobō, 1971), 278-279.


34 Glossary to Three Texts on Consciousness Only: BDK English Tripitaka 60-I, II, III, 421.

35 Hsüan-tsang, The Demonstration of Consciousness Only, 347.
wisdom.  

Second, manas (thought) is transformed into “the knowledge of sameness [samata- jñāna 平等性智].” This knowledge “contemplates the complete sameness of all dharmas [things] and oneself and other sentient beings.” When the manas changes itself into the knowledge of sameness, it transcends the attachment to self and observes the equality of all beings and becomes the source of great benevolence and selfless compassion. Furthermore, this knowledge also “manifests varieties of forms of bodies of enjoyment and lands in conformity with the dispositions of sentient beings” and the foundation of Nirvāṇa.

Third, mental consciousness is transformed into the knowledge of “wonderful observation” (pratyaveksana-jnana 妙観察智), in which one “contemplates the special and common characteristics of all dharmas and evolves without obstruction.” Fourth, the five sense consciousnesses are transformed into “the knowledge of achieving the task” (krtya-anusthāna- jñāna 成所作智), which manifests the three actions of body, speech, and mind of numerous transformations. Each level of consciousness is transformed into different types of wisdom when the bodhisattva achieves enlightenment as Buddha.

4.3.2 Soga’s interpretation of the store consciousness

Soga applies the theory of the store consciousness to the Dharmākara. He states that the content of the store consciousness is Dharmākara and one can be conscious of Dharmākara as the store consciousness. Dharmākara is our true subjectivity, which is

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36 Ibid., 352.
37 Ibid., 348.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ryōjin Soga, Nyorai hyōgen no Hanchu toshiten Sanshinkan 如来表現の範疇としての三心観 (View of Threefold Mind as category of manifestation of Tathagata), 157-158.
the store consciousness.

Soga explains his understanding of the three aspects of the store consciousness. According to him, the “specific character of the consciousness” indicates “the general principle of all self-awareness,” and “self-awareness of self-awareness.” In the “specific character of the consciousness,” one can see the process of self-awareness when one recognizes the karmic process of self-deviation from truth. Soga interprets the store consciousness as the principle of self-awareness, which is associated with the transcendental subjectivity. He also understands the store consciousness as “fundamental self-awareness of pure creation.” The store consciousness itself is “the infinite power, which creates and stores all things” and “the stored and received finite physical body, which emerges as the result of all sentient beings’ karmas.” The spirit and body become one in the store consciousness. This means that the store consciousness has creative power, producing the phenomena of all things and storing them in itself as the seeing part. At the same time, the store consciousness is the receptacle, which receives all seeds of phenomena as the seen part.

Soga equates the content of the store consciousness with the content of the Dharmākara’s subjectivity. What one can see in the store consciousness is what Dharmākara’s self sees. Though Dharmākara is not a historical person, he takes the physical bodies of all sentient beings, living in each of them as the store consciousness.

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41 Ibid., 164.
42 Ryōkei Kaginushi, who is a researcher of Soga’s Buddhist theology, holds that Soga’s interpretation of the store consciousness as the principle of self-awareness is very special and creative. Ryōkei Kaginushi, “Soga Ryōjin ni okeru Yuishiki kyōgaku” (Ryōjin Soga’s Buddhist Theology of Consciousness Only) in Soga Kyōgaku: Hojō Bosatsu to shukugō (Soga’s Buddhist Theology: Dharmākara Bodhisattva and Karma), 201.
43 Ryōjin Soga, Goko no shiyui wo haitei toshite 五劫の思惟を背景として (Dharmākara’s Deliberation for Five Kalpas as a Background), in vol. 3 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我最深論集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), ed. Soga Ryōjin senshū kankōkai (Tokyo: Yayoi shobō, 1970), 307. All translations of this work from the Japanese to the English are mine.
44 Ibid., 309.
He recognizes the bodies of all sentient beings as his own body and sees his body as the
internal object of his subjectivity. Moreover, he assumes the karmas of all sentient beings
when he takes their bodies as his own body.

Soga makes a creative interpretation regarding the seeds of the store
consciousness. He holds that the pure seed is the Amitābha’s Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu,
which is the power of Tathāgata in the vow mind. This means that the Name as the
pure seed is the seeing part of the store consciousness and sustains Dharmākara’s
self-recognition and salvific activities. However, in this interpretation, the Name can only
be the seeing part of the store consciousness, and cannot be the seen part because it is the
pure seed. Thus, Dharmākara cannot see the Name as internal object because the store
consciousness can only see the impure seeds. The impure seeds are the karmas of all
sentient beings, which are taken on by Dharmākara. Nevertheless, Dharmākara sees the
Name as internal object. He calls sentient beings through the Name and gives himself to
them in the Name. Can the Name be both the pure seed and impure seed? How can we
resolve this contradiction?

Ryōkei Kaginushi advances a compelling interpretation of Soga’s Name theory.
Kaginushi holds that the pure seed becomes the impure seed when Tathāgata becomes
our true self. This means that when Tathāgata undertakes self-negation and enters into
the karmic world, the Namu-Amida-Butsu becomes the impure seeds in the world as
salvific means. Finally, the Name becomes the seen part of the store consciousness as its
fruit. In my view, the Name is the pure seed when the Name sustains the individuality of

45 Ryōjin Soga, Jōdo shōgon no ganshin to ganriki (The Vow Mind and Vow
Power of the Adornment of the Pure Land), in vol. 3 of Soga Ryōjin senshu (The Selected
Works of Ryōjin Soga), 338.

46 Ryōkei Kaginushi, “Soga Ryōjin ni okeru Yuishiki kyōgaku” (Soga
Ryōjin’s Buddhist theology of Consciousness Only) in Soga Kyōgaku: Hōzō Bosatsu to shukugō (Soga’s
Buddhist Theology: Dharmākara Bodhisattva and Karma), 261.
Dharmākara’s self. It becomes the impure seed when Dharmākara works in the world and gives himself in the Name.

Soga explains the three aspects of the store consciousness, namely the specific character of the store consciousness, the fruit of the store consciousness, and the causal aspect of the store consciousness. One can see the fruit of the store consciousness in the finite and relative aspects of self-awareness. Moreover, one can see the causal aspect of the store consciousness in the infinite and absolute aspect of self-awareness. The fruit of the store consciousness becomes a seen part of the store consciousness because one can see the fruit in the realized action as object. However, the causal aspect of the consciousness can never become a seen part of the store consciousness because pure seeds in the store consciousness cannot become a seen part of the consciousness. When the seeds become an object of the store consciousness, these seeds are already impure. When the pure seeds become the impure seeds, they can become the seen part of the store consciousness.

Moreover, Soga hold that the three aspects of the store consciousness are deeply related to the three aspects of “time” in the store consciousness. Soga explains that the store consciousness proceeds from present time to present time. There is no “past time” or “future time” divided from the present time in the chronological sense. Nevertheless, the present time contains “the past aspect,” and “the future aspect,” which are seen in the activity of the self-awareness of the store consciousness. As noted above, the specific character of the store consciousness indicates present time itself. The fruit of the store consciousness indicates the past aspect, which is seen in the maturation of the store consciousness. The causal aspect of the consciousness indicates the future aspect, which

47 Ryōjin Soga, Nyorai hyōgen no Hanchu tōshiten Sanshinkan 如来表現の範疇としての三心観 (View of the Threefold Mind as category of manifestation of Tathāgata) , 165.

48 Ibid.
is seen in all the seeds in the store consciousness.\textsuperscript{49}

Soga applies these three aspects of the store consciousness to the threefold mind of the Dharmākara. He holds that the specific character of the store consciousness is equivalent to the entrusting mind. He also states that the fruit of the store consciousness is equivalent to the sincere mind, and the causal aspect of the store consciousness is equivalent to the aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land.\textsuperscript{50}

Soga states that the entrusting mind is the Dharmākara’s self-awareness itself. The sincere mind appears in the finite and past aspect of Dharmākara’s self-awareness. On the other hand, the aspiration to be born in the Pure Land appears in the infinite and future aspect of the development of Dharmākara’s self-awareness.\textsuperscript{51} These three aspects of Dharmākara’s self-awareness are equivalent to the three aspects of the store consciousness. They are contained in the Dharmākara himself, which is the store consciousness itself.

First, Soga elucidates the sincere mind, which corresponds to the fruit of the store consciousness. When Shinran explains the sincere mind, he describes the karmic situation of sentient beings, “I find that all beings, an ocean of multitudes, have since the beginningless past down to this day, this very moment, been evil and defiled, completely lacking the mind of purity. They have been false and deceitful, completely lacking the mind of truth and reality.”\textsuperscript{52} In Soga’s interpretation, one can recognize “all beings, an ocean of multitudes” in the relation between the six senses (六識) and their objects (六境) in our consciousness.\textsuperscript{53} This is the world of karma, which is formed as a result of the

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 186-187.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 168.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 169.

\textsuperscript{52} Shinran, \textit{The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way}, 95.

\textsuperscript{53} Ryōjin Soga, \textit{Nyorai hyōgen no Hanchu toshiteno Sanshinkan} 如来表現の範疇としての三心観
maturation of the seeds in the store consciousness. The sincere mind of Dharmākara works in the karmic world to save all beings. Thus, the sincere mind deeply corresponds to the fruit of the store consciousness.

When Dharmākara is opened in relationship to all sentient beings in the sincere mind, his self is already in the past aspect of the store consciousness. The reason is that when one can recognize beings as objective reality, this reality has already passed from the present time to the past. This past aspect of consciousness appears in the activity of Dharmākara’s self-awareness.

Soga also explains the practice of Dharmākara in the Larger Sutra. The sutra declares that Dharmākara did not awaken any thoughts of “greed, hatred, or cruelty.” He did not attach to “any form, sound, smell, taste, touch or idea.” Soga makes a creative interpretative move, however, positing that Dharmākara is also immersed in karmic human reality with other sentient beings and struggles with carnal human desire. Nevertheless, the sutra emphasizes that he does not succumb to such desires and blind passions. When he faced karmic reality, he awakened his true and pure mind and transcended karmic reality by relinquishing himself and then receiving himself. Thus Dharmākara’s mind is the source of the sincere mind. The sincere mind emerges as the fruit of Dharmākara’s self-awareness itself.

Second, Soga explains the entrusting mind. The entrusting mind is related to the specific character of the store consciousness in the present time. The entrusting mind is the Dharmākara’s pure trust in sentient beings (without any doubt of their salvation) and

(View of Threefold Mind as category of manifestation of Tathāgata), 174-175.

54 Hisao Inagaki, trans., The Larger Sutra on Amitayus (The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life), 41.

55 Ryōjin Soga, Nyorai hyōgen no Hanchu toshiteno Sanshinkan 如来表現の範疇としての三心観 (View of Threefold Mind as category of manifestation of Tathāgata), 182-183.

56 Ibid., 184.
is formed in his self-negation. Soga emphasizes that the entrusting mind denies any false ideas of rebirth in the Pure Land in order to lead us to true rebirth in the fulfilled Land.\footnote{Ibid., 201.} Finally, in the entrusting mind, one recognizes oneself deeply entangled in the darkness of the cycle of karmic evil and thus unable to be reborn in the Pure Land by one’s own power.\footnote{Ibid., 209-210.} The entrusting mind reflects on Dharmākara’s self-awareness and self-negation. The entrusting mind is related to itself and negates itself in its activity. Thus, it cannot be a self-existent reality. Moreover, the entrusting mind negates itself by emptying itself into other beings and so negates any false forms of rebirth in the Pure Land in our consciousness. The self-awareness of the entrusting mind is based on the specific character of the store consciousness.

Third, Soga explains the aspiration for birth in the Pure Land. Shinran holds that the aspiration for birth in the Land is the calling of Tathāgata, who directs its merits to all sentient beings. This calling is deeply connected with imparting to sentient beings the awakening of truth.\footnote{Ibid., 210-211.} The aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land is related to the causal aspect of the store consciousness. The causal aspect of the store consciousness contains all seeds of karma, which enable our recognition of objectivity and our action in the future. In my view, when Dharmākara is engaged in his salvific work, he recognizes that sentient beings have no way to extricate themselves from the cycle of birth and death by their own power. In this moment, Dharmākara calls to them: “Be born in my Land.” This calling comes from the infinite future because the Pure Land is realized in the future. When Dharmākara’s calling emerges from the infinite future of the Pure Land, the future does not appear as a time after the present time, but appears as the future which is
sustaining the present time. Moreover, this calling from the future is the un-objectified foundation and sustains our recognition and action in the present time. In this calling to sentient beings, Dharmākara opens the way of salvation to them all in the Pure Land and then returns to himself. Finally, he accomplishes his enlightenment as Amitābha in the present time.

From the perspective of Consciousness Only, Soga also observes the enlightenment of Dharmākara as Amitābha. First, he explains that the three phenomena in the store consciousness—a seed which produces an action, consciousness in action, and creating new seeds by influence of past actions—happen together at the same time in relation to Amitābha’s Name. According to his analysis, a (pure) seed signifies the Name (Namu-Amida-Butsu), consciousness in action signifies the activities of all Buddhas, and creating new seeds by influence of past actions signifies all Buddhas’ reciting and praising the Name. The Name is a fundamental, potential power to save others in Dharmākara and is contained as a pure seed of the store consciousness. When the Dharmākara takes salvific vows and enters the karmic world, the pure seed of the Name becomes impure seed in order to work in the world. When sentient beings are saved in the Land by the power of the Name, they become Buddhas. Finally, when the Buddhas praise the Name, their actions are contained in the store consciousness as new seeds. Soga holds that Dharmākara accomplishes his enlightenment as Amitābha when all Buddhas praise his Name.

Although Soga depicted Dharmākara as the store consciousness, he did not clarify how Amitābha can be connected to the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror, which is the stage after Dharmākara’s enlightenment. In my view, Amitābha represents the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror because the knowledge manifests the eternal

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60 Ryōjin Soga, Gōkan no sekai to hosshō no sekai 業感の世界と法性の世界 (the world of karmic sensitivity and the world of suchness) in vol. 4 of Soga Ryōjin senshu 曽我量深選集 (The Selected Works of Ryōjin Soga), 104.
Tathāgata. Originally, Dharmākara observes its (impure) seeds, body, and place, as internal objects because they are the seen part of the store consciousness. Thereafter, when he attains enlightenment as Amitābha, the impure seeds are eliminated and the pure seeds remain. The Name as the impure seed is transformed into the pure seed which praises Amitābha. The body is transformed into the Buddha body of personal enjoyment. The place is changed into the Pure Land. Thus, Amitābha observes the pure seeds, the Buddha body, and the Land as internal objects because they are the seen part of the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror. Therefore, the transformation from Dharmākara to Amitābha corresponds to the transformation from the store consciousness to the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror.

4.4 Relation between the Structure of Dharmākara and the Structure of Salvation of All Individuals

When I recognize myself deeply entangled in the darkness of the cycle of karmic evil on the earth (機の深信), paradoxically I find the final salvation in Amitābha (法の深信). When I find myself in the karmic darkness, I recognize myself as a true individual in interdependent relation with others. In this moment, I am saved by the infinite light of Amitābha. This is the structure of salvation of the individual in Shin Buddhism. The contradictory realities, namely the self-recognition of karmic evil and Amitābha’s acceptance, the karmic darkness and the infinite light of Amitābha, are deeply interconnected. At the same time, these contradictory realities are clearly distinct and not confused with one another.

Shinran emphasizes self-recognition of our own karmic evil, which comes from evil passion (kleśa). Shin Buddhist scholar Hisao Inagaki explains that “the evil passions are mental functions which disturb and defile the mind and body.” They become “the cause of transmigration in Samsāra.” In Mahāyāna Buddhism, a bodhisattva attains
liberation and enlightenment “through recognizing the nonsubstantiality of the evil passions.” The “non-substantiality” of the evil passions means that evil passion itself is neither good nor bad in true reality when one sees it as it is. However, Shinran recognizes “karmic evil” as the fundamental reality of all sentient beings. He recognizes karmic evil very deeply in his own existence and thus cannot see it as neutral reality. In Shinran, karmic evil indicates the sinful reality in which one is imbedded and from which one cannot be liberated from blind passion, carnal desire, and karma by one’s own power. Only when one recognizes the karmic evil in oneself and receives faith in Amitābha by Tathāgata’s power, can one find the way of liberation.

In my view, this structure of individual salvation is rooted in the double structure of Dharmākara. When one recognizes oneself as a true individual in the karmic darkness, this recognition is based on the individual reality of Dharmākara. Dharmākara knows that he himself is immersed in karmic reality and thus his self-recognition is the basis of each individual’s self-recognition.

On the other hand, Dharmākara has an individualized Buddha nature, namely, the threefold mind, which enables his bodhisattva practice. In his practices, because of his infinite, pure Buddha mind, he accepts complete immersion in the karmic human reality with sentient beings for the purpose of saving them. Recognizing himself in the karmic reality, he calls sentient beings to salvation in the Pure Land.

When the Dharmākara calls each individual to be reborn in the Pure Land and gives his mind to them as faith in Amitābha, this event is crucial for the salvation of each individual. Each individual recognizes that he/she has received the faith by the power of Amitābha, enters the stage of non-retrogression in the present time, and is assured of rebirth in the Pure Land in the future.

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61 Hisao Inagaki, Glossary to Shinran, Kyōgyōshinshō: On Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Enlightenment, 366.
In the beginning of this chapter, I posed three questions. The first was how the individual reality of Dharmākara is immersed in karmic human nature. In my view, Tathāgata manifests its very self as the Name and the Name is the foundation of the Dharmākara’s individuality. The subjectivity of Dharmākara is Tathāgata and thus he is freely engaged in bodhisattva activity without any blind passion because of his Buddha nature. He individualizes the universal Buddha nature as the threefold mind, which is the principle of salvific activity in the world. He also individualizes the karmic human nature in his self-awareness of his birth and death within karmic reality. Though he is involved in the cycle of birth and death, however, he does not succumb to any carnal desire or blind passion in his bodhisattva practices. In his human consciousness, he recognizes that he is involved in the karmic cycle of birth and death with others and he also realizes that sentient beings cannot free themselves from samsāra by their own power. In doing so, he recognizes himself as true individual, interdependent with other individuals in the same karmic reality. At the same time, he recognizes his subjectivity as Tathāgata through this recognition of individual reality.

The second question I considered was how Dharmākara works as the fundamental consciousness in our subjectivity. Dharmākara keeps his individuality as the fundamental consciousness. Soga regards this fundamental subjectivity as the store consciousness of the theory of Consciousness Only. The store consciousness consists of its seeing part and seen part. The seeing part is the faculty of recognition itself while the seen part consists of the seeds in the store consciousness, body, and place. As the store consciousness, Dharmākara is the receptacle of one’s karmic seeds, which produce one’s intellectual recognition and bodily action. In Soga’s view, the Name is the pure seed, which cannot be the internal object of Dharmākara’s self-recognition, but rather sustains
Dharmākara’s cognitive activity. However, the Name also becomes the impure seed in its self-negation in the world. Thus, Dharmākara can see the Name as internal object and gives his very self in the world through the Name. Soga explicates the structure of Dharmākara’s self-recognition and his activity in the framework of the structure of the store consciousness. He holds that the specific character of the store consciousness is equivalent to the entrusting mind. It belongs to the present aspect of the store consciousness. He also states that the fruit of the store consciousness is equivalent to the sincere mind. It belongs to the past aspect of the store consciousness. The causal aspect of the store consciousness is equivalent to the aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land. It belongs to the future aspect of the store consciousness.

When the store consciousness is transformed into the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror, the seen part of the consciousness, namely the impure seeds, body, and place, is transformed into the pure seeds, Buddha body, and the Buddha Land. Likewise, when the Dharmākara attains enlightenment as Amitābha, he can see the pure seeds (the Name, Amitābha’s own action, and other Buddhas’ actions), its universal Buddha body, and the Pure Land, as its internal object.

The third question I explored is how the structure of the Dharmākara is connected to the structure of the salvation of each individual. In the understanding of individual salvation in Shin Buddhism, two contradictory realities make a composite reality. When I recognize myself in the karmic darkness, I also recognize myself as a true individual in interdependent relation with others. In this moment, I am saved by the infinite light of Amitābha. In my view, such a structure of individual salvation is based on the composite nature of Dharmākara. He is a composite individual reality which consists of the karmic human nature and the Buddha nature. In his individual reality, he has the pure Buddha mind (the threefold mind). At the same time, he is completely immersed in karmic reality
with sentient beings in order to save them. Dharmākara recognizes that he himself is involved in the cycle of birth and death. Thus Dharmākara’s self-recognition is the basis of each individual’s self-recognition of karmic nature.

When the Dharmākara calls each individual to be reborn in the Pure Land and imparts his mind to them as faith in Amitābha, this event is crucial for the salvation of each individual. Each one recognizes that he/she has received the faith by the power of Amitābha, enters the stage of non-retrogression in the present time, and is assured of rebirth in the Pure Land in the future. Therefore, within Shin Buddhism, Dharmākara’s composite individual reality sustains the structure of individual salvation.

In the next chapter, I compare the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ with the theory of the Buddha body of Shin Buddhism. In doing so, I seek to shed new light on the understanding of the personal and cosmic dimensions of Christ’s hypostatic union, considering how the cosmic salvific dimensions of the Buddha body may pose a broader vision for much of Christian soteriology, one in which personal and cosmic salvation are inextricably bound.
V. New perspectives on the Hypostatic Union of Christ in Light of the Relationship between Dharmākara and Amitābha

5.1 Introduction: Fundamental Topics in the Chapter

In this final chapter, I explore new perspectives on the hypostatic union of Christ in dialogue with Shin-Buddhism. I compare the union of the divine nature and the human nature in the divine hypostasis of Christ with the unity between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature in both Dharmākara and Amitābha (the personal and cosmic dimensions, respectively). In light of this comparison, I consider new perspectives on the understanding of the hypostatic union of Christ. I demonstrate that the Buddha body theory suggests new insights for Christian soteriology in terms of the relational, collective and cosmic scope of salvation and the interdependence of all things in creation, which ultimately has its basis in the mutual relations of the triune God.

First, I compare the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ with the individual body of Dharmākara, which is the personal dimension of the union of the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature. I then elucidate new perspectives on the personal dimension of Christ’s hypostatic union that emerge out of this engagement with the internal structure of Dharmākara. Second, I compare the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ with the cosmic body of Amitābha. Then, I consider new perspectives on the cosmic dimensions of Christ’s hypostatic union that arise out of the exploration of the structure of Amitābha. Third, I compare the relationship between the divine hypostasis of Christ and the human hypostasis of each human with the relationship between Amitābha and Dharmākara as true human subjectivity. Then, I explicate new perspectives on the relationship between the individual human hypostasis and the divine hypostasis of Christ. Finally, I summarize these new perspectives on the personal and the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ and explicate the soteriological implications of the relationship between the two dimensions.
5.2 New Perspectives on the Personal Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union of Christ: Comparison with Dharmākara Bodhisattva

5.2.1 The divine *hypostasis* as the locus of the union of the divine and human nature in Jesus Christ

In this segment, I compare the divine *hypostasis* of Christ with the individual reality of Dharmākara and elucidate new perspectives on the understanding of Christ’s *hypostasis*. In the first chapter, I explicated the understanding of the hypostatic union in classic patristic theology. In particular, Maximus the Confessor held that the human nature and the divine nature form a composite union in the divine *hypostasis* of the Logos (“a composite *hypostasis*”).¹ The divine *hypostasis* is the locus of the union and thus works as the foundation of the communication of idioms.

In Maximus the Confessor, the *hypostasis* is the individual self-existent principle of subjectivity.² The divine *hypostasis* of the Logos transcends the union of the divine and human natures. As such, the *hypostasis* and the union of the two natures thus belong to different ontological levels. The divine *hypostasis* makes possible and sustains the union of the two natures. The divine nature has its own *energeia* and will and is clearly separated from the divine *hypostasis*. At the same time, the human nature has its own autonomy and specific role, which is not swallowed up by the operation of the divine nature. These two natures are united, but do not intermingle, and constitute the communication of idioms.

The *hypostasis* sustains the union of the two natures, but is not a *tertium quid* in relation to the two natures. The *hypostasis* is the locus of the union and sustains it. Thus there is only a composition of the two *enhypostatized* natures, which appears as the Incarnate Logos in the world. Since the divine *hypostasis* of the Logos subsists in the

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² Maximus the Confessor, *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica*, PG 91, 152D.
divine nature, Christ can exist as God and exercise divine operation in the enhypostatized
divine nature. In the same way, since the divine hypostasis subsists in the human nature,
Christ becomes human and operates in a human manner in the enhypostatized human
nature. Therefore, Christ’s hypostasis is a composite hypostasis, which works in the two
enhypostatized natures.

Reflection on the hypostatic union reveals the true meaning of hypostasis.
Originally, hypostasis meant “individual” in the context of the Cappadocian Trinitarian
theology, in which the hypostasis did not indicate the nature of each person, but the
relationship between one of the persons to the other persons in the immanent Trinity.

Thereafter, Cyril of Alexandria introduced the notion of hypostasis to Christology
as the basis of the union of Christ’s divine and human natures. However, in the
neo-Chalcedonian Christology, the meaning of hypostasis is transformed from
“individual” to “individual existence,” which is independent being and transcends the
two natures on an ontological level in order to avoid the moderate Monophysite position,
which holds that there is one single composite nature in Christ. As a result, the content of
the hypostasis of this Christology differs from the original meaning of hypostasis in
Cappadocian Trinitarian thought. When we reflect on the hypostasis of the Logos in the
framework of Christology, we often neglect the perspective of the interdependent
relationships of the hypostaseis (this is particularly true of Western theologies).

I propose that we regain the original Trinitarian meaning of hypostasis as
interdependence for the context of Christology. The hypostasis is not mere independent,
individual existence. In Cappadocian Trinitarian theology, the original meaning of

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hypostasis is the interdependent individual, which indicates the interrelation with the other divine hypostaseis. Each hypostasis retains its own characteristics in the mutual relation with others. Each divine hypostasis has its hypostatic properties and these properties make the distinction of the three hypostaseis possible. For example, the Father begets the Son, and the Son is begotten by the Father. The Father spirates the Holy Spirit through the Son, and the Holy Spirit is spirated by the Father through the Son. Each hypostasis supports the entities and operations of other two hypostaseis.

On the other hand, the divine nature and the human nature are general, and do not have hypostatic properties, but their own natural properties. For example, God is one, true, good, creator of heaven and earth, eternal being, and so forth. The hypostasis emerges only in the relationship with the other hypostaseis. Here we observe the complementarity of the original meaning of hypostasis in Christology and the Shin Buddhist understanding of individual being, which exists only in the interdependent relationship with others.

5.2.2 The personal dimensions of the union between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature in Dharmākara bodhisattva

In Shin Buddhism, Dharmākara bodhisattva indicates the personal dimensions of the union between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature. In the fourth chapter, I explicated the structure of Dharmākara bodhisattva. Dharmākara is the individual reality, the basis of the interconnection between the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature. His individuality is sustained by the Name, Namu-amida-Butsu, which is the self-manifestation of the eternal Tathāgata.

We recognize the composite union of the two natures in the individual reality of

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5 Gregory of Nazianzen holds that the nature of God is general, and recognizes this nature as “incorporeal,” “unoriginated,” “immutable,” “immortal.” We can express the divine nature by both negation of what God is not, and also by the positive assertion of what God is. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 28, trans. Frederick Williams, in Gregory of Nazianzus, On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2002), 43.
Dharmākara at the moment of individual salvation. In the understanding of individual salvation in Shin Buddhism, two contradictory realities form a composite reality. When I recognize myself in the karmic darkness, I also recognize myself as a true individual in interdependent relation with others. In this moment, I am saved by the infinite light of Amitābha. In my view, such a structure of individual salvation is based on the composite nature of Dharmākara. In his individual reality, he has the pure Buddha mind (the threefold mind), which is individualized Buddha nature. At the same time, he is completely immersed in karmic reality with sentient beings in order to save them. Dharmākara recognizes that he himself is involved in the cycle of birth and death. Dharmākara’s individual reality is thus found in the interrelationship with other beings in karmic reality.

5.2.3 The fundamental differences between the hypostasis of Jesus Christ and the individual reality of Dharmākara

There are fundamental differences between the divine hypostasis of Jesus Christ and the individual reality of Dharmākara bodhisattva. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but also a historical person, who lived an actual human life in first-century Palestine. He was born of a human mother and preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in the world. Finally, he experienced fully a human death on the cross. In the Christology after the fourth century, he is understood as the divine hypostasis—the second person of the Trinity, the Logos, the Son who proceeds from the Father. From the sixth century, the neo-Chalcedonian theologians recognized the Son as an individual independent being, who exists by himself and is the Word of God. The Father sent the Son into the world and his hypostasis assumed universal human nature and was born as an historical human, Jesus.

On the other hand, Dharmākara bodhisattva is not an historical person, but the
ontological ground of every person. The personal reality of Dharmākara assumes each human body and sustains the activity of human subjectivity as the fundamental self. The Dharmākara is itself a spiritual body (sambhoga-kāya) together with his enlightened form, Amitābha. He assumes the historical body of each human (nirmana-kāya) as a true self and enables the enlightenment of each historical Buddha. Thus, he was also working in the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni (Gautama) and sustained his enlightenment in history.

The Dharmākara is individual reality, but is not an independent entity. Dharmākara emerges as the self-determination of Tathāgata, which is emptiness, nothingness, and ineffability. Tathāgata is the reality which has no static substance in itself and is recognized in the inter-dependent relationship of all sentient beings. Likewise, we can discover the Dharmākara in deeper dimensions of our subjectivity, which has an inter-dependent relationship with others in karmic reality. Dharmākara can be a true individual in the relationship with others in the karmic reality. Despite these fundamental differences between Jesus Christ and Dharmākara in terms of their ontological status, the comparison raises new implications for Christ’s divine hypostasis from the perspective of interdependence with others.

5.2.4 The interdependent character of Christ’s divine hypostasis

John P. Keenan proposes a “Mahāyāna Christology,” which he formulated by comparison between Western Christology and the thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In particular, for new interpretations of Christology, he employs Madhyamika philosophy, which holds that nothing has its own substance because of the interdependent co-arising of all things. He suggests that the person of Christ is “empty of any essence that might identify him and serve as a definition of his being.” Despite the Gospel depictions of his words and deeds, which clearly indicated his person and character, Christ has “no
identifiable selfhood beyond those dependently co-arisen actions and words. However, in my view, if Christ were empty and had no selfhood, he would be incarnated in all beings and everything would become Christ. This is an inadequate view of Christology. Christ has a separate subjectivity as the Logos, which is begotten by the Father. However, his hypostasis can be a true individual only in the interdependent relationship with other hypostaseis in the Trinity.

In the New Testament, Jesus himself says, “The Father, for what he has given me, is greater than anyone, and no one can steal anything from the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one” (John 10: 29-30). This statement depicts the intimate and interdependent relationship Jesus enjoys with the Father. The Father is the supreme, highest being and generates the Son eternally. The Father is giving this same infinite being to the Son because he is the Logos of God. They are one in the same divine nature in the union.

Jesus also says, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?” (John 14:10). The hypostasis of the Logos is living in the Father and at the same time the Father lives in the Logos. They interpenetrate one another in their fundamental relationship. One cannot exist without the others. This interpenetrating relationship is the deepest expression of the union of the Father and the Son. Thus, in Christology, we must observe the Son’s hypostasis from the perspective of the relationship with the Father and the Spirit and how the hypostasis of the Logos is individualized by their interrelationship. For this observation, we must consider the divine universal nature, which is the common nature of the three persons.

5.2.5 New perspectives on Christ’s divine nature and human nature: comparison with the Buddha nature and the karmic human nature of Dharmākara

In this segment, I first elucidate new perspectives on the divine nature of Christ

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through comparison with the Buddha nature of Dharmākara. Second, I explicate new understandings of the human nature of Christ in the comparison with the karmic human nature of Dharmākara. Third, I elucidate new dimensions of Christ’s divine consciousness by comparing it with Dharmākara’s threefold mind. Fourth, I elucidate new understandings of Christ’s human consciousness by comparing it with Dharmākara’s self-awareness in the karmic human reality.

First, in considering Christ’s divine nature, we understand that in traditional understandings of Christology, his divine nature is hypostatized by the divine hypostasis. His divine nature is ontologically the same as the one divine nature of the Trinity. The divine nature has its natural characteristics—God is the creator; God is one, true, good, infinite, and so forth. In the Incarnation of the Logos, the hypostasis of the Logos brings its natural properties in Jesus Christ. Thus, Christ shares the divine nature with the other hypostaseis in the Trinity and at the same time, he also possesses his own individualized divine nature, which is sustained by the Logos. The divine nature takes its own individual concrete form in Christ, which is enhypostatized by the Logos. For example, Christ performs miracles and undergoes transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension, which indicate his own individualized divine nature. Therefore, his divine nature has a twofold structure. One is the divine nature, which is common to the other hypostaseis in the Trinity. The other is the individualized divine nature in Christ, which is enhypostatized in a particular way by the Logos.

Similarly, in Shin Buddhism, Dharmākara is the individualized form of the universal Buddha nature (Tathāgata, Nirvana, nothingness, emptiness, and so forth), which is common to all Buddhas. The universal Buddha nature is individualized in Dharmākara as the threefold mind. He works as a bodhisattva to save all sentient beings by exercising his threefold Buddha mind. When Dharmākara attains enlightenment as
Amitābha, he recognizes that he has interdependent relationships with other beings in the Pure Land. All the individuals realize the universal Buddha nature (Tathāgata, Nirvāṇa, and Emptiness) in enlightenment. At the same time, the universal Buddha nature is individualized in each individual. This means that each individual is living in its conventional form of the Buddha nature. Each becomes Buddha or bodhisattva, ever Praising Amithāba in the Pure Land. We can say that the universal Buddha nature and individualized Buddha nature are inseparable from one another; i.e., they have a mutually interdependent relationship.

The Buddha body of suchness (Tathāgata) takes form as Dharmākara and Amithāba, which are the Buddha body of compassionate means. Both manifestations of the Buddha body (suchness and compassionate means) are inseparable and interdependent because the Buddha body of suchness cannot be known to the world without the Buddha body of compassionate means. On the other hand, the Buddha body of compassionate means cannot work without the Buddha body of suchness.

This perspective sheds a new light on the understanding of the divine nature of Christ. Because the divine nature enjoys interdependent relations with the divine hypostaseis in the Trinity, we recognize the divine nature through the mutual relationship of the hypostaseis. On the other hand, we discover the hypostaseis in the inner-communion of the divine nature. Thus, they are inseparable from one another. In traditional understandings of Christology, Christ’s divine nature is sustained by the hypostasis of the Logos and ontologically, the hypostasis transcends its divine nature.

In my view, the hypostasis of the Logos transcends the individualized divine nature in Christ, but is not prior to the divine nature of the Trinity nor to the mutual relationships of the Trinitarian hypostaseis. The hypostasis of the Logos is a true individual entity in its own hypostatic properties, as it is produced by the interdependent
relationship with the other *hypostaseis* in the divine nature. In the understanding of Western theology, there can be no *hypostaseis* in the Trinity without the internal relationship of the divine nature. On the other hand, there is no divine nature without the interdependent relationship of the *hypostaseis*. The divine nature can be seen through its relationship with the three *hypostaseis*.

For example, Thomas Aquinas explains that the intra-relationships of God’s three persons are identical with God’s divine nature. The relations of the three persons are “subsistent relations.” In God, a really existing relation has the existence of the divine nature and is identical with the divine nature. The relation distinguishes the persons in virtue of the relationship to the other.\(^7\) The source of distinction in God is “relative” opposition based on origin. Relative opposition means the opposition in terms of quantity, action, or passion. One exists in reference to the other without being negated or contradicted by the other.\(^8\) There are four relations in God. These include (1) the paternity (fatherhood) relation of the Father to the Son, in which the Father generates the Son; (2) the filiation (sonship) relation of the Son to the Father, in which the Son is generated by the Father; (3) the active spiration relation of the Father and the Son to the Holy Spirit, in which the Father and the Son spirate the Holy Spirit; and (4) the passive spiration relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, in which the Holy Spirit is spirated by the Father and the Son.\(^9\) These four intra-relationships are identical with the divine nature.

Moreover, the Logos individualizes the divine nature of the Trinity as the *enhypostatized* divine nature. The divine nature of the Trinity and the individualized divine nature of the Logos are interdependent and inseparable. For example, Christ

\(^7\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I. 28, art. 2.

\(^8\) Ibid., I. 28, art. 3.

\(^9\) Ibid., I. 28, art. 4.
expresses his own being, “I am he” (John 18: 5). This “I am” is the divine nature of the Trinity, which is shared with the other divine hypostaseis. He also expresses his individualized divine nature: “I am the Way; I am Truth and Life” (John 14: 6); “Our beloved Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him” (John 11:11). In this statement, he announces his intention to raise Lazarus from the dead. Raising the dead is the activity of the divine. These statements indicate Christ’s individualized divine nature in the Logos. Thus, we can say that the divine nature takes a concrete personal form as the individualized nature in each hypostasis. We can discover the true reality of the individualized divine nature through recognizing the divine nature of the Trinity and also recognize the reality of the divine nature of the Trinity through the individualized divine nature in each hypostasis.

The divine hypostasis of the Logos is the individual reality, but knows an interdependent relationship with the hypostasis of the Father. When such hypostasis assumes human nature, the human nature can also know interdependent relationships with others. In the Incarnation, the Logos took on universal human nature through becoming one individual soul and body in Jesus Christ. Thereafter, in the union between the Logos and the human nature, the Logos enhypostatized Jesus’ humanity and became the individual God-human.

Theodore the Studite (759-826) holds that the Logos incarnated universal humanity, which is revealed in the individual (Jesus Christ). He affirm that “generalities [ta katholou] have their existence in particulars [en atomois].” For example, general humanity is seen in a singular way, in Peter, and in Paul, for example, and in all other

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10 Theodore the Studite (759-826) was one of the most important persons in the period of Eastern Christian theology after the Second Counsel of Nicaea (787). He fought against iconoclasm and defended the legitimacy of icon veneration. Introduction to Theodore the Studite Writings on Iconoclasm, introduction and trans. Thomas Cattoi (New York: The Newman Press, 2014), 1-2.

humans. “If individual members did not exist, humanity in general would also not exist.”  

If Christ only assumes general humanity and does not represent an individual, he could not be separated from other humans. However, hypostatically he is distinguished from Peter as someone who represents an individual. The reason is that the hypostasis of the Logos assumed humanity. Theodore holds that Christ “is differentiated by his hypostatic properties from all other members of his species.” Thus, “Christ is circumscribed with respect to his hypostasis, but he is uncircumscribed with respect to his divinity, or with respect to the two natures of which he is composed.” Christ assumes human nature, which is uncircumscribed. This human nature is represented in the individual soul and body, which is sustained by the Logos.

The Logos is the foundation of Jesus’ subjectivity and sustains his humanity. His humanity is interrelated with the humanity of other, ordinary humans because the Logos assumes universal humanity. Chalcedonian Christology has tended to focus on Jesus’ universal humanity rather than his inter-relationship with the human nature of other humans. We must search for the deeper meaning of the relationship between the Logos and the universal human nature from the perspective of radical interdependence with all others.

As noted above, in Shin Buddhism, Soga holds that Dharmākara is not an historical person, but the ontological ground of every human person and assumes the human body of each individual as its true subjectivity. The Dharmākara is the principle of self-awareness. However, when we compare this Shin Buddhist view with Christology,

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12 Ibid. English translation is in ibid.
13 Ibid., III, 21. English translation is in ibid., 95.
14 Ibid., III, 34. English translation is in ibid., 99.
15 Ibid. English translation is in ibid.
16 Ibid., III, 46. English translation is in ibid., 102.
taking on the universal human nature does not mean that the Logos assumed each human’s soul and body in the Incarnation of the Logos. That position leads us to the false view that “everyone is Christ (Isochristism).” The Logos is the divine hypostasis of Christ, which exclusively constitutes Christ’s subjectivity and his human activity. Nevertheless, the Logos assumed universal human nature and thus Christ’s subjectivity is directly opened to the internal consciousnesses of other humans. As noted in the second chapter, Teilhard de Chardin explores the relationship between Christ’s human consciousness and the consciousnesses of other human persons. He holds that Christ experienced an individual human consciousness in himself. At the same time, Christ is the man who gathered together the consciousnesses of all humans in the depth of his human consciousness. Therefore, according to Teilhard, Christ’s human experience is opened to universal human experience. Christ perceives his own humanity and human experience in deep relation to all others in their humanity.

Therefore, Christ’s humanity is sustained by the divine hypostasis, but has a deep, interdependent relationship with other humans. Though in his humanity he was begotten of God the Father, he could not have been born in the world without a human mother. Further, Jesus needed his human companions for the proclamation of the Gospel, and he could not have performed miracles without the people’s faith and trust (this was clear in the people’s rejection of him in Nazareth, wherein he was unable to perform any miracle). Christ’s redemptive work is not accomplished unless his human disciples experience his death and resurrection and participate in the mystery of the redemption. Therefore, his life relies on the mutual relationship with other human consciousnesses because his humanity is not isolated, but interdependent with other humans.

5.2.6 The relationship between the divine consciousness and the human consciousness in the *hypostasis* of Christ from Lonergan’s perspective

In the first chapter, I explained that Christ’s divine consciousness and human consciousness are united in the divine *hypostasis* of the Logos. Nevertheless, I did not elucidate the specific content of the divine and human consciousnesses. Moreover, I did not explicate how the divine and human consciousnesses are related in the divine *hypostasis*. In order to do so, I introduce Bernard Lonergan’s theory of the inner structure of Christ’s two consciousnesses. His theory helps us understand the relationship between the two consciousnesses in the divine person.

Lonergan holds that divine knowledge is common to the three persons of the Trinity. The divine knowledge is distinguished as “knowledge on the side of the knowing subject” and “knowledge on the side of object.”\(^{18}\) The Son, on the side of his knowing subject, has the divine knowledge, “wherein the Son knows in the same way as the Father knows.”\(^{19}\) On the other hand, the Son, on the side of object, has the divine knowledge, which is the “beatific knowledge.” The beatific knowledge is “to know the triune God through the divine essence [as primary object] and, in proportion to the perfection of this knowledge, to know all other things in God as secondary objects.”\(^{20}\) In this secondary object of beatific vision, Christ sees “the incarnate Word as incarnate” and “everything that became manifest to him through his human consciousness.”\(^{21}\) In Christ’s human consciousness, Christ, on the side of object, consciously senses, understands, and chooses something as human. At the same time, on the side of subject, he recognizes himself.

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19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 207.

21 Ibid., 219.
The divine consciousness and the human consciousness communicate with one another on the side of the object. Lonergan holds that “Christ as God knows himself to be this human being and Christ as man knows himself to be the natural Son of God.”

When Christ knows himself as the divine person, he partially knows himself (though not fully) through the beatific vision, namely, through knowing God by his essence. Through the beatific vision, Christ the man clearly knows and judges in the human consciousness on the side of object.

Christ as human not only sees the triune God and the incarnate Word on the side of the object, but is also conscious of himself on the side of the subject. Therefore, Christ clearly recognizes himself as “the natural Son of God and true God” through his human consciousness and his divine consciousness, which is the beatific knowledge.

The divine person is conscious of the divine person through the human consciousness. When the divine person is conscious of himself through the human consciousness, “the human consciousness is to acknowledge that a divine person has really and truly become a human being,” and “to add in him another consciousness beside divine consciousness.”

Considering Christ’s subjectivity, we must distinguish “the subject as subsisting in the divine nature, and that same subject as subsisting in a human nature.” They are “the distinction between Christ as God and Christ as man.” As the Son of God, Christ “is

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22 Ibid., 243.
23 Ibid., 265.
24 Ibid., 207.
25 Ibid., 205.
26 Ibid., 211.
27 Ibid., 239.
28 Ibid., 221.
aware of himself in his infinite perfection through his divine consciousness,” and also as
the Son of man, “the same person of God is aware of himself through his human
consciousness in the poverty of human nature,” which knows human limitation.29

Christ has self-awareness of “I” in himself. Lonergan distinguishes several
meanings of Christ’s “I.” First, his “I” indicates the “I” as human, which is “an outer
word uttered by Christ,” and “the inner word conceived in the human mind of Christ,
both in its compound form ['I am'], and its proper simple form ['I'].”30 For example,
Jesus says, “Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11: 29).

Secondly, his “I” indicates the divine person of the Word. That is the “I” as divine,
which “under the formality of the true and of being is meant by the outer word and
intended by the inner word, and that which in fact, when the word ‘I’ is spoken, identical
with the one who signifies and intends.”31 For example, Jesus says, “In all truth I tell you,
before Abraham ever was, I am” (John 8: 58); “Do you not believe that I am in the Father
and the Father in me?” (John 14: 10).

Thirdly, his “I” indicates “the divine person of the Word as subsisting in a human
nature.” It consists of “the very one who means and intends in the way proper to the
potency of these [divine and human] operations,” and “the very one who means and
intends in the way proper to the act of these operations.”32 For example, Jesus says, “My
Father still goes on working, and I am at work too” (John 5: 17).

These three meanings of Christ’s “I” are related to the activities of his divine and
human natures. Because Lonergan explicates the internal structure of Christ’s divine and

29 Ibid., 223.
30 Ibid., 224-225.
31 Ibid., 224-225.
32 Ibid., 225.
human consciousnesses in the divine person of the Logos from the perspective of “the side of object” and “the side of subject,” it is very helpful to compare his construal to Soga’s understanding of Dharmākara, which is related to the theory of Consciousness Only.

5.2.7 The content of the divine consciousness and the divine will of Christ

In the hypostatic union, Christ has a divine consciousness. The divine consciousness belongs to the divine nature, which has natural properties of the Trinity, not of the hypostatic properties of the Son. Thus, he shares the same divine consciousness with the Father and the Holy Spirit because the divine consciousness is based on the divine nature of the Trinity. The Son can therefore recognize other beings in the same way that the Father and the Spirit recognize them. Christ also has a divine will. The divine will also belongs to the natural properties of the Trinity and thus the Son has the same divine will as the Father and the Spirit. Hence, the Son can perform what the Father and the Spirit perform.

In the Christology of Maximus the Confessor, the specific content of the divine consciousness and the divine will are not very clear. They belong to the single nature of the Trinity and thus are shared by the three hypostaseis. As a result, we tend to think that the divine consciousness and the divine will only have neutral characteristics, which are not affected by the hypostatic characteristics of the three hypostaseis. However, Jesus possesses his divine consciousness and exercises his divine will in the concrete relationships with the Father and the Holy Spirit, not in the relationship with the undifferentiated nature of the Trinity. Therefore, we have to determine how Christ can possess his divine consciousness and exercise his divine will in the interrelationship with the other hypostaseis even though the divine consciousness and will belong to the natural properties of the Trinity. In other words, we need to explore how the Son individualizes
the divine consciousness and the divine will as his own consciousness and his own will while keeping their natural characteristics, which are shared with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

5.2.8 New perspectives on the divine consciousness and the divine will of Christ: comparison with Dharmākara’s threefold mind

In my interpretation of Shin Buddhism, which builds on Soga’s view, Dharmākara is individual reality and his individuality is based on the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu, which indicates the self-awareness of Tathāgata itself. Dharmākara’s personal reality individualizes the universal Buddha nature as the threefold mind. We recall that the threefold mind consists of the sincere mind, the entrusting mind and the aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land.

The sincere mind indicates Dharmākara’s pure and true mind. With this mind, he fulfilled bodhisattva practice for the salvation of all sentient beings, which lack the pure mind because of their karmic deposit and blind passion. The sincere mind is deeply connected with the Name, Namu-Amida-Butsu, because Dharmākara gives himself in the Name, with sincere mind, to suffering sentient beings.

The entrusting mind indicates Dharmākara’s pure trust in sentient beings even though they are immersed in the consequences of karma and have lost the way of liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Dharmākara undertook bodhisattva practice to save all sentient beings without any doubt of their salvation. He gives himself away to them in self-negation and opens the way of true salvation by making sentient beings recognize their deviation from truth, and negates their false understanding of rebirth in the Pure Land (i.e., that they can effect this rebirth by their own power).

The aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land is Dharmākara’s fundamental calling to all sentient beings. Dharmākara calls them to be born in the Land through the Name.
In this final calling to sentient beings, Dharmākara accomplishes the way of salvation for them all in the Pure Land.

Finally, those three aspects of mind are united in Dharmākara’s single entrusting mind, which places its trust completely in the eternal Tathāgata. In this act of complete trust, Dharmākara achieves his self-awareness. This is the basis of the threefold mind.

As we reflect on the christological problem, we discover some potentially helpful insights with regard to the Dharmākara’s threefold mind. In comparing the Dharmākara’s threefold mind with the divine consciousness of Christ, we discover the threefold divine mind in Christ himself. Lonergan holds that Christ possesses divine consciousness, which recognizes the Father, the Son (Logos), and the Holy Spirit on the side of object. Likewise, in my view, Christ’s divine consciousness has three aspects, which recognizes the three persons as internal objects and reflects the minds of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. These three aspects are united in Christ’s one mind, entrusting itself to the Father. In this single, trusting mind, Christ recognizes himself on the side of the subject.

From this perspective, the mind of each person of the Trinity indicates the divine consciousness and the divine will, which are enhypostatized by each person. The mind of each person is natural rather than hypostatic. It belongs to the divine nature of the Trinity and is enhypostatized by each person in its own mode.

In my view, the sincere mind corresponds to the mind of the Father, who loves and desires to save all people. Jesus says, “But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike” (Matthew 5: 44-45). The Father’s selfless, universal love is his sincere mind to save all people. The Son sees what the Father is doing in his
universal love and acts in like manner to the Father. Jesus says, “In all truth I tell you, by himself the Son can do nothing; he can do only what he sees the Father doing: and whatever the Father does the Son does too” (John 5: 19). Christ can see what the Father is doing as internal object of his divine consciousness. Out of the sincere mind, the same mind as is in the Father, he saves people.

The entrusting mind corresponds to the mind of the Son, who trusts humans as his companions. He calls his disciples and gives them the power to drive out unclean spirits and cure diseases, and entrusts to them his mission of proclaiming the Gospel (Matthew 10: 1-15). He holds that those who do the will of the Father are his brother, sister, and mother (Matthew 12:50). He trusts humans even though they deviate from God’s will in their sinfulness. He never abandons his deep trust in the disciples even when they abandon him at the moment of his Passion and death on the cross. Finally, when he is resurrected, he entrusts his mission to the apostles and sends them into the world to baptize people and teach them God’s ways. He declares that he is always with them, to the end of time (Matthew 28:19). This entrusting mind emerges in his divine consciousness when he recognizes himself as the incarnate Logos, which is one of the internal objects of this consciousness. When the Logos assumes universal human nature, he also takes on the deepest trust in humanity. He recognizes other humans as his companions, as those with whom he shares the same humanity.

The aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land corresponds to the Holy Spirit, who is working in the world to call people and save them through the coming of the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit comes from the calling of the Father and the Son, and causes people to aspire to rebirth in the Kingdom of God. Jesus says, “In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:5-6). Jesus asks the
Father to send the Holy Spirit to the people. Jesus says, “I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you forever” (John 14: 16-17). Further, he says, “Still, I am telling you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7).

The Holy Spirit leads us to recognize truth. After his death and resurrection, the risen Christ himself imparts the Spirit by breathing on the apostles: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained” (John 20:22b-23). Giving the Holy Spirit to the suffering people is directly connected to their salvation.

These three minds reflect the three minds of the hypostaseis and are united in the Son’s deep trust in the Father. This trust is based on the hypostatic relation between the Father and the Son. The Father generates the Son and the Son returns to the Father. In this hypostatic relation, Christ retains his divine hypostasis. The Father and the Son share the same divine consciousness. However, in Gethsemane, Jesus was tempted to deviate from the Father’s will, but finally he says, “My Father, if this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done” (Matthew 26:42). His mind, which entrusts itself completely to the Father, is the mind of self-negation, which culminates in his passion and death on the cross. Paul says that Christ, “being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on the cross” (Philippians 2:6-8). His self-negation of entrusting himself to the Father also negates our shallow faith in God. We ordinarily rely on our own power and find it difficult to deeply trust in God in daily life. However, Christ’s self-negation negates such shallow faith and leads us to deeper trust in God even in the utter darkness, pain, and negativity of life.
The Son’s entrusting mind, which trusts the Father completely, unifies his threefold divine consciousness because the Son’s perfect trust in the Father enables the self-recognition of Christ and sustains the identity of this threefold divine consciousness. Christ’s threefold mind reflects the minds of the three hypostaseis and is based on his recognition of these hypostaseis as the internal objects of his divine consciousness. The internal objects are the Father, the Incarnate Son (Logos), and the Holy Spirit. The three aspects of the threefold mind reflect on the divine consciousness and the divine will of the three persons. This view is different from a traditional understanding of the immanent Trinity, which consists of the hypostatic causal relationships of the three individual divine persons. This view is also different from the Modalistic view of the Trinity, which holds that God manifests Godself in different modes as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and that none of these modes is its own hypostatsis.

In my view, the threefold mind of Christ does not belong to hypostatic, but to natural properties. Thus, his threefold mind is the individualized divine consciousness in the Logos, which belongs to the enhypostatized divine nature. In his divine consciousness, Christ recognizes the Father as internal object of this consciousness, which has a different hypostasis from him. This objective recognition is based on the hypostatic relationship between the Father and the Son. However, the divine consciousness is a natural property of the Trinity, and is thus shared with the Father. The Son individualizes the divine consciousness as the mind of pure trust in the Father, and the Father individualizes the same divine consciousness as the sincere mind. Moreover, the Son can share the sincere mind with the Father in his divine consciousness because the sincere mind is not hypostatic, but natural. Therefore, Christ’s threefold mind exists in his divine consciousness because each person of the Trinity individualizes the divine consciousness in a unique way, but each individualized divine consciousness can be shared by the other
persons in the Trinity.

5.2.9 Hearing and reciting the Name of Jesus

In this segment, I elucidate the meaning of reciting the Name of Jesus as salvific means. Jesus tells his disciples,

> When that day comes [when the Spirit comes in the world], you will not ask me any questions. In all truth I tell you, anything you ask from the Father he will grant in my name. Until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and so your joy will be complete (John 16:23-24).

> When that day comes you will ask in my name; and I do not say that I shall pray to the Father for you, because the Father himself loves you for loving me, and believing that I came from God (John 16:26-27).

Jesus asks his disciples to pray in his name through the Spirit after he has gone to the Father. The reason is that the Father loves those who pray in Jesus’ name and will give them what they desire. Jesus’ name is originally given by the Father (Matthew 1:21) and the name itself becomes the means of salvation after Pentecost. The name is related to the Father’s sincere mind and becomes concrete salvific means in the world through the coming of the Spirit. Peter performs many miracles by reciting Jesus’ name (Act. 3:1-4:22).

In my view, the Name of Jesus itself manifests Jesus’ spiritual presence and his mind. When one recites the Name and leaves everything to Jesus, one can experience Jesus’ spiritual presence and his threefold mind internally. Reciting his Name is connected to true faith in Christ. However, reciting his Name is not a practice accomplished by one’s own power, but fundamentally a practice which is sustained by the salvific power of God. When one recognizes one’s own sin and suffering, hears the Name of Jesus (which is praised by other living beings in the world) and recites his Name by the salvific power of God, one enters the way of salvation. Later, I explain the structure of individual liberation in the faith, which is accompanied by hearing and
reciting the Name.

Furthermore, the Name also has the power of opening a true understanding of the interdependent nature of all beings. When one recites the Name of Jesus and receives faith in him, one is opened to the interdependent relationship of all beings, which has its basis in the hypostasis of the logos in its relationship with the other persons of the Trinity. One can then see that everything is interdependent and that one’s individual salvation is inextricably connected to the salvation of all other living beings. Therefore, the Name of Jesus plays an important role in the economy of liberation.

5.2.10 The human consciousness and human will of Christ: comparison with Dharmākara’s karmic human nature

Christ has a human consciousness, which belongs to his human nature. This human consciousness is based on the self-conscious activity of the human spirit, which is sustained by the hypostasis of the Logos. His human will is united with his divine will, but in some cases, his human will can be affected by his physical limitations and tempted to deviate from the divine will (e.g., his suffering in Gethsemane). Rahner holds that Christ’s human self-consciousness is based on the self-conscious activity of his finite human spirit.  

Christ has a finite spirit which is transcendentally open to the whole of reality. His spirit moves toward the horizon of the whole and returns to itself by way of objective matter. This movement makes his self-consciousness possible. His spirit is fully opened to the being of God and fully comprehends being itself. His finite spirit is sustained by the divine Logos, which is the self-communication of God itself and his true subject. Thus, the human spirit and self-consciousness belong to the human nature in the divine Logos and the activity of the human spirit is the basis of Christ’s recognition of objectivity and freedom.

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In Shin Buddhism, Dharmākara recognizes his human consciousness and human will together with his threefold mind, which is his individualized Buddha nature. His human consciousness and human will are deeply connected with his Buddha nature. This does not mean that he does not have a human consciousness and a human will—clearly he does. He is completely immersed in karmic reality with other sentient beings, though without succumbing to its sinfulness. He lives in the active Nirvāṇa in which he strives to liberate all sentient beings from the karmic cycle of life and death in order to attain his perfect enlightenment. Shinran cites the Sutra of the Tathagata of Immeasurable Life:

He [Dharmākara] performed bodhisattva practices in this way, passing innumerable, countless, incalculable, unequaled kotis of nayutas of millions of kalpas. During that time, he never harbored a single thought of greed, anger, or folly, nor any impulse of desire, harmfulness, or wrath; he cherished no thought of form, sound, smell, taste, or tangible thing. The constant warmth of affection and respect he felt for all sentient beings was like that for close relatives.  

When he undertook bodhisattva practice for the salvation of sentient beings, he shared karma with them all. Thus, although his human consciousness and human will could be tempted to greed, bad intention, or impurity, he did not succumb to such carnal desire and blind passion because of his Buddha nature. If he had no karmic human nature, the sutra would not refer to these sensuous elements—he possessed the capacity to be affected by the karma in which he was immersed, but did not succumb to it because the Buddha nature supported him.

Here we must ask how Dharmākara is immersed in karmic reality. We can discover the level of Dharmākara’s immersion in karmic reality through our individual experience of salvation. When one recognizes oneself as a true individual in the karmic darkness, this recognition is based on the individual reality of Dharmākara. Through his karmic human nature, Dharmākara embraces and receives those who are entangled in the cycle of karmic evil that makes their liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

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34 Hisao Inagaki, trans. The Larger Sutra on Amitayus, 96.
impossible. By our own power we can never be saved from karmic evil, but through the grace, presence, and power of Dharmākara, we can be settled in the situation. This means that Dharmākara is immersed in our deepest karmic reality and sustains our human self-awareness. Dharmākara knows himself to be immersed in karmic reality and thus his self-recognition is the basis of each individual’s self-recognition.

When we compare Dharmākara’s immersion in karmic reality with the human consciousness of Christ, we discover new perspectives on the understanding of Christ’s human consciousness and will. When reflecting on his human consciousness and will, we regard his kenosis, and observe how completely he is immersed in human reality. The kenosis of the Son has three stages, namely the Incarnation, the death on the cross, and the descent into Hades. In the Christ hymn, Paul explicates the process of Christ’s kenosis and exaltation:

being in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God something to be grasped. But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names; so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2: 6-10).

The Father sent his Son as Jesus Christ to the world in order to save people bound by sin, suffering, and death. The Son empties himself and assumes human form in the Incarnation. When he began proclaiming the Gospel of God’s Kingdom in the world, he encountered many suffering people and healed them by his miracles, which were signs of the coming of the Kingdom. In his universal love, he was engaged in salvific activities, which directly reflected the sincere mind of the Father.

However, he was persecuted by the high priests and scribes and crucified. When he willingly accepted his passion and death in Gethsemane, he underwent the deepest
form of self-negation, entrusting himself completely to the Father. Before his death, he promised the disciples that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to them after he left the world.

Moreover, Jesus asks his believers to pray in his Name when the Holy Spirit comes (John 16:26-27). In doing so, they will receive grace from the Father. Thus, the coming of the Holy Spirit in the future is directly related to praying in Jesus’ Name. After he rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples, imparting the Holy Spirit and sending them forth to bring his salvation to those who dwelt in the darkness of suffering, sin, and death.

When he faces his passion and death in Gethsemane, his human consciousness and will are tempted to avoid the inevitable consequences of his fidelity to the will of the Father because of anticipated physical suffering, though he ultimately chooses to accept the cup. This decision of his human consciousness and will is crucial for the salvation of all. Christ could not accomplish his salvific work in the world without this human consciousness. The reason for this is that his human consciousness is related to all other humans’ consciousnesses and thus he can completely take the pain and suffering of all others upon himself.

After his death, he descended into Hades and saved souls there. According to Paul,

*He went up to the heights, took captives, he gave gifts to humanity.*

When it says, ‘he went up’, it must mean that he had gone down to the deepest levels of the earth. The one who went down is none other than the one who went up above all the heavens to fill all things (Ephesians 4: 8-10).

Christ descended into the deepest levels of the earth, namely Hades. Hades is the place for sinful people who had not lived in the will of God in the Old Testament before Jesus Christ appeared in the world. In this place are people who committed serious sin in their lives. Christ’s human consciousness has a co-natural interconnection to the human
consciousnesses of other humans. Christ can therefore be immersed in the sinful reality of other humans in his human consciousness even though he does not know sin in himself. Thus, he rescues those in Hades and saves them by his power. He is therefore able to sustain each of us, suffering as we are from sin and death. He takes our sins upon himself in order to save us. In the first letter of Peter, Christ’s descent into Hades is described as follows,

Christ himself died once and for all for sins, the upright for the sake of the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. They refused to believe long ago, while God patiently waited to receive them, in Noah’s time when the ark was being built (I Peter 3: 18-20).

Traditionally, Christ’s descent into Hades after his death is called the “Descent into Hell [descendus ad infernos].” This means that Christ’s soul and body were separated after his death on the cross, and his soul, which is united with his divine person, descended to the Limbo of the Fathers (the Fathers of the Old Testament, who lived in the will of God, but did not know Jesus Christ). He liberated the just by taking them to the glory of heaven. Moreover, he proclaimed his power and authority throughout Hell.

However, according to tradition, he did not save the damned in that place. He undertook a glorious descent and thus he did not suffer pains of Hell.35

Hans Urs von Balthasar, however, holds that Christ descended into Hades and suffered the deepest pain with sinners there. Christ’s descent into Hades indicates that “he was in solidarity with the living, so, in the tomb, he is in solidarity with the dead.”36

Originally, in the Bible, the descent into the underworld and the ascension to heaven did not include the threefold world structure, namely Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell.

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Rather, the two categories indicated that “light and heaven are situated ‘above’” and “darkness and the world of graves ‘below.’”³⁷ Balthasar holds that there can be neither Hell nor Purgatory before Christ, but only Hades.³⁸ When the true salvation is offered to all people in Christ’s Gospel, there is then “the human possibility of deciding for or against God’s revelation in Christ.”³⁹ There can only be true Hell when one rejects the revelation of God in Christ. Thus, true Hell and true Purgatory can exist as the place for sinful people, who totally or partly reject the revelation of God in Christ.

According to Balthasar, Christ’s redemptive action started from his passion and death and culminated in his suffering in Hades. In Hades, he experienced the second death (“visio mortis [vision of death]” in Nicholas of Cusa), which indicates Christ’s experience of being abandoned by God the Father.⁴⁰ In this experience of the second death, Christ took all sins from the people in Hades and was “made sin” (2 Cor 5:21) even though he did not commit sin himself. He identifies himself “with the status of sinners, and ultimately with the sin of all sinners.”⁴¹

I do not agree with von Balthasar, however, that Christ experienced deeper suffering than the crucifixion itself in the “second death” in Hades. Otherwise, the meaning of the crucifixion is relativized and underestimated. Nevertheless, in my view, he was immersed in the sin of all sinners in Hades and took their sins on himself. In doing so, he saved them by the redemptive power of his death on the cross and subsequent resurrection. This descent is the full immersion of the Logos in universal humanity and enables the salvation of all the living and the dead. This is also the ultimate realization of

³⁷ Ibid., 150.
³⁸ Ibid., 177.
³⁹ Ibid., 178.
⁴⁰ Ibid.
the hypostatic union.

After Christ underwent the three stages of kenosis, the Father raised and glorified him, causing all beings to praise his name: “All beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2: 10). Thus, Christ is deeply immersed in the human condition in his kenosis and in this way opens the path of true salvation to all living beings in the world.

5.3 New Perspectives on the Cosmic Dimensions of the Hypostatic Union of Christ: Comparison with the Cosmic Body of Amithāba

5.3.1 The understanding of the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ

In the second chapter, I explicated the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union, which I reiterate briefly in the present context for clarity. The union consists of the unity between the universal reality of all individuals and the transcendental horizon, which is sustained by the divine Logos. In this horizon, the universal humanity and the divinity of Christ are united. There is a union of all physical beings in the universal humanity of Christ. The reason is that the human nature of Christ is immersed in matter and so his humanity shares common matter with other beings. Thus, Christ’s humanity becomes the foundation of the union of all physical beings.

Teilhard de Chardin holds that Christ’s human nature contains all beings in the universe, which are in the process of evolution. The universal Christ is the Omega Point. He is the cosmic physical reality that contains all beings. Christ as the Omega leads the process of evolution and the convergence of all beings as the end of their evolution. 42

When we consider the relationship between each individual and the eternal Logos, we recognize that the divine hypostasis of the Logos sustains the human hypostasis of each individual in the cosmic dimensions of the union. In the relation with the divine

42 De Chardin, Science and Christ, 34-35.
hypostasis, each human hypostasis enables the activity of the finite human spirit. The human spirit is the basis of self-consciousness and relationship with others because it opens the precondition of such relationship, passes through matter in the world, and returns to itself. The self-return of the human spirit is sustained by both the cosmic divine energy and the cosmic humanity of Christ. The self-conscious activity of the finite human spirit enables the personal identity of each human hypostasis and enables the mutual relationship with and among others.

The basis of the mutual relationship is “the union differentiates.” Each human hypostasis deepens its self-recognition as a person in relation to the divine hypostasis of the Logos. He/she recognizes him/herself as a unique human person, who is completely different from others. Nevertheless, this personalization of the human hypostasis does not bring isolation from others, but deepens the mutual connection with others in the universe. When one recognizes oneself more deeply, one can experience true openness to others.

In the personalization, one can recognize that there are innumerable self-conscious others in the universe, who also form a deeper interconnection with one another in Christ’s cosmic body. When one recognizes that the divine hypostasis makes possible the human hypostasis, one can see that the other’s human hypostasis is also sustained by the same divine hypostasis. When one finds the foundation of the person, one can also find the foundation of the unification of all. Thereafter, when one sees that one’s human consciousness and body are opened to all beings in the cosmic body of Christ, one can also see that others’ human consciousness and body contain all beings in the same body of Christ. Eventually, each person can communicate one with another in the cosmic body of Christ. In this moment, one undergoes self-transcendence to God. Moreover, other beings experience self-transcendence in mutual relationship with one another. Finally, one recognizes that the cosmos itself experiences self-transcendence to
God in Christ’s cosmic body through the collective self-transcendence of all beings. The self-transcendence of the cosmic body of Christ moves toward God the Father in order to realize the full perfection of its cosmic humanity.

5.3.2 The cosmic body of Amithāba and the Pure Land

In Shin Buddhism, when Dharmākara attained his enlightenment, he attained the universal body of Amitābha, which contains all sentient beings. Dharmākara undergoes self-negation and attains self-recognition, which involves the self-conscious process of the threefold mind. When the Dharmākara achieves self-recognition, the Tathāgata reveals itself from the foundation of Dharmākara’s self-recognition. The activity of the Tathāgata makes Dharmākara its enlightened form as Amitābha. The activity of the Tathāgata works through all Buddhas’ praising of Amitābha’s Name. The cosmic body of Amitābha is always expanding through the activity of the Tathāgata, who is revealed to us by the salvific activity and the self-recognition of Dharmākara.

We can observe the self-awareness of Dharmākara and the eternal Tathāgata in our human self-awareness. When I recognize the deepest dimensions of my true personal self, I find myself as the Tathāgata’s self, namely the personal reality of Dharmākara. When I recognize the presence of Dharmākara in the karmic darkness, I find the activity of Dharmākara’s self-awareness as the Tathāgata’s self. At this moment, I receive faith in Amitābha, who appears as the horizon of infinite light and life. Amitābha is Tathāgata’s Tathāgata, which appears in the reality of Tathāgata. It appears when the Dharmākara returns to himself, bringing with him all sentient beings. When all Buddhas praise Amitābha’s Name, Tathāgata returns to itself and Tathāgata’s Tathāgata is revealed and forms the cosmic body of Amitābha.

Furthermore, there are also two aspects of Dharmākara/Amitābha’s power of directing the virtues. One aspect is that Amitābha is directing virtues to draw sentient
beings forth to the Pure Land. *Amitābha* directs its mind to them and saves them, bringing them into the Pure Land. They receive the mind of *Amitābha* in faith and are settled in the present karmic situation, assured of attaining Nirvāṇa in the future. The power of *Amitābha* is always working in the world and enables the salvation of sentient beings in the Land (partially realized in the present and fully realized in the future).

The other aspect is that *Amitābha* is directing virtues for returning sentient beings to the world to save other beings who are still suffering. *Amitābha* is working in the beings who are reborn in the Pure Land, empowering them to carry out salvific activities in the world. When he sees the suffering of sentient beings in the karmic world, he enters the world and delivers them to the Pure Land and returns to himself in self-awareness.

When Dharmākara attained his enlightenment, he realized the universal body of *Amitābha* and the Pure Land. The Pure Land is truly the fulfilled Land, which is established by Dharmākara’s vow mind and his bodhisattva practices. For Shinran, *Amitābha* is immeasurable light and life. The true Pure Land is the Land of immeasurable light. In this case, the body of *Amitābha* and the Pure Land are inextricably connected.

In Dharmākara’s enlightenment, each individual being attains the faith in *Amitābha* and recognizes the infinite horizon where all saved beings dwell. The power of *Amitābha* can save them in himself, inviting all to dwell in the common place of the Pure Land, because Dharmākara truly becomes *Amitābha* when all other Buddhas praise him. Through this praise, the eternal Tathāgata forms the body of *Amitābha*. Thus, the cosmic body of *Amitābha* is inseparable from the Land, where other sentient beings (who become Buddhas in the Land) praise *Amitābha*.

In the Pure Land, all subjects have a universal consciousness in which they can perceive the cosmic interconnectedness among all sentient beings. Though they dwell in the Pure Land, they are conscious of other beings who are suffering in the world, and
hence cannot accomplish their enlightenment without seeking to save suffering beings and bring them into the Land. Thus *Amitābha* imparts to them his power and returns them to the world. Moreover, their salvific activities participate in the fulfillment of *Amitābha’s* own enlightenment. Consequently, the cosmic body of *Amitābha* and his Land continue to expand.

Further, in the Pure Land, time flows from the future to the present. In Soga’s view, the true future is *Tathāgata*, who sustains the present time. Thus one can find the true future as the basis of the present time. In other words, we recognize the Pure Land as the true future, which is the foundation of the present, not as future after the present time.

5.3.3 New perspectives on the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union as the foundation of collective salvation in light of the cosmic Buddha body

Comparing the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ with the cosmic body of *Amitābha*, we discover new aspects of the cosmic dimensions of the union. When Christ recognized himself as the divine *hypostasis* through his divine and human consciousnesses and underwent self-negation (kenosis) in his humanity, he was glorified by the Father. In this moment, the Father formed the cosmic body of Christ and revealed himself through his Son’s cosmic body.

The self-recognition of the individual Christ means that the divine *hypostasis* of Christ knows himself through the divine consciousness and the human consciousness. His activity in the world is based on this self-conscious activity. His divine consciousness has its internal objects, which are the Father, the Son and the Spirit, and reflects the minds of the three *hypostaseis*. Thus, the divine consciousness accomplishes its self-recognition through the relationship between the Logos and other persons in the economy of salvation. At the same time, he has a human consciousness, which is sustained by the

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43 Ryōjin Soga, *Hongan no Bucchi* (Buddha’s Earth of the Original Vow) in vol. 4 of *Soga Ryōjin senshu* (The Selected Works of Soga Ryōjin), 356.
activity of finite spirit. The finite spirit undergoes a movement of self-return through matter. This finite spirit is sustained by the divine Logos and constitutes the foundation of the human self-consciousness.

Christ had his various experiences in his human consciousness, and in his human will, freely chose to sacrifice himself, accepting his human death. After his death, he descended into Hades and saved the souls imprisoned there. When he underwent the three stages of kenosis, Christ was raised from death and exalted by the Father to heaven. Finally, he is praised by all beings. In this moment, his cosmic body is realized. The Father establishes Christ’s cosmic body, which contains all beings: “he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ” (Ephesians 1:9-10). Those who are in the cosmic body of Christ are assured of inheriting the Kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit: “In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s possession, to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1: 13-14). This activity of the Father is based on the self-conscious activity of the Father’s hypostasis, which knows Himself through the Son’s hypostasis.

Similar to the two aspects of Dharmākara/Amitābha’s power of directing the saving virtues, there are two aspects of Christ’s salvific activities. One aspect is that Christ gives himself to save people from their suffering, sin, and death. He proclaims the Gospel and performs many miracles to heal them and alleviate their suffering. He declares, “The blind see again, the lame walk, those suffering from virulent skin-diseases are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (Luke 7: 22). These events foreshadow and announce the Kingdom of God. In
Christ’s death and resurrection, believers are saved from sin and death through his self-sacrifice.

The other aspect is that Christ imparts power to the disciples, sending them into the world to help others who are still suffering. Christ saves people from their suffering, sin and death through his own death and resurrection. Thereafter, he sends them into the world, empowering them to accomplish salvific works. For example, Jesus gives his twelve disciples the power and authority to expel devils and to cure diseases, and sends them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. They are engaged in salvific work in the world (Luke 9:1-6). The risen Christ charges his disciples with the mission of proclaiming the Gospel and baptizing people (Matthew 28:19-20), and empowers them to forgive sins (John 20: 21-22). They established the Church and continue the proclamation of the Gospel. The teachings and practices of the apostles contain the fundamental truths of Christianity, which are directly given by Christ himself. Thus, we keep the apostolic tradition, which has been transmitted through the teachings, sacraments, and ministries in the Church.

The cosmic body of Christ is evolving through these two aspects of Christ’s salvific work. Paul holds that the cosmic body of Christ is one body, which comprises many parts—many people who receive different gifts in the same Spirit—all of whom have intercommunication with one another (I Corinthians 12:12-13). Each individual recognizes that he/she is related to all other individuals and is interdependent with them in the cosmic body of Christ. According to Paul, “If one part is hurt, all the parts share its pain. And if one part is honoured, all the parts share its joy” (I Corinthians 12:26). This means that individual salvation cannot be separated from others’ salvation. Typically, Western soteriology has tended to focus on the individual dimensions of salvation; however, in the cosmic perspective, salvation is collective, while containing each
individual salvation. The suffering of all is inextricably bound to the suffering of each individual. The other’s salvation is deeply connected to my personal salvation. It is for this reason that Christ sends his disciples into the world to rescue others and mediate to them his salvation. They experience true liberation from their suffering, sin, and death in Christ’s death and resurrection. Thereafter, Christ empowers them to proclaim the Gospel to other people who are suffering and in need of salvation. It is for this reason that the risen Christ gives the Spirit to them for their salvific work in the world. They seek to liberate suffering people in the world and make them a part of the cosmic body of Christ.

In my view, the cosmic body of Christ contains all living beings (Ephesians 1:22-23), who are embraced in the all-inclusive love of God’s Kingdom. The cosmic body of Christ is an immanent physical force which unites them all. They are in constant communion with Christ and share Christ’s suffering and glory. His Kingdom is the horizon, where his cosmic body is ever expanding.

At the end of the time, Christ accomplishes the salvation of all in his Kingdom, wherein all are subjected through Christ to the Father and God becomes all-pervasive.

After that will come the end, when he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father, having abolished every principality, every ruling force and power. For he is to be king until he has made his enemies his footstool, and the last of the enemies to be done away with is death, for he has put all things under his feet. But when it is said everything is subjected, this obviously cannot include the One who subjected everything to him. When everything has been subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to the One who has subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

Finally, God the Father prevails over and pervades everything. Nevertheless, the dominion of the Father does not abolish the cosmic body of Christ, but rather perfects and fulfills it. Through the cosmic body of Christ, the Father rules over all things.

Furthermore, in my view, in the Kingdom of God, the present time is sustained by the eschatological future, which is revealed through the Holy Spirit. All beings evolve
from the past through the present to the future. This time flow is sustained by the eschatological Kingdom, which appears as the future while manifesting itself in the world at the present moment. This (partially) realized eschatology manifests the Kingdom in the present time. The eschatological future is fulfilling the present time and revealing to us the purpose of history, which is fully accomplished at the end of time.

5.4 The Relation between the Divine Hypostasis and the Human Hypostasis of the Individual Human; a Comparison with the Dharmakāra as the Fundamental Consciousness and the Amitābha as the Knowledge of a Great and Perfect Mirror

5.4.1 New perspectives on the relationship between the divine hypostasis of Christ and the human hypostasis of individual humans

As already mentioned, the individuality of each human hypostasis is sustained by the divine Logos. The human hypostasis has a finite soul, which is the foundation of human consciousness. The finite human spirit, which is sustained by the divine Logos, goes forth from itself and returns to itself through objective matter. The self-return is accomplished through the universal humanity of the cosmic Christ.

In what follows, I link our finite human consciousness with Christ’s finite human consciousness. Our human consciousness is based on the finite human spirit, which is sustained by the divine Logos and returns to itself through matter. However, unlike Christ, the individual human consciousness can be separated from God when we forget that the human spirit has its foundation in God. Christ’s human consciousness is also founded on his finite human spirit, but is always united with the divine consciousness, in which he clearly sees the triune God as inner object. His human consciousness is also directly opened to the relationship with God and recognizes all beings in God. Thus, in the relationship between our human hypostasis and Christ’s hypostasis, we must think in terms of the relationship between the human consciousness of the human hypostasis and
the union of the \emph{enhypostatized} divine and human consciousnesses of Christ’s composite hypostasis. We can see that the self-conscious subjectivity of our human hypostasis is sustained by the divine, self-conscious, composite subjectivity. Apropos of this issue, Soga’s view of \textit{Dharmākara} as fundamental subjectivity can provide new insights.

5.4.2 \textit{Dharmākara} as the store consciousness and \textit{Amitābha} as the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror

Soga holds that the \textit{Dharmākara}’s individual reality is recognized as the fundamental subjectivity, which sustains our self-consciousness. He regards this fundamental subjectivity as the store consciousness of the theory of Consciousness Only, which is a doctrine of \textit{Yogācāra} thought. \textit{Dharmākara} works in our body as the store consciousness. He assumes the bodies of all sentient beings in his own body as the fundamental subjectivity. He calls me and renders me an internal object of the same subjectivity. \textit{Dharmākara}’s vow mind is true self, and my personal “I” is contained in the vow mind as “Thou” in the same subjectivity.

As the store consciousness, \textit{Dharmākara} is the receptacle of one’s karmic seeds, which produce one’s intellectual recognition and bodily action. The store consciousness consists of its seeing part and seen part. The cognitive faculty of the \textit{Dharmākara} works as the seeing part and observes its impure seeds, body, and place as internal objects because they are the seen part of the store consciousness. In this case, the “impure” seeds signify everyone’s \textit{karma}. The Name, \textit{Namu-Amida-Butsu}, originally the pure seed, changes itself to the impure in order to work in the darkness and limitations of karmic reality.

In his threefold mind, the sincere mind appears as the fruit of the seeds in the store consciousness. When the \textit{Dharmākara} is opened to all sentient beings in the sincere mind in his activity of his self-awareness, he is found in the past aspect of the store
The entrusting mind is related to the specific character of the store consciousness in the present time. The entrusting mind is the basis of the activity of Dharmākara’s self-recognition and reflects Dharmākara’s self-negation as well.

The aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land is related to the causal aspect of the store consciousness, which contains all the seeds of karma, and enables our recognition of objectivity and our action in the future. Dharmākara’s calling comes from the infinite future because the Pure Land is realized in the future, which is understood as the foundation of our recognition and action in the present time. Thus, Dharmākara’s self-awareness starts from the present and returns to the present by passing through the past aspect and the future aspect of the store consciousness.

Thereafter, when he attained enlightenment as Amitābha, the store consciousness was transformed into the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror in the Consciousness Only. In my view, Amitābha is the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror. This knowledge emerges in the transformation of the store consciousness and manifests the forms of all sentient beings. The store consciousness has the impure seeds, body, and place as the seen part. However, when he attains enlightenment, the impure seeds are transformed into pure seeds. The reason is that sentient beings are assured of Nirvāna in the future when they attain faith in Amītābha in the present time and their blind passions cease to influence and direct their lives. The body is transformed into the Buddha body of personal enjoyment (sambhoga-kāya). This means that the bodies of sentient beings are also transformed into a part of the Buddha body in Amītābha’s infinite light and life. The place is changed into the Pure Land and its adornments, which are manifested as the infinite light of Amītābha. Thus, Amītābha observes the pure seeds, the Buddha body, and the Land as internal objects because they are the seen part of the knowledge of a great
and perfect mirror. Therefore, the transformation from Dharmākara to Amitābha corresponds to the transformation from the store consciousness to the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror.

5.4.3 The spiritual presence of Christ in our human consciousness — comparison with Dharmākara as true subjectivity

In the relationship between the hypostasis of the divine Logos and our human hypostasis, we can say that each human hypostasis is sustained by the divine Logos. However, contrary to Shin Buddhism, in which Dharmākara is our true subjectivity, we cannot hold that each human hypostasis is equal to the divine hypostasis of the Logos. The reason is that if one sees Christ as one’s subjectivity, one has fallen into the heresy of “Ioschristism,” which means everyone is equal to Christ. Christ has his own separate subjectivity, which is sustained by the divine Logos. His subjectivity cannot be equivalent to other human subjectivities. We cannot have Christ’s subjectivity as our own human subjectivity.

However, in comparison with Dharmākara as our true self, we can discover the spiritual presence of Christ in our human consciousness. As Paul says, “I have been crucified with Christ and yet I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me” (Galatians 2:20).

Christ is living in our human consciousness as a spiritual being. Paul also declares,

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44 Evagrius of Pontos (345-399) tends toward “Ioschristism.” He held that one can receive Christ’s wisdom itself and thus become equal to Christ in the level of intellect. “The mortal corporeal nature has received Christ’s ‘Wisdom, full of modalities/varieties,’ whereas it is not susceptible of Christ himself.” Evagrius, Kephalaia Gnostika 3:11 in Evagrius, Kephalaia Gnostika: A New Translation of the Unreformed Text from the Syriac, trans. Ilaria L. E. Ramelli (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 145. Evagrius’s theological position was condemned in the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. “If anyone says that there will not be a single difference at all between Christ and other rational beings, neither in substance nor in knowledge nor in power over everything nor in operation, but that all will be at the right hand of God as Christ beside them will be, as indeed they were also in their mystical pre-existence, let him be anathema (Anathema 13 of anti-Origenist Canons).” The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553: with related texts on the Three Chapters Controversy vol. 2, trans. Richard Price, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 286.
God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law, so that we could receive adoption as sons. As you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son crying ‘Abba, Father’; and so you are no longer a slave, but a son (Galatians 4:5-7).

The Spirit of the Son is working in us and crying out to the Father. This Spirit of the Son expresses his pure trust in the Father and inspires us to trust in the Father, enabling our adoption as children of God. The spiritual presence of the Son also reflects (in Shin Buddhist terms) Christ’s threefold mind—the sincere mind of the Father, the entrusting mind of the Son, and the aspiration for rebirth in the Kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit. The spiritual being of Christ internally manifests the threefold mind to each human person.

When he observes that one is suffering from the effects of original sin and death in the world, the spiritual being of Christ approaches him/her in his sincere mind, which is the same sincere mind as the Father. This aspect of Christ’s spiritual presence is related to the past aspect because humans are suffering from the effects of the original sin into which they are born as the fundamental human condition (or karmic cycle in Buddhism). Then, he trusts in the Father in the entrusting mind of the Son, and in his Incarnation, passion and death undergoes self-negation to the Father. This entrusting mind is connected to the present time. Finally, Christ himself, with the Father, gives the Spirit and causes people to aspire to rebirth in the Kingdom of God. The activity of the Holy Spirit is related to the future aspect because the Spirit realizes the Kingdom of God in the future.

How does one recognize the spiritual being of Christ internally? In my view, when one recites the Name of Jesus, recognizes oneself as embedded in sinful reality, andrepents of one’s deviation from God, one can discover Jesus internally as the one who undergoes kenosis in the darkness of sinful human reality. He is immersed in our reality even though he himself has not succumbed to sin. When one recognizes that one cannot
extricate oneself from the grasp of sin by one’s own power, Jesus reveals himself in one’s human self-consciousness and therefore one attains faith in Jesus and settles in the present moment of darkness and negativity. In this present moment, one undergoes self-transcendence to the earth, which is the locus of suffering, death, and sin. Only then can one live in solidarity with other suffering beings. Followers of the way of Christ do not seek self-transcendence to the heavens, thereby transcending negative realities. Such a position avoids immersion in other’s suffering and death. Rather, the personal settlement is based on Christ’s kenosis, which consists of his self-negation in the Incarnation, passion, death, and descent into Hades.

Regarding the Catholic tradition, I find an integral relationship between the reciting of the Name of Jesus and the grace transmitted through the sacraments of the Church. We experience true salvation from suffering, sin, and death through the sacraments because we are fully opened to the risen Christ as we receive them. Based on this experience, reciting the Name of Jesus deepens the experience of salvation. In particular, this practice opens different dimensions of salvation, which is realized as settlement in the midst of human darkness. Thus, in my view, reciting the Name enriches the experience of salvation through the sacraments.

When one attains faith and settles in the present moment through the recitation of Jesus’ Name, one experiences a transformation of consciousness and a reversal of mind. In this moment, one recognizes the saving power of the cosmic Christ in the present and is assured of attaining the eschatological Kingdom of God in the future. When one sees Jesus internally in the darkness of sin and suffering, paradoxically one sees the infinite light of the cosmic Christ and enters the way of salvation.

The Jesus internal to us, and the cosmic Christ, are united with one another as “the composite subjectivity” of Christ. The composite subjectivity consists of the
enhypostatized divine and human natures in the single hypostasis of Christ. It is the foundation of our self-recognition, in which we perceive Jesus internally in the midst of sinful darkness, and the infinite light of the cosmic Christ as saving power.

Furthermore, analogous to the store consciousness of the Dharmākara's threefold mind, Jesus as the internal spiritual being has the character of receiving seeds, which are our actions. Paul says,

> Whatever someone sows, that is what he will reap. If his sowing is in the field of self-indulgence, then his harvest from it will be corruption; if his sowing is in the Spirit, then his harvest from the Spirit will be eternal life. And let us never slacken in doing good; for if we do not give up, we shall have our harvest in due time (Galatians 6: 7-9).

Paul holds that good deeds are good seeds, which are sown in the Spirit. Good seeds produce good fruits of the Spirit. The good fruits are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5: 22-23). On the other hand, bad deeds are bad seeds, which are sown in self-indulgence. Bad seeds produce bad fruit. The bad fruits are “sexual vice, impurity, and sensuality, the worship of false gods and sorcery,” and so forth (Galatians 5: 19-20).

In my view, Jesus as internal spiritual being is the receptacle of the seeds, which are our actions, just as the store consciousness is the receptacle of all good and bad seeds. As the fundamental consciousness, Jesus himself is pure and uncontaminated by sin. Nevertheless, in his Incarnation, passion, and death, he undergoes self-negation, ultimately moving to Hades—the depths of the sin and negativity in which all are immersed. In doing so, he bears all people’s sins and saves them. As the internal spiritual being, Jesus receives good seeds and bad seeds in himself. When we recognize that he receives our good and bad actions as good and bad seeds, we can then be converted to God, practice good deeds, and cease to do bad deeds in the future. However, when we forget that Jesus receives and bears our impure seeds, we return to such actions in the
future.

Jesus works in our human subjectivity internally and opens the structure of our self-consciousness. The human self-consciousness comprises the seeing part and the seen part. The seeing part is our cognitive faculty. The seen part consists of the seeds of human actions, the corruptible human body, and the world. The kenotic presence of Jesus internally in the darkness of sinful reality opens the fundamental structure of human self-consciousness.

Thereafter, our human consciousness is fundamentally reversed and transformed into the new form of self-consciousness of the cosmic presence of Christ in the infinite light. The seeds of our good actions are transformed into good spiritual fruits while the seeds of the bad actions cease to flourish. Our corruptible human body is transformed into the glorified human body, which is incorruptible and immutable by the grace of Christ’s resurrection. Paul explains the relationship.

Someone may ask: How are dead people raised, and what sort of body do they have when they come? How foolish! What you sow must die before it is given new life; and what you sow is not the body that is to be, but only a bare grain, of wheat I dare say, or some other kind; it is God who gives it the sort of body that he has chosen for it, and for each kind of seed its own kind of body (I Corinthians 15:35-38).

Our corruptible human body is only seed, but God gives an incorruptible body to us as fruit. Paul also says, “what is sown is weak, but what is raised is powerful; what is sown is a natural body, and what is raised is a spiritual body” (I Corinthians 15: 43-44).

Paul also says,

Indeed, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But when Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin but the spirit is alive because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead has made his home in you, then he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you (Romans 8: 9-11).
When he rises from the dead, he transforms our human body to an incorruptible body through the power of his resurrection.

The world as the seen part also becomes the Kingdom of God. When Jesus proclaimed the Gospel and performed miracles, he declared to John the Baptist’s disciples, “the blind see again, and the lame walk, those suffering from virulent skin-diseases are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (John 11:5). He also says, “The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, ‘Look, it is here! Look, it is there!’ For look, the kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:20b-21). The Kingdom of God cannot be seen as outer object from inner self. The Kingdom is the internal object of our subjectivity as its seen part when our fundamental consciousness is transformed into the knowledge of a great and perfect mirror.

When one experiences the transformation of human consciousness and receives spiritual fruit, a glorified human body, and the reality of Kingdom life, one does not remain in a self-enclosed enjoyment of the divinized reality, but is moved by the spirit of Christ into the world to mediate God’s salvation to those who are suffering. This is because all beings are interdependent and thus salvation is a collective, not merely an individual reality. Consequently, those who experience the divine reality are moved to become a healing and salvific presence to others, proclaiming the Gospel to them. Therefore, the transformation of consciousness is the foundation of our praxis of realizing the Kingdom of God in the world.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have proposed new perspectives on the hypostatic union of Christ in dialogue with Shin-Buddhism. The dialogue brings interdependent perspectives on the divine hypostasis of the Logos; Christ’s divine consciousness and will in his divine
nature; and human consciousness and will in his human nature. I summarize the points as follows.

First, in the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ, the divine hypostasis of the Logos is an individual who is interdependent with the other hypostaseis in the immanent Trinity. The intercommunion of the three hypostaseis realizes the single divine nature. On the other hand, the internal relationship in the single divine nature enables the three hypostaseis. Thus, the divine hypostaseis and the divine universal nature are interdependent in the Trinitarian relations.

The hypostasis of Christ possesses the divine nature, which consists of the divine nature of the Trinity and the individualized divine nature. In my view, we can say that his hypostasis transcends his individualized divine nature on the ontological level. However, the hypostasis is not prior to the divine nature of the Trinity and the divine nature of the Trinity is not prior to the divine hypostasis.

Christ’s divine nature contains the divine consciousness and the divine will. His divine consciousness is the threefold mind, which reflects the sincere mind of the Father, the entrusting mind of the Son, and the aspiration to enter the Kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit. When each divine person individualizes the divine consciousness and the divine will of the Trinity in its respective mode, the mind of each person is revealed. When the Son recognizes the Father, the Incarnate Logos, and the Holy Spirit as internal objects of his divine consciousness, he reflects the divine mind of each person in himself, which forms his threefold mind. The Father individualizes the divine consciousness and the divine will as his sincere mind. In the sincere mind, he gives himself for the salvation of all living beings in the world. He also gives the Name of Jesus as salvific means to all beings and asks them to recite the Name. Hearing and reciting the Name of Jesus opens the way of faith in Jesus and leads to salvation within the interdependent relationship with
other beings. The Son individualizes the divine consciousness and the divine will as the entrusting mind. In the entrusting mind, the Son trusts the people as his companions, thus capacitating them to accomplish his saving works. The Holy Spirit individualizes the divine consciousness and the divine will as the aspiration to enter the Kingdom of God. The aspiration is given by the power of the Holy Spirit, which saves people through the realization of the Kingdom of God. These three aspects are united in Christ’s single mind, in which he entrusts himself utterly to the Father. The Son’s mind, trusting in the Father, is also the individualized divine consciousness and will in the Logos. This single mind is based on the hypostatic relationship between the Son and the Father. In this deep trust in the Father, the Son recognizes himself.

Christ’s human nature has an interdependent relationship with other humans, which reflects the hypostatic, interdependent relationship between the Son and other two divine persons. His human nature possesses human consciousness and human will. His human consciousness is related to the consciousnesses of all humans and gathers them together in himself. Therefore, Christ’s human experience extends to and embraces universal human experience. Moreover, he is immersed in the sinful reality of humans though he does not know sin in himself. He underwent three stages of kenosis, namely the Incarnation, death, and the descent into Hades. In doing so, he opened the way of salvation to all living beings. Thus, he is able to sustain each of us in our suffering, sin, and death. He is fully immersed in humanity and this immersion is the expression of the hypostatic union of Christ.

Second, in the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union of Christ, the universal humanity and the divinity are united in the hypostasis of the Logos. All individual beings live in the universal humanity of Christ and know inter-communion. The human nature of Christ is immersed in matter and shares matter with other beings and thus his humanity
becomes the foundation of the union of all beings.

The cosmic body of Christ is formed by the Father when Christ recognizes himself as the divine hypostasis of the Logos through the divine consciousness and the human consciousness and accomplishes his salvific work in the world. After undergoing the three stages of kenosis, he was raised him from the dead and exalted to the heavens by the Father. In this moment, the Father formed the cosmic body of Christ, which contains all living beings.

Moreover, there are two aspects of Christ’s salvific activities. One aspect is that Christ gives himself in order to save people from their suffering, sin and death. The other aspect is that Christ imparts power to those of his Kingdom and sends them into the world to bring his salvation to suffering people. This is also the foundation of the apostolic church. The cosmic body of Christ comprises many parts, all of whom have intercommunication with one another. Each individual recognizes that one is related to all other individuals and interdependent with them in the cosmic body. Thus, one’s salvation cannot be separated from the salvation of all others. The salvation is therefore collective, while containing each individual salvation. For this reason, the risen Christ gives the Spirit to his apostles for the salvation of suffering people in the world. These in turn become a part of the cosmic body of Christ, which contains all living beings and embraces them as the beloved of God. In the end of time, the Father takes over the Kingdom of the Son and realizes Christ’s cosmic body. Through the cosmic body, the Father becomes all in all, governing all creatures in the perfection of the world. The Kingdom appears as the eschatological future, which sustains the present moment. We live in the time which flows from the past to the present to the future. All physical beings undergo evolution in this timeframe. Nevertheless, the Kingdom sustains the process of past-present-future as the eschatological future, and in the present time, the Kingdom
reveals the end of creatures’ evolution and their perfection.

In the relationship between the divine hypostasis and each human hypostasis, Jesus is the internal spiritual being who inhabits our human self-consciousness. One recognizes him internally in the midst of sinful reality. At the same time, paradoxically, one can experience the saving power of the cosmic Christ and settle in the present moment, being assured of entering the eschatological Kingdom of God in the future. One undergoes self-transcendence to the earth, which is the locus of suffering, death, and sin, and settles in the midst of the darkness of human negativity. This settlement is based on the kenosis of Christ in human reality. One can have such experience when one hears and recites Jesus’ Name. Jesus recognizes that reciting his Name reflects the Father’s sincere mind and the salvific practice of the Church after the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Reciting Jesus’ Name and receiving faith in him enriches the experience of grace and salvation, which is mediated by the sacraments of Church.

Moreover, Jesus as the internal spiritual presence is the receptacle of the seeds which are our human actions. He undergoes self-negation into the world and is immersed in sinful human reality, bearing our sins even though he himself has no sin. Thus, as the internal spiritual presence, he receives the impure seeds of our human condition, immersed as we are in the cycles of original sin, and seeks to make them into pure, good seeds by his redemptive power.

As the internal spiritual presence, Jesus opens our recognition of the internal structure of the human self-consciousness, which consists of the seeing part and the seen part. The seeing part is our cognitive faculty. The seen part consists of the seeds of human actions, the corruptible human body, and the world.

When one discovers Jesus internally in the darkness of suffering, death and sin, one experiences the reversal (conversion) of one’s mind, perceives the cosmic power of
Christ, and enters the way of salvation. In this moment, our human self-consciousness is transformed into a new form of human consciousness in the cosmic Christ. The seen part of the consciousness is transformed into the divinized reality. The seeds of human actions are transformed into good spiritual fruits. Christ’s corruptible human body is transformed into the incorruptible risen body. Likewise, God transforms our human body into an incorruptible body. The world of the seen part becomes the Kingdom of God and the fully realized body of Christ wherein all things live in interdependence and harmony in the cosmic web of life. In the transformation of consciousness, one is moved to help those who are suffering in the world and in this way, to bring about the Kingdom of God—in the present moment and in its final realization. The transformation of consciousness is the foundation of our salvific praxis in the interdependent relationship with all living beings.
General Conclusion

This dissertation has sought to gain new insights into the personal and cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union in dialogue with the Buddha body theory of Shin Buddhism. These insights have in turn elucidated the salvific implications of the hypostatic union for the entire cosmos. I have sought to demonstrate that the dialogue underscores the interdependent character of the divine hypostasis of the Logos; Christ’s divine consciousness and will in his divine nature; and his human consciousness and will in his human nature. The Logos’ interdependent relationship with the other divine persons is also the basis for the interdependence of all beings in the cosmic web of life.

Regarding the personal dimensions of the hypostatic union, I have explored the interdependent characteristics of the divine Logos. The Logos has its hypostatic properties, which indicate that the Son is begotten by the Father and through the Logos the Spirit is spirated by the Father. The Logos has its own hypostasis, which subsists in interdependent relationship with the other hypostaseis in the divine nature of the Trinity. The hypostasis of the Logos cannot be separated from the divine nature, which is shared by three hypostaseis. The divine hypostasis of the Logos transcends both the individualized (enhypostatized) divine nature and the human nature on an ontological level. However, the Logos does not transcend the divine nature of the Trinity because the interdependent relationship of the three hypostaseis subsists in the divine nature of the Trinity.

Christ possesses an individualized divine nature, which, to use Shin Buddhist terms, could be like the threefold mind. This mind consists of the sincere mind, the entrusting mind, and the aspiration for rebirth in the Kingdom of God. Christ recognizes the Father, the incarnated Logos itself, and the Holy Spirit as internal objects of his divine consciousness. His objective recognition of the three hypostaseis in his divine consciousness is related to the constitution of his threefold mind.
The sincere mind is the individualized divine consciousness and will of the Father, and indicates his universal love for all living beings. In his recognition of the Father as internal object, the Son possesses the same sincere mind in his divine consciousness and is influenced by the individualized divine consciousness and will of the Father.

The entrusting mind is the Son’s unwavering trust in his fellow human beings. He trusts them deeply even though they deviate from God’s will in their sinfulness. He never abandons his deep trust in the disciples even when they abandon him at the moment of his passion and death on the cross. Finally, when he is risen, he entrusts his mission to the apostles and sends them into the world to baptize people and teach them God’s ways. This entrusting mind is the individualized divine consciousness and will of the Son when he recognizes himself as the incarnate Logos, which is one of the internal objects of this consciousness. When the Logos assumes universal human nature, he also takes on the deepest trust in humanity.

The aspiration for rebirth in God’s Kingdom indicates the individualized divine consciousness and will of the Holy Spirit. After the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit was sent into the world, inaugurating people to enter the Kingdom of God. When Christ recognizes the Spirit as internal object in his divine consciousness, he also recognizes that he shares the Holy Spirit’s intention, thus sending the Spirit to save all living beings by drawing them into the Kingdom.

These three minds are unified in the Son’s single mind, which he entrusts to the Father. He has the deepest trust in the Father, who begets him. This complete trust is the basis of the threefold mind. In the life of Christ, this trust in the Father reaches the most profound level in his self-negation at the moment of his passion and death. Therefore, Christ has an individualized divine consciousness and will as the mind that perfectly trusts the Father (the entrusting mind). This single mind is intrinsically interrelated to the
individualized divine consciousnesses and wills of the other persons of the Trinity, and is thus profoundly influenced by them. This intra-Trinitarian relationship forms the threefold mind.

Christ has an individualized human nature. As Dharmākara is immersed completely in karmic reality, Christ, in his human nature, is also immersed in the deepest realities of human sinfulness, though he himself knows no sin. He deepened his immersion into human reality in three different stages of *kenosis*. The first level of *kenosis* is the Incarnation of the Logos, which assumed universal humanity and became Jesus Christ. The second level of *kenosis* involves Christ’s suffering and death on the cross. Jesus accepts the Father’s will in Gethsemane in pure trust. Nevertheless, he cries on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Matthew 27: 46). He experiences abandonment by the Father, but paradoxically is united with the Father through death.

In the third level of *kenosis*, he descends into Hades and saves the souls imprisoned there, after which he is resurrected and exalted into heaven by the Father. After Christ’s exaltation, the Holy Spirit is sent into the world for the realization of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, in Christ’s exaltation to the heavens, the Name of Jesus is praised by all beings in heaven and on earth. The Name of Jesus manifests Christ’s spiritual presence. The revelation of the Name of Jesus to all living beings is connected to the sincere mind of the Father, who intends their salvation. It is also the calling of God through the Holy Spirit, who seeks to save all beings through the realization of the Kingdom. Finally, at the end of time, Christ will come again as the Son of Man, saving and restoring all living beings within the cosmos. These three levels of *kenosis* are Christ’s full immersion into humanity and also the full expression of the hypostatic union. This *kenosis* is also the foundation of our personal human salvation.
In the cosmic dimensions of the hypostatic union, the divine hypostasis of the Logos is the basis of the union of the divine and human natures. His cosmic body is deeply immersed in material reality through his humanity. Thus, the cosmic body of Christ contains all beings and the divine nature unifies them through its power. All finite beings are interdependent in the cosmic body. Thus, the nature of salvation is collective and cosmic in its scope, and cannot be limited to the individual.

Christ’s cosmic body possesses Christ’s two salvific powers. One is the divine power to save suffering beings. The other is the power which returns these saved beings to the world to mediate God’s salvation through works of mercy and justice. In this way, his cosmic body is continuously expanding, embracing all beings within the web of life in their intrinsic interdependence.

In the relation between the divine Logos and each individual, the divine hypostasis of the Logos sustains each human hypostasis. Each hypostasis is interdependent with all other living beings. Jesus’ Name has the power of negating the false view of being, which holds that an individual is independent and sustained by its own power. When one attains faith in Jesus through the recitation of his Name, one is opened to authentic being, in which all beings are interdependent. Thus, an individual can experience a dependent relationship with the Logos and interdependent relationships with other finite beings. Receiving faith in Jesus means that one participates in Christ’s threefold mind, which is sustained by Christ’s pure trust in the Father. When one recognizes that one is deeply immersed in human suffering, sin and death and cannot be liberated from them by one’s own power, one hears and recites Jesus’ Name and receives true faith in Jesus. Then, paradoxically one experiences the reversal (conversion) of mind and recognizes that one is saved by the divine power of Christ. In this moment, one undergoes self-transcendence to the earth and settles there in the midst of darkness and
negativity. Finally, one experiences the unfolding of the Kingdom of God.

One’s settlement on the earth is sustained by Christ’s kenosis, which consists of the Incarnation, death on the cross, and descent to Hades. One can deepen one’s acceptance of earthly suffering and experience internal peace when one embraces deeply Christ’s kenosis. One can experience this settlement when one experiences the kenotic presence of Jesus internally in one’s human consciousness.

In this moment, God transforms the human self-consciousness to a new form of consciousness grounded in the cosmic presence of Christ, which is realized by Christ’s resurrection and exaltation. In this new self-consciousness, one can see spiritual fruit, the incorruptible body, and the Kingdom of God, where all spiritual beings praise Jesus’ Name and are interdependent. This transformation of human consciousness impels each person to go forth to respond to others who are suffering in the world. This response embraces suffering people in the cosmic body of Christ and furthers the expansion of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is partly realized in the present and will be fully realized in the eschatological coming of the Son of Man in the future.

The dialogue with Shin Buddhism opens new perspectives on the universal nature of salvation, and the interdependence of all creatures in the cosmic web of life. In this regard, it accords well with Pope Francis’ encyclical letter on the environment, Laudato Si’. In the tradition of Western soteriology since Augustine, theologians have tended to emphasize the salvation of the individual human soul from sin and death. However, as I have demonstrated in this dissertation, in order to serve as an adequate soteriology for today’s world, Christian salvation must be seen as collective and cosmic in nature, realized in the interdependent relationship of all living beings. In Laudato Si’, the Pope holds that all beings are by design interdependent and that no creature is self-sufficient. Citing the Catechism, the Pope declares that “creatures exist only in dependence on each
other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.”¹ We must therefore reject “every tyrannical and irresponsible domination of human beings over other creatures.” To this he adds that “the created things of this world are not free of ownership,” but have their life and being in God. For this reason, “all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate, and humble respect.”² Thus, humans must not harm other creatures or destroy nature and exploit natural resources for the sake of greed and personal economic gain. In the face of severe environmental devastation and its disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable—both humans and fragile eco-systems—we are called to the praxis of saving nature and perpetuating sustainable ecological systems.

Moreover, in the interrelationship with other humans, it is important to help people through works of charity who are suffering from natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and so forth. Many victims of such disasters are living in the darkness of human suffering because they have lost family, friends, home, and all personal properties. Furthermore, it is the poor and vulnerable that are disproportionately impacted by such disaster and we must thus forge systems of solidarity and communal response. In such cases, the collective understanding of the salvation of Christ’s cosmic body encourages us to be immersed in the darkness of their suffering and to engage in works of compassion and mercy to help them and ease their suffering.

Francis also holds that “the ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things.”³ All beings are opened to God’s transcendence and proceed to their


² Ibid., #89, 64.

³ Ibid., 60.
perfection in Christ. In my view, when all spiritual beings undergo self-transcendence to God through their activities, the cosmic body of Christ itself undergoes self-transcendence to the Father and finally God becomes all in all. In this cosmic journey toward God, humans have a singular responsibility in relation to all other creatures. After declaring that “the ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us,” the Pope asserts that

[A]ll creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.\(^4\)

In this regard, the Pope calls for a sound environmental pedagogy, explaining that whereas earlier on in the history of environmental education, such education was centered on scientific analysis and awareness of the need to protect the environment, it now tends to incorporate a sustained critique of the ‘myths’ of modernity itself. These myths serve to legitimate an ethos of rampant individualism, an embrace of the unregulated market, and the exploitation of the earth in the name of progress and development.\(^5\) This education seeks “to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures and with God.”\(^6\) This vision calls for educators capable of guiding people, “through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care,”\(^7\) and takes place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere.” Such education is essential to planting seeds in young minds that “continue to bear fruit

\(^4\) Ibid., 83.

\(^5\) Ibid., #210, 141.

\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ibid.
throughout life.” 8

This call to a sound pedagogy of interdependence and responsibility has profound implications for my own role as an educator and spiritual formator in a Jesuit university setting in Japan as I design curricula and courses in Christian anthropology, Christology, and soteriology. The perspectives gained in this study will equip me to inject a dimension of cosmic interdependence into all facets of these theological loci. Such a vision will enable me to engage learners in a broad, inclusive, and cosmic view of salvation that is intrinsically tied to a radical responsibility for the earth and all creatures in the fragile web of life. I have sought to show that the cosmic salvific dimensions of the Buddha body present a challenge to Western Christian soteriological schemas, which have tended to focus almost exclusively on the individual dimensions of human salvation.

8 Ibid., #213, 142.
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