Zeitschrift: Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société Suisse-Asie

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft

Band: 74 (2020)

Heft: 4

Artikel: Tiantai Buddhist elaborations on the hidden and visible

Autor: Kantor, Hans-Rudolf

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-976549

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Mehr erfahren

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. En savoir plus

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. Find out more

Download PDF: 03.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, https://www.e-periodica.ch

DE GRUYTER ASIA 2020; 74(4): 883–910

Hans-Rudolf Kantor*

Tiantai Buddhist Elaborations on the Hidden and Visible

https://doi.org/10.1515/asia-2019-0008

Abstract: A crucial feature of Tiantai (天台) Buddhist thought certainly is its elaboration on the hidden and visible, called "root and traces" (*ben ji* 本跡), as the concept of non-duality (*bu er* 不二) of these opposites is part of what constitutes the highest level of Buddhist doctrine in Tiantai doxography, called "round/ perfect teaching" (*yuanjiao* 圓教). Such elaboration is inextricably bound up with paradoxical discourse, which functions as a linguistic strategy in Tiantai practice of liberating the mind from its self-induced deceptions.

Observation of paradoxes in the elaboration on the hidden and visible could be called *practice qua doctrinal exegesis*, because Tiantai masters try to integrate self-referential observation in mind-contemplation (*guanxin* 觀心) with interpretation of *sūtra* and *śāstra*. For Tiantai Buddhists, the ultimate meaning of the *Buddhadharma* (*fofa* 佛法) itself is independent from speech and script and only accessible to the liberated mind, yet it cannot fully be comprehended and displayed apart from the transmission of the canonical word. To observe the paradox in non-duality of the hidden and visible is what triggers *practice qua doctrinal exegesis* and entails liberation (*jietuo* 解脫) according to the "round/ perfect teaching."

The article traces the formation of paradoxical discourse in Chinese Madhyamaka, particularly referencing the Tiantai elaboration on the hidden and visible and its diverse sources of inspiration, which includes both Chinese indigenous traditions of thought (Daoism and Xuanxue) and translated *sūtra* and *śāstra* literature from India.

Keywords: round/perfect, paradox, hidden and visible, root and traces, Madhyamaka, Tiantai

1 Background of the hidden and visible

The principal founder of the first indigenous Buddhist school in China, the Tiantai school 天台宗, is the scholar monk Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597), whose teaching combines

***Corresponding author: Hans-Rudolf Kantor,** Graduate Institute of Asian Humanities, Huafan University, No.1, Huafan Rd, Taipei/Shihding 22301, Taiwan. E-mail: kantorsan@hotmail.com

Buddhist doctrine (*buddhadharma*, *fofa* 佛法—Law of the Buddha) transmitted by *sūtra* and *śāstra* with practice of mind-contemplation (*guanxin* 觀心), introspection. He holds that, apart from contemplation (*guan* 觀), the meaning of doctrine (*jiao* 教) remains incomprehensible, just as contemplation, without the guidance of doctrine, fails to achieve liberation (*jietuo* 解脫) from the mind's self-induced deceptions.[1] Such mutuality between practice and understanding (*jiexing xiangzi* 解行相資) is the core of the Tiantai teaching in its attempt to elucidate the wisdom-path to Buddhist liberation. In his commentaries, treatises, and meditation manuals, Zhiyi expresses that proper exegesis of the canonical word is wherein practice of wisdom-liberation persists. His advocacy for non-duality of doctrine and contemplation (*jiaoguan shuangmei* 教觀雙美), or understanding and practice, means in actuality *practice qua exegesis*, integrating the mind's introspection and self-referential observation with the meaning of Buddhist doctrine.[2]

Although the ultimate meaning of doctrine (*shengyi* 勝義, *diyiyi* 第一義) is considered to be independent from speech and script and thus is what consists only in silent accomplishment of the mind's liberation, its enactment under incessantly changing circumstances, that is wisdom (*zhi* 智) never ceasing to apprehend the ultimate, cannot really dispense with the Buddha's word (*buddhavacana*, *foyan* 佛言) transmitted by *sūtra* and *śāstra*. Tiantai masters believe that liberation accomplished in silence generates speech in the shape of the Buddha's teaching (*yanjiao* 言教), which, then again, guides the practitioner to awakening in silence (*mo* 默).

For Zhiyi, as well as many other Chinese Buddhists, the practitioner's understanding must embrace such circularity of speech and silence (*shuo mo* 說默), observing the paradox in this non-duality. Hence, paradoxical discourse,

---

1 Chinese Mādhyamikas' understanding of "liberation" (*vimokṣa*, *jietuo* 解脫) seems to be strongly influenced by Kumārajīva's view; for instance, in his introduction to the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* (注維摩詰經), Seng Zhao quotes Kumārajīva's explanation: "Since the mind achieves a state in which it is undistorted and in control of itself, not fettered by any disability, it is called liberation. 心得自在，不為不能所縛，故曰解脫也," (T38, no. 1775, p. 327, c19–20). In his own explanation, Seng Zhao adds: "What gives [the mind] free rein to [adapt to any change] without obstruction, and makes it immune to afflictions, is liberation. 縱任無礙塵累不能拘，解脫也," (T38, no. 1775, p. 327, c26).

2 "*Jiao guan shuang mei* 教觀雙美" literally means "valorizing doctrine and contemplation at the same time" and is a statement used by the Ming dynasty master Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655) to describe the tenet of Zhiyi's Tiantai teaching. Another formula of Ouyi Zhixu expressing the same is "*yi jiao she guan* 依教設觀," which means "to unfold contemplation by relying on doctrine," (T46, no. 1939, p. 936, c24). In the *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀), Zhiyi uses a similar expression: "to disclose contemplation in reliance on the gate of doctrine" (*yi jiao men tong guan* 依教門通觀), (T46, no. 1911, p. 59, b24); for deeper discussion on the history of the formation of the Tiantai school, see Chen 1999.

referencing the relationship between speech and silence, teaching and liberation, or hidden and visible, is a constitutive element of *practice qua exegesis* in Tiantai thought. The formula for this paradoxical combination is the binary "root and traces" (*ben ji* 本跡), which Zhiyi uses in his treatise on the title of the *Lotus-sūtra*, the *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義—*Meaning of the Dark in the Sūtra of the Lotus Blossom of the Subtle Dharma*, to describe the highest level of Buddhist teaching according to his classification of doctrines (*panjiao* 判教)—the "round/ perfect teaching" (*yuanjiao* 圓教).

The Tiantai antonym of the "round/ perfect" (*yuan* 圓) is the "partial" (*pian* 偏) which fails to integrate and balance correlatively dependent opposites, such as silence and speech, contemplation and doctrine, hidden and visible, emptiness and conditioned co-arising etc, and, in this sense, contravenes the non-dual round/ perfect. Hence, for Zhiyi, integration of the round/ perfect means circular relationship between root and traces: again, liberation of the awakened mind is like a hidden root (*ben* 本) as it evades linguistic expression and yet is what gives rise to speech in form of the Buddha's teaching transmitted by *sūtra* and *śāstra;* those are the visible traces (*ji* 跡) which then again guide back to their invisible root—liberation and awakening in silence.

As an antonym of the "partial," the "round/ perfect" also designates the most accomplished form of practice and understanding, the Tiantai ideal of "*yuandun zhiguan*" 圓頓止觀—"perfect/ round and sudden calming and contemplation." "Perfect/ round contemplation" is like a hermeneutical circle involving a dynamic relationship between mind and text: mind-contemplation persists in properly comprehending *Buddhadharma* via all its diversified textual expressions in *sūtra* and *śāstra*, just as this comprehension culminates in accomplished introspection of mind, which is liberation from all self induced-deceptions. Zhiyi's Tiantai account of the "round/ perfect" is traditionally believed to be itself an expression of *practice qua exegesis*, displaying paradoxical discourse for the soteriological purpose of fathoming out the complex relationship of root and traces—non-duality of the hidden and visible—at the level of linguistic pragmatics, which fulfills the sense of "inconceivable liberation" (*acintya-vimokṣa*, *busiyi jietuo* 不思議解脫).[3]

---

3 The accomplished form of *practice qua exegesis* is called "inconceivable liberation"—a term borrowed from the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra*. In his commentary to this *sūtra*, Zhiyi describes this in a way which shows that *practice qua exegesis* requires observation of paradox: "As for explaining the name 'inconceivable liberation' right in accordance with its particular sense, this actually is liberation which does not separate from words and script. ... Therefore, separating from [the assumption that there really is] a nature wherein script and words persist actually is

However, the binary "root and traces," which accounts for the Tiantai sense of the non-dual "round/ perfect" as opposed to the "partial," is not a term transmitted by translated Buddhist literature from India. It rather originates in indigenous sources of Chinese philosophy and, most probably for the first time, occurs as a binary, expressing the paradoxical sense of non-duality, in the earliest existent Chinese commentary on the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra* composed by Kumārajīva (344–413) and his famous disciple Seng Zhao 僧肇 (374–414).[4] Tiantai master Zhiyi as well as Sanlun master Jizang 吉藏 (549–623) borrowed

---

liberation. Liberation thus means: to never separate from all the dharmas, [as there is no real dharma to separate from]. ... Therefore one should realize that the same applies to the bondage to [names]. Thus, both liberation from and bondage to names and words actually is neither [real] bondage nor [real] liberation, and yet there are the names of liberation and bondage, which actually is inconceivable bondage-liberation. Inconceivable bondage actually is inconceivable liberation. Therefore, the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra* says: 'The nature of desire, anger, and delusion actually is liberation.' 正別釋不思議解脫名者，即是不離文字之解脫也。...是故文字性離，即是解脫。解脫者即諸法也。...故知縛亦如是。是則名字之縛脫，即是非縛非脫，而有縛脫之名者，即是不思議之縛脫也。不思議縛即是不思議之解脫也。故此經云：婬怒癡性即是解脫," (T38, no. 1777, p. 550, a8–b7). The passage means that what is referred to as an actual name or word is not a really existent entity—as no reference point of our intentional activity contains a real or irreducible core. Hence, there are no real words or names which we could cling to or dispense with, and consequently there are also not really bondages to delusive names, images, and afflictions which we must be liberated from. Paradoxically enough, to strive for liberation from delusion is then to mistake something unreal for real, which entails bondages to delusions, and to see that there is no real liberation that we can accomplish and no real bondage to get rid off is to really accomplish liberation from all bondages. In his interpretation of the *sūtra's* paradoxical statement that the nature of desire, anger, and delusion actually is liberation, Zhiyi particularly emphasizes the "inconceivable," which, for him, is the term that indicates the paradox that must be observed in order to actually understand and realize liberation. In other words, he demonstrates that full understanding qua actual explanation of this paradoxical term from that *sūtra* is what triggers and enacts true liberation—*practice qua exegesis*.

4 See the passage from Seng Zhao's *sūtra* commentary (注維摩詰經), which is frequently quoted throughout the works of Zhiyi and Jizang: "Without the root there is nothing that hands down all the traces, and without the traces there is nothing that reveals the root. Although root and traces must be differentiated, they are one with regard to the inconceivable. 非本無以垂迹，非迹無以顯本；本迹雖殊而不思議一也," (T38, no. 1775, p. 327, a27–b5). In the first chapter of the earliest extant Chinese translation of the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra*, accomplished by Zhiqian 支謙 (222–252), the two terms "traces" and "root" appear in combination (T14, no. 474, p. 519, b2–3). However, they do not bear the sense of non-duality that Seng Zhao, Jizang, and Zhiyi later ascribed to this binary. Kumārajīva's and Xuanzang's 玄奘 (602–664) later translations (as well as the extant Sanskrit version) of the same *sūtra* do not contain these terms and moreover agree with one another regarding the passage that Zhiqian has otherwise translated with "traces" and "root." Buddhist scholarship in medieval China adopted those two terms from the indigenous Xuanxue tradition.

that term from Seng Zhao to elaborate on paradoxical relationships in the Buddhist teachings, such as those between conventional truth (*shisudi* 世俗諦) and ultimate truth (*shengyidi* 勝義諦), conditioned co-arising (*yuanqi* 緣起) and emptiness (*kong* 空), doctrine and liberation, or speech and silence.

Seng Zhao's work, at the turn from the fourth to the fifth century in medieval China, contains a lot of terminology drawn from indigenous thinkers and authors, particularly, from those who are affiliated with Daoist and Xuanxue thought (*xuanxue* 玄學: "Study of the Dark"). Those indigenous thinkers are concerned with that which triggers the functioning and fulfills the efficaciousness of the natural or self-so processes, wherein actualities come into being, which also is believed to be what makes human activity worthy and noble when its performances reveal the capacity to equal those processes. This universal embrace is a concern for all what enables things to actually exist—a concern without exclusion of, inclination to, or partial preference for any particular thing.

The impartial principle that corresponds to that concern has often been seen as what is effective only in a hidden and subtle way, therein intensifying its force which sustains the realm of visible and distinct forms. Devoid of any inclination and partiality, it evades specification or determination which is why its hidden or subtle functioning is deemed as unobstructed. If accomplished in the realm of human activity, it accounts for the value which makes a person worthy, as it is what sustains the visible and yet goes beyond that realm, fulfilling the universal concern for all things without partiality. The attempt to conceive of that principle in terms of the inseparability of the hidden (invisible) and visible is particularly obvious in the tradition of the "Study of the Dark" (*xuanxue*), which has combined views from Confucian and Daoist sources.

For instance, Wang Bi's 王弼 (226–249) notion of the "root to be taken as what is devoid of specification" (*yi wu wei ben* 以無為本) refers to what gives rise to the realm of the visible and distinctive which he designates as "ends" (*mo* 末).[5] Inspired by the image of the plant, he describes the worthy or noble as a person

5 The phrase "*yi wu wei ben* 以無為本" occurs in Wang Bi's commentary to chapter 40 in the *Daode jing* 道德經, stating: "All things under heaven are born from what is there [the realm of presence, the visible]; and the beginning of what is there takes non-presence as the root [the hidden, invisible, what is devoid of specification]. In aspiring to complete what pertains to the realm of presence, one must turn back to non-presence, [invisible, devoid of specification]. 天下之物皆以有為生，有之所始，以無為本，將欲全有，必反於無也," (Lou 1992: 110). In his commentary on the *Book of Changes* (*Yi jing* 易經), he similarly explains the *Fu*-hexagram (*fu gua* 復卦), which symbolizes circular recurrence, see (Lou 1992: 336). Inspired by the *Daode jing*, Wang Bi specifies the relation between "non-presence" (*wu* 無, the hidden, what is devoid of specification etc.) and the "realm of presence" (*you* 有, the visible, distinct) by means of certain images,

who exclusively focuses on cultivating the root (*ben* 本), eradicating all proclivities to what pertains to the realm of the ends, and, paradoxically enough, it is this stance that promises a harvest in which the noble obtains maximum benefit from those ends. Therefore, Wang Bi explains: "Any benefit that figures in the realm of presence [the visible] requires non-presence [the hidden] to be taken as efficacious functioning. 凡有之為利，必以無為用" (Lou 1992: 2).

The worthy performs his universal concern for everything that pertains to the realm of the visible, by detaching her/his personal inclinations from every thing in that realm. This comes close to the paradox of intention expressing the view that the most efficacious manner of pursuing a goal is to reach the goal by giving up the attempt to reach it. The paradox is part of this universal and impartial concern in the sense that it must be observed in order to fulfill the same (concern), which shows that the thought of inseparability of the hidden and visible mirrors and reflects a sense of inconsistency. A similar emphasis on inconsistency can also be found in Guo Xiang's 郭象 (225–312) version of the hidden and visible, and also, according to the thesis of this paper, in early Prajñā pāramitā/ Madhyamaka thought. This would then account for those conceptual affinities which are part of the conditions that have made possible the confluence of Buddhist and Xuanxue thought, culminating in the formation and development of the Tiantai teaching in the history of Chinese Buddhism.

Hence, analogous to Wang Bi's binary of "root and ends" (*ben mo* 本末), Guo Xiang's concept of the hidden and visible is represented through the terms "*ming*" 冥, translated as "invisible entanglement," and "*ji*" 跡—"traces."[6] Guo Xiang points out that traces consist of what the hidden and dynamic functioning of

---

such as "root and ends" (*ben mo* 本末) and also "mother and offspring" (*mu zi* 母子), see his commentary to chapter 38: "Protect the mother in order to enable the offspring to survive, venerate the root in order to give rise to the ends. 守母以存其子，崇本以舉其末," (Lou 1992: 95). For a deeper discussion on Wang Bi's thought see Richard Lynn (1999) and Wagner (2000).

6 "*Ming*" 冥, translated as "invisible entanglement," literally means "dark, deep, underworld, ocean." In Xuanxue context, it belongs to the same semantic field which includes terms such as "non-presence," "what is devoid of specification" (*wu* 無), and also *xuan* 玄, which literally means "black, mysterious, dark," for instance, Wang Bi explains the first chapter of the *Daode jing*: "The dark is what is invisibly entangled [with everything], voiceless and devoid of specification. 玄者，冥也，默然無有也," (Lou 199: 2). "*Ming*" often figures in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子; as an antonym of *ji* 跡, it becomes a technical term in Guo Xiang's commentary on the same work, although he sometimes uses *ming* also as a verb in the sense of "to intermingle with," or "to coalesce." "*Ji*" literally means "footprint, trace, mark, sign" and occurs in the *Daode jing* only once, but with the distinct meaning of what interferes with the natural or self-so course (*ziran* 自然), wherein actualities come into being. In the Daoist and Xuanxue sources, "traces" figures as an image which captures the seminal traits that the authors and compilers of these texts ascribe to the realm of names (*ming* 名) and forms (*xing* 形)—the visible. Particularly the

the self-so processes, wherein actualities come into being, leaves behind in the realm of visible forms and conventional names. Consequently (also paradoxically), once coagulated into what is conventionally known and has a name, those fixed traces stand out against the dynamic that has given rise to them, occluding the access to their own source.[7] Only oblivion, the forgetting (*wang* 忘) of names and traces, allows for approaching this productive functioning of the hidden/dark

---

Zhuangzi, (like the *Daode jing*), points out that our conventional use of names tends to impute norms and values to actual things which matter to the way we exist, and that such intentional activity in our epistemic-linguistic stance to the world may interfere with the course that those things naturally pursue. Viewed from this perspective, fixed names, assigned to ephemeral actualities, are often full of prescriptive connotations and appear to be coercive, or even delusive. Thus our intentional activity relying on the use of names may have an effect similar to the "wheel-traces" (*cheji* 轍跡), which are left behind in the ground and interfere with its natural texture that enfolds in itself the hidden path for the one who knows to move forward in a smooth and unobstructed (natural) fashion. Chapter 27 of the *Daode jing* states: "If skilled in moving forward, no wheel-trace will be left behind, 善行無轍跡," and Wang Bi further explains: "To move forward in accordance with the self-so course is to not-fabricate and to not-implement; therefore, when attaining completion, no thing ever leaves a wheel-trace behind. 順自然而行，不造不施，故物得至而無轍跡也," (Lou 1992: 71). Guo Xiang adopts the thought of interference linked to the meaning of "traces"; unlike Wang Bi however, he holds that "traces," as inextricably associated with fixed "names" (*ming* 名), is what the dynamic functioning of actualities leaves behind in the realm of the conventional. For a further discussion on this see Ziporyn 2004.

7 The following passage from Guo Xiang's commentary on the *Zhuangzi* illustrates this thought: "[In the ancestral sacrifice] the cook and the priest respectively rest in their differing roles entrusted to them. All things, including birds and beasts, are content with what they receive. [...] This is the utmost of actuality under heaven. Since each [variously] achieves his/its actuality [in the *dao*], what else need to be done? This is nothing but self-fulfillment. [...]. 'Yao' and 'Shun' are only names for worldly matters. What has made [those] names is actually nameless. Hence, how could it be that what Yao and Shun implies is only 'Yao' and 'Shun'! What it certainly implies is the actuality (*shi*) of the person inspired [by the *dao*] (*shenren* 神人). What we now call 'Yao' and 'Shun' is only named after worldly dirt and dust. [...]. As to Yao, in actuality he is invisibly entangled [with everything] (*ming*), while the traces of this is [what is named] 'Yao'. When the focus of our observation switches from the traces to invisible entanglement, it should not surprise that what is [hidden] inside and what is [visible] outside pertain to different domains. [...], 庖人尸祝，各安其所司；鳥獸萬物，各足於所受；[...]此乃天下之至實也。各得其實，又何所為乎哉？自得而已矣。[...]堯舜者，世事之名耳；為名者，非名也。故夫堯舜者，豈直堯舜而已哉？必有神人之實焉。今所稱堯舜者，徒名其塵垢耳！[...]夫堯實冥矣，其跡則堯也。自跡觀冥，內外異域，未足怪也。[...]," (Guo 1991: 26, 33, 34). These passages represent the view that traces as well as names are incongruent with actualities and invisible entanglement which is what is nameless and yet produces names and traces. Traces and names pertain to the conventional realm, also called "what is [visible] outside" (*wai* 外), while actuality, oblivion, and what is nameless epitomize the sense of noble performance—"what is [hidden] inside" (*nei* 內). The former, which accounts for the visible, descends from the latter

(*xuan* 玄), into which the noble merges in non-distinctive entanglement (*ming*), that is: "indistinctly intermingling together with things" (*yu wu ming* 與物冥), and "embarking on that which comes across" (*suo yu si sheng* 所遇斯乘).[8]

For Guo Xiang, "trace" (*ji*) is an antonym of "invisible entanglement" (*ming*); the two are analogous to Wang Bi's polarity of "root and ends." These two binaries account for two different versions of a theme, which I call "inseparability of the hidden and visible." The relation of the hidden and visible does not imply the meaning of duality, but the two are opposites in an epistemological sense and thus account for an epistemological bifurcation. Each of the two is meaningful only in correlation with the other, yet each respectively represents a distinctive realm of knowing or understanding different from the other. What we know about the realm of forms does not apply to what is formless and vice versa, yet, in order to understand either side, we must consider the other. The relationship of the two epistemic realms is conceived of in a paradoxical fashion.

Guo Xiang's notion of "invisible entanglement and traces" (*ming ji* 冥跡) accentuates incongruity between the hidden and visible, which entails a paradoxical relationship similar to Wang Bi's "root and ends." While Wang Bi seems to focus on the paradox of intention, Guo Xiang more explicitly highlights the paradox that occurs in the account in which "trace" represents the partial occluding the access to the impartial which is yet the source all partial traces descend from—the paradox of incongruity.

Again, despite such incongruity, traces and invisible entanglement are non-dual. For Guo Xiang, to actually see the paradox that characterizes the non-dual yet bipolar relation of the hidden and visible is what entails access to all hidden functioning (*xuan*)—the dark or impartial that evades determinacy, which is invisible entanglement in oblivion, similar to the virtuoso performance, in which a musician, forgetting her/himself, seems to coalesce with her/his instrument.

---

which is foundational and hidden. The relationship between the hidden and visible is paradoxical, as the visible is incongruent with what it descends from—the hidden. The conventional cannot be taken as what discloses to us the sense of the noble; on the contrary, the derivative occludes the access to the origin it comes from—the hidden that gives rise to the visible traces cannot be accessed by adhering to those self-same traces.

8 Guo 1991: 20. Stressing the importance of non-knowing and forgetting, Guo Xiang says: "Therefore non-knowing is the principal. Consequently, the true person knows by means of abandoning what is [consciously] known, consummates without [intentionally] consummating an action, brings forth by leaving [everything] to its self-so course, and acquires by sitting in forgetfulness. Hence, knowing is called suspending, and acting is named leaving. 故以不知為宗。是故真人遺知而知，不為而為，自然而生，坐忘而得，故知稱絕而為名去也," (Guo 1991: 224).

In this sense, "*ming*"—invisible entanglement is an essential aspect of Guo Xiang's version of the traditional thought of impartiality—the universal concern or embrace, as is "*wu*" 無—the root devoid of any specification and partiality in Wang Bi's understanding of the inseparability of the hidden and visible. These two conceptions may illustrate that the thought of impartiality tends to form a paradoxical relationship between the hidden and visible, which, as we shall see, is also true of the Buddhist "*yuan*"—the "round/perfect." For instance, after the influential Kumārajīva disciple Seng Zhao has coined the binary "root and traces" on the basis of Xuanxue and Madhyamaka thoughts, Tiantai master Zhiyi as well as Sanlun master Jizang use that term to clarify the relationship of Nāgārjuna's (c. 150–c. 250) discussion about the two truths (*satyadvaya*, *er di* 二諦).

The universal concern of the noble which characterizes the traditional thought of impartiality leads, in the form of Xuanxue thought, to the epistemological bifurcation of the hidden and visible; analogously, Mahāyāna views cherish the universal concern of the Buddha to liberate the minds of all sentient beings from their self-induced deceptions and their suffering rooted therein, and this entails, according to Madhyamaka thought, the distinction of conventional from ultimate truth, which, as we shall see, also implies a sense of epistemological bifurcation and the paradoxical relationship of what is distinguished—the paradox of distinction.

In other words, what Xuanxue thinkers as well as Buddhist masters share in common is the view that the thought of impartiality—the universal concern and embrace emptied from inclinations to any particular—entails an epistemological bifurcation—the hidden and the visible, and that therefore the cultivation of that universal concern must imply an awareness of inconsistency. Interestingly enough, this observation developed independently in both Chinese Xuanxue and Indian Mahāyāna thought. The thesis of this paper is then that it is such observation which might have functioned as the point of intersection based on which the Chinese Tiantai teaching construed its concept of the "round/perfect"—the Chinese Buddhist thought of impartiality inspired by Madhyamaka.

The "Study of the Dark"—adopting views not only from Confucian and Daoist sources—has played an eminent role in the Chinese appropriation of early Indian Prajñā pāramitā/ Madhyamaka ideas. The three interconnected aspects of (1) impartiality, (2) inseparability (non-duality) of the hidden and visible, and (3) awareness of inconsistency feature not only the universal concern in the "Study of the Dark," but also that of the Buddhist conception "*yuanjiao*"—"the round/perfect teaching"—developed in the Tiantai 天台 and the Huayan 華嚴 schools. Hence, the subsequent paragraphs outline and adumbrate (1) the specific manner in which the non-dual hidden and visible (root and traces) characterizes the Tiantai Buddhist notion of the "round/ perfect," (2) the

paradoxes that the understanding of this conception must observe, and (3) the way in which all this relates to both Xuanxue and Madhyamaka thought.

2 The hidden and visible in Tiantai's round/ perfect teaching

Tiantai master Zhiyi, who witnessed the change of the three dynasties Liang, Chen, Sui in his lifetime, based his teaching on inspirations from the early Indian Prajñā pāramitā/ Madhyamaka scriptures and treatises many of which had earlier been introduced and translated by Kumārajīva. At the same time, the notion of Buddha-nature (佛性 *foxing*) from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* 大般涅槃經, as the potential which enables the non-awakened to transform into the opposite, the awakened, plays a central role in his teaching. Moreover, referencing the translated scriptures and treatises (*sūtra* and *śāstra*) from India, Zhiyi's doctrinal exegesis uses an idiom which is strongly influenced by Xuanxue thought and its terminology. Since the time of the initial translations of *sūtra* and *śāstra* four hundred years earlier, Chinese Buddhist masters had started to incorporate such terminology into their own interpretations of the dharma.

However, from which sources did Zhiyi derive the idea and expression of the "round/ perfect teaching" (*yuanjiao*), or who were the first Buddhist masters who might have used this term? According to the extant sources, the earliest use of the term "round/ perfect teaching" is proved in the *Collected Interpretations of the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (*Daban niepan jing jijie* 大般涅槃經集解) edited and collated by Baoliang 寶亮 (444–509) and others in 509. Several of the mentioned Buddhist masters from the fifth century, such as Baoliang himself, Seng Zong 僧宗 (438–496), and Seng Liang 僧亮 (unknown) are listed as the adherents of this doctrine.

Besides this, Dilun master 地論師 Huiguang 慧光 (468–537) seems also to have developed a doxographical scheme, in which the "round/perfect teaching" figures as the summit of the *Buddhadharma*. However, unlike those interpreters of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and the later Tiantai concept, Huiguang associated it primarily with the teachings in the *Huayan-sūtra* (*Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, *Dafang guangfo huayan jing*, 大方廣佛華嚴經). In fact, this *sūtra* text mentions the term "*yuan*" in the compound "*Yuanman jing*," which means "*Sūtra of Full Perfection*." The *sūtra* verses say:

> Aware of the maturity of sentient beings' faculties, he goes to their assembly site, and reveals the power unrestrained [by delusion] to expound the *Sūtra of Full Perfection* to

> uncountable sentient beings, and confers the prophecy of their awakening. 知眾生根熟，往詣大眾所。顯現自在力，演說圓滿經，無量諸眾生，悉授菩提記, (T09, no. 278, p. 750, b5–7).[9]

For the Dilun and the later Huayan masters, it is this *sūtra* which accounts for the teaching that is deemed as "round/ perfect." In the Chinese tradition, the *Huayan-sūtra* is believed to represent the ultimate meaning of the dharma in exactly the same way in which that meaning reveals itself to the fully awakened in the very moment of his awakening and his mind's liberation from deception.

Although Tiantai master Zhiyi carried on the use of the term "round/perfect teaching," for him, it is the *Lotus-sūtra* (*Saddharma pundarīka-sūtra*, *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經) which fully conveys that exalted sense, because, according to his understanding, only this *sūtra* has the capacity to "reveal the root by setting forth all the traces" (*fa ji xian ben* 發跡顯本), "to reveal the real by opening up all the adapted" (*kai quan xian shi* 開權顯實), and "to let in the subtle by clearing up the coarse" (*jue cu ling miao* 決麁令妙). In his treatise on the meaning of the title of the *Lotus-sūtra*, he explains:

> If neither the gateways [to liberation from delusion], nor the principles [correspondent to the teachings], nor the [practicing] persons have acquired the sense of the subtle (*miao* 妙), then we must now open up [all these], which means: to open up all desires, deluded views, and afflictions, which awakening is inseparably bound up with, therefore the [*Lotus-sūtra*] says: 'contemplating all dharmas as empty like the real mark'; to open up all of *saṃsāra*, which *nirvāṇa* is inseparably bound up with, therefore the [*Lotus-sūtra*] says: 'constantly abiding in the [incessantly changing] worldly forms'; to open up all the common persons, with whom the noble person is inseparably bound up, therefore the [*Lotus-sūtra*] says: 'all sentient beings are my ward'; ... When each gateway and each principle will have entered the subtle, then it is called: 'to reveal the real by opening up the adapted,' as well as 'to let in the subtle by clearing up the coarse.' 若門、若理、若人未妙者，今當開謂：開一切愛見煩惱即是菩提，故云：觀一切法空如實相；開一切生死即是涅槃，故云：世間相常住；開一切凡人即是妙人，故云：一切眾生皆是吾子； ... 若門、若理無不入妙，是名開權顯實，決麁令妙也.[10]

For Zhiyi, "the subtle" (妙 *miao*), the first character in the Chinese title of Kumārajīva's version of the *Lotus-sūtra*, is a synonym of the "round/perfect." It accounts for the unrestrained capacity to embrace the instructive value in each instant of deception. This is wisdom inextricably bound up with deception, as it

---

9 Similarly in the same *sūtra* chapter: "爾時，如來知諸眾生應受化者，而為演說圓滿因緣修多羅。時，彼大眾聞正法已，八十那由他眾生皆起離垢清淨法眼，得無學地，一萬眾生得大乘道，滿足普賢菩薩行願，見十方佛轉正法輪，現自在力，百佛世界微塵等眾生，具摩訶衍，滅十方世界無量眾生惡道苦難，生天人趣," (T09, no. 278, p. 749, a17–24).

10 T33, no. 1716, p. 792, b25–c16.

persists in being the correlative opposite of all the ever changing deceptions—all deceptions are inversions of wisdom, just as wisdom is transformation of all deceptions. The subtle endows the practitioner's performance with the awareness of this inseparability of deception and wisdom, thus enabling her/his understanding and acting to liberate itself and benefit others.

As is evident from the quote, the meaning of the subtle and the round/perfect is expressed by means of paradoxical speech, often combined with the Chinese character "*ji*" 即, translated as "inseparable." Zhiyi, as well as the later Tiantai masters, such as Siming Zhili 四明知禮 (960–1028) in the Song Dynasty, stress that it is the specific Tiantai understanding of that character—the Tiantai expression for inconsistency, which distinguishes the round/perfect teaching from all the other schools and masters, and makes it superior compared to them.

All this means that opposites, such as *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, or deception and wisdom, constituted solely through interdependency of mutually negating references (wisdom is non-deception, and deception is non-wisdom etc.), are equally empty of a real and independent core. Therefore, the two are not really different from each other, and this extends to all correlatively dependent opposites. The real nature of these differentiations is emptiness (*śūnyatā*, *kong* 空), which must be revealed through the "suspension of correlative dependency" (*jue dai* 絕待)—the evading sense of the subtle (*miao*) is suspension (*jue* 絕) realizing emptiness.

Yet, emptiness paradoxically is the root wherein these two are constituted as correlatively dependent opposites (*xiang dai* 相待)—because if not empty, they would not be correlatively dependent—hence, what is differentiated is tangible but therein becomes coarse (*cu* 麁) as this veils its own unreality. In other words, the real sense of emptiness can be revealed by unveiling unreality of those differences which are the "traces" (*ji*) which inversely guide back to the "root" (*ben*) that sustains them and is emptiness. Therefore, "root" accounts for non-duality in emptiness and "traces" for polarity in unreality. Because the hidden root is real and has the capacity to sustain, the traces are unreal but have the capacity to reveal.

The whole relation implies non-duality qua circularity of the opposites "root and traces" (*ben ji* 本跡), inseparability and difference, "subtle and coarse" (*miao cu* 妙麁), and also applies to the "real and adapted" (*shi quan* 實權).[11] The Tiantai binary "root and traces" thus itself is an example of what it is meant to represent: the bipolar traces and the non-dual root together express non-

11 For Zhiyi the "real" (*shi* 實) is the meaning of the ultimate only conveyed by the Buddha-vehicle, while the "adapted" (*quan* 權) is the meaning of *upāya* (*fangbian* 方便, skill in the use of means) conveyed by the three vehicles of the bodhisattva, *śrāvaka*, and *pratyekabuddha*.

duality qua circular polarity. This circular dynamic is called "subtle." For Zhiyi, the subtle in terms of "root and traces" embodies the sense of the "round/perfect" in the *Lotus-sūtra*. Therefore, the largest part of his lengthy treatise on the *sūtra* title consists of the two sections: (1) "*jimen shimiao*" 跡門十妙 (ten subtleties of the gate of the traces) and (2) "*benmen shimiao*" 本門十妙 (ten subtleties of the gate of the root). These two sections demonstrate coherence and interdependence between the manifold doctrines from all the *sūtras* and *śāstras*, and, in combination, reveal the subtle as that wherein all the manifold and differing doctrines coincide. The subtle is the most perfect expression of the round which embraces all—the ultimate meaning of Buddhadharma. Hence, Zhiyi concludes, this is why the character "*miao*" must obtain the first position in the title of this *sūtra*.

In the same treatise on this *sūtra*, Zhiyi uses the term *jue dai miao* 絕待妙, which could be translated as the "subtle qua suspension of correlative dependency," which characterizes the level of the "perfect/round teaching," and, in his other Tiantai work also recorded by his disciple Guanding 灌頂 (561–632), the *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (*Great Calming and Contemplation*), he coins the term *jue dai guan* 絕待觀, which means "contemplation suspending correlative dependency." In his commentary to this Tiantai classic, Zhanran 湛然 (711–782) explains that the first term accounts for the "subtle understanding" (*miaojie* 妙解) of the doctrines in *sūtra* and *śāstra*, and the second term hints at the "proper practice" (*zhengxing* 正行) of "mind-contemplation" (*guanxin* 觀心).

For the Tiantai masters, the two are complementary, as mind-contemplation and doctrinal understanding cannot be separated from each other, like the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a chariot. Moreover, in Zhiyi's Tiantai teaching, the terms "suspension" (*jue* 絕), "inseparability" (*ji* 即), "subtle" (*miao* 妙), and "round/perfect" (*yuan* 圓) are synonymous—they define the semantic field of the "round/perfect teaching," thereby implying such circular mutuality of subtle understanding and proper practice.

Again, according to the Tiantai teaching, the two are complementary in the sense that the doctrinal framework transmitted in the Buddhist canon and the self-examining practice of the contemplating mind in actuality together form a hermeneutical circle. Apart from the teachings in *sūtra* and *śāstra*, the self-examining practice of contemplation is incapable of liberating the mind from its self-induced deceptions, just as apart from the practice of mind-contemplation, the doctrinal contents in *sūtra* and *śāstra* remain incomprehensible. As previously mentioned, Zhiyi's "perfect/round teaching," implying non-duality of doctrinal exegesis and practice of mind-contemplation, establishes the hermeneutical paradigm of *practice qua exegesis*. Doctrinal exegesis, interpreting *sūtra* and *śāstra*,

enacts practice of mind-contemplation, entailing self-referential observation, and vice versa.

In this specific context, the *Lotus-sūtra* plays an important role, because it is considered to be what embodies the hermeneutical circle which connects the understanding of the canonical word with the contemplative practice of liberation. Zhiyi outlines the compositional structure of the *sūtra-text* in a manner that this structure also corresponds to and mirrors the *sūtra's* inter-textual relationship with all the other scriptures (*sūtras*). Resorting to the indigenous image of the hidden and visible, he divides the text into the two parts of the hidden root and the visible traces, which, for him, means that this text as a whole embodies the subtle sense of liberation—which is the non-dual "root" which enables all the teachings of the other *sūtras* to function as the bipolar "traces" that guide back to liberation. The compositional structure of the text, as well as its inter-textual relationship with all the others, enacts what the binary "root and traces" implies—the subtle—the sense of non-duality qua circular polarity between doctrine coined in linguistic expression and inexpressible liberation realized in mind-contemplation.

For Zhiyi, the *sūtra* thus consists of two parts: The first part (chapter 1 to 14) displays the textual manifestation of all the traces, explaining that no one of the Buddha's performances really is what it seems to be, and that his speech cannot be taken in the literal sense of the words that he uses—even his extinction into *nirvāṇa* does not really display his departing from this world of delusion. Yet nothing in his words and performances (his traces) is deceptive, as—to the contrary—all this involves a falsehood that is instructive, which is what characterizes the traces as signs inversely pointing back to what is true and real, which also is what, ultimately, can only be found in the practice and experience of the practitioner's own mind-contemplation.

For Zhiyi, the sense of what is true and real is then what the second part of the *sūtra* is meant to convey, epitomized in the *sūtra's* statement:

> Since I have been becoming Buddha, for eternal ages in a life full of uncountable eons, I have been constantly abiding without ever extinguishing, 我成佛已來，甚大久遠，壽命無量阿僧祇劫，常住不滅.[12]

For him, this is the textual instantiation of the root, as this reveals the true and real sense that, in the long-lasting and incessantly changing course of becoming a Buddha, the Buddha in fact has been being Buddha since ever, like the mind

12 T09, no. 262, p. 42, c20–21.

realizing that it, in all deluded states as well as all stages of transformation, in fact has always been containing the full potential for wisdom.

Hence, giving rise to all the changing and differing traces, the root is what remains unchanged. This is ambiguously featured as non-duality qua circular polarity (inseparability) of delusion and wisdom (*fannao ji puti* 煩惱即菩提, *wuming ji faxing* 無明即法性)—truth and reality indicated and inversely signified via all the constantly changing and various forms of instructive unreality. For Zhiyi and other Tiantai masters, the true nature of reality—"dharmanature" (*faxing* 法性) takes shape and is fully present in the deceptive manner—"ignorance" (*wuming* 無明) we exist in our world, since such force of falsehood has a heuristic value and therefore is nothing but an inverse form of the instructive functioning that informs our being in the world—and this precisely is what the awakened becomes aware of as the root instantiated in her/his experience of having been being Buddha since ever—that is: the actual nature of being Buddha unfolded in infinite multiplicity of ever changing identities.

For the practitioner, who strives for the accomplishment of liberation, the circular mutuality between the *Lotus-sūtra* and the other scriptures means that the understanding of this specific *sūtra* requires that of all the others, which also applies in reverse. On her/his path to "inconceivable liberation" (*acintya vimokṣa*, *busiyi jietuo*), her/his mind's comprehension must become like, or be modeled after, the hermeneutical circle that the Buddhist canon provides with this inter-textual relation, sketched out by the inner compositional structure of this specific *sūtra*-text that embodies circular mutuality of "root and traces."

Hence, in the course of cultivation, no one of all the canonical texts can be missed or neglected, although the true and accomplished (round/perfect) comprehension of just one *sūtra* includes that of all. According to the Tiantai view, the complete understanding of a single *sūtra* text culminates in realizing non-duality of linguistic expression and inexpressible liberation—the entire text-meaning of the *Lotus-sūtra* as "root and traces," which also is what each instant of deluded mental activity actually and really is. This is the reason why the Tiantai masters consider this *sūtra* as that scripture which represents the "round/perfect teaching" most comprehensively.

Again, all this implies inseparability qua circularity, according to Zhiyi's conception of the "round/perfect teaching": the hidden root has the capacity to constitute, but it must be revealed, while the visible traces have the capacity to reveal, but they must be constituted—the two are inseparable, like the *Lotus-sūtra* and the other scriptures in their inter-textual relationship, as well as the two parts which together constitute this text as a whole. Such dynamic circularity or inseparability of the hidden and visible as "root and traces," "subtle and coarse," or "real and adapted" is the feature of the "round/perfect teaching,"

which Zhiyi detects particularly in the text of the *Lotus-sūtra* and, in correspondence to this, also formulates as the most accomplished form of mind-con-templation.

As previously mentioned, according to this Tiantai interpretation, the evading sense of the Buddha's liberation in silence is the root that gives rise to speech in the manifold shapes of his teachings, which are the traces transmitted by *sūtra* and *śāstra* that, in turn, lead back to this root—silence generates speech, just as speech engenders silence.[13] "Root and traces" account for the paradox of linguistic signification, which the practitioner must see at the level of the "perfect/round teaching" in both the text of this *sūtra* and in her/his own mind. In a hermeneutical sense, non-duality of root and traces implies circularity in the relationship of text and mind.

In contrast to the later Huayan masters, Zhiyi's exposition resorts much more to the terminology of the "Study of the Dark" when he features the "round/perfect teaching" in terms of the circular non-duality of "root and traces," which he has borrowed from Kumārajīva's disciple Seng Zhao, who had been the first using this binary in the sense of non-duality yet polarity in his introduction to the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra*. Seng Zhao's Buddhist treatises and his commentary are abundant in Xuanxue terms. His use of "root and traces" (*ben ji*) in the explanation of "inconceivable liberation" in this *sūtra* seems to be inspired by Guo Xiang's "invisible entanglement and traces" (*ming ji*). However, the heuristic value or aspect of "revealing," which Seng Zhao attributes to the term "traces," has a much more positive connotation, compared to Guo Xiang, for whom the visible trace as a fixed imprint rather occludes than discloses the access to its hidden, indeterminate, and dynamic source.

The heuristic value in the concept "traces" seems to be of Buddhist origin, because, when the early Chinese Buddhist masters associated this Xuanxue term with the Madhyamaka doctrine of "conventional truth" (*saṃvṛti-satya*, *sudi* 俗諦,

---

13 The following quote from the *Mohe zhiguan* (摩訶止觀) expresses this paradox of linguistic signification: "The one who considers speech and silence as rivals has not understood the intent/meaning of the teaching and is far away from principle [liberation]. Apart from speech there is no principle [liberation], and apart from principle there is no speech. To never separate from speech is to be devoid of speech, just as to be devoid of speech is to never separate from speech. [...] The one tightly attached to script [Buddhist texts] undergoes harm; one should realize that script is not [real] script; the one, who fully comprehends that all script is what is neither script nor non-script, has the capacity to accomplish the understanding of all through just one single script [in any of the Buddhist scriptures]. 若競說默，不解教意，去理逾遠。離說無理，離理無說。即說無說，無說即說，[...] 若封文為害；須知文非文，達一切文非文非不文，能於一文得一切解," (T46, no. 1911, p. 3, b2–9). For a deeper understanding of this issue in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*, see Stevenson and Donner 1993, and Swanson 2018.

shidi 世諦, *shisudi* 世俗諦), the occluding quality and sense of interference, which had been assigned to "traces" in the Daoist and Xuanxue discourses, obviously turned into the opposite—the sense of "revealing." This change of evaluation might have to do with the Mahāyāna view that it is the negative experience of suffering and delusion apart from which the positive, wisdom and liberation, cannot arise. The negative, seen as an inverse sign, is instructive and thus has the capacity to be positive, and for the Tiantai masters, the same ambiguity applies in reverse—the positive has the capacity to be negative in excluding its own opposite from itself.[14] Therefore, the Buddhists, who, in agreement with the Daoist/Xuanxue thinkers, deny the clinging to the "traces," nevertheless reject the stance that entirely abandons the provisional use of them. Thus, they evaluate the traces as inverse signs of the root, all of which carry the ambiguity of the positive/negative (the negative in its heuristic value) that must be seen in order to accomplish the mind's liberation from its self-induced deceptions.

Correspondent to this Mahāyāna view, there is the early Madhyamaka position according to which ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*, *shengyi di* 勝義諦, *diyiyi di* 第一義諦, *zhendi* 真諦) can only be apprehended by differentiating it from conventional truth—a limited, provisional, and instructive sense of truth in the realm of unreality. The conventional, ultimately untrue, nevertheless conveys a limited sense of truth due to that heuristic value of unreality—therefore the ambiguous conventional can be called truth in a limited and provisional sense. Thus these two truths do not account for disparate realities, because the conventional is just unreal, and therein, that is in an inverse fashion, points at the otherwise evading sense of the ultimate. Despite their differentiation, the ultimate cannot be revealed apart from the conventional that the Chinese Buddhists associate with the "traces." The Chinese "traces" expresses the ambivalent stance of Indian Madhyamaka thought to the negative—the sorrowful

---

14 This ambiguity of the negative/positive (evil/good) is most explicitly expressed in the Tiantai work *Guanyin xuanyi* (觀音玄義), a work whose authorship is assigned to Zhiyi, which however has been doubted by modern scholarship in Japan. The text claims that evilness in nature (*xinge* 性惡) cannot be eradicated by cultivation of good (*xiushan* 修善), just as goodness in nature (*xingde* 性善) cannot be destroyed by cultivation of evil (*xiu'e* 修惡): "Although the Icchantika [most deluded sentient being] has completely severed any cultivation of good, goodness in nature is still there. Although the Buddha has completely severed the cultivation of evil, evilness in nature is still there. 闡提斷修善盡，但性善在。佛斷修惡盡，但性惡在," (T34, no. 1726, p. 882, c10–11). Good and evil are correlatively dependent opposites and thus inseparable; hence each of the two represents this inseparability as a whole. Therefore, if goodness prevails in cultivation, evilness in nature is still there, and vice versa. Hence, to separate what is inseparable is a delusion, and delusion is the source from which all cultivation of evil comes from, according to Tiantai Buddhist thought; for a deeper discussion see Ziporyn 2000.

experience of unreality, and thus highlights its heuristic value and soteriological relevance—the positive—as the wholesome way in which deluded beings are believed to transform into the opposite.

Nonetheless, reminiscent of Wang Bi's and Guo Xiang's notion of paradoxical inseparability of the hidden and visible, the binary "root and traces" featuring the concept of the round/ perfect carries on the thought of impartiality in this Chinese Buddhist discourse, yet adding the ambivalent evaluation of unreality—the heuristic value of the traces. In this Buddhist concept of the hidden and visible, the thought of impartiality seems to become even closer associated with the sense of paradox, as the mind's observation of that paradox is what triggers the liberation from its self-induced deceptions. Zhiyi's Tiantai interpretation of the Indic term "inconceivable liberation" is based precisely on this view. The subsequent paragraph explains in more detail how and why the Chinese Buddhist masters came to use the Xuanxue scheme of the hidden and visible for their interpretations of liberation and two truths in Buddhist Madhyamaka thought.

3 Paradoxical coinciding of becoming with being

The formation of the Tiantai term "*yuanjiao*," as well as its conceptual structure of non-duality—"root and traces," is not solely based on inspirations from the indigenous traditions in China. Rather, it is the confluence of the two sources of early Indian Prajñā pāramitā/ Madhyamaka and Chinese Daoist/ Xuanxue which shaped that thought. According to early Buddhist masters in medieval China, such as Seng Zhao, the affinity or point of intersection that these two seem to share in common consists of the two previously mentioned aspects: (1) non-duality of the hidden and visible, and (2) impartiality. However, if seen from the viewpoint of these early Chinese Buddhist masters, how would these two aspects apply to the Buddhist teachings that Kumārajīva introduced to China at the turn of the fourth to the fifth century? To further examine this question, some preliminary remarks about the concept of the two truths in Prajñā-pāramitā/ Madhyamaka thought must be made:

Referencing the "middle way" (*madhyamaka*, *zhongdao* 中道), early Indian Madhyamaka thought, as developed by Nāgārjuna in the second century, points at the ontological indeterminacy in all "conditioned co-arising" (*pratītyasamutpāda*, *yuanqi* 緣起). "Ontological indeterminacy" means that the ontological status of interdependently arising things cannot be unequivocally determined. Due to their emptiness of self-being, or lack of *svabhāva*—"emptiness of inherent existence"

(*śūnyatā*, *kong* 空), things are neither really existent (*fei you* 非有), nor does their unreality equal complete non-existence (*fei wu* 非無).[15] On the one hand, they are unreal, because they are not intrinsically what they appear to be; they are phenomena which persist only in extrinsic relationships subject to constant change. On the other hand, they are not nonexistent, which is evident from the existential relevance of their deceptive effects on sentient beings—deceptions resulting into "suffering," according to Buddhist doctrine.

The main issue in this understanding of the ontological status of conditioned co-arising is Nāgārjuna's use of the Sanskrit term "*svabhāva*" the literal sense of which is "self-being" or "self-existent." The Chinese translation "*zixing*" 自性 means "self-nature." The initial part of chapter 15 in the Chinese *Zhong lun* 中論 (Nāgārjuna's *Mūla madhyamaka kārikā*) expands on a sense of "self-nature" (*zixing*), or "self-being" (*svabhāva*), which inevitably occurs whenever our intentional acts take their reference points to be what actually and really exists. However, Nāgārjuna points out that "*pratītyasamutpāda*" ("conditioned co-arising") means that there is no thing that exists independently from something else, nothing is self-existent (*svabhāva*).

This is to say no thing which we point at in our linguistic references is really existent, because not only the certain thing that is pointed at but also all the others which such a thing is dependent on are not self-existent: those others themselves are dependent on something else and so on. Thus emptiness of inherent existence (*śūnyatā*) implies that there is no irreducible core of reality in any of the referents that we point at. All are unreal, yet unreality is not tantamount to complete nonexistence.[16] In our attempts to point at something real, we inevitably construe the *svabhāva* of things which is unreal. "*Svabhāva*" indicates an inevitable reification or hypostatization that evades the awareness in our epistemic-propositional references. Hence, "emptiness of *svabhāva*" expresses that there is no ontological equivalent of the semantic construction that we cannot cease to produce in our language use.

---

15 For instance, following Nāgārjuna, Seng Zhao explicitly makes this point in his *Treatises* (*Zhao lun* 肇論): "[Illusively] existent yet not [truly/really] existent, this is called not existent. Not [truly/really] existent yet [illusively] existent, this is called not non-existent. If it is so, then it is not the case that there are no things; things are just not true/real things. [...] Therefore, the *Fangguang bore jing* says: 'All dharmas are false/ provisional signs and not true/real. It is like the illusory person created through magic. It is not the case that there is no illusory person created by magic. It is only the case that the illusory person created by magic is not a true/real person.' 雖有而無，所謂非有。雖無而有，所謂非無。如此，則非無物也，物非真物。【...】故放光【般若經】云：諸法假號不真。譬如幻化人，非無幻化人。幻化人，非真人也," (T45, no. 1858, p. 152, b5–6, c18–20).

16 See T30, no. 1564, p. 20, a12–13.

If reality is what constitutes the world we inhabit, relate to, interact with, and thus shape, then unreality is part of it. In this sense, reality is emptiness which sustains unreality unequal to nonexistence, because without emptiness of inherent existence interdependency would be impossible. To understand the true sense of emptiness—nature of reality—is to realize existential relevance yet ontological indeterminacy of unreality in all interdependent arising—the middle way. This is to say, such unreality evades our conventional awareness like a blind-spot, precisely due to the fact that it is what pervades all our epistemic-propositional references—the assumption of *svabhāva* that we must make when we refer to something as real.

That all referents are unreal conversely means that real things cannot be referred to. This also extends, paradoxically enough, to that type of unreality whose ontological status cannot really be denied. If it is true that all referents are unreal, then the unreality of nameable things evades, like a blind-spot, our epistemic-propositional references. Hence, what allows us to really access the true sense of emptiness is the awareness of the paradox that our intent to refer to something as real generates unreality. In other words, awareness of the paradox triggers and indicates self-referential observation in our epistemic-propositional references, and, most importantly, apart from such observation the ultimate sense of emptiness cannot properly be comprehended.

At this point, Nāgārjuna resorts to the concept of the two truths in Indian philosophy. He holds that, in order to truly see the ultimate sense of emptiness, we must distinguish ultimate truth from conventional truth. Without such distinction, our intentional activity would otherwise force us to acknowledge "*svabhāva*," because, whenever we consider our reference point to be what is real and actually exists, we must rely on the image of an independent and irreducible core of reality. However, as previously mentioned, this assumption precisely is what "emptiness" must deconstruct, if conditioned co-arising is to be conceived of in a coherent way. Therefore, the ultimate meaning must be distanced from any speech that intends to refer to it, which culminates into this paradoxical distinction of two truths.

The distinction between two truths means then that, conventional truth, deeply engaged with the linguistic construction of *svabhāva*, is incongruent with the ineffable sense of ultimate truth, emptiness—a sense which is undistorted by any construction, and yet the conventional and ultimate persist in correlation, they are inseparable, as is *śūnyatā* and *pratītyasamutpāda*, as well as, the real and unreal. For, if unreality construed by conventional truths is considered as what is independent, or persists apart from ultimate emptiness, the unreal would be mistaken for real. Therefore, the distinction of two truths entails the opposite, revealing emptiness and unreality of what is distinguished—

inseparability, which is a paradox—the paradox of distinction that our observation must become aware of in order to really see emptiness in conditioned co-arising.[17] Because of the paradox that this distinction reveals inseparability of what is to be distinguished, Nāgārjuna further says that the understanding of the evading sense of the ultimate must rely on the conventional.

Again, the ultimate does not separate from the conventional, because the conventional is not ultimately real—it is empty, and emptiness does not equal nonexistence; yet falsehood of the conventional and truth of ultimate emptiness are not the same. The correlation of the two truths—the paradox of inseparability yet differentiation features the proper understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda* apart from which the turn of the non-awakened into the awakened would not be conceivable—the mind's liberation from self-induced deception. In this Madhyamaka interpretation, the two truths indicate the epistemological

17 This is a paradox but not a contradiction and therefore cannot be interpreted in terms of para-consistent logic, which acknowledges dialetheism—true contradictions: true statements whose negations are also true. This view on Nāgārjuna's concept of the two truths is defended by Deguchi, Garfield, and Priest (2008: 385–402) and (2013), but has also been challenged by others. My point is that opposing statements about emptiness, liberation, or ultimate truth are not contradictory in the same respect. There certainly is a type of paradox, which characterizes the Madhyamaka discourse of emptiness and liberation. At the level of cognitive construction, it occurs whenever conceptual forms and statements, referencing those crucial Buddhist topics (emptiness, liberation, ultimate truth), turn out to be self-referential and self-inclusive, because such operation entails their own reversal. For instance, "emptiness of *svabhāva*" implies that there is no *svabhāva* of emptiness, and, only in this self-inclusive sense, emptiness is empty of emptiness, that is, what "emptiness" signifies must be denied in order to reveal true emptiness. Again, this is a paradox but not a contradiction! The Sanskrit suffix "*-tā*" in "*śūnyatā*" does not mean that there really is *svabhāva* of what is empty of it, as the ontological interpretation of dialetheism might suggest. "*Svabhāva* of emptiness" in fact contradicts "emptiness of *svabhāva*," and there is no contradictory contention like this in any of the texts composed by Seng Zhao, Jizang, Zhiyi, or others. "Emptiness of emptiness" (*kong kong* 空空, *kong yi fu kong* 空亦復空) denies "*svabhāva* of emptiness," in order to maintain the true sense of "emptiness of *svabhāva*." Moreover, the previously mentioned view of "ontological indeterminacy" excludes the ontological sense of the dialetheist understanding of emptiness, which the proponents of this interpretation coin into this formula: "(1) Things have no nature, and (2) that is their nature," (cf. Deguchi/Garfield/Priest 2013: 399). Again, the statement "no-nature [= emptiness] is the nature of things" cannot mean that there is "*svabhāva* of emptiness." In order to endorse the paradoxical form, "nature" in each of the two opposite statements would need to have a different meaning, but then the two statements are not really contradictory. The ambiguity of the expression "nature" corresponds to the differentiation—the two aspects, of the conventional and ultimate. The formula should mean: "Things have no nature [not one that we ascribe to them at the conventional level—*svabhāva*], and that is their nature [in the ultimate sense which is different from the conventional one—emptiness]." The ontological interpretation of dialetheism confuses *śūnyatā* with *svabhāva*.

significance of the hermeneutical circle in the proper understanding of *pratītyasamutpāda* which includes the insight about ontological indeterminacy: The comprehension of the ultimate persists in understanding the provisional nature of the conventional and vise versa; the same applies also to the notions of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

Nāgārjuna's notion of distinguishing the two truths entails an epistemological bifurcation into *prajñā* and *upāya*, as pointed out in the interpretations of the Chinese masters. For instance, in his attempt to elucidate the mutuality of *prajñā* and *upāya*, Seng Zhao explains in his commentary to the *Vīmalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* that the root of inconceivable liberation (*busiyi jietuo zhi ben* 不思議解脫之本) consists of the two aspects of "wisdom and adaptation" (*zhi quan* 智權), also referred to as "*hui quan*" (慧權) in Huida's 慧達 (c. fifth century) introduction of Seng Zhao's *Treatises* (*Zhao lun* 肇論). *Zhi* 智 or *hui* 慧, translated as wisdom, implies *prajñā-pāramitā* (accomplishment of wisdom), and *quan* 權, literally to weigh, balance, adjust and adapt, is a another term for *upāya-kauśalya* (*fangbian* 方便), which means skill in the use of means.

Drawing on Seng Zhao, Jizang distinguishes two forms of wisdom (*er zhi* 二智), translated as "wisdom of the real" (*shi zhi* 實智) and "wisdom of adaptation" (*quan zhi* 權智)—a distinction which Yuankang 元康 (627–649) in his Tang *Commentary to Seng Zhao's Treatises* (*Zhao lun shu* 肇論疏) adopts:

> As for [1] the gate of *prajñā* contemplating emptiness, and [2] the gate of *upāya* concerned with what is there, contemplating emptiness is wisdom of the real (*shi zhi*), and being concerned with what is there is wisdom of adaptation (*quan zhi*). 然則般若之門觀空、漚和之門涉有者，觀空是實智也，涉有是權智也.[18]

Highlighting the dynamic mutuality between these two distinctive aspects, Jizang, in accordance with the later Yuankang, explains that they are yet inseparable or non-dual (*bu er* 不二), neither of the two develops apart from the other.

This Chinese expanding on Nāgārjuna's thought of the two truths explicates the implicit epistemological bifurcation and also the paradoxical relationship of two epistemic fields—a feature, which comes close to the Xuanxue scheme of the hidden and visible. Hence, in their appropriation of Madhyamaka thought, the Chinese Buddhist masters also equated the evading sense of the ultimate with the hidden root, and the manifesting function of the conventional with the realm of the visible—an image most probably borrowed from Wang Bi's "root and ends" (*ben mo*) and Guo Xiang's "invisible entanglement and traces" (*ming ji*). For instance, Tiantai master Zhiyi analyzes the paradoxical and circular

18 T45, no. 1859, p. 166, b22–23.

relationship of the two truths on the basis of a statement drawn from the commentary to the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra* by Kumārajīva's disciple Seng Zhao, who stresses the non-duality of the hidden and visible through the two Xuanxue terms "root" and "traces." In his treatise on the meaning of the title of the *Lotus-sūtra*, Zhiyi explains:

> As for elucidating 'root and traces' in reference to 'principle and things', this is as stated [in the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra*]: 'All dharmas are set up on account of the non-abiding root'.[19] Non-abiding principle is the real mark and ultimate truth of the root-time. All the dharmas are the densely intertwined conventional truths of the root-time. As the root of the real mark and ultimate truth leaves behind the traces of the conventional, the root of ultimate truth becomes manifest by pursuing the traces of the conventional. [We quote from Seng Zhao's *sūtra*-commentary:] 'Although root and traces must be differentiated, they are inconceivably one'.[20] 約理事明本跡者，從無住本立一切法。無住之理，即是本時實相真諦也。一切法，即是本時森羅俗諦也。由實相真本垂於俗跡，尋於俗跡即顯真本。本跡雖殊，不思議一也.[21]

"Non-abiding root" (*wuzhu ben* 無住本) or "principle" (*li* 理) is true emptiness. As there is no evidence for a really existent entity wherein all things ultimately abide, such emptiness of inherent existence, unequal to nonexistence, truly is the ultimate root because of which all interdependent arising can be set up as a net of intertwined conventional truths. Devoid of any real arising and cessation (*busheng bumie* 不生不滅), true emptiness instantiates "root-time" (*benshi* 本時) insofar as it is unaffected by the temporality and impermanence which characterizes all the unreal arising and cessation (*shengmie* 生滅)—conditioned co-arising that it sustains.

Expanding in empty interdependency of such root-time, temporal and provisional conventionality forms a net of intertwined and mutual references each of which accounts for a particular trace that equally points back to the self-same root as the ultimate truth of all. Exhibiting its own unreality which is emptiness of inherent existence unequal to nonexistence, each trace manifests the root of all. Again according to Zhiyi, "root" is what constitutes but is hidden and therefore must be made manifest, while all the visible traces are what manifests but must be constituted. This circular non-duality of root and traces—the Buddhist hidden and visible—highlights and epitomizes the relation between the two truths as that between conditioned co-arising and emptiness, which is

19 This is a quote from the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra*, T14, no. 475, p. 547, c22. For a detailed discussion of Zhiyi's understanding of the two truhs, see Swanson 1989, and Ziporyn 2016.

20 The last sentence is a quote from Seng Zhao's commentary on the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra*, see footnote 4, (T38, no. 1775, p. 327, a27–b5).

21 T33, no. 1716, p. 764, b19–c1.

also in accordance with the relation of becoming Buddha and being Buddha, according to Zhiyi's reading of the *Lotus-sūtra*.

Again, "root-time" (*benshi* 本時), another term for emptiness and ultimate truth, stresses the aspect of non-arising and non-cessation (*busheng bumie* 不生不滅). It accounts for the consummate form of actually being the awakened as depicted in the *Lotus-sūtra*, which in a paradoxical manner explains that becoming Buddha does not really differ from being Buddha. There simply is no real becoming which is subject to linear temporality in terms of arising and cessation.

Zhiyi's commentary on the *Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra* (*Weimojing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏) contains a passage corresponding to this quote from his treatise on the title of the *Lotus-sūtra*.[22] However, unlike this quote, that passage does not use the term "root-time," precisely for the reason that the *Lotus-sūtra* is considered to be the only scripture which describes the process of becoming Buddha from the viewpoint of actually being Buddha—which is "root-time." Only such perspective of "root-time" can apprehend interdependency of all sequential time-aspects in this process as a simultaneous whole, apart from which there is no self-contained state of being Buddha.

Most importantly, actual awakening and the entire process of transformation preceding liberation do not persist apart from each other like disparate states of being. The process and its result are not separate events. Their mutuality becomes evident in the awakening which realizes such root-time, suspending the successive order in linear temporality. All arising and cessation in the transformative process in fact is empty, coinciding with non-arising and non-cessation. Becoming Buddha coincides with actually being Buddha like conditioned co-arising with emptiness, conventional with ultimate, or traces with root. Being Buddha corresponds to emptiness which is the hidden root that sustains, and becoming Buddha accords with conditioned co-arising which embraces all the visible traces that manifest. Emptiness and conditioned co-arising, ultimate and conventional, being Buddha and becoming Buddha are, in the very sense of root and traces, "inconceivably one."

This paradoxical coinciding of becoming Buddha with being Buddha implies the same circularity which constitutes non-duality qua polarity of root and traces—the very feature of the round/perfect. Hence, in distinguishing root from traces, ultimate from provisional, being from becoming, emptiness from

---

22 Similar to the passage in his treatise on the *Lotus-sūtra*, Zhiyi says: "一、約理事明本迹者，此經云：從無住本，立一切法。今明不思議理事為本迹者。理即不思議真諦之理為本。事即不思議俗諦之事為迹。由不思議真諦之理本，故有不思議俗諦之事迹。尋不思議俗諦之事迹，得不思議真諦之理本。是則本迹雖殊不思議一也," (T38, no. 1777, p. 545, b21–27).

conditioned co-arising, awakening in fact realizes the coinciding of these opposites, which agrees with Nāgārjuna's thought of the two truths—the paradox of distinction. For Zhiyi, the *Lotus-sūtra* unfolds this paradox of distinction in its textual message of "revealing the root by setting forth the traces" (*fa ji xian ben* 發跡顯本).

By contrast, all the other *sūtras*, according to the Tiantai view, refer to the course of transformation as a succession of stages, each of which begins (arise) and ends (cease) in a linear, irreversible, and one-dimensional timeline. Moreover, because those *sūtras* treat awakening—being Buddha as the result which separates from this sequential process—becoming Buddha, they do not perceive liberation as a pervasive quality immanent to this course, and, therefore, the two—process and awakening—appear to be like separate events. Root and traces cannot be observed as inconceivably one. Hence, the manner in which these *sūtras* distinguish the ultimate from the conventional cannot really entail full observation of paradoxical coinciding. Their views must remain partial as opposed to the round/perfect. Those *sūtras* lack insight about root-time which can only be presented in the account that, on the basis of the "round/perfect teaching," adumbrates the entire course of becoming Buddha from the viewpoint of being Buddha, thereby integrating the two.

Tiantai masters believe that only the *Lotus-sūtra* truly accounts for the experience of actually being Buddha, because it describes mutual pervasion of time-aspects as the result of fully awakened awareness that each of the temporally different stages in the process of becoming Buddha must coincide with that which also persists in actually being Buddha. Otherwise, no one of these stages could ever be an element of the transformative process from which awakening cannot be separated like an independent event.

In the *Lotus-sūtra*'s narrative, different time-aspects are reversed, disrupting the successive order of conventional temporality, as for instance, father and son encounter each other in a reversed arrangement of time-aspects: The father in the state of his past childhood encounters the son in the state of his geriatric future. The younger son sees his older father in a state much younger than himself, just as, conversely, the older father sees the younger son in a state much older than himself. In other words, the perceived sequential order of all time-aspects is transposed into a perspective of simultaneity to reveal mutual dependency, which, in this paradoxical manner, deconstructs the image of conventional timelines, and yet, at the same time, shows what constitutes conventional temporality.

For Zhiyi, this is the viewpoint of the "round/perfect teaching" which looks at all phenomena in terms of root-time—the paradoxical coinciding of becoming with being, revealed only to the awakened, who is liberated from self-induced

deceptions and, in a circular manner, sees non-arising and non-cessation in arising and cessation and vice versa. This is the manner in which the *Lotus-sūtra* is believed to shed light on the process of becoming from the viewpoint of its inseparable result—awakening.

Again, the sequential and irreversible timeline in which each time-aspect of the conventional occurs and obtains its temporal determination veils the root-time that is interdependency of all infinite time-aspects in simultaneity. The key point is that it is that simultaneous interdependency of all in which each truly persists, just as such simultaneity cannot be separated from each in its sequential arrangement. However, in their perceived timeline, conventional moment-thoughts are unaware of precisely this simultaneity, while the awareness of it is the awakening which deconstructs the clinging to the conventional image of the sequential temporal order, without really completely invalidating it.

Awakening, according to the Tiantai interpretation of the *Lotus-sūtra*, experiences an inexhaustible multitude of changing identities in reference to which this awareness of simultaneity realizes the full nature of actually being Buddha. This experience and observation of the paradoxical coinciding of becoming with being, sequence with simultaneity, is of course defiant and inconsistent, seen from the viewpoint of conventional temporality.

4 Conclusion

Construing the binary "root and traces" in their interpretation of the two truths, Chinese Buddhist masters, such as Seng Zhao, Jizang, and Zhiyi, seem to assume conceptual affinities between Madhyamaka and Xuanxue thought, although they seem, at the same time, to be very well aware of the fundamental differences regarding the ontological approaches which these two traditions have developed. Particularly Tiantai's "round/perfect teaching" follows the epistemological bifurcation of the hidden and visible in Xuanxue thought and combines this with the Madhyamaka concept of the two truths.

As previously explained, this bifurcation in Xuanxue epistemology features the thought of impartiality—the universal concern devoid of inclinations to particulars, which also includes the observation of a certain sense of inconsistency (paradox of intention, paradox of incongruity). The same is true of Zhiyi's "round/perfect teaching" which combines both integration and inconsistency in his view of root and traces—the Buddhist version of the hidden and visible (paradox of distinction). The way in which "the relation of the invisible and visible" in this era of Chinese philosophy has been discussed stresses the insight

that observation of paradox and inconsistency is part of the course in which the thought of the impartial as well as round/ perfect must be developed.

References

Primary Sources

Takakuso, Junjirō 高楠順次 / Watanabe, Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 (eds.) (1924–1934): *Taishō Shinshū daizōkyō* 大正信州大蔵経 (Buddhist Canon Newly Compiled in the Taishō Era). 85 Vols Tokio: Issaikyō Kankō Kai.
T 262 *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (*Saddharmapundarīka-sūtra*)
T 475 *Weimo jie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所說經 (*Vimalakīrti nirdeśa-sūtra*)
T 1564 *Zhong lun* 中論 (*Mūlamadhyamaka kārikā*), Longshu 龍樹 (Nāgārjuna)
T 1775 *Zhu weimo jing* 注維摩經
T 1858 *Zhao lun* 肇論
T 1716 *Miaofa lianhua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義
T 1777 *Weimo jing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏
T 1911 *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀
Wang Bi's 王弼 (226–249) collected works:
Lou, Yulie 樓宇烈 (1992): *Wang Bi Ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋. Taibei 台北: Huazheng shuju 華正書局.
Zhuang Zhou's 莊周 (fourth century BC) *Zhuangzi* 莊子and Guo Xiang's 郭象 (252–312) commentary:
Guo, Qingfan 郭慶藩 (1991): *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋. Taibei 台北: Huazheng shuju 華正書局.

Secondary Sources

Chen, Jinhua (1999): *Making and Remaking History: A Study of Tiantai Sectarian Historiography* (Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph; 14). Tokyo: The International Institute of Buddhist Studies.
Deguchi, Yasuo / Garfield, Jay / Priest, Graham (2008): "The Way of the Dialetheist: Contradictions in Buddhism". *Philosophy East and West* 57.2: 385–402.
Deguchi, Yasuo / Garfield, Jay / Priest, Graham (2013): "Buddhism and Contradiction". *Philosophy East and West* 63.3: 353–358.
Lynn, Richard (1999): *The Classic of the Way and Virtue—A New Translation of the Tao-te Ching of Laozi as Interpreted by Wang Bi*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Steven, Daniel B. / Donner, Neal (1993): *The Great Calming and Contemplation: A Study and Annotated Translation of Chih-i's Mo-ho chih-kuan* (Kuroda Institute: Classics in East Asian Buddhism; 3). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
Swanson, Paul (1989): *Foundation's of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism*. Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture. Berkeley: Asian Humanity Presss.

Swanson, Paul (2018): *T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's Mo-ho Chih-kuan—Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight—Translation and Commentary by Paul Swanson* (Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Wagner, Rudolf (2000): *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator—Wang Bi on Laozi*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Ziporyn, Brook (2000): *Evil and/or/as the Good: Omnicentrism, Intersubjectivity and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought*. (Harvard;Yenching Institute Monograph Series; 51). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ziporyn, Brook (2004): *Being and Ambiguity: Philosophical Experiments with Tiantai Buddhism*. Chicago: Open Court.

Ziporyn, Brook (2016): *Emptiness and Omnipresence: An Essential Introduction to Tiantai Buddhism*. Bloomngton: Indiana University Press.

Supplementary Material: The online version of this article offers supplementary material (https://doi.org/10.1515/asia-2019-0008).