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AN OMNITELIC RECONCEPTION OF TELEOLOGY IN TIANTAI BUDDHIST THOUGHT

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For Michio T. Shinozaki and the late Gene Reeves

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to be a contribution to redressing deficits in the existing scholarship of Tiantai Buddhist thought in Anglophone America and further facilitating future intercultural dialogue in the philosophy of religions. In particular, it investigates ways in which a set of Tiantai's philosophical premises rooted in the tradition's flagship doctrine of Three Truths expressed in the mutually subsuming relation of various philosophical categories is used by Zhiyi, and attempts to draw its implications by examining Tiantai doctrines that deabsolutize the boundaries of the pairs of opposites such as self and other, the seen and unseen, conscious and unconscious, and delusion and enlightenment. In showing Tiantai's claims for the ultimate incoherence of finding the priority in each pair of these opposites respectively, the dissertation argues that the thoroughgoing lack of primacy in the pair of opposites results in the *identity* of these opposites and thus reveals that the Buddhahood is inherent to sentient beings' each moment of practice. In a larger context of the academic study of religions, Zhiyi's elaboration of Three Truths can offer a response to an issue embedded in the relation between universal and particular, and their parallel relation between related pairs of concepts such as whole and part, and ends and means. Postmodernist critics have considered one of the philosophical problems inherent to this relation to lie in a certain conception of exclusion: the realization of the true universality involves some form of the negation and neglect of the particular, even when some "essential" aspect of it is regarded as preserved. In this relation of negation, something about the particular has to be given up to synthesize with the universal. The same issue is found in the relation between whole and part, and between ends and means. Means are surrendered and eventually negated by the ends. In light of this, the present dissertation attempts to contribute an "omnitelic"

conception of totality, universality and result evolving out of the initially atelic Buddhist premises, that, by virtue of bringing no single finality to it, offers a philosophical framework that helps us rethink the relation between universal and particular that produces no sacrifice of any aspect of finite beings. This unique framework of Tiantai not only allows infinite play of all quiddities within it but also paradoxically brings coherence to the relation among all of these quiddities *without losing* any aspect of their identities, and hence, affirming the value of them all. A significance of this omnitelic framework is in that it philosophically undergirds buddhas and bodhisattvas' post-enlightened act and their salvific compassionate responses to the suffering of all sentient beings. The thematic choice of Zhiyi's discussion is based on my interest in the problem of "the relation of negation" embedded in teleology. As the final chapter of this dissertation discusses, a chief example of this is in the Western thought represented in Hegel's concept of the cunning of reason that exemplifies "dialectic progression", in contrast to Tiantai's "omnitelic circulation."

PREFACE

In ancient times, there lived an uncle and a nephew who became weavers at a palace. One day, they stole some rare treasures from the palace. A guard reported this theft to the king. The nephew told his uncle that he feared the latter would be captured because he was old and weak, so he made his uncle hide in a cave underground. But being afraid of getting caught, the nephew then chopped off the uncle's head and took it, leaving his body. After it was discovered, the king ordered that the corpse be placed at the crossroads so that the dead man's relatives would come to retrieve it, thereby revealing themselves. The king sent watchmen to capture any suspects. After that, taking advantage of the distraction when some merchants gathered around the corpse, the nephew arrived with a cart full of logs, under which he covered the body, but the king discovered this and had the logs removed.

Later, taking advantage of the distraction of children dancing around the corpse, the nephew set the body on fire. Then the nephew placed bottles of liquor at the site, and the watchmen got drunk. He then took his uncle's bones away in the empty liquor bottles. The king was frustrated by the nephew's trickiness and tried another tactic. He had a woman set out as bait on a wooden log floating in a lake near the crossroads, with a guard surveilling from a distance. The king commanded the woman, "Take hold of anyone who comes here, then scream." The lazy guard found someone else to watch it for him, resulting in the woman on the log being unguarded for several days. This allowed the nephew to arrive unseen in the nighttime to rape the woman. She grabbed at his garment, but he instead gave her the corpse's hand and escaped. Then she screamed for help, and yet when she looked she discovered she was only holding the hand of the dead man.

As a result of her assault, she gave birth to a handsome baby. The king ordered the nursing mother to carry her baby out, planning to arrest anyone who got emotional when meeting them. The mother and her baby were hungry and thirsty day after day and arrived where someone was making cakes on a stove. The baker, emotionally moved by their plight, gave them some cakes. The king gave an order to go out after him, but he also was fermenting good quality wine, and the guards instead got drunk.

Their drunkenness allowed the nephew to kidnap the baby and head for another country. The king of that country thought his scheming showed wisdom, offering to give him a daughter of a great minister of the country as a wife, but he refused, and so he instead named him as his own son, offering to marry him to the daughter of the king of the original country. The offer was accepted by the original country's king, suspecting that this was the thief and kidnapper. Then the nephew disguised himself to resemble one of five hundred horsemen in uniform. At the time of going to the country to meet his wife, the king of the original country saw him and asked if he was the former thief. The king sighed in admiration over his cunning deceptions—and gave him the daughter as his wife.¹

This nephew was one of the former lives of Śāriputra, Śākyamuni Buddha's famous disciple monk, who is known for being foremost in wisdom. The uncle was a former life of Devadatta, a cousin of Śākyamuni, known as a notorious figure who attempted to murder him out of jealousy and later joined his sangha repenting his evil deeds. The one who added a further surprising twist to this unexpected disclosure of their previous identity was Zhiyi, the de facto founder of Chinese Buddhist school called Tiantai, who made an enormous claim: all moments

¹ *Taishō shinshū daizō kyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (*The Chinese Buddhist Canon as Compiled in the Taisho Reign*). Ed. and compiled by Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku et al. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankō Kai, 1924–1934. (Henceforth, “T”) T34.11c23-T34.12a16.

of all the previous lifetimes of the Buddha's disciples, including both Śāriputra's ethically unacceptable behavior in his former life in the remote past and also his important role in the sangha in Śākyamuni's time, are both the "trace" of his bodhisattva practice that strives to end the suffering of all beings—and further, that all bodhisattva practices are actually the expression of already accomplished Buddhahood. How can we make sense of the idea that Śāriputra's wrongdoings that contribute to the engendering of suffering are precisely those bodhisattva practices that promote the end of suffering and even the expression of the perfect wisdom of accomplished Buddhahood? This dissertation tackles these inquiries.

INTRODUCTION

In the field of Buddhist studies in North America and Europe, East Asian Buddhist philosophy remains a neglected area relative to Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. Furthermore, even within the field of East Asian Buddhist thought, the vast majority of work is focused on topics related to the Zen/Chan school, the Huayan school, Dogen (1200-1253 CE), the Kyoto School, and the like, while there are at present still very few scholars working on Tiantai thought, the focus of study in the present dissertation. Hence, the academic study of East Asian Buddhist philosophy is already a small field, and Tiantai is smaller still.

And yet Tiantai, founded in the sixth century, was the first indigenous Chinese Buddhist school, setting the terms for all subsequent doctrinal developments in Chinese Buddhist history, and its derivative Japanese form Tendai was traditionally the uncontested mainstream of Japanese Buddhist thought, serving as the wellspring and training ground for all subsequent indigenous Japanese schools that sprang from the work of the radical Buddhist reformers of the Kamakura period (1185-1333 CE), including Shinran (Pure Land), Dogen (Sōtō Zen), and Nichiren. This neglect of Tiantai thought has thus made comprehension of East Asian Buddhism virtually impossible in Anglophone academia.

Hence, in spite of the smallness of the field of Tiantai studies, its prospective significance cannot be overstated. But even more to the point, there are dimensions of Buddhist thought unique to Tiantai that arguably provide otherwise elusive opportunities for meaningful philosophical dialogue between European philosophy of religion and Buddhist ideas. In particular, as I will attempt to elucidate in this dissertation, Tiantai thought shares neither the commitment to an atelic universe and the ultimate soteriological goal of reaching an atelic state

of desirelessness, typical of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, nor to the teleological structure typical of European religious traditions, where both creation and soteriology are governed by an overriding telos. Rather, we will find in Tiantai a rarely conceived third option, which I will here call the “omnitelic” conception of both reality and value.

This dissertation thus aims to be a contribution to redressing these deficits in the existing scholarship and further facilitating future intercultural dialogue in the philosophy of religions. In this introductory chapter, we shall commence with looking at how philosophical issues treated by Tiantai thinkers are situated in a broader academic context of the philosophy of religions so that we will have a clear idea about the philosophical issues that this dissertation takes up. After sketching out a big picture of what this project is about, I will introduce the world of Tiantai Buddhist philosophy by providing a critique of works undertaken by recent scholars of the field, such as Paul Swanson and Ng Yu-kwan so as to explain what are among controversial topics in the field, and how I approach them in this dissertation. The end of this introduction includes the method I use in this project, followed by a summary of each chapter.

0.1 Tiantai’s “Omnitelic” Approach and Hegelian Teleology: What Is At Stake?

To begin to get a sense of the issues at stake in this dissertation, let us look at the Tiantai interpretation of a prominent Buddhist figure, Śāriputra, known in all schools as the foremost in wisdom of all of the Buddha’s historical disciples, but generally disparaged in Mahāyāna texts as a “śrāvaka,” i.e., a mere “voice-hearing disciple,” falling far short of the real Mahāyāna wisdom of a “bodhisattva,” a buddha-to-be. But in the Tiantai depiction of Śāriputra we find a surprising twist, for we are told there not only that Śāriputra has all along been a bodhisattva, unbeknownst to himself, but also that his bodhisattvahood, far from canceling or eliminating his “śravakahood,”

is in fact what makes him a “true śrāvaka,” a śrāvaka all the more, and that his misrecognition of himself was itself part of his bodhisattva practice, skillfully elicited by the teaching of the Buddha. This move depends on an elaborate set of premises and tropes, even some whimsical wordplay, but it has important philosophical implications when compared with other examples of positively valued misdirection and self-misrecognition in the history of religious thought.

Bodhisattvahood determines the value of śrāvakahood in a new context, revealing a further meaning of what it is to be a śrāvaka—and indeed, this recontextualization reaches back even to a transformed understanding of the somewhat surprising stories of Śāriputra’s past lives as a bandit and romancer highlighted in Tiantai commentary (as the Preface introduced). He is revealed to have been not only a Mahāyāna-śrāvaka, but even a Mahāyāna-bandit, where Buddhahood is conceived not only as śrāvakahood all-the-more, but even as banditry all-the-more: the craven cunning wiliness that characterized him as a bandit is revealed through certain Tiantai recontextualizations to be the wisdom of Buddhahood. In this model, the ultimate apprehension of the individual’s identity and value reveal *a greater fulfillment* of his proximate misconceptions of his identity and value which simultaneously transforms their original significance: ultimate misdirection of one’s finite desire is here seen as a way of liberation, where the latter is conceived not as the negation of that finite desire but as its more complete fulfillment.

The distinctiveness of this conception can be seen by comparison to the Hegelian notion of the *cunning of reason*, as we shall explore in the present dissertation’s final fifth chapter. However, at the moment it suffices to say the following. The exemplary Hegelian figure here would be Napoleon: in his pursuit of glory and fame, Hegel thinks he inadvertently accomplished the universal aims of the World-Spirit. But in doing so, he himself is chewed up

and spit out: his own private ends are “sublated,” which involves both their contribution to the higher development *and* their own literal frustration. Napoleon in no way gets what he wants, though his wanting it allows Reason to get what *it* wants, as it were. In this model both what is ultimate (the abstract universal higher telos) and what is proximate (the passions of the particular) are sublated in the singularity of actual historical fulfillment, entailing the ultimate destruction of both one’s finite desire and the lifeless non-self-instantiating abstract universal, conceived as excluding the passions of the particular, as a way Reason cunningly advances its purpose. In the contrast of these two cases, we see a larger question about teleology emerge. This is the crux of the topic I take up in this dissertation.

In taking a cue from the Śāriputra narrative at the outset, this dissertation investigates ways in which a set of Tiantai’s philosophical premises rooted in the tradition’s flagship doctrine of Three Truths expressed in the mutually subsuming relation of various philosophical categories is used by Zhiyi (538-597 CE), the de facto founder of Tiantai School, and attempts to draw its implications by examining Tiantai doctrines that deabsolutize the boundaries of the pairs of opposites such as self and other, the seen and unseen, conscious and unconscious, and delusion and enlightenment. In showing Tiantai’s claims for the ultimate incoherence of finding the priority in each pair of these opposites respectively, the dissertation argues that the thoroughgoing lack of primacy in the pair of opposites results in the *identity* (rather than mere “inseparability” or “indivisibility” as other scholars of the field prefer to use) of these opposites and thus reveals that the Buddhahood is inherent to sentient beings’ each moment of practice (e.g., Buddhahood, under the guise of non-Buddhahood, is inherent to Śāriputra, who is manifestly a mere śrāvaka, or, even earlier, a mere bandit). In a larger context of the academic study of religions, Zhiyi’s elaboration of Three Truths can offer a response to an issue embedded

in the relation between universal and particular, and their parallel relation between related pairs of concepts such as whole and part, and ends and means. Postmodernist critics have considered one of the philosophical problems inherent to this relation to lie in a certain conception of exclusion: the realization of the true universality involves some form of the negation and neglect of the particular, even when some “essential” aspect of it is regarded as preserved. In this relation of negation, something about the particular has to be given up to synthesize with the universal. The same issue is found in the relation between whole and part, and between ends and means. Means are surrendered and eventually negated by the ends. Parts, even when “included” in the whole, surrender their independence and separability in the whole.

The issue of negation seems to be structurally inherent to each of these three pairs as commonly conceived; in all of them we find a conception of universality, totality, or result that is ultimately teleological in nature, where everything that is finite is oriented around and gravitated toward a fixed point of reference which alone gives the finite its value and meaning. In this picture, realization of integration with the universal/totality/end involves some form of partial exclusion or negation of particular/part/means; the latter is ultimately susceptible to being in some sense or other sacrificed for, modified by, or subjected to the former. This is true even in notions of autotelic activity, where the means are preserved in the fulfilment of the end, or even coextensive with it: the structure of subordination, where the specific means are given value only through their relation to this end, whether coextensive and simultaneous or not, remains.

Thus, what is at stake in all these cases is the status of the finite. In light of this, I hope that the present dissertation will contribute an “omnitelic” conception of totality, universality and result evolving out of the initially atelic Buddhist premises, that, by virtue of bringing no single finality to it, offers a philosophical framework that helps us rethink the relation between

universal and particular that produces no sacrifice of any aspect of finite beings. This unique framework of Tiantai not only allows infinite play of all quiddities within it but also paradoxically brings coherence to the relation among all of these quiddities *without losing* any aspect of their identities, and hence, affirming the value of them all. A significance of this omnitelic framework is in that it philosophically undergirds buddhas and bodhisattvas' post-enlightened act and their salvific compassionate responses to the suffering of all sentient beings.

In particular, I argue that Zhiyi's discussion about the various set of philosophical categories reveals the ultimate identity and reversibility of the pair of each category, leading to a further implication of the critique and reconception of the nature of teleology on the basis of Tiantai Three Truths. The thematic choice of Zhiyi's discussion is based on my interest in the problem of "the relation of negation" embedded in teleology. A chief example of this is in the Western thought represented, as already mentioned, in Hegel's cunning of reason, according to which one's pursuit of human passion is how God's purpose is covertly fulfilled. Hence, Hegel's solution for the potential conflict between finite and divine purpose is by sublating the finite purpose, preserving and including it only as a necessary but superseded means, and thereby only *fulfilling* the divine purpose, not the finite one.

In this picture, preserving itself through the cunning of reason, the divine purpose advances toward a single historical telos. The Tiantai version of this would seem at first glance also have one goal—Buddhahood. However, there is no convergence of everyone's projects into one historical narrative. The goal of Buddhahood is neither a historical endpoint nor something that brings finality to it. As a goal, paradoxically, Buddhahood not only has no purpose of its own, but even reveals itself never to have been a purpose in the ordinary sense—i.e., a purpose for the

sake of which the individual means leading toward it have to be abandoned or negated or surpassed or subjugated. Hence, the most significant difference between the two traditions is that the Tiantai version shows the *purposelessness* of Buddhahood, by which all non-buddha beings and *their* purposes are preserved and fulfilled. However, there is a crucial difference in the status of purpose in Western and Buddhist thought.

From its beginning, Buddhism treated the means and ends relation embedded in the teleological structure of desire as the cause of suffering. Hence, the goal of Buddhist practice is to reach goallessness. In other words, the tradition uses purpose, as is of course inevitable, but only with the paradoxical goal of reaching a kind of purposelessness. Thus considered, a Buddhist implication of “desire” and theological notions of “telos” are linked, insofar as God is often conceived as *autotelic*, which can either imply no external goal or the setting of goals toward Himself for all finite creatures. But given the crucial differences between the autotelic and the atelic, there is a danger of equating the goal of purposelessness with a theological notion of divine purpose.

As stated earlier, Buddhahood itself has no purpose—even itself. It is rather *atelic* and thereby values all purposes, and embeds in them a peculiar potential paradox that plays out in various ways in diverse strains of the tradition. What particularly interests me in this topic is knowing the status of finite beings and their purpose in the process of cunning. In Hegel’s case, the purposes embraced by finite beings, though preserved as necessary means toward the divine purpose, are sublated and negated rather than fulfilled at the end of the process of the historical goal. Thus, selfishness is not found in the absolute, and no unreason must be found in reason.¹ In

¹ There are different interpretations of “the cunning of reason” in Hegelian scholarship. One reason for this is that Hegel’s presentation about the topic seems to differ even among his texts. For example, in Section 209 of *The Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel says, “Reason is as *cunning* as it is *mighty*. Its cunning generally consists in the

contrast, in Tiantai, when the cunning process takes finite forms, they are led beyond themselves and toward an “infinity of futures” in *each* of which all finite purposes converge and are preserved; each of these convergence points, each finite form, ends up equally characterizable as universal reason or as universal unreason, in which all purposes, reasonable and unreasonable, selfish and unselfish, are in a very specific sense fulfilled.

In Tiantai, at first there is a contrast: the Buddha is purposeless, and sentient beings are purposeful. In this picture, the latter does not need to be sacrificed for the former because the encounter between purposelessness and purposes do not constitute the relation of exclusion; purposelessness does not exclude purpose in the same way that purpose excludes purposelessness, or in the way the achievement of a purpose requires the negation or surpassing of the means used to achieve that purpose. Perhaps counterintuitively, what is inherent to the purposes of sentient beings, unbeknownst to them, is the goal of attaining the purposelessness of the Buddhahood. This paradoxical loop of purpose and purposelessness is made explicit when sentient beings consciously become “bodhisattvas” in the Tiantai context. This is the moment in

mediating activity which, while it lets objects act upon one another according to their own nature, and wear each other out, executes only *its* purpose without itself mingling in the process. In this sense we can say that, with regard to the world and its process, divine Providence behaves with absolute cunning. God lets men, who have their particular passions and interests, do as they please, and what results is the accomplishment of *his* intentions, which are something other than those whom he employs were directly concerned about. [(Translated by T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, 1991)]”

A similar account of the cunning of reason that involves the negation of objects or, as Hegel says, the “world-historical individuals” appears in Introduction of *Philosophy of History*. However, *The Science of Logic* contains seemingly more nuanced discussions about the topic and leaves a room for different interpretations (e.g., McGowan [2019], Rosen [2014], Winfield [2012], Lampert [2011]). In Section 1614 Hegel says, “That the end relates itself immediately to an object and makes it a means, as also that through this means it determines another object, may be regarded as *violence* [*Gewalt*] insofar as the end appears to be of quite another nature than the object, and the two objects similarly are mutually independent totalities. But that the end posits itself in a *mediate* relation with the object and *interposes* another object *between* itself and it, may be regarded as the *cunning* of reason. The finitude of rationality has, as remarked, this side, that the end enters into relationship with the presupposition, that is, with the externality of the object. In the *immediate relation* to the object, it would itself enter into the sphere of mechanism or chemism and thereby be subject to contingency and the loss of its determination as the Notion that is in and for itself. But as it is, it puts forward an object as means, allows it to wear itself out in its stead, exposes it to attrition and shields itself behind it from mechanical violence. [(Translated by A.V. Miller, 1969)]” The fifth chapter of this dissertation examines the cunning of reason and its implications according to *The Science of Logic*.

which finite purposes themselves become the ultimate content, and indeed instantiation, of the purposelessness that is their goal. In Tiantai, purposelessness leads all finite purposes (seen to be devoid of self-nature, understood to mean not only epistemologically but also ontologically and ethically ambiguous qua their precise particularity, and particular qua ambiguous) beyond themselves though unchanged, and thereby reveals both the expandability of finite purposes and the necessity of preserving and fulfilling, rather than sacrificing, all these purposes for their Buddhahood. The result is that the finite purposes that are recontextualized through the purposelessness of Buddhahood ultimately revert to the immanent process of the paradoxical embodiment of purposelessness in the form of finite purposes and their fulfillment.

In the cunning of reason, Reason, which finite beings unknowingly serve, is the truth about their purpose. This ultimately leads to the negation of finite purposes, which are themselves unfulfilled, though in their self-destruction they fulfill the universal purposes of Reason. Similarly, at first glance, the Buddhahood that sentient beings fulfill unbeknownst to them is the truth about their finite purpose. However, in contrast to the cunning of reason, the Tiantai version shows how finite purposes are expanded and attain their true meaning—not a meaning other than their original meaning, but the more thoroughgoing version of precisely that finite meaning. This is how, by virtue of being purposeless, Buddhahood does not exclude but rather expands the meaning of finite purposes of sentient beings.

Thus, the initial posit of the contrast between the purposelessness of Buddhahood and the purposefulness of sentient beings was in fact only to reveal their ultimate identity. (This distinct conceptual move from difference to identity that paradoxically preserves the difference is hugely important to Tiantai and is undergirded in the tradition's principal doctrine of Three Truths that we will look at below, wherein I discuss a critique of a Tiantai scholar Paul Swanson's works

and his seeming misconstrual of this essential philosophical idea.) However, Tiantai thinkers warn that this “identity” does not create an exclusive middle position that affirms itself by way of negating all other positions. For them, the identity or middle as “center” is not the “exclusive center (*danzhong* 但中)” but is rather the “*non-exclusive center budanzhong* 不但中).”

In the Tiantai context, this topic appears in discussions about the Mahāyāna concept of nirvāṇa, “the nirvāṇa of non-dwelling (*wuzhuchu-niepan* 無住處涅槃).” This Mahāyāna nirvāṇa posits the conceptual move of the “negation of negation”—that is, the extinguishment of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, enlightenment and delusion, seen in terms of the middle way. In pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism, nirvāṇa refers to negation (emptiness, extinguishment, and non-arising) of all conditioned dharmas, whereas saṃsāra constructs and affirms diversity and conflict among them. However, as these concepts advance in the Mahāyāna, it is not anymore the “saṃsāric” side only but both nirvāṇa and saṃsāra that are to be extinguished or negated. This negation of negation (negation of nirvāṇa—negation of the absence of all distinctions and determinations) is further considered and thereby becomes a steppingstone for bodhisattvas to reënter the world and use all kinds of distinctions as skillful means. The negation of the mutual exclusivity of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, i.e., the reaffirmation of both in a new form characterized by non-mutual-exclusivity became a precursor to the Tiantai conception of bodhisattvas who affirm and use both of them as occasions arise, freely going back and forth between them to liberate all sentient beings.

Hence, later in Tiantai both nirvāṇa and saṃsāra expand their meaning and attain further implications, each implying and enfolding the other. These reinstated saṃsāric dharmas are inherent in, and of equal status to, the double negation of nirvāṇa as Buddhahood. This is the distinct Tiantai implication where the inherent inclusion of all worldly dharmas becomes nirvāṇa itself, as a synonym for “Mahāyāna nirvāṇa.” In resolving the initial contrast between them,

nirvāṇa and saṃsāra thus become identical to each other, while maintaining their contrast, for this contrast now exists on both sides of the divide between them. Mahāyāna nirvāṇa now means a thorough comprehension or *mastery* of both nirvāṇa and saṃsāra. With this new implication, nirvāṇa is no longer present only somewhere. Nirvāṇa is everywhere including saṃsāra, delusion, and each moment of the unenlightened practice of sentient beings. Considered thus, Tiantai thinkers claim that it is precisely the negation of negation that reveals the affirmation of all dharmas. Zhiyi brings up the importance of this transition from the exclusive to the non-exclusive mean elsewhere in his texts but elaborates it in his discussion about the Tiantai contemplation practice of “Three Thousand Worlds Inherent to A Single Moment of Experience (*yiniansanqian* 一念三千).”

This leads to Tiantai’s argument for the mutually subsuming relation between Buddhahood and sentient beings, universal and particular, whole and part, and ends and means. Although sentient beings are absorbed into Buddhahood, the Buddhahood does not negate sentient beings or any aspect of sentient beings, including their delusion (precisely what makes them sentient beings as opposed to buddhas). This relation evades the relation of negation because it is precisely Buddhahood that reveals the meaning of what it is to be a sentient being, i.e., to be deluded. Hence, Buddhahood is not opposed to finite desire, but is rather a more glorified—thorough, extreme, all-pervasive—version of finite desire. This means that all finite purposes are aiming toward Buddhahood, which itself is aimlessness. In Tiantai, everything is aiming toward aimlessness rather than a single telos or any other historical end. This is significantly different from the teleological conception of totality as stated earlier. The mutual subsumption of Buddhahood and sentient beings shows a non-teleological conception of totality that produces no sacrifice. The present dissertation is going to take up this topic in detail as its

central philosophical concern and argue for a possibility of Tiantai's "omnitelic" relation where universal and particular are seen to converge without remainder.

With this philosophical concern in view, this dissertation intends to further investigate the framework of the cunning of reason and develop the Tiantai version of it, which can be named "the cunning of Buddhahood," by building on key Tiantai concepts such as the 'middle', 'inherent evil', 'opening the provisional to reveal the real' and others. The concept of 'middle' underlies the Tiantai worldview and, as mentioned earlier, deabsolutizes the boundaries of seemingly opposite pairs, such as the conventional and ultimate views on human experience, sentient beings and the buddhas, delusion and awareness, and presence and absence. Anchoring in the 'middle', Tiantai philosophers argue that different ideals in conflict can be brought into integration without losing any of the identities of the ideals; thus the value of all things is affirmed. This would be an interesting point of conversation with other thinkers in philosophy of religion such as Hegel. The conceptual foundation of the Middle is drawn from the Tiantai doctrine of 'inherent evil' in all beings including the buddhas, considering human desire to be ineradicable.

Thus, the Tiantai meditation practice starts with contemplating and accepting desire as a part of human character and uses it as a vehicle to reach one's Buddhahood. One of the central Buddhist scriptures for Tiantai, the *Lotus Sūtra*, illustrates this point in the parables based on the particular desire structure: the lure of desire for X attains telos Y. In other words, the attainment of the purpose Y requires desire for X and the ultimate misdirection of this initial desire. In this desire structure, one does not know that by embracing and fulfilling the apparent purpose X she is fulfilling the unknown purpose Y. The real purpose of her conscious pursuit of particular desire for X is unknown to her, and it is by way of knowing and non-knowing of her true purpose

how not one but an infinity of unknown purposes are fulfilled. The Tiantai interpretation shows that she is doing something much greater than what she thinks of herself doing in every single moment of pursuing her particular desire. Hence, it is precisely from the conscious desire that one attains the infinite unconscious telos. Thus, the Tiantai cunning of Buddhahood will urge the necessity of preserving the purpose of unenlightened sentient beings as the constitutive *content* of the purposelessness of enlightened beings (buddhas and bodhisattvas).² Given the concept of the Middle, Tiantai thinkers consider the purposivity of buddhas and sentient beings to be identical. The present dissertation will call this oneness of purposivity the Tiantai “omnitelic” approach and show how it would respond to the philosophical problem of the relation of exclusive negation embedded in teleology. Moreover, this approach is based on a distinct Tiantai conception of time, which is most prominently elaborated in the doctrine of “Opening the Provisional to Reveal the Real (開權顯實 *kaiquanxianshi*).” Tiantai thinkers, understanding an internal or mutually entailing relation of cause and effect, considered time and timelessness non-dual, *not* in the sense of a transcendence of finite temporality, but rather as the radical mutual inclusion of all moments. This atypical and perhaps counterintuitive immanentist conception of time in Tiantai leads to the omnidirectional nature of time, according to which each finite moment of experience is how the infinity of its finitude is revealed. In the dissertation, these discussions will culminate in an argument for the immanence of Buddhahood according to the Tiantai implications of the *Lotus Sūtra*’s pinnacle concept of the eternal life of tathāgata,

² In the fourth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, four elder śrāvakas say that they realize that they are “true śrāvakas (*zhenshishengwen* 真是聲聞).” This is when these śrāvakas for the first time hear the universality of Buddhahood from Śākyamuni, which is to say that everyone including them will be buddhas. This is the moment in which the śrāvakas realize that the true meaning of their conscious telos of becoming an arhat (the goal of śrāvakas) was in fact to fulfill the Buddhahood of others and themselves (the goal of bodhisattvas). In this sense, unbeknownst to them, (the purposelessness of) Buddhahood has always already been the true telos that is attained as a result of seeking the conscious telos of being an arhat. There would be no purposelessness of the Buddhahood apart from the finite telos of śrāvakas. In Tiantai, the finitude of finite telos is necessarily constitutive of its own infinity.

which is undergirded in the mutually subsuming relation explained in the Tiantai category of “root and trace (*benji* 本迹)” with an emphasis on its purposeless, timeless, and thus omnitemelic nature. The present dissertation will walk through these elusive and fecund Tiantai premises and their implications. As we will see in the final fifth chapter of the text, all of these discussions will lead to the tradition’s enormous claim that all activities of both enlightened and deluded beings are the content of the eternal life of Buddhahood, which forms the mutually flowing *circular* relation between Buddha and sentient beings. Using a motif of this circularity quoted from the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, Zhiyi claims that the lives of all beings resemble to “rivers” that flow into the single “ocean” of the tathāgata’s life, and that alternately it is from this oneness of ocean that all rivers flow out. The characterization of this circularity is rooted in Tiantai’s non-exclusive middle and entails a useful comparative insight in relation to the exclusive middle of Hegelian thought. By creatively adopting this analogy of the mutually subsuming *circular* relation between the single ocean and different rivers, with all other Tiantai premises discussed in earlier chapters in mind, this dissertation attempts to prove a thesis: While Tiantai’s omnitemeleology presents the mutually entailing circularity between teleology and ateleology, there is no such circular relation between them in Hegelian dialectical progression. Chapters 1 through 4 serve to build up conceptual foundations for the ultimate investigation of this thesis, followed by Chapter 5 that finally examines it and its extraordinary implications.

0.2 Tiantai Scholarship in Anglo-American Academia

As I will discuss below, there is a tendency of recent Tiantai scholarship that exhibits a misunderstanding of the tradition’s central doctrine of the Three Truths that is rooted in Indian Madhyamaka’s theory of Two Truths. Scholars such as Paul Swanson and Ng Yu-Kwan, I will

argue, misconstrue this elusive but essential Tiantai doctrine, while the importance of academic contributions they made to the field cannot be overstated. Since the Three Truths is a supremely important conceptual key to all philosophical discussions of Tiantai and hence together with its implications occupy most pages of this dissertation, let us carefully look at how this original Indian Buddhist idea was transformed by the ingenuity of Chinese Tiantai. We will do so by way of tracing philosophical steps that culminate into the composition of Three Truths according to Brook Ziporyn's critical review of Swanson's translation of Zhiyi's magnum opus *Mohezhiquan* (摩訶止觀), pointing out some conceptual errors that are seemingly based on Swanson's misconstrual of this essential Tiantai doctrine. After reviewing Swanson's conceptual deficit that Ziporyn critiques and remedies, we will make a transition to looking at Ng's work that also demonstrates a similar tendency of having trouble comprehending the meaning and nuances of the Three Truths. Reviewing their works will orient us in the field of Tiantai study and at the same time clarify the most puzzling and yet essential kernel of Tiantai philosophy.

First, let us look at how the notion of truths in Indian Madhyamaka's Two Truths was further developed into Tiantai's threefold truth that is composed of Emptiness, Conventionality and the Middle. "Emptiness" is a Buddhist concept and a common English translation of the Sanskrit word "śūnyatā," which refers to the absence of intrinsic nature to all possible quiddities. This essencelessness is characterized by observing that nothing arises apart from its supporting conditions. Since there is no exception to this, emptiness itself is also empty. In this sense, we can say that emptiness is transcendental in the sense that it is the condition of the possibility of any quiddities at all.³ The Indian Madhyamaka school, a major philosophical influence of Tiantai thought, developed Two Truths theory of the Conventional (referent according to our

³ My personal conversation with Professor Dr. Dan Arnold at the University of Chicago Divinity School in 2017.

ordinary speech) and the Ultimate (emptiness of all these quiddities). Although, in Madhyamaka, Ultimate Truth is considered to be the condition of the possibility of all conventional truths, in Tiantai, these two truths became coextensive to one another.⁴ Tiantai thinkers see the identity between Ultimate and Conventional Truths and consider their identical relation to be reversible, characterizing this reversibility to be the Middle, and hence this is called *Three Truths*. An important epistemological implication of this doctrine is that once any kind of object of cognition is thoroughly comprehended, it reveals the totality of all possible experiences. Accordingly, one should also understand that any *other* kinds of object of cognition, in the same manner, refer to the same totality. Therefore, both experiences are equal in their totality but different in their perspectives, and, crucially, this multiplicity of perspectives is itself inalienable from their status as an object of any kind. Thus, they are at once the same and different. This position cannot exclude *any* other views (because otherwise the totality would have to be deficient), hence, for instance, even a devil's view is *readable as* an aspect of the Buddha's view. However, scholars such as Swanson and Ng have misconstrued the ingenuity of this Tiantai doctrine of the Three Truths. Their translation and interpretation of passages from *Mohezhiqian* reveal their dubious understanding of this doctrine. One of the shared points of contestation that applies to both of them is how they misinterpret Zhiyi's famous passage, "Ignorance is Dharma-nature. (無明即法性)" This thought is a conceptual key to understanding the distinctive Tiantai conception of the mutually entailing relation between delusion and awakening, suffering and liberation, and sentient beings and buddhas. (We will carefully trace the usages of this thought in Tiantai texts and consider their significant implications in the present dissertation's third and fifth chapters.)

⁴ For detailed discussions, see Ziporyn, Brook. *Evil and/or/as the Good: Omnipresence, Intersubjectivity, and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press. 2000. 101-11.

Both Swanson and Ng seem to struggle with how to overcome a conceptual difficulty of comprehending these opposites to be “identical,” forcing them to take recourse to an easier choice of translation, distorting the significance of Tiantai thought. In light of these concerns, let us examine how this conceptual error occurred by starting with Ziporyn’s critique of Swanson’s misinterpretation of Tiantai.

0.2-1 Paul Swanson

Swanson is among the leading scholars of Tiantai today. Starting with a publication of his first book, *Foundations of T’ien-T’ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism* (1989), his contributions to the field includes a historic achievement of publishing an English translation of Zhiyi’s entire *Mohezhi-guan* (*Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight: T’ien-t’ai Chih-I’s Mo-ho Chih-kuan*, 2017) that contains informative footnotes and additional translated texts of Tiantai. This work is divided into three volumes, amounting to more than twenty-two-hundred total pages. According to Ziporyn, this achievement is:

... [a] major cultural event, marking a hugely consequential new channel of cultural exchange, on a par with the translation of Hebrew scriptures into Greek to create the *Septuagint* in the third century BCE, or the translation of Aristotle and other classical Greek works into Arabic in the eighth and ninth centuries CE. In a very real sense it is only now that a large-scale Anglophone dialogue between East Asian Buddhism and Western philosophy and religion can even *begin*.⁵

However, as Ziporyn explains in detail in his review, Swanson’s treatment of important Tiantai terms and concepts are seemingly missing essential insights of the tradition. Let us trace some of these problems. For instance, Swanson’s translation says:

The basis for ignorance and fatuous delusion is none other than Dharma-nature (or, “the nature of reality”) 法性. Due to fatuous delusion, Dharma-nature changes, producing [the state of] ignorance and arousing perverted views and [the dualities of]

⁵ Ziporyn, Brook. *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities & Social Sciences*, July 2018. 1.

good and not-good and so forth. This is like when the cold comes and water changes and hardens into ice. Also, it is like when sleep comes and the mind changes and you have various dreams.

Now, you should realize that perverted views are indivisible from Dharma-nature; they are neither one nor different 不一不異.⁶

The first problem of this translation is that he avoids equating ignorance and Dharma-nature and instead says that *the basis for* ignorance is Dharma-nature. He comments on this choice and explains that Zhiyi “does not go that far”⁷ to claim that ignorance is Dharma-nature. I must say that this is a disappointingly misleading interpretation of the elusive and yet fundamental insight of Zhiyi’s thought. Swanson’s translation creates the unnecessary medium of “the basis” of ignorance, suggesting that Dharma-nature is some kind of ontological bedrock—the basis—out of which ignorance springs, harmfully conjuring up the ontological hierarchy between them that puts priority on “the basis” over ignorance. But in Tiantai, there is no such ontological hierarchy between dharmas. Even in Conventional Truth (*jia-ti* 假諦), when it *seems* that a priority of mind is posited, the point of such posit is not to secure hierarchy but to further argue that a single moment of experience (*yinian* 一念) entails three thousand dharmas, hence does not exhibit a prioritization of mind over three thousand, but rather shows a provisionally emphasized *aspect* of the entire dharma-realm. By inserting an unnecessary medium between Dharma-nature and ignorance, Swanson ends up conveying the opposite meaning of what Tiantai argues for. His translation seems to be misguided by an assumption that Dharma-nature is *not* ignorance, but is

⁶ Swanson, Paul L. trans. and commentator. *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight: T’ien-t’ai Chih-I’s Mo-ho Chih-kuan*. Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture Series. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press. 2017. 842.

Translating the passage literally, Zhiyi says in *Mohezhi-guan*: The insanity and delusion of ignorance is originally Dharma-nature. Dharma-nature is transformed because the insanity and confusion are used, creating the ignorance. This gives rise to all the perverted views [that distinguishes what is] good and not good and so on. This is like when coldness meets and crystalizes water, transforming it into “hard-water [e.g., ice].” It also resembles to sleep meets and transforms one’s mind, making it produce various kinds of dreams. Now you should know that all perversions are precisely Dharma-nature. They are neither the same nor different.

無明癡惑本是法性。以癡迷故法性變作無明。起諸顛倒善不善等。如寒來結水變作堅水。又如眠來變心有種種夢今當體諸顛倒即是法性。不一不異。

⁷ Ibid. 842.

rather only the underlying *basis* of ignorance. This position does not only exhibit the unnecessary creation and positing of the ontological hierarchy between ignorance and its basis, it also harms the significance of Tiantai’s argument for the “identity-as-difference” relation between ignorance and Dharma-nature. In fact, in more than one place of *Mohezhi-guan* and other works, Zhiyi emphatically says, “ignorance *is* Dharma-nature (無明即法性).”⁸ Zhanran confirms that it is identity between them that is meant in Zhiyi’s present passage⁹ and supports this interpretation by alluding to *Dazhidulun* that says, “Dharma-nature is precisely Real-Attribute, and [this] Real-Attribute is nothing other than Dharma-nature.”¹⁰ The Chinese character that Swanson translates as “the basis” is 本 *ben*, which means “root,” “origin,” or “fundamental.” In the present case, this term functions as an adverb and hence should be translated as “originally”: “Ignorance originally *is* (*shi* 是) Dharma-nature.” As we shall see in detail below, this is to be understood to mean that ignorance and Dharma-nature are two alternate expressions of the same thing, but also, crucially, that this “same thing” itself has no content other than precisely this reversible distinction between them. The provisional distinction between them is to show that they are two different aspects of the same content that can be expressed either *as* ignorance *or* Dharma-nature depending on how one’s mind disambiguates what it perceives. In this sense, Dharma-nature is findable nowhere outside ignorance, and vice versa.¹¹ It is only in this sense that either can be considered a foundation of the other; but the point of this lies precisely in their across-the-boards reversibility: as Zhili (知禮 960-1028) who is considered to be Tiantai school’s fourteenth patriarch notes, to exactly the extent that we can say that

⁸ For instance, this phrase appears five times in *Mohezhi-guan*.

⁹ T46.301c17-c18. (初法文中，但指無明即是法性，但觀法性不觀無明。)

¹⁰ T46.301c20. (法性即是實相，實相只是法性。)

¹¹ We will return to this elusive Tiantai argument for the identity between ignorance and Dharma-nature in the present dissertation’s third chapter in detail.

Dharma-nature is the foundation that ignorance depends on, we can also say that ignorance is the foundation that Dharma-nature depends on: they are “dependent on each other and further (therefore) mutually identical.”¹²

What is really at stake here, as Ziporyn already pointed out in his review, is highlighted in the last sentence of this passage that Swanson translates: “Now, you should realize that perverted views are *indivisible from* Dharma-nature.”¹³ The Chinese character he translates “indivisible from” is 即 *ji*, which means “identity” or “be identical to.” But there is a huge difference between saying two things are “indivisible from” or “identical to” each other, and this reveals the heart of the problem. Swanson explains that his choice of “indivisible” is intentional and is deliberately chosen over the commonly used translation of “identity.” In his essay, “Understanding Chih-i: Through a glass, darkly?” (1994)¹⁴, Swanson explicitly states that his “rendering is to use the (admittedly awkward) term ‘indivisible’ to soften the idea of ‘identity’ 即.”¹⁵ As he reveals, this deliberate choice is based on his caution against reading Zhiyi’s text with “an over reliance on Chan-jan’s [Zhanran’s] commentary.”¹⁶ He continues:

By relying on so heavily on Chan-jan [Zhanran], there is the danger that we will see Chih-i [Zhiyi] only through his eyes, yet is it not preferable (as much as possible) to encounter Chih-i [Zhiyi] directly? Besides, quoting Chan-jan’s [Zhanran’s] (or another traditional) commentary sometimes lulls one into thinking that the ambiguity in Chih-i’s texts has been clarified or adequately explained, when in fact sometimes it has not. It also becomes a habit that leads one away from wrestling directly with Chih-i’s [Zhiyi’s] text itself.¹⁷

While this shows admirable scholarly caution on Swanson’s part, I will argue that he has

¹² T.46.715c25. (依而復即)

¹³ My emphasis.

¹⁴ Swanson, Paul. ‘Understanding Chih-i: Through a glass, darkly?’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Volume 17, Number 2, Winter 1994.

¹⁵ Ibid. 347.

¹⁶ Ibid. 347.

¹⁷ Ibid. 348.

overcorrected in the opposite direction, with extremely damaging philosophical consequences. Zhanran (湛然 711-782), the sixth patriarch of Tiantai school, is known for reviving the philosophical importance of the tradition and establishing the school's authority with respect to other Chinese Buddhist schools of that time. Since Zhiyi's works leave many parts unexplained, Zhanran's texts and commentaries on Zhiyi's works are traditionally considered essential resource for Tiantai exegesis. Swanson's remark here shows that he has given considerable thought to Zhiyi's usages of *ji* "identity," but as his translation of *Mohezhiquan* shows (as we will examine more below soon), this reassessment unfortunately results in a fundamental misinterpretation of Tiantai thought. Inasmuch as Swanson's non-reliance on Zhanran's commentary exemplifies an honest attempt at a close reading of Zhiyi, he is to be commended. However, his avoidance of "the danger that we will see Zhiyi only through Zhanran's eyes" and the practice of "wrestling directly with Zhiyi's text itself" seem to have ended up directing him to an unconvincing reading of Zhiyi, misconstruing the central tenets of his thought. After Swanson published his translation of *Mohezhiquan* in 2017, Ziporyn wrote a critical review on this historic publication and strenuously argued against some of the faults in the translation, to which we will now turn.

As we saw above, while lauding Swanson's historic achievement to the field of Tiantai study, Ziporyn points out some of the grave mistakes that Swanson's translation of the most important part of the entire *Mohezhiquan* exhibits. The first passage at issue is from the section on the "contemplation on inconceivable objects (觀不思議境)," where Swanson translates: "[O]ne thought is all thoughts, all thoughts are one thought, and these are neither one nor all. [一

心一切心。一切心一心。非一非一切。]”¹⁸ As Zhiyi says, the three implicit copulas of this passage respectively correspond to the truth of Conventionality, Emptiness, and Middle, thus Tiantai’s flagship doctrine of Three Truths.¹⁹ However, as Ziporyn points out, Swanson’s translation exemplifies how he fails to convey the nuance of this doctrine. According to Ziporyn, the first copula of this passage (“one thought is all thoughts” thus Swanson translates) that supposedly conveys the meaning of Conventional Truth should be rather translated in the following way: “Whenever there is a single thought, all things are aspects of that thought, but all are aspects of that thought only as functions of that thought, and thus (both the one thought and all ‘non-thought’ dharmas that are aspects of it) are neither the one thought nor the all (i.e., the non-thought dharmas).”²⁰ Here there is an unignorable difference between Swanson’s simple mathematic equation “one thought is all thoughts” and Ziporyn’s much more nuanced and emphatic translation that exhibits how the value and meaning of everything one’s mind perceives is entailed and transformed according to a particular status of one’s thought or mind (*xin* 心).

Ziporyn’s translation emphasizes a mind’s nature of disambiguating what it perceives according to its particular state. This conveys an importance of particularities contained in Conventional Truth, where objects of perception are “shaped by a particular karmic structure of mind.”²¹ As we will see soon, the multiplicity created by the mind’s function of disambiguation is the most important characteristic of Conventional Truth for Tiantai. Importantly, the particularities of Conventional Truth refer to *all* dharmas, as Tiantai’s argument for the inherent

¹⁸ Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*. 831.

¹⁹ Zhiyi says: “If saying that whenever there is a single dharma, all dharmas are the aspects of that dharma precisely means dharmas that arise through causes and conditions, this is the Conventional Truth, that is, the contemplation on the Conventionality. When I speak that all dharmas are the aspects of this single dharma, this precisely means Emptiness or the contemplation on Emptiness. In the case of [speaking of] neither a single dharma nor all dharmas, this is precisely the contemplation on the Middle Way. (若一法一切法。即是因緣所生法。是為假名假觀也若一切法即一法。我說即是空空觀也。若非一非一切者即是中道觀。 [T46.055b13-b15.]”

²⁰ *H-Net Reviews*. 18.

²¹ *Ibid.* 15.

entailment of all dharmas in single moment of thought expresses. However, Swanson's equation between one thought and all thoughts rather limits the identity of the one thought only to all other *thoughts*, therefore not to any other non-thoughts. As I will show below and throughout this dissertation, this limitation would deprive of the thrust of the elusive and yet significant point of Tiantai philosophy. Given that Conventionality is constitutive of the Three Truths, this aspect of differentiation is also constitutive of and essential for Tiantai Three Truths, which—unlike Mādhyama's Two Truths—takes the multiplicity in Conventionality to be the content of the Ultimate truth of Emptiness. Before moving on, let us pause at this Tiantai's distinct conceptual move and consider an example of how a mind disambiguates what it perceives based on its particular state and how everything that it encounters becomes an aspect of that particular state of mind.

A homey phenomenological example may help illustrate the very concrete dimension of experience Zhiyi has in his sights here. A father returns from an international trip. Overjoyed by reunion with his son, on the following day, he happily drives his son to baseball practice. On their way, because of his particular status of mind, everything the father experiences becomes a happy moment, including how he places his coffee tumbler in a cup holder and their conversation about his previous baseball practice (even including a moment of accidentally spilling coffee over his white shirt and an aggressive driver cutting him off on the road). Knowing he and his son will be on time, he lets these indignities pass, focuses on driving safely, and stops at every single yellow light to ensure a smooth trip. Everything he experiences is colored by the joy of reunion with his son. In this sense, the particular status of his mind makes everything he experiences a part of that state of mind. However, after a while, he realizes that his vehicle's clock that was blocked by his phone is an hour behind, and it's actually an hour later

than he thought it was. He freezes up, realizing that he was not aware that summer time started in his home country while he was away. This awareness instantly changes the status of his mind into another. Knowing they are already late, he immediately starts to step on the gas, making sure to pass all yellow lights, honking at slow drivers who passed his vehicle a minute ago and instead passing all other vehicles on the road, and regretting how relaxed he was up to the very moment of his catastrophic discovery of the unexpected advent of summer time. In that rushed moment, in contrast to his earlier happy-reunion moments, every object he experiences turns into “what needs to be hurriedly passed,” making him only care about pursuing his sole purpose of getting to the baseball field as soon as he can.

It is in this sense that a particular karmic structure of the mind orients everything that a mind perceives according to its particular state. When the constitution of these objects as objects is further understood as inseparable from the operation of the mind as such, and the operation of the mind likewise recognized to be inseparable from this constitution of its objects, available only *as* these differently constituted objects, all particularities of one’s experience are grasped as an “aspect” of that mental activity: as Zhiyi has just explained prior to this passage, the differently constituted objects of experience and the differing state of mind are simply two alternate ways of describing the same thing. This is what it means to say that they are internal to each other, that all objects are aspects of mind but also that there is no mind other than these aspects: the state of mind and its objects thus provide a concrete practical phenomenological exemplification of the “intersubsumption” that Tiantai develops elsewhere on the purely theoretical level. The mind is only all its objects, all its objects are only the mind, and thus all of them are neither exclusively the mind nor the objects. It is for this reason, and not because of any special ontological status, that the mind, considered in this way, is the primary object of Tiantai

contemplation.

As this example shows, a shift of the status of mind from one to another transformed the value and meaning of “reunion” from joyous to anxious, while the contents or entities within this experience of reunion apparently remain the same. What these contents mean to him changed according to the alteration of the context that co-originated with a new status of his mind. Now the claim being made in this section is that there are no stable unchanging identities of these objects at all apart from their changing “meanings,” which are constituted by the changing state of mind. In the Buddhist universe, one’s mind together with what it encounters are constantly changing in their unlimitedly altering relation with all dharmas. This is what Zhiyi means by “Whenever there is a single thought, all things are aspects of that thought” expressed in Conventional Truth. Because of this, an alternate new moment of experience oriented by a new content of thought keeps evolving, expressing the infinity of Conventional Truths, and their intersubsumptive relation between all these contents and their concomitant states of mind, and thus between all states of mind and all contents. This is what Zhiyi means when he calls them *inconceivable*. This is the essential implication and nuance that Swanson’s translation fails to convey by his simple equation: “one thought is all thoughts.” This infinite alterability exhibited in Conventional Truth is inherent to the minds of all sentient beings and is expressed in unlimitedly different ways.²² Hence, Zhiyi elaborates this complex particularity of sentient beings’ experience by his famous notion that was considered by later Tiantai as being the tradition’s flagship doctrine, “Three Thousand Worlds As A Single Moment Of Thought (一念三千 *yiniansanqian*).” According to Zhiyi:

²² To the question regarding whether the entailment of all dharmas to a single dharma is deliberate or non-deliberate, Zhiyi answers: “It is how Dharma-nature is by nature. Hence, it is not something deliberately made, just as separability in ten directions is inherent to one speck of dust. 法性自爾非作所成。如一微塵具十方分 (T46.051c20-21.)”

A single moment of thought entails ten dharma-realms. But each and every one of the ten also entails ten dharma-realms in it, making it one hundred dharma-realms. Each realm entails thirty kinds of worldly events. Therefore, one hundred dharma realms precisely entail three thousand kinds of worldly events. This is to say that three thousand [worlds] reside in a single moment of thought.

夫一心具十法界。一法界又具十法界百法界。一界具三十種世間。百法界即具三千種世間。此三千在一念心。²³

A single moment of thought is an intersubjective field of experience that is seen and “disambiguable” in infinite different ways, expressed here with the term of art “three thousand.”²⁴ In this sense, the Conventionality of the experience of sentient beings cannot be exhaustively known and cannot be reduced unilaterally to any one substratum. In fact, whatever knowledge one acquires about it is far less than the tiny tip of an iceberg of this ever-expanding field of intersubsuming intersubjective experience. The point of Zhiyi’s thorough exposition of “three thousand” in the section on Conventional Truth is to show how Conventionality itself, if thoroughly comprehended, is precisely *inconceivable* and hence ends up attaining the same characteristic of Emptiness. As Ziporyn says:

This is where Conventionality, taken on its own terms and with its own Conventional premises, crashes to reveal the Inconceivability usually presented as characterizing Emptiness. But here Conventionality itself is Inconceivable, and this is what it means to say that Conventionality and Emptiness are identical. Here the exposition turns from the one side to the other: “Conventionality enters Emptiness,” in the Tiantai phrase. [...] The Inconceivability is the result we would expect from Madhyamaka dialectics

²³ T46.054a05-a08. This Tiantai doctrine shows that all dharmas such as each moment of thought, of deluded experience of sentient beings, have ten aspects of suchness (*shirushi* 十如是). Each of these ten categories that are inherent to all dharmas further entails the ten realms (*shijie* 十界) of mind that is composed of six realms of rebirth (the realm of hell, hungry ghost, asura, animal, heavenly beings and humans) plus four realms of liberation (*śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, *bodhisattva*, and *buddha*). While these ten realms refer to the realms of rebirth and liberation, Tiantai thinkers argued that each of them further entails these ten realms of mind within itself. Hence, each of the ten realms entails a set of ten realms in it and is expressed in ten different ways of suchnesses, amounting to one thousand dharmas. Furthermore, these one thousand dharmas express three different worlds of land-environment (*guotu* 國土), sentient beings (*zhongsheng* 眾生) and five aggregates (*wuyun* 五蘊). Then finally, one thousand times three amounts to three thousands.

²⁴ Immediately after this passage, Zhiyi explains that neither a single thought nor three thousands is prior or posterior. Their relation is “neither the same nor different, and obscure, wondrous, profound and absolute. It is not about knowing or being known, speaking or being spoken. Therefore, it is called the inconceivable object, and this is the meaning of it. (非一非異玄妙深絕。非識所識。非言所言。所以稱為不可思議境意在於此 [T46.054a16-a18].)”

demonstrating the Emptiness of self-nature, but these are not applied here; instead, we are simply describing what is present to consciousness. The Inconceivability, usually the description of Emptiness, is directly present to be experienced in the deluded and Conventional fantasizing consciousness and its relation to any Conventionally imagined world.²⁵

It seems because of the lack of the comprehension of the exposition of Conventionality that Swanson translates another important passage “[T]he worldly truth is [taught on the basis of] the supreme truth.”²⁶, and “[This illustrates that] the worldly truth is indivisible from the supreme truth [and vice versa].”²⁷ However, the insertion of “on the basis of” and the interpretation of “identity” merely as “indivisible from” subverts the purpose of Zhiyi’s exposition of Conventionality and thereby puts the truths of Conventionality and Emptiness forever apart from one another. In other words, Swanson ruins what Zhiyi is here importantly building up by his notorious insertion of the “basis,” making the whole point backslide into where the entire discussion started. Ziporyn points out Swanson’s remark that this treatment shows that “the Conventional idea is definitively put to rest, clearing the air for us to move into the Middle section.”²⁸ According to Ziporyn, Zhiyi’s argument for the identity between Conventionality and Emptiness is rather “reasserting the *validity* of the previous way of speaking in terms of one thought ‘giving rise to’ three thousand dharmas, in spite of the fact that this formulation, like any other possible formulation, is merely Conventional.”²⁹ Hence, in the end, what Zhiyi’s arguing here is “a move to omnicataphasis rather than into further apophasis, and that is precisely how it

²⁵ *H-Net Review*. 8-9.

²⁶ Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*. 829.

²⁷ To this passage, Swanson adds explanatory notes about this translation and says, “[O]r simply, ‘the worldly truth is the supreme truth [and the supreme truth is the mundane truth].’ This is the ‘positionless position,’ the ‘inexpressible expression,’ the ‘non-dualistic dualism,’ the positive expression of ultimate negation, of the Middle. (Ibid. 829)”

²⁸ *H-Net Review*. 10.

²⁹ Ibid. 10. Ziporyn continues: [W]hat we find the text doing there is asserting the validity of *all* alternate approaches, claiming that the Supreme Method *Siddhānta* (第一義悉檀) is not a rejection of all forms of speech and conception, rejecting even Emptiness and all the more so all lesser concepts, but rather an affirmation that *all* of them are ways to ‘insight into truth’. (Ibid, 11)

serves as a bridge to the section on the Middle.”³⁰ Therefore, Swanson’s translation, “[This illustrates that] the world truth is indivisible from the supreme truth [and vice versa]” is, according to Ziporyn, “aggressively deflationary interpretation of 即, demoting it from its plain sense as ‘identical to’ into the much tamer ‘indivisible from’.”³¹ Given how grammatically impossible this translation is, he continues, “[i]t is hard not to see a private philosophical agenda getting in the way of an unbiased translation here.”³²

In sketching out all these premises of Conventional Truth and Emptiness, Zhiyi moves to the final section on the Middle, “demonstrating that the previous two sections were alternate ways of saying the same thing, in opposite directions: that Conventionality (leading to Emptiness) and Emptiness (leading to Conventionality) are reversibly identical to one another.”³³ What occurs in the Middle section is an extension of the Conventionality and its convergence into Emptiness, and their reversibility to *all dharmas* such as each thought, skhanda, each realm, each land and so on, all of which are entirely the inconceivable objects of contemplation.

According to Ziporyn, this means:

The three thousand dharmas, including minds and bodies and lands, are seen not to be self-standing and self-determining minds and bodies and lands, but rather to be insubstantial and ambiguous, because I have now seen them to be really identical to something of a totally different character, to this one thought. This also means that when I characterize them as mental, as the first sentence claims, I see that they are presently disambiguated that way merely in relation to this one thought, which also means they are alternately disambiguable by alternate Conventional entities.³⁴

The point of contestation against Swanson’s deflationary treatment of “one thought is all thoughts” is that it is rather only from a viewpoint of having already understood how

³⁰ Ibid. 11.

³¹ Ibid. 12.

³² Ibid. 12.

³³ Ibid. 12.

³⁴ Ibid. 16

Conventionality is inconceivable, just as Emptiness is, hence how the reversibility between them is inherent to their relation, that we can finally say, “one thought *is* all thoughts.”³⁵ However, Swanson’s equation of “one thought” and “all thoughts” exhibited in his translated passage that supposedly refers to Conventional Truth shows an evidence that he ignores the multitudinous intersubsumptive self-differentiation process in Conventionality that constitutes the contents of Three Truths. In demonstrating these subtle and yet essential philosophical implications, Ziporyn says:

[T]his culmination of the contemplation described in the Middle section is a universalization of the reversible identity structure uniquely advanced in the Inconceivability of Conventionality section on *yiniansanqian*, that is, the reversible neither-same-nor-different relation between a momentary thought and its three thousand contents, now applied to all other *Conventional* relata (i.e., to all skandhas, to all entrances, to all sense realms, to all sentient beings, to physical lands, and so on). [...] It is this meaning, of the full reversible identity between Conventional entities as delineated phenomenologically in the Conventionality section, that is brought to its full omnidirectional expression in the Middle section. We should note again, therefore, that the “Conventionality” passage begins by talking about Conventional entities—the three thousand, the momentary thought—and ends by showing their “Inconceivability,” that is, their Emptiness, purely in terms of the very process of Conventional positing, the illusory discriminations of the mind itself, without, however, having to invoke separately the traditional arguments for Emptiness. *Conventionality considered alone* yields Emptiness, and its own identity to Emptiness, which is the Middle.³⁶

Tiantai contemplation practice is meant to show how the threefold truths operate in sentient beings’s each moment of experience. As Conventional Truth demonstrates, transformation of one’s field of experience is occurring every single moment. This can occur because Emptiness, the absence of the unchanging self-nature, is inherent to all possible relata and entities of experience. But, importantly, Tiantai advances this traditional conception of Emptiness and

³⁵ As Ziporyn says, “The Middle is only demonstrated if the ‘one’ and ‘all’ here are understood as an initially mutually exclusive contrast and negation, as two opposite qualities, like thought and world, self and other, mind and matter, as in the reading we propose. ‘Neither one nor all’ then means ‘neither X nor non-X’—the Middle, which is just what Zhiyi tells us this phrase is supposed to mean. Only thus does the transition from one Middle to the next make sense. (Ibid. 17)”

³⁶ Ibid. 18-19.

considers it to be the unlimitedly alterable “ambiguity.”³⁷ In light of this, as I mentioned earlier, Tiantai thinkers see that a subjective world of experience is constantly shifting and keeps revealing new contexts.³⁸ The altering value and meaning of the field of experience that any subject undergoes constitute an unendable process of intersubjective experience that is universally shared in all enlightened and unenlightened beings where the interdependent relation of the contents of their experience keeps altering and revealing new contexts. This is how the emptiness *qua* unlimitedly alterable ambiguity that is inherent to all dharmas becomes identical to Conventionality in the Three Truths, how Tiantai interprets Conventional Truth *qua* Emptiness and their reversibility marked as the Middle according to the Three Truths, which show the unlimited openness of the value and meaning of the intersubjective field of experience expressed in every single moment of thought.

Metaphorically speaking, the mutually subsuming relation not only between mind and its contents (on the practical level) but also between Conventionality and Emptiness (on the theoretical level), as Ziporyn brings up in his review, resembles to two “sides” of the Mobius strip, which shows that a thorough comprehension of one side necessarily ends up transitioning into the other, showing the impossibility of carving out the abstract one-sidedness in their true relation of identity-in-difference. Each point of the strip is a full embodiment of this identity equally expressed in every single aspect of the same strip. In contrast, the analogue of Swanson’s version, embodying mere “indivisibility,” would be the two sides of a looped but untwisted strip of paper, the inner forever inner and the outer forever outer because, unlike the Mobius strips,

³⁷ Ziporyn, *Emptiness and Omnipresence: An Essential Introduction to Tiantai Buddhist Thought*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 2016. 148-165.

³⁸ Zhiyi says. “The mind of the one who contemplates [= subjectivity] does not dwell from any moment to moment. Moreover, the contemplator and the contemplated, all of these, arise according to conditions. 能觀之心亦念念不住。又能觀所觀悉是緣生 (T46.052b26-b27.)”

there is no twist in it. Because of this, tracing one side forever gets one stuck on the one side, cutting off a pathway to the mutually extensive intersubsumptive identity between the two sides.

As a result, a thorough tracing of one side turns out to merely show its non-identical “indivisibility” from the other side. Without the twist, there will be no awareness that there is from the beginning only the one side that is nevertheless always and everywhere also two, because at every point there is also an opposite side. Unlike Ziporyn’s interpretation of Tiantai, Swanson’s version is modeled on the two different sides of a flat piece of paper that are indivisible but nevertheless definitely different, rather than a Mobius strip where the two sides are both everywhere two and everywhere one. This is the elusive nuance of the identity between Conventionality and Emptiness that Swanson seemingly fails to capture, which inadvertently leaks into his translated passages. In this sense, every single encounter that mind faces itself is the absolute Middle that exhibits the reversibility of Conventionality and Emptiness, which is the true aspect of all dharmas, or in an important term used in Tiantai, “Real-Attribute (實相 *shixiang*).” This is why Zhiyi says in *Mohezhi guan*:

Perfect and Sudden [cessation and contemplation] from the beginning tracks the Real Attribute itself. Any object [of contemplation] encountered is precisely the Middle. There is nothing among them that does not express this truth. Tying the attention to only the dharma-realm is to realize the oneness of the mind and entire dharma-realm. Whether it is a single experience of seeing color or smelling, there is nothing that is not the Middle-way. This is the same whether it is the realm of self, Buddha, or sentient being. [...] There [only] is pure and singular Real Attribute, outside of which there are no other dharmas that are separate from it. The tranquil reality of Dharma-nature is called cessation. Being tranquil and yet eternally showing is called contemplation. Although we speak of what is prior and posterior, they are neither two nor separate from each other. This is called Perfect and Sudden cessation and contemplation. 圓頓者。初緣實相造境即中無不真實。繫緣法界一念法界。一色一香無非中道。己界及佛界衆生界亦然。[...] 純一實相。實相外更無別法。法性寂然名止。寂而常照名觀。雖言初後無二無別。是名圓頓止觀。³⁹

³⁹ T46.001c23-002a02. In the same text, *Mohezhi guan*, Zhiyi further comments on the Tiantai contemplation of cessation and contemplation: “Single-mindedly tying the attention to the dharma-realm to realize the oneness of mind and dharma-realm. Tying the attention is precisely ‘cessation’; and one moment of thought [in a sense of

0.2-2 Ng Yu-Kwan

Among recent scholars of the field, Ng Yu-Kwan, also struggled with how to make sense of Tiantai's mind-bending claims and yet was seemingly unable to show a convincing explanation of the identity between Conventionality and Emptiness. One of the most obvious examples is his treatment of "the pure Mind" that is prioritized over the deluded mind, to which we will turn next. In his *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism and Early Mādhyamika* (1993)⁴⁰, Ng collects and traces Zhiyi's texts on the relationship among the Three Truths and argues that Buddha-Nature is "ever-abiding, functional, and all-embracing" and thereby he states that "Truth (*shixiang* 實相)" (or "Real Attribute" throughout this dissertation) for Zhiyi has characteristics of "permanency, dynamism, and all-embracing nature."⁴¹ Ng's achievement is significant to the field of that time, especially in his argument for Tiantai's truth qua "Middle-Way Buddha-Nature," successfully showing that it was not a static truth but rather had "extremely positive and constructive attitude toward the

realizing the oneness of mind and dharma realm] is precisely 'contemplation'. 但專繫緣法界，一念法界。繫緣是止，一念是觀 (T46.011b22-b23)." It is in this sense he says: "A subject and object of contemplation all dependently co-arise. This co-arising is precisely emptiness. This is the teaching of cause and effect for [practitioners of] two-vehicle. If one contemplates and finds that there is emptiness, then he falls into two poles [of extreme] to sink in emptiness and get stuck there. [Bodhisattvas] give rise to great compassion and enter the provisional to transform living beings. Although there is no body in Real, they provisionally create body. Although there is no emptiness in Real, they provisionally preach about emptiness. Transforming and guiding them is precisely the teaching of cause and effect for bodhisattvas. If you contemplate this dharma, liberators and the liberated are both dharma of the middle-way real-mark, then [all of them are] the ultimate purity. What is good and evil, who there is and there is not, who liberates and does not, all dharmas are like this. This is the cause and effect of Buddha-dharma. 能觀所觀悉是緣生。緣生即空。並是二乘因果法也。若觀此空有墮落二邊沈空滯有。而起大慈悲入假化物。實無身假作身。實無空假說空。而化導之。即菩薩因果法也。觀此法能度所度。皆是中道實相之法。畢竟清淨。誰善誰惡。誰有誰無。誰度誰不度。一切法悉如是。是佛因果法也。 (T46. 052b26-052c04.)"

⁴⁰ As Ng discusses, among the essential philosophical sources for Tiantai thought attributed to Indian Buddhism is Nāgājuna, who is a supposed author of *大智度論* *Dazhidulun* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*) whose Sanskrit or Tibetan texts are not discovered. *Dazhidulun* is a major source and one of the most frequently quoted texts for Zhiyi. However, because of this status of authorship, audience in non-East Asian Buddhism may find *Dazhidulun* deviating from the Indian Mādhyamaka. Regardless the attributable authorship of the text, with the historical formation and development of East Asian Buddhist thought in view, *Dazhidulun*'s influences on subsequent Buddhist traditions are undeniable. Thus, throughout my dissertation, treatment of the text will be in accord with how Tiantai and other scholars of East Asia treated it, and I will include this text as one of the major philosophical inspirations for Tiantai thought.

⁴¹ NG, Yu-Kwan. *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism and Early Mādhyamika*. 1993. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. x.

empirical world.”⁴² According to him, truth is not static but rather dynamic in a sense of “capable of functioning”⁴³ or having a character of “meritorious functioning [(功用)]”⁴⁴ and thereby integrates both “Way and Nature.” Ng says that this “functioning (*yong*用)” is the function of truth that liberates sentient beings from suffering. Although this line of thinking is a significant contribution, I must admit that he more than a few times in the book seems to be unable to dispel his possible misconstrual of Tiantai that is evident in his absolutization of “the Mind” that ends up attaining a privileged status of “the pure Mind.” Even more disappointing is that his allusion to the pure Mind is a result of Ng’s attempt to make sense of the “extremely difficult to comprehend”⁴⁵ relation between ignorance and Dharma-nature, which as we saw in Swanson’s treatment of this relation above is at heart of Tiantai contemplation practice. Let us walk through how Ng discusses this step by step and why he sought a “solution” to the incomprehensible problem of the identity between them in the notion of “the pure Mind.”

In the book’s penultimate seventh chapter “Practical Signification of Identification,” Ng discusses a passage from *Mohezhi-guan*, which, according to his translation, states:

Likewise, the immeasurable greed and sensuous desires are the seed of Buddhahood. [They] enable the bodhisattva to produce countless doors to the *Dharma*. More firewood makes the flames [rise] fiercely, and the dung fertilizes flowers. This is why [we say] that greed and sensuous desire are the Way. If [one] extirpates greed and sensuous desire and abides in the Emptiness of greed and sensuous desire, how can [he] produce all doors to the *Dharma*?⁴⁶

Ng starts commenting on this passage by saying, “Defilements can help produce the doors to the *Dharma* (*fa-men*) to promote Buddha affairs, but defilements are not something to be used. [...]

⁴² Ibid. 86.

⁴³ Ibid. 44.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 62.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 173.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 168. Zhiyi’s original passage says, “無量貪欲是如來種亦復如是。能令菩薩出生無量百千法門。多薪火猛。糞壤生華。貪欲是道。此之謂也。若斷貪欲住貪欲空。何由生出一切法門。(T46.047a06-a09.)”

[I]t is because there are defilements that practical measures have to be undertaken to overcome them.”⁴⁷ His emphasis that defilements themselves are not used for realization of one’s Buddhahood is based on his understanding that they serve as expedient device, which initiates “the endeavors for overcoming defilements.”⁴⁸ Here he seems to be suggesting that defilements are not part of Buddhahood but can serve as means to advance one’s practice toward Buddhahood. However, this contradicts to Zhiyi’s emphatic passage that Ng translates as “greed and sensuous desire are the Way.” While Ng is aware of the necessity of “a special understanding of the nature of defilements” embedded in Zhiyi’s seemingly paradoxical and counterintuitive statement, I would say that in terms of Tiantai’s broader philosophical context, Ng’s treatment of “defilements” seems to exhibit a conceptual error and hence be in tension with Tiantai’s essential doctrine of the “interpenetration of ten realms (十界互具),” which argues that the highest stage of Buddhahood is inherent to all other nine realms and thus they mutually entail each other. If, as Ng claims, defilements were only valid as an expedient means which are ultimately expendable, this interpenetration will not be complete, relegating Tiantai’s non-exclusive Middle to rather something *exclusive* or partially penetrating. Then he brings up Zhiyi’s passage that says, “The defilement of ignorance is originally Dharma Nature.”⁴⁹ This is the same passage that we discussed above in our critique of Swanson’s treatment of the relation between ignorance and Dharma-nature. In the case of Ng, he successfully avoids an unnecessary insertion of “the basis of” ignorance that is equal to Dharma-nature (as Swanson does). Then he seems to end with a decent understanding of Zhiyi’s point of this relation by saying, “It is in the sense of not being two separate things, but being different states of the same thing, that Chih-i

⁴⁷ Ibid. 168.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 168.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 170.

identifies Dharma-nature and ignorance.”⁵⁰ This is an advance over Swanson’s formulation, inasmuch as now we are not merely talking about two things with a shared inseparable basis, or a one-way relation of basis and based, but two “states” of one thing of exactly equal ontological status. However, the real question then becomes the relation between these two states, and immediately after this explanation, Ng ends up revealing how he really interprets it by showing that this relation exhibits “a transition of states—namely, from the prevalence of ignorance to the overcoming of ignorance and the revelation of Dharma-nature.”⁵¹ Contradicting how he astutely pointed out the non-twoness of ignorance and Dharma-nature, he discloses that his real understanding is that there are different states that *are* in fact themselves separate and distinct from each other. These two states of the one thing are mutually exclusive, definitively expressed as one or the other exclusively at any given time. This is exactly the misunderstanding that later Tiantai tradition stigmatizes as the deflationary meaning of “identity” as merely “two opposite sides of the same thing turned over one way or the other” (*yiwuxiangfan*—物相翻).⁵² This leads to his unnecessary creation of the problem of inability to dispel “a moral or religious struggle between Dharma-nature and ignorance.”⁵³ In order to find a way of “resolving” this tension, he then moves on to alluding to *Fahuaxuanyi* and other writings of Zhiyi. However, since he is coming from his original assumption that ignorance and Dharma-nature are two separate states that are independent from each other, and since this assumption itself is not questioned, his subsequent discussions that address this essential Tiantai topic end up going in the wrong direction. In the end, he seems to even give up on his project of “resolving” the struggle between ignorance and Dharma-nature by saying, “This antinomy makes Chih-i’s thought extremely

⁵⁰ Ibid. 171.

⁵¹ Ibid. 171.

⁵² T46.707a28-a29.

⁵³ NG, *T’ien-t’ai Buddhism and Early Mādhyamika*. 171.

difficult to comprehend, and consequently, it has hardly been dealt with seriously by scholars.”⁵⁴ Since he got his translations correct, seeing this unsatisfactory conclusion is disappointing and excruciatingly painful. Moreover, this unfortunate giving-up is followed by a further surprising move. Ng says that a “solution” (while there would be nothing to “solve” if he was not coming from a wrong premise) is “found solely in a third possible condition, which synthesizes Dharma Nature and ignorance. [...]he third condition must be nothing but the mind.”⁵⁵ This immediately raises an eyebrow for close readers of Tiantai who may be defenders of the tradition’s orthodoxy as Zhanran and Zhili advocated, because giving a privileged status to one’s mind qua “pure Mind” contradicts the Tiantai doctrine of “inherent evil (*xingju* 性具)” that rather argues for the necessity of “deluded mind.”

Privileging the pure Mind over a deluded mind would hinder the life-blood of the Tiantai Three Truths and thus would make the “meritorious function of Truth” that Ng argues for rather ironically dysfunctional. Prioritization of pure Mind is problematic in Tiantai because it would make mind *exclude a deluded aspect of the mind as part of the mind itself*. For instance, toward the end of the book, he says, “[D]efilements become a positive instrument to us and there is no need to extirpate them.”⁵⁶ The term “defilements” Ng is referring to is the Chinese 貪欲; his treatment of defilement is that it is at best something there is “*no need to extirpate*.” Here we should be aware that saying thus about defilement is totally different from saying that “*defilements are necessary*,” which *is* precisely the case in Tiantai, as for instance Zhanran says, “Such things as the afflictive labors of obstructive dusts are the seeds of tathāgata (塵勞之儔是如來種).” In Tiantai, as we discussed above, defilement is necessary, it cannot and must not be

⁵⁴ Ibid. 173.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 173.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 169.

extirpated rather than *merely* being something there is “no need to extirpate,” because it is inherent to our mind and its nature is precisely Buddha’s compassion. (More on this below.) Therefore, it seems to me that Ng’s consideration of mind as the mediator that combines Dharma-nature and ignorance ends up turning it into “the pure Mind” and hence excludes its aspect of defilement as an *essential* part of it. As a result, this sense of “having to deal with defilements as something that somehow must be incorporated into Tiantai system” kind of view, that frowns on the unwanted presence of the deluded mind, continues to bother him and creep into his discussions about the relation between ignorance and Dharma-nature, a decisive topic for Tiantai thought. This is perhaps a common misunderstanding about Tiantai that nevertheless undermines the tradition’s lifeblood of the mutually subsuming identity among all dharmas, all of which without exception are themselves fully illusory, fully real and fully the Middle-Way, including both what is conceived as “the false mind” and what is conceived as “the pure Mind.”⁵⁷ Therefore, in spite of his achievement and contribution to the field, Ng seems to end up merely reporting what Zhiyi appears to be saying about the relation between delusion and enlightenment but never successfully showing Ng’s philosophical consideration about why they are in an identical relation and what such relation of identity entails. However, the passages Ng quotes from the works of Zhiyi on this topic are supremely important. The problem is a lack of persuasive philosophical discussions, which seem to be in part attributed to his misconception of Tiantai Three Truths, as suggested in his absolutization of the pure mind. This book was published in 1993. His notion that no scholars took Zhiyi’s paradoxical statement about the equation between ignorance and Dharma-nature seriously demonstrates how difficult and elusive Tiantai thought is for even the minds of experts. However, this orientation of Tiantai academia

⁵⁷ Ziporyn points out the same conceptual misunderstanding in his response to Paul Swanson’s translated work of *Mohezhi guan*.

was about to see an enormous change of the fecundity of the field by the arrival of Brook Ziporyn's masterful volume *Evil and/or/as the Good*, published in 2000 from Harvard University Press.

0.2-3 Brook Ziporyn

Ziporyn's scholarship on Tiantai is notable for the precision of his philosophical understanding of the tradition's texts. His vital presence in the field is grounded in his strong knowledge of and familiarity with Chinese philosophical texts and Western philosophy that thereby make his writing about Tiantai accessible to scholars of both Chinese thought and Western philosophy, including those who work on Buddhist thought. Ziporyn's works in all these fields contain discussions about and cross-references to essential topics in other philosophical traditions, making them accessible to a wider audience, while securing *accessibility* for readers who are non-experts of Tiantai or Chinese Buddhist thought, which has been an issue for the field of Tiantai, and in fact for the entire field of Chinese Buddhist thought today. Hence, Ziporyn's enormous contributions to academia not only brought his philosophical elucidation of Tiantai, but opened roads to more inclusive academic conversations across traditions and disciplines.

We already started to see above how Ziporyn understands the heart of Tiantai thought and engages with other scholars of the field such as Swanson. Throughout this dissertation, I will attempt to investigate the philosophical implications of Tiantai materials by philologically and conceptually leaning on Ziporyn's works. As shown above, among the strengths of his Tiantai scholarship are his expert reading ability of Buddhist-hybrid classical Chinese and ways he carefully pays attention to philosophical implications embedded in some of the most complex and conceptually challenging philosophical texts of Tiantai and other literature. But perhaps one

of the rarest and most significant aspects of his contribution to the field is how he makes complex Tiantai thought more intuitive and comprehensible by way of creatively deploying various analogies that explain the elusive nuances. This makes the most difficult texts more accessible to readers of his works, building conditions for facilitating a further intercultural dialogue in the academic study of philosophy of religions. The examples of these analogies include “the ambiguous O” that explains how Emptiness, the absence of self-nature of all conventional reality, is further developed and interpreted as the “illimitable ambiguity” that exhibits the unlimitable openness to otherness according to the Tiantai Three Truths.⁵⁸

Another ingenious elaboration of the “setup/punch-line” trope precisely captures and concretely exemplifies Tiantai’s prominent doctrine of “Opening the Provisional to Reveal the Real (*kaiquanxianshi* 開權顯實),” which demonstrates an internal or mutually entailing relation of cause and effect, delusion and enlightenment, suffering and liberation, śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood, etc., and thereby undergirds the immanentist conception of Buddhahood that is omnipresent in all moments of experience of all beings in the entire dharma-realm. In particular, the analogy of setup/punch line is especially pertinent to our discussions in the second chapter where we will see how Zhiyi alludes to the Śāriputra narrative contained in the *Lotus Sūtra* and explains it in terms of this doctrine of opening the provisional to reveal the real. We will look at the details about how this analogy explains ways in which Śāriputra’s pre-Mahāyāna moments of practice (setup) is opened up to reveal that it has been always already Buddhahood (punch line) unbeknownst to him, just as the punch line normally arrives unexpectedly, and yet from the viewpoint of having already known the punch line we will retrospectively realize that the punch line has been expressed in the form of absence—hence in the moments we thought we were only

⁵⁸ Ziporyn, *Emptiness and Omnipresence*. 148-165.

hearing the setup, such that the “humorousness” we thought pertained only to the punch line was also present everywhere, in the deadpan form of its absence, throughout the setup.

0.3 Method

In the field of Chinese Buddhist thought, Tiantai philosophy is known for its foremost complexity and difficulty.⁵⁹ However, Ziporyn’s philosophical precision bolstered by his ingenuous employment of analogies made me better understand and appreciate the tradition’s philosophical ingenuity that is obscured by the notoriety that unfortunately keeps academic minds away from investigating Tiantai texts. The reason for this notoriety is the tradition’s counterintuitive and atypical philosophical moves that were partially already explained in this introductory chapter. Ziporyn’s usages of various analogies powerfully serve as an antidote to make students of Tiantai comprehend its philosophical points in less counterintuitive ways. Inspired by his effective approach, throughout this dissertation, as a method of my philosophical investigation, I will enhance this method and attempt to pick up metaphors and stories used in Tiantai literature so we can build up our understanding of Tiantai thought by considering the philosophical implications of these concrete tropes. With this methodological approach, I hope to demonstrate how we can make unusual claims of Tiantai more intuitive and accessible. To give some examples, I will use Zhiyi’s commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra*’s narrative of Śāriputra’s story (Chapter 2), the “water and/as ice” trope that shows the mutually entailing identity between ignorance and Dharma-nature (Chapter 3), the metaphor of “the leaver and followers of footprints (Chapter 4) and the “ocean and rivers” that Zhiyi adopts from the *Mahāyāna*

⁵⁹ My personal conversation with Professor Dr. Peter Gregory whose publications include *Tsung-Mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*. Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 16. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press, 2002)

Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra to explain the relation between Buddha and sentient beings according to the *Lotus Sūtra*'s pinnacle concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata according to the Three Truths (Chapter 5). This method will be consistent with my discussions about Hegel and Tiantai to be presented in the final part of the fifth chapter, wherein I bring up Hegel's concept of "the cunning of reason" according to the *Science of Logic* and examines the implications of this concept by focusing on his concrete allusion to "a plough." It is my hope that by using this methodology I present Tiantai thought in intuitive ways and contribute to the further growth of the field and a more inclusive academic conversations about the philosophically fecund topics and points embedded in Tiantai materials.

0.4 Summary of Each Chapter

In contrast to Swanson, in this dissertation, I join Ziporyn's hermeneutical stance as a defender of the late Tiantai exegesis of Shanjia School led by scholar-monks such as Zhanran and Zhili, presenting a total of five chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 gives an overview of the rise of Chinese Buddhism and how its distinctively Chinese character was formed, commencing with tracing how Buddhist texts were first imported to China during the second century CE. Then we will examine a turning point of Chinese Buddhism during Kumārajīva's (鳩摩羅什) arrival in China and his remarkable contributions made in the fifth century. One of the important sources that introduces his philosophy is a correspondence of letters between him and Huiyuan (334-416) that is known as *Dashengdayizhang* (大乘大義章). This document shows a historical case of interaction between Hīnayāna⁶⁰ and Mahāyāna ideas and how the *Lotus Sūtra* was interpreted by

⁶⁰ In history of Buddhism, the "Mahāyāna (great vehicle)" movement emerged out of conflictive interactions with preexistent Buddhist groups. Declaring to be bodhisattvas whose aim is to strive for the end of suffering of all sentient beings, Mahāyānists criticized the preexisting traditions by calling them "Hīnayāna (lesser vehicle)."

prominent Buddhists of that time. We will pay close attention to Kumārajīva’s attitude toward translation and his textual reliance on *Dazhidulun* (大智度論) attributed to Nāgājuna,⁶¹ a massive commentary to the *prajñāpāramitā* (or “perfection of wisdom”) *sūtra* literature, which had a heavy influence on his thoughts and translation. After tracing Kumārajīva’s thoughts and historic achievements, we will look at how his famous disciples such as Seng Zhao (僧肇) and Zhu Daosheng (竺道生) further developed Chinese Buddhist thought by seeing ways in which Chinese philosophical concepts such as “Coherence (*li* 理),” “stimulus and response” and “trace and its leaver” were incorporated and used in Buddhist contexts and further for a Tiantai interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra* and other Buddhist literature essential to Tiantai. The chapter ends with a brief biographical account of the life of Zhiyi, from his encounter with Buddhism during his childhood through his heroic achievements as a scholar-monk in various training centers of Chinese Buddhism. This groundwork attempts to demonstrate how Chinese discussions of Buddhism diverge from those of Indian Buddhism, due to the particular conditions of intellectual history in China.

Chapter 2 presents the world and philosophy of Tiantai through a reading of the story from the *Lotus Sūtra* that exhibits a moment in which Śāriputra who thinks of himself as a śrāvaka attains a new self-recognition of himself as a bodhisattva. The point of this scene for Tiantai is that his bodhisattvahood is and always has been expressed in the form of his śrāvaka practice,

⁶¹ As Ng discusses in the above-mentioned *T’ien-t’ai Buddhism and Early Mādhyamika*, among the essential philosophical sources for Tiantai thought attributed to Indian Buddhism is Nāgājuna, who is the supposed author of *大智度論 Dazhidulun (Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra)* whose Sanskrit or Tibetan texts are not discovered. *Dazhidulun* is a major source and one of the most frequently quoted texts for Zhiyi. However, because of this status of authorship, audience in non-East Asian Buddhism may find *Dazhidulun* deviating from the Indian Mādhyamaka. Regardless this unknown authorship of the text, with the historical formation and development of East Asian Buddhist thought in view, *Dazhidulun*’s influences on subsequent Buddhist traditions are undeniable. Throughout my dissertation, treatment of this text will be in accord with how Tiantai and other scholars of East Asia treated it, and I will include this text as one of the major philosophical inspirations for Tiantai thought.

which is normally considered to be the opposite of bodhisattvahood. In the *Lotus Sūtra*, this scene starts with Śākyamuni’s abrupt declaration that buddhas use skillful means to liberate sentient beings from suffering. Because of this, buddhas deliberately make distinctions among different types of practitioners (e.g., śrāvaka, bodhisattva), while in reality there is no such distinction. To the eyes of his śrāvaka disciples, this was a surprising twist because it would mean that from the beginning there were no śrāvakas but only bodhisattvas, revealing that all his disciples, including themselves, were in fact bodhisattvas, “buddhas-to-be.” This is the *Lotus Sūtra*’s famous teaching of “one-vehicle (ekayāna)” that advocates the universal Buddhahood inherent to all types of Buddhist practitioners. However, in what sense there are “only bodhisattvas” is unclear from the text. The sūtra does not explain this matter, and there are still those who self-identify as śrāvakas in the audience of the Buddha’s assembly. The second chapter investigates this enigmatic reconception of śrāvakahood and its relation to bodhisattvahood in order to find a Tiantai solution to this conceptual barrier. As we will see in the chapter, Tiantai thinkers took this to mean that Buddha’s wisdom allows us to see the paradoxical identity between śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. In light of this, I will argue that this enigmatic claim of the *Lotus Sūtra* shows the mutually subsuming (or “intersubsumptive”) identity between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood, which is prominently expressed in Zhiyi’s oxymoronic notion, “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas (*dachengshengwen* 大乘聲聞).”⁶² This seemingly self-contradictory expression is crucial for Tiantai’s conceptual reorganization of the relation between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood. This paradoxical identity of what appears to be in opposition is not achieved by abandoning the śrāvaka practice, but rather by *thoroughly* being a

⁶² As opposed to bodhisattvas of Mahāyāna, Hīnayāna was composed of a group of “śrāvakas” whose focus of practice is to hear the teachings of Śākyamuni and thereby to achieve their personal awakening. Because of this, Zhiyi’s usage of “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas,” instead of a typical Mahāyāna-bodhisattvas or Hīnayāna-śrāvakas, rather seems to be contradictory at a glance.

śrāvaka and thereby striving for its dynamic activity of Buddhahood, the goal hitherto considered to be applicable to only bodhisattvas but not to śrāvakas.

Chapter 3 builds on the second chapter's discussion about the paradoxical identity-in-difference between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood. Specifically, we will examine Tiantai application of this atypical notion of oneness to “causes and results (*yinguo* 因果)” and their *necessary* intersubsumption that exhibits the Tiantai conception of the omnidirectionality of time. In brief, in Tiantai, “necessity” in this context means “necessary omnipresence” qua inescapable ineradicability of causes, their results or any other particularities of Conventional reality (that is—as we saw earlier—another name for Emptiness, and their reversible relation of the Middle). This characterization of all dharmas is known as “Real Attribute (*shixiang* 實相),” which is grounded in Tiantai's Three Truths. From the viewpoint of Real Attribute, any single moment of experience that appears to be present only in a particular locus is in reality omnipresent. Hence, the necessary intersubsumption between causes and results is grounded in their surprising attribute of omnipositionality. This strange and yet essential notion of the omnipresence of dharmas culminates into the Tiantai discussion about the intersubsumptive relation between “ignorance” and “Dharma-nature” that presents therapeutic functions liberative to the suffering of sentient beings. This part of the chapter not only presents Tiantai's essential philosophy, but also serves as my responses to what Swanson and Ng have in my view misconstrued. Building on academic studies of the topic undertaken by recent scholars of the field, I argue that according to the Tiantai Three Truths, the nature that ignorance and Dharma-nature share is “recognition of suffering” that thereby indicates that saṃsāra, the unendable cycles of suffering, is qualified as a cause of the equally unfinishable process of

Buddhahood, and that this cause and its effect stand in a relation of intersubsumption, such that both pervade each side of the relation.

Chapter 4 takes up the Tiantai concept of the root and traces mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction. In terms of the “root,” all of the Buddha’s disciples are bodhisattvas, “buddhas-to-be,” while they manifest a variety of seemingly deluded practice in the “traces.” Since on this view Buddhahood and non-Buddhahood are indivisible,⁶³ Buddhahood is just one way of referring to this indivisible whole (Buddhahood-non-buddha-beings), and non-buddha beings are another way of referring to the same whole, but with a different rhetorical emphasis (non-buddha-beings-Buddhahood); hence they are viewed as mutually subsuming one another and thereby reversible. The chapter attempts to demonstrate how this identity and reversibility of opposites works in terms of the relation between the root and trace. In light of these concerns, the fourth chapter focuses on the theoretical interpretation of the “six levels of root and trace (六重本迹)” that appears in Zhiyi’s *Fahuaxuanyi* (*Profound Meaning of the Sūtra of the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma*) and argues that the most important philosophical implication of the relation between root and traces is a conception of the non-teleological dimension of the teleological, on the basis of Tiantai Three Truths epistemology. In Tiantai, purposive practice is posited as a provisional truth but only to reveal that all practices are ultimately enlightened non-purposive activities. Special attention is paid to Zhiyi’s analogy of the “leaver and followers of footprints,” which shows the convergence of the perspectival difference between deluded and enlightened practice, purposive and purposeless act, and trace and root. Hence, the significance of this analogy will be shown to lie in how it exhibits the reversibility of epistemological

⁶³ They are “indivisible” *not* in a sense Swanson translates the term 即 *ji*, but as I will show in the chapter, saying that Buddhahood and non-buddhahood are “indivisible” is an initial conceptual step that will culminate to their mutual entailment and reversibility.

opposites. This will be the final essential piece that completes the conceptual foundations for the subsequent and final fifth chapter's argument for the identity between buddhas and sentient beings in the context of the eternal life of the tathāgata according to the Tiantai conception of root and traces.

Chapter 5 is where all preceding discussions from each chapter culminate to a final investigation of the *Lotus Sūtra*'s concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata as a central focus, considering its implications in relation to what we started to investigate in the last chapter, the mutual entailment of purpose and purposelessness, hence, an omnitemic conception of purposivity. Here Zhiyi clarifies that the tathāgata's eternal "life" does not refer to the Buddha's biological life but rather his "life as wisdom." A conceptual key to understanding this is Tiantai's reorganization of the Mahāyāna doctrine of three-bodies of the tathāgata. Zhiyi argues that these three are interpenetrative and become the content of the eternal tathāgata's life. This leads to the tradition's astonishing claim that all activities of both enlightened *and* deluded beings are the content of this eternal life. This enormous claim is anchored in Tiantai's *circular* relation between Buddha and sentient beings. The motif of this "circularity" is drawn from the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (大般涅槃經), which speaks about the "ocean of the tathāgata's life (如來壽命海)," asserting that the lives of all beings resemble "rivers" that flow into the single "ocean" of the tathāgata's life, but also flips this metaphor and compares the Buddha's life to a lake *from which all rivers flow out*. An essential implication of this river-ocean analogy is to say that river *is* ocean, and ocean *is* river; in the same way, sentient being *is* Buddha, and Buddha *is* sentient being, forming a *circular* relation of identity between sameness and difference. Importantly, the original contrast of names is not eliminated but preserved while exhibiting their identity. It is this paradoxical unity of oneness and difference that is undergirded by the

interpenetrated three-bodies of the tathāgata, which is the content of the eternal life of the Buddha, of the ocean of the tathāgata’s life, whose motif is the mutually entailing *circular* relation between the single ocean and different rivers that intersubsumptively supplement each other. This is what the Tiantai interpretation of the tathāgata’s eternal life culminates in. With this in mind, the second half of the chapter will finally return to the topic that this Introduction stated earlier—that is, “the relation of negation” embedded in teleology. With all the unusual and unexpected philosophical premises that earlier chapters built up in mind, we will examine the problem of teleology according to Hegel’s concept of “determinate negation,” as discussed in his *Science of Logic*, and his account of “the cunning of reason” in that text, as opposed to the account in the *Philosophy of History*. My claim is that while Hegel and Tiantai share the idea of the Middle, Hegel’s *exclusive* middle differs from Tiantai’s omniscient position of *non-exclusive* middle that is prominently expressed in the idea of “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas.” In this picture, the śrāvaka’s voice-hearing practice reveals itself to be *a version of* the bodhisattva practice of causing all to hear the Buddha-way. The seemingly obscure point of this discussion becomes clearer when we put two traditions (Hegel and Tiantai) into a conceptual dialogue within the Hegelian philosophical framework of “the cunning of reason,” in which the traditional *teleological* picture is transformed and ends up exhibiting rather nonteleological or *atelic* relation between ends and means. However, this *atelic* is still a penultimate position according to Tiantai, because it merely shows how the expansion of means turns into a new end and hence does not dissolve the tension between them. In other words, the *atelic* is still an attempt to overcome the idea of external teleology. In contrast, in Tiantai, we see neither teleology nor *atelic* conception of ends and means. Rather, it is the *omnitelic* conception of ends and means where the mutual entailment of teleological and *atelic*, purpose and purposelessness becomes pervasive in each

moment of purposive practice and purposeless activity. I hope this constructive thought experiment demonstrates the usefulness of using a Western intellectual framework for the investigation of Chinese Buddhist materials and thereby contributes to developing a meaningful conversation that enriches a philosophical study of the Hegelian and Tiantai materials by bridging traditions.

The Conclusion presents my final thought on Śāriputra's past life as a bandit and romancer from the viewpoint of Tiantai commentaries and considers where the results of our investigations may further lead us.

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT WAS AT STAKE AT THE BEGINNING OF CHINESE BUDDHISM?

Buddhism was introduced to China through the translation of Sanskrit texts. However, this historical condition of the import of translated Buddhist texts initiated by Anshigao and Lokakṣema during the second century meant that both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna texts were *simultaneously* introduced to China without information about the historical order of their formation. On one hand, this led to the struggle of how to resolve the contradictions of Buddha's teachings contained in different texts. On the other, it is precisely in this struggle and creative attempts to resolve such seeming paradoxes that developed Chinese Buddhist thought and created conditions for establishing great schools of Chinese Buddhism. In light of this, the present chapter gives an overview of the advent of Chinese Buddhism and how its distinct Chinese character emerged out of particular contexts of their intellectual history. Commencing with reviewing the process of the first import of Buddhist texts to China during the second century, we will examine how the early formation of Chinese Buddhism had a turning point in the fifth century after Kumārajīva arrived at Changan and undertook groundbreaking translation projects with his disciples. We will look at the importance of his thought expressed in a correspondence of letters between him and Huiyuan (334-416 CE), which shows a historical case of important interaction between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna ideas that entails information regarding how the *Lotus Sūtra* was interpreted during that time. We will also pay attention to Kumārajīva's attitude toward translation and his textual reliance on *Dazhidulun*, which made an influence on his translation. After spending time on Kumārajīva and his thoughts, we will look at what impacts his disciples such as Seng Zhao and Zhu Daosheng made on the further growth of

Chinese Buddhist thought by seeing how Chinese concepts such as “Coherence (*li* 理),” “stimulus and response” and “trace and its leaver” were repurposed and used in Buddhist contexts at its early phase and further for a Tiantai interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. With this groundwork, I hope to demonstrate how Chinese discussions of Buddhism diverge from those of Indian Buddhism due to particular conditions of intellectual history in China.

1. The Advent of Chinese Buddhism

In the second century CE, two prominent non-Chinese scholar monks arrived at the ancient Chinese capital of Luoyang (洛陽) and undertook the first massive project of translating Sanskrit Buddhist texts into classical Chinese. First monk who marked the beginning of this historic moment was Anshigao (安世高), who was a prince of the Parthian Empire (247 BCE-224 CE), a region in today’s northeastern Iran. With expertized knowledge of abhidharma and samādhi, he translated forty fascicles of Hīnayāna sūtras including *Anbanshouyijing* (安般守意經), *Yinchirujing* (陰持入經) and *Renbenyushengjing* (人本欲生經). The meditation manual *Anbanshouyijing*, which explains how to stabilize one’s mind through a meditative practice of counting breath, gained popularity among Chinese Buddhists of that time. The Chinese term “anban” is a transliteration of the Sanskrit term “āna-apāna,” which means coming in and out of one’s breath.¹ The influx of these influential pre-Mahāyāna texts was soon followed by a massive import of Mahāyāna texts translated by Lokakṣema (支婁迦讖), who is from the Greater Yuezhi (大月氏) located in the west of Anshigao’s homeland Parthia. In arriving at Luoyang,

¹ Wakemi, Akira. ‘第2章 仏教伝来 (Chapter 2, The Arrival of Buddhism)’ From *新東アジア仏教史 06 中国 I 南北朝, 仏教の東伝と受容 (Vol. 6: China I, Northern and Southern Dynasties: The Propagation of Buddhism to East Asia and Its Reception)*. Tokyo: Kosei Publication Co. 2010. 83.

Lokakṣema translated twenty seven fascicles of Mahāyāna sūtras including *Daoxingborejing* (道行般若經),² *Shoulengyansanmeijing* (首楞嚴三昧經; Skt: *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra*) and *Banzhousanmeijing* (般舟三昧經; Skt: *Pratyutpannasamādhisūtra*). *Daoxingborejing* is the oldest existent Chinese translation of the *prajñāpāramitā* (or “perfection of wisdom”) sūtra whose central idea of “emptiness” marked the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought. *Shoulengyanjing* talks about a meditative practice of “śūraṅgama samādhi” (or “a concentration of the heroic progress.”) This sūtra considers a state of concentration called “dhyāna” to be fundamental to all kinds of bodhisattva practice and was used as a foundation for the formation of subsequent influential schools of Chinese Buddhism. For instance, in the sixth century, Huisi (515-577 CE), the second patriarch of Tiantai, developed the meditation practice of “concentration that follows one’s mentation (隨自意三昧)” based on the śūraṅgama samādhi. Zhiyi learned this method from his master Huisi and further developed it in his system of meditation practice.

Although the massive import of translated Buddhist texts initiated by Anshigao and Lokakṣema during the second century marked a historic milestone, it also created a problem in Chinese Buddhism. Since both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna texts were translated and introduced to China *at the same time* without information regarding the historical order of their development, it generated an issue of how to understand the seeming contradictions among Buddha’s various

² According to Karashima, the original title of this text was either 般若波羅蜜經 (*Prajñāpāramitā*) or 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā*). He says, “Later, however, when Kumārajīva translated the Larger *Prajñāpāramitā* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā*), which is an enlarged version of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, also entitled it 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā*), people changed the original title of Lokakṣema’s translation in question by adding the name of its first chapter, namely 道行品, to 道行摩訶般若波羅蜜經 or 摩訶般若波羅蜜道行經, in order to differentiate between the two. The title 道行般若經 is presumably an abridged form of 摩訶般若波羅蜜經” (*A Critical Edition of Lokakṣema’s translation of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology. 2011.1)

teachings expressed in different texts. However, this intellectual challenge was also an opportunity for Chinese Buddhists. Their attempts to resolve this confusion led to the practice of classification of teachings (教判), one of the characteristics of Chinese Buddhism, which emerged out of this specific Chinese context. Perhaps we can make this confusion more intuitive by imagining how difficult it would be to determine the historical order of development of the texts of Western philosophy. Let's say the works of different philosophers—such as Aristotle, Descartes, Hegel, and Freud—were randomly translated into one language at the same time and made available to us for the first time in history, but we have no information about the author of each text or the year of production. We are not sure about which text is meant to respond to which texts and whether or not the same author wrote some of these texts. It would not be an easy task to put them in a correct historical order, solely based on the fact that all we can see is the main body of the texts themselves. This was the type of experience that Chinese Buddhists had to face at that time.

In the mid third century, Chinese Buddhists expanded the ways they obtained Buddhist texts. During the previous century, Buddhist literature was brought to China from outside through translation that was undertaken by foreign monks who came to China. But more than a century after Anshigao and Lokakṣema played important roles in Luoyang, Chinese Buddhists started to be dissatisfied with merely waiting and receiving these translated texts brought by foreigners. This dissatisfaction eventually led to the rise of Chinese Buddhists who made a journey to the western region via Silk Road to obtain Buddhist texts, starting with such pioneer Zhushixing (朱士行), who was a well-known lecturer of *Daoxingborejing*, one of the texts translated by Lokakṣema during the second century. He found ambiguous parts in this sūtra and attributed the reason of it to the problem of translation. Because of this, he became the first

Chinese “seeker of dharma (求法者)” who made a journey to the kingdom of Khotan in the western region and attained *pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra*,³ the original Sanskrit text of *Daoxingborejing*, in 260.⁴ However, this trend of seeking the dharma did not replace the old practice of having foreign Buddhist monks translate Buddhist scriptures into classical Chinese.

Around this time, Zhu Fahu (竺法護 239-316) from Dunhuang in the far northwest of China, played an important role as a translator. After he joined a Buddhist monastic order at the age of eight, Zhu Fahu heard that Mahāyāna sūtras were discoverable in the western region outside China and traveled there to obtain original Sanskrit Buddhist texts. He then went to the Chinese capital of Changan to undertake his translation projects that continued over forty years, during which he translated three hundred nine fascicles of Buddhist scriptures. Among his translation was *Zhengfahuajing* (正法華經), the first translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Unlike *prajñāpāramitā* literatures that were already transmitted to China, the emphasis of the *Lotus Sūtra* is not on perfection of Buddha’s wisdom or meditation practice but rather on the idea of “one-vehicle” that affirms the Buddhahood of śrāvakas (whose goal is to become an arhat rather than a buddha) and explains the consistency of different teachings contained in various Buddhist sūtras. In the *Lotus Sūtra*’s second chapter, Śākyamuni declares that all buddhas in the future, past and present employ the same pedagogical method of “skillful means” to liberate sentient beings in different ways. According to the sūtra, this leads buddhas to use different teachings, while the truth about this difference is undergirded by the oneness of teachings that equally instruct his disciples and makes them attain true wisdom that is equal to the Buddha’s. This idea

³ This text was translated into classical Chinese as *Fanguangborejing* (放光般若經) in 290 CE.

⁴ Wakemi, ‘The Arrival of Buddhism’ From *The Propagation of Buddhism to East Asia and Its Reception*. 88-89.

of one-vehicle attracted the Buddhist China because, as we saw earlier, Chinese Buddhism started with the simultaneous import of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna scriptures, which led to the emergence of the problem of how to make sense of the inconsistency of Buddha’s various teachings expressed in different Buddhist literature. In a way, the *Lotus Sūtra*’s distinct idea of “one-vehicle” offered a solution to this concern by claiming that the difference of teachings given to the practitioners of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna was based on a provisionally established pedagogical method of skillful means, and yet the ultimate and real goal that unifies different teachings is the oneness of Buddhahood that is available to all of his disciples, including śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. In other words, by the time *Zhengfahuaqing* was translated by Zhu Fahu in the third century, the Buddhist China was ready to welcome and celebrate the arrival of an idea that can bring the confusion about different teachings contained different texts into relief.⁵

2. Kumārajīva’s Enormous Contributions

A turning point for the intellectual history of Chinese Buddhism was in the early fifth century, when Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什 344?-413?) arrived at Changan and undertook a groundbreaking translation project with his disciples. Since we cannot overestimate his contributions to the development of Chinese Buddhist thought and the subsequent emergence of major Chinese

⁵ Zhufahu’s contribution was followed by the arrival of other non-Chinese Buddhist monks including Buddhacinga (仏図澄 232-384) and Dharmakṣema (曇無讖 385-433). Buddhacinga arrived at the northern capital of Luoyang when he was almost eighty years old and transmitted Buddhism particularly associated with the Sarvāstivādin school. Unlike other foreign scholar monks, he did not translate any Buddhist texts. Rather, it was his supernatural power that attracted both government officials including emperors and popular audience of that time, resulting in establishing eight hundred and ninety-three Buddhist temples across the country, which contributed to the spread of Buddhism in China. Dharmakṣema first studied Abhidharma literature prior to studying the Mahāyāna literature. During his stay in Guzang (姑臧), he translated texts that made unignorable influence on the development of Chinese Buddhism including *Daban’niepanjing* (大般涅槃經, Skt: *Mahāyānamahāparinirvāṇasūtra*) and *Pusadichijing* (菩薩地持經, Skt: *Bodhisattvabhūmisūtra*). (Wakemi, ‘The Arrival of Buddhism’ From *The Propagation of Buddhism to East Asia and Its Reception*. 94-99.)

Buddhist schools, let us take a closer look at his achievements. Kumārajīva's paternal ancestry was in India. While visiting Kucha, one of the major cities on the Silk Road, his father was forced to marry the sister of the king of the Kucha kingdom, leading to the birth of Kumārajīva. The mother of Kumārajīva gave him an advanced education when he was little. At the age of seven, he joined the Buddhist monastic order when his mother joined the order to become a nun and received monastic precepts. After that, she took him to Kashmir where Kumārajīva studied under an Indian scholar-monk Bandhudatta (槃頭達多) who was an expert of the philosophy of the Sarvāstivāda school, which was one of the most influential traditions of Abhidharma Buddhism. Following this period of studying pre-Mahāyāna thought, on his way home to Kucha, Kumārajīva studied under Śūryasoma (須利耶蘇摩), who had a penetrating understanding of Mahāyāna thought. Kumārajīva, who had no familiarity with Mahāyāna, at first did not accept what he learned from his master, leading to serious academic debates about differences between Mahāyāna and pre-Mahāyāna thought. However, in the end, Kumārajīva accepted and became a follower of Mahāyāna. Although this was the beginning of his study of Mahāyāna, it was more than twenty years later when he actually started translating Mahāyāna texts into classical Chinese.

What was he doing during these twenty years until he went to China? He was taken hostage after the army of the king Lüguang (呂光) of Houliang (後涼) defeated Kucha, Kumārajīva's homeland. This was the beginning of a series of miserable incidents that surrounded his life until he went to the Chinese capital of Changan. For instance, although he refused, Kumārajīva was forced to get drunk and then locked in a room with a daughter of the king, leading to engaging in forced sexual intercourse and unwillingly becoming the father of a child. As a result, he ended up breaking the monastic precepts. Moreover, his child was killed in

a gambling game that he grudgingly played with the king. These kinds of miserable days continued during these years. After going through this emotionally draining period, the king of the latter Qin (後秦) invited Kumārajīva and arranged his move to Changan. This is when he finally started to undertake his translation projects. A translation facility was established at the north of the capital where he dedicated to his tasks with five hundred other monks. At that time, it had been already more than two centuries since the beginning of translating Indic Buddhist texts into classical Chinese, accumulating various unresolved issues about translation and Buddhist ideas. A special characteristic of Kumārajīva's translation site was that it surpassed what it was supposed to do. As they translated, Kumārajīva explained translated words and discussed them with his disciple-translators. Because of this interaction, the site of translation became the site of education, leading to the emergence of prominent scholar-monks including Seng Zhao (384-414?), Seng Rui (?-?), Daosheng (?-434) and Huiguan (?-436), all of whom had a tremendous impact on the further development of Chinese Buddhist thought.

Kumārajīva's understanding of the central Mahāyāna concept of "emptiness" was not only based on the *prajñāpāramitā sūtras* but also on two incredibly influential Indian Buddhist schools of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. In particular, he translated the former schools' founder Nāgārjuna's magnum opus *Zhonglun* (中論, *mūlamadhyamakakārikā*), the *Shiermenlun* (十二門論) attributed to Nāgājūna,⁶ and *Bailun* (百論) attributed to Āryadeva. Later in China, Jizang (549-623) found his three-treatise school (三論宗) based on these three texts. According to *Gaosengzhuan*, Kumārajīva's translation was based on the following orientation:

People in India highly value the style of literature and prefer that the rhythmical style is put on the five-tone scale. When people see the king of their kingdom, they always

⁶ Although this Mahāyāna śāstra is attributed to Nāgājūna, there is neither the Sanskrit original nor the Tibetan translation of the text. Because of this, its authorship is unknown.

praise his virtues. When they attend a Buddhist ritual, they celebrate by singing and reciting. All verses and stanzas in Buddhist sūtras take this literary form. If Sanskrit words were merely replaced by Chinese, it would lose the richness of such literary embellishment. Although a basic meaning is attained, it would greatly change their literary style. It would be like someone chews food, and this food is spit out and given to someone else. It would not only deprive the flavor of the food but also make people sick and throw up.

天竺國俗甚重文製。其宮商體韻以入絃為善。凡觀國王必有贊德。見佛之儀。以歌歎為貴。經中偈頌皆其式也。但改梵為秦失其藻蔚。雖得大意殊隔文體。有似嚼飯與人。非徒失味。乃令嘔噦也。⁷

Regarding Kumārajīva's this view, Ōchō Enichi says, "It was because he was the most prominent foreign translator that he had negative views on translation according to his keen awareness of an impossibility of expressing the subtlety of literal style of Sanskrit in classical Chinese."⁸ As we will see below, Kumārajīva tended to prefer idiomatic translation to literal translation. This emphasis led him to even insert new stanzas that the original Sanskrit did not figure into his Chinese translation. Regarding Kumārajīva's unique style of translation, Paul Harrison has an interesting remark: "We can see in Kumārajīva's case how he was prone to inserting commentarial glosses into his translations, much as we might nowadays (but he could not call on parentheses), to clarify the meaning of the text or make it read more smoothly."⁹ While this style of translation could be a point of controversy, it was nonetheless the ingenuity of Kumārajīva's approach to translation that made Buddhist texts digestible, and they gained enthusiasm and popularity among Chinese Buddhists of that time. Funayama Tōru says that the excellence of Kumārajīva's idiomatic translation attracted people to reading and studying the

⁷ T50.332b25-b29.

⁸ Funayama, Toru. 仏典はどう漢訳されたのか：スートラが経典になるとき. (*How Buddhist Scriptures Were Translated into Chinese: Making Sutras into 'Classics' [jingdian]*). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. 2013. "悲観的な翻訳観は、彼が史上最もすぐれた外国人漢訳者だったからこそ、梵語の韻文のニュアンスは、漢語で全然伝えられないことを深く自覚していたのだろう。(99)"

⁹ Harrison, Paul. "Experimental core samples of Chinese translations of two Buddhist sūtras analysed in the light of recent Sanskrit manuscript discoveries." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies: Volume 31 Number 1-2*. 2008 (2010). 244.

Lotus Sūtra, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* and the *Diamond Sūtra*.¹⁰

3. Kumārajīva's Correspondence with Huiyuan

At that time, Lushan was a major site for Buddhist study and meditation practice. Before Kumārajīva's arrival at Changan in 401, Huiyuan (334-416 CE) entered Lushan to build Donglin temple (東林寺) and form his saṃgha after he studied the Hīnayāna method of meditation under his master Daoan (312-385 CE). While staying at Lushan, Huiyuan came to know of the arrival of Kumārajīva and sent him letters with questions about Buddhist topics. Their exchange continued multiple times and were later compiled into a collection of exchanges known as *Dashengdayizhang* (大乘大義章).

This text contains seventeen questions and answers to them that mainly discuss the Mahāyāna idea of dharma-kāya as a central concern and other topics that appear in the *prajñāpāramitā sūtra*. As Wakemi Akira points out, Huiyuan's interests were not simply in the study of the *prajñāpāramitā sūtras* but also how to situate his own Buddhist practice in a broader context of Buddhism that entails Mahāyāna that values a practice of bodhisattva way, which was new to him at that time.¹¹ A noteworthy point of his concern pertinent to the present dissertation is that Huiyuan occasionally brought up topics in the *Lotus Sūtra* in this exchange. For instance, in the tenth question, Huiyuan asks Kumārajīva why while arhats have already exhausted attachment to objects of desire, they can—as the *Lotus Sūtra* says—still practice compassion,

¹⁰ Funayama. *How Buddhist Scriptures Were Translated into Chinese*. 100.

¹¹ Wakemi, Akira. ‘『大乘大義章』中における『法華經』観’ (Thoughts on the *Dharma Flower Sūtra* according to *Dashengdayizhang*.) in 佛教学セミナー (*Buddhist Seminar*): 73, 2001. “慧遠の興味は、単なる般若学といった限定された問題ではなく、仏教全体の中で自らが行じてきた実践をどのように位置づけるかに関わっていたように思われる。安世高以来の小乗禅を実践した阿毘曇の研究にも精力を傾けていた慧遠にとって、自らが中心に据えてきたものを大乘菩薩道の中でどのように位置付けていくべきか、大きな問題となっていた。(46)”

which can be considered to be desire for the end of suffering of sentient beings. He was wondering why the *Lotus Sūtra* claims that arhats, just like bodhisattvas, are able to become buddhas. From this question, we can infer that Huiyuan had a concern over his own Buddhahood, since he self-identifies as a śrāvaka. At Lushan, Huiyuan probably received many translated Mahāyāna literature, which state that a path of śrāvaka only leads to arharship rather than to Buddhahood. In contrast, the *Lotus Sūtra* explicitly claims and celebrates the Buddhahood of arhats. This is the matter that was important to Huiyuan because the practice he had undertaken belonged to a śrāvaka path. Hence, whether he is able to be a Buddha was a big concern for him as it may transform the nature and entire meaning of his practice.

Kumārajīva thinks that what is special about the *Lotus* is its claim of the Buddhahood of arhats. Based on this, he says that arhats further undergo the cycle of rebirth and attain forms of body in other lives, in spite that other Mahāyāna scriptures say that arhats are no longer subject to rebirth and hence will not receive any other body. In the tenth question, Kumārajīva answers Huiyuan's inquiry by referring to the *Lotus Sūtra*. He says:

The rebirth of arhats is what the only the *Lotus Sūtra* talks about. Innumerable tens of thousands of other sūtras say that after arhats reach death, they will enter extinction. In contrast, for the *Lotus Sūtra*, this is precisely the secret-storehouse of all buddhas. 阿羅漢還生者。唯法華經說。無量千萬經。皆言阿羅漢。於後邊身滅度。而法華經。是諸佛秘藏。¹²

By showing textual evidence in the *Lotus Sūtra*, Kumārajīva first argues that Huiyuan has a wrong assumption that arhats no longer undergo a cycle of rebirth and hence do not receive another physical body. As Kumārajīva says a few sentences later in the text, “Arhats cut off their attachment merely to the threefold world but not to nirvana. (阿羅漢雖斷三界愛。不斷涅槃佛

¹² T45.133b19-b21.

中愛。)”¹³ Because of this, as the *Lotus Sūtra* claims, arhats still undergo rebirth. However, while his answer contains an important insight, this is still not taking up the heart of Huiyuan’s question about why arhats can still give rise to compassion, which can be interpreted as a question about how the Hīnayāna path can grow into Mahāyāna. Perhaps an answer is already given in his reference of “arhats’ attachment to nirvana,” implying that this attachment is desire which is an incipency of compassion. In either case, he ultimately seems to end up avoiding answering Huiyuan’s question and instead emphasize that the Buddha’s wisdom is unknowable and beyond our comprehension. He says:

Because of this, on some occasions the Buddha says that arhats enter nirvana but in other times he says that they become buddhas. Hence, this is among five inconceivable aspects [of Buddha’s teachings]. The teachings of the buddhas are the most inconceivable of all things. The teaching of the Buddha that equates the nirvana of arhats to their Buddhahood is something only buddhas can understand.

所以取涅槃、所以應作仏。然五不可思議中。諸佛法是第一不可思議。佛法者。謂阿羅漢涅槃當作佛。唯佛知之。¹⁴

Regardless whether this “answer” is satisfactory, what is important to our concern is that the *Lotus Sūtra* was among popular Mahāyāna sūtras at that time, and a prominent Buddhist monk such as Huiyuan who followed a Hīnayāna practice was interested in a variety of Mahāyāna sūtras. Kumārajīva’s answers to Huiyuan’s questions were based on Mahāyāna sūtras including the *Lotus Sūtra*, establishing the authority of Mahāyāna in the Buddhist China of that time. As Ōchō says, it was around the time Kumārajīva’s translations became available that the focus of Chinese Buddhism started to make a shift from the apophatic *prajñāpāramitā* literature to the kataphatic thoughts of one-vehicle and buddha-nature expressed in the *Lotus* and the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtras*.¹⁵

¹³ T45.133c4-c5.

¹⁴ T45.133b27-c1.

¹⁵ Ōchō, Enichi. *法華思想*. (*The Lotus Thought*). Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten. 1968. 224.

Moreover, as various modern scholars have pointed out,¹⁶ Kumārajīva’s thought about the *Lotus Sūtra* as “secret-storehouse (*mizang* 秘藏)” is based on a commentary to the *prajñāpāramitā sūtra* called *Dazhidulun* (大智度論) that is attributed to Nāgārjuna. The text says:

The *prajñāpāramitā sūtra* is not the secret dharma. In contrast, the *Lotus Sūtra* and other various sūtras talk about arhats’ comprehension and acceptance of their Buddhahood. This is what only great bodhisattvas are capable of receiving, retaining, and employing, just as a great master of medicine can prescribe poison as medicine. 般若波羅蜜非祕密法。而法華等諸經說阿羅漢受決作佛。大菩薩能受持用。譬如大藥師能以毒爲藥。¹⁷

Given that there are no other references throughout *Dazhidulun* where the relation between the *prajñāpāramitā sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra* is directly mentioned other than the present passage, we can say that the author of *Dazhidulun* considered ideas in the *Lotus Sūtra* to be different from the *prajñāpāramitā sūtra* especially because the former endorses the Buddhahood of those who become arhats, the goal of śrāvaka practitioners. In this sense, as the present passage states, the *Lotus Sūtra* is similar to being a special medicine that only a highly skilled master can handle and prescribe, just as “only great bodhisattvas” can achieve such mastery. Since Kumārajīva translated the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Lotus* passages quoted in *Dazhidulun* are from Zhu Fahu’s old translation, *Zhengfahuajing* (正法華經). However, interestingly, *Zhengfahuajing* does not say that the *Lotus Sūtra* resembles a secret storehouse or “poison” that can be used as a medicine for special cases. Rather, it is in Kumārajīva’s version of *Miaofalianhuajing* (妙法蓮華經) that boldly claims that this sūtra, in a tone of seeming self-praise, is the “secret and essential storehouse of all buddhas (諸佛祕要之藏),” but without an analogy that equates the sūtra to be

¹⁶ Ibid. 226-227.

¹⁷ T25.0754b20-b22.

any special kind of medicine.¹⁸ Therefore, *Dazhidulun*'s reference on the *Lotus Sūtra* can be considered as a part of its own commentary to this sūtra.

4. Ingenuity of Translation: Ten Suchnesses in the *Lotus Sūtra*

Dazhidulun was influential on Kumārajīva's thoughts as expressed, for instance, in his translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The second chapter of his translation contains the idea of "Ten Suchnesses," while the original Sanskrit text *saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* does not contain these ten categories. Let us look at how they differ, and how the doctrine of Ten Suchnesses is in fact an idea influenced by *Dazhidulun*. Kumārajīva's *Lotus Sūtra* says:

[T]he Dharma the buddhas have attained is understood only rarely and with great difficulty. Only a buddha together with a buddha can fathom the ultimate reality of all things. That is to say, among all things, each has such an appearance, such a nature, such an embodiment, such a potential, such a function, such a cause, such a condition, such an effect, such a reward, and from the first to the last, such an ultimate identity.¹⁹ 佛所成就第一希有難解之法。唯佛與佛乃能究盡諸法實相。所謂諸法如是相。如是性。如是體。如是力。如是作。如是因。如是緣。如是果。如是報。如是本末究竟等。

Unlike this Chinese translation, the Sanskrit original rather contains "five interrogatives" as translated into English by Kern as follows: "None but a Tathāgata, Sāriputra, can impart to a Tathāgata those laws which the Tathāgata knows. And all laws, Sāriputra, are taught by the Tathāgata, and by him alone; no one but he knows all laws, what they are, how they are, like what they are, of what characteristics and of what nature they are."²⁰ This is among the most

¹⁸ The sixteenth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* contains a parable that uses an analogy which equates Śākyamuni's teachings revealed in the sūtra are "medicine" that can awake people back to consciousness only if they accept and take them on their own.

¹⁹ *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*. Translated by Shinozaki, Ziporyn and Earhart. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co. 2019. 58.

²⁰ Kern, Johan Hendrik Caspar. *The Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka or The Lotus of the True Law*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1909. 32. See also Shirato, Waka. 法華經方便品における実相の問題 ('The issue of Real-Attribute in the Skillful Means Chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*') 1961. 18. In his 一念三千とは何か (*What is the Three Thousand Worlds As a Single Moment of Experience?*), Kanno says: "それらの法はなんであるか (ye ca te dharmā), それ

well-known passages in the *Lotus Sūtra* that refers to the “ultimate reality of all things (諸法實相).” Having a central importance to Tiantai philosophy, the doctrine of Ten Suchnesses was used as a foundation for the formation of the tradition’s flagship concept of “Three Thousand Worlds As A Single Moment of Deluded Experience (一念三千).” In a nutshell, this means that each moment of one’s unenlightened experience entails everything (expressed as “Three Thousand”) that does not appear to be a part of such instance of an unenlightened experience. The point of this teaching is not saying that a single moment of experience and three thousand worlds (e.g., the entire dharma realms) are not distinct from one another. Rather, as we saw in Ziporyn’s critique of Swanson’s Tiantai in the last chapter, the entire dharma realm, three thousand worlds, are inherent to each moment of experience, and that in this sense whenever there is one’s particular state of mind, every possible quiddity expressed as three thousand worlds in the entire dharma-realm itself becomes an aspect of that mind.²¹

If we compare these two passages, we know that Kumārajīva inserted his own thoughts in his translation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. An academic consensus is that this insertion is based on references in *Dazhidulun*, which says:

There are nine kinds in each dharma. First is “embodiment (體).” Second, each of these dharmas also has dharma. This is just as eyes and ears equally create four elements, and yet it is only eyes that can see but not ears that are endowed with such ability. It is also like how fire becomes a dharma by including heat and becomes

らの法はどのようにあるか (yathā ca te dharmā), それらの法はいかなる様態か (yādṛśās ca te dharmā), それらの法にはいかなる特質があるか (yal-lakṣaṇās ca te dharmā), それらの法にはいかなる本性があるか (yat-svabhāvās ca te dharmā)。すなわち、それらの法 (te dharmā) そのもの、(その) あり方、様態、特質、本性という、これらの法について (teṣu dharmeṣu)、如来だけが直知するのであり、明晰な知を有するのである。(53-54).”

²¹ As we will see in the present dissertation’s third chapter in detail, this is how Tiantai interprets the Buddhist idea of twelvefold chains of causes and conditions (十二因縁) and shows how the long history of suffering based on one’s ignorance is in fact the history of liberation that expresses the beginningless and endless Dharma-nature that is *conditioned and appearing as* ignorance and suffering. The doctrine of Ten Suchnesses is one of the most important philosophical foundations for Tiantai thought that often seems to be paradoxical and contradictory to common understanding.

unable to make itself wet. Third, all dharmas have “potential (力)” just as flame’s potential to burn something or water’s potential to make things wet. Fourth, each and every dharma itself has “cause.” Fifth, all dharmas have their own specific “conditions.” Sixth, all dharmas have their own specific “results.” Seventh, each and every dharma has its own specific “nature.” Eighth, each and every dharma has a limitation and obstruction. Ninth, each of all dharmas has open and penetrating skillful means. As soon as all dharmas arise, from embodiment through all other dharmas are present in these nine.

一一法有九種：一者、有體；二者、各各有法；如眼、耳雖同四大造，而眼獨能見，耳無見功；又如火以熱為法，而不能潤；三者、諸法各有力；如火以燒為力，水以潤為力；四者、諸法各自有因；五者、諸法各自有緣；六者、諸法各自有果；七者、諸法各自有性；八者、諸法各有限礙；九者、諸法各各有開通方便。諸法生時，體及餘法，凡有九事²²

Zhiyi comments on this passage in *Fahuawenju*, his commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra*:

“Each has a dharma” corresponds to “such function” in the *Lotus Sūtra*. “Each has a limitation and obstruction” is “such attribute.” “Each has a result” means “such result” and “such recompense.” “Each has open and penetrating skillful means” is precisely “such an ultimate identity from the beginning to the last.”

各有法者，即是法華中如是作；各有限礙者，即是法華中如是相；各有果者，即是法華中如是果、如是報也；各有開通方便者，即是法華中如是本末究竟等²³

Zhiyi’s standpoint is that Ten Suchnesses in Kumārajīva’s *Lotus Sūtra* is equivalent to this *Dazhidulun* passage, and how they are expressed as ten categories or nine dharmas precisely correspond to each other.

So far, we have seen how Kumārajīva’s creative attitude toward idiomatic translation led to the ingenuity of his occasional insertions of sentences and words that were not necessarily found in the original text. These insertions are based on his understanding of translated texts including the commentary to the *prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, *Dazhidulun*, which was seemingly not found in the Buddhist India and nevertheless was a heavily influential text for the development of Chinese Buddhist thought. Kumārajīva’s translation and retranslation of Mahāyāna texts clarified the meaning of what is being stated in these literatures and made them accessible to Chinese

²² T25.298c06-c14.

²³ T34.042c18-c22.

Buddhists of that time, spurring interests and enthusiasm about these texts. Another aspect of Kumārajīva's contributions to the later flourishing of Chinese Buddhism was that his site of translation also served as a place of education. This open space of learning at Changan, the epicenter of Buddhist study of that time, did not only produce influential translated materials but also prominent scholar-monks who later developed what they learned from their master Kumārajīva and made impacts on a further development of Chinese Buddhism. For instance, we can see an important historical record of the Chinese adaptation of Indian Madhyamaka thought according to the works of Seng Zhao. Before we move on to the next section, let us briefly look at his achievement.

Seng Zhao was born in a poor family in Changan and first learned Daoism. But after he studied the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*, he made a decision to join a Buddhist monastic order. Then he visited and studied under Kumārajīva who was staying at Guzang (姑臧) at that time, and later on arrived with him at Changan in 401. Seng Zhao was one of the closest disciples of Kumārajīva. After their team completed the translation of *Dapinborejing* (大品般若經) in 405, Seng Zhao wrote *Borewuzhilun* (般若無知論, “Prajñā has no knowing”), which was praised by his master Kumārajīva. Two years later, *Borewuzhilun* was brought to Lushan by Kumārajīva's other prominent disciple Zhu Daosheng (355?-434) and was read by Huiyuan and other influential monks.²⁴ As Ziporyn's recent study showed, *Borewuzhilun* exhibits a distinctive Chinese interpretation of “emptiness” that demonstrates his philosophical “move from Emptiness as exclusion to Emptiness as inclusion, and from denial of ontological substance to denial of

²⁴ Kanno, Hiroshi. 中国仏教の経典解釈と思想研究 (*An Interpretation of Sūtras and a Study of Thoughts in Chinese Buddhism.*) Kyoto: Hozokan. 2022. 21-22.

mutually exclusive determinateness.”²⁵ In Seng Zhao’s thought, Ziporyn says, “the refutation of all positions was very quickly construed as in some sense synonymous with the *allowing* of all views, the endorsement of all views.”²⁶ It was by successors of Kumārajīva’s thought who further contributed to the flourishing of Chinese Buddhist thought that became a foundation for the emergence and blossoming of major Chinese Buddhist schools in the subsequent Sui and Tang Dynasties that stretch from the late sixth through the beginning of tenth centuries.

5. Zhu Daosheng and Evolution of Kumārajīva’s Teachings

Among Kumārajīva’s disciples, Daosheng also made a great contribution to developing the Chinese discussions about buddha-nature and interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Born in Julu (鉅鹿) of Henan province in China, he received monastic precepts at the age of twenty. After spending time at Longguang temple, he went to Lushan to study abhidharma under Saṃghadeva. After Kumārajīva arrived at China in 401, Daosheng went to Changan to study under him. Several years later, after the fall of Changan, he went to Jiankang (建康), the epicenter of Buddhist studies at that time, and spent his next twenty years. His time at Jiankang marked an important moment for his Buddhist carrier because there he received six translated fascicles of *Nihuanjing* (泥洹經), which is the first translation of what we now know as the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, famous for an enormous claim about the buddha-nature of all sentient beings. However, *Nihuanjing*, a partial translation of this massive sūtra, states that a group of critics called “icchantikas (一闍提),” who were mired by greed and, against main claims of the

²⁵ Ziporyn, Brook. “Seng Zhao’s ‘Prajñā is Without Knowledge’: Collapsing the Two Truths from Critique to Affirmation.” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 47: 831-849. 2019. 831.

²⁶ Ibid. 833. According to Ziporyn, “For Seng Zhao, because nothing can be established as true, nothing can be excluded as false. Here the understanding of Emptiness has become not the exclusion of all views, but the inclusion of all views. (Ibid, 831)”

sūtra, do not have buddha-nature. Nevertheless, Daosheng, based on his study of the sūtra that led him to foreseeing what the remaining untranslated part of the sūtra can be supposed to say, argued that icchantikas also have buddha-nature and hence are capable of becoming buddhas. Daosheng's argument that seemed to contradict the claim of *Nihuanjing* infuriated Buddhists in Jiankang. *Nihuanjing*'s tenth chapter, for instance, says, "Some monks preach the *tathāgatagarbha sūtra* and say, 'All sentient beings have buddha-nature, and hence Buddhahood will be immediately revealed to them as soon as innumerable afflictions in their bodies are thoroughly removed and perish. [However,] . . . icchantikas are exceptions' (有比丘廣說如來藏經, 言一切眾生皆有佛性, 在於身中無量煩惱悉除滅已, 佛便明顯, 除一闡提)."²⁷ In contrast to what Daosheng declared, this sūtra seems to deny the Buddhahood of icchantikas on the basis that they do not have buddha-nature. Because of this, Jiankang Buddhists harshly criticized Daosheng, making him escape and return to Lushan in 430. However, while staying at Lushan, a more complete version of forty fascicles (unlike six fascicles of *Nihuanjing*) of the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* translated by Tanwuchen (曇無讖, 385-433 CE) was brought to Lushan, proving the accuracy of Daosheng's argument for the Buddhahood of all sentient beings including icchantikas. Since the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* was brought to China after the death of Kumārajīva, how to understand the ideas in this massive text was left to his disciples including Daosheng.

Daosheng's works also exhibit how further development of Chinese Buddhist thought took place by incorporating elements of Chinese philosophy into a Buddhist context. Let us look at the usages of the Chinese concepts "Li (理)" and "stimulus and response" according to his writing. In the introduction to the commentary to the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*,

²⁷ T12.0881b23-b26.

Daosheng explains the unchanging characteristic of Buddhist idea of awakening by way of equating it to the Chinese philosophical idea of “Li (理)” or “Coherence.”²⁸ He says:

True Coherence is non-deliberate as it is. Awakening also matches to it at the innermost and has no gaps from being true. [Because of this,] how can awakening be subject to alteration? The unchanging substance is crystal clear and constantly illuminating. But when you go against it based on delusions, this [unchanging] event is not yet revealed to you. If you can go through it and seek [this Coherence], it reverses your delusions and returns you to the ultimate. By returning to the ultimate, you obtain the root.

夫真理自然。悟亦冥符。真則無差。悟豈容易。不易之體。為湛然常照。但從迷乖之。事未在我耳。苟能涉求。便反迷歸極。歸極得本。²⁹

As Kanno showed, the usage of “Coherence (理)” is important to Daosheng.³⁰ In this passage, Daosheng is claiming that seeking and comprehending the unchanging Coherence leads to the ultimate root. Moreover, in the same text, after commenting on “Dharma-nature” by stating that “dharma” means that there is no non-dharma (非法) and that “nature” means the true ultimate that is unchanging, he shows how “Dharma-nature” and “Coherence (Li)” become synonyms of each other. He says, “Dharma-nature’s illumination is perfect. Reality of Coherence constantly exists. When it reaches the response [of buddhas] that is elicited [by sentient beings], how can it be even temporarily ceasing (法性照圓。理實常存。至於應感。豈暫癈耶)?” This is an early example of how philosophical terms of Chinese thought were used in Chinese Buddhist writing as a way of interpreting the Buddhist materials.

Particularly, in addition to his usage of the Chinese philosophical term “Coherence (Li),” here we should not overlook his usage of the category of “stimulus and response (感應),” to which now we will turn. This set of terms, “stimulus and response,” is a traditional category in

²⁸ For an extensive study of the term Li used in the history of Chinese thought, see Ziporyn’s *Beyond Oneness and Difference: Li 理 and Coherence in Chinese Buddhist Thought and Its Antecedents*. 2013. Albany: State University of New York Press.

²⁹ T37.377b10-b13.

³⁰ Kanno, Hiroshi. *中国仏教の經典解釈と思想研究*. 2021. 30-34.

Chinese thought. The fifteenth chapter (刻意篇) of *Zhuangzi* (莊子), for instance, contains the usage of elicitation and response and presents the nonintentional character of a sage's response. The *Zhuangzi* says, “[Sages] do not take the initiative to anticipate either good fortune or bad; they do not respond until touched off, do not move until pressed upon. They spring into activity only when it has become impossible not to (不為福先，不為禍始；感而後應，迫而後動，不得已而後起).”³¹ This passage shows that the response of sages does not precede the elicitation (“being touched off”) because their response is activated by elicitation which gives the impetus (迫) to move. Hence, sages “do not take the initiative to anticipate either good fortune or bad (不為福先，不為禍始).” Another characteristic is that sages respond perfectly to the conditions as *Zhuangzi* says, “They spring into activity only when it has become impossible not to (不得已而後起).” This category is also used as an important philosophical framework for Tiantai that explains the similar relation between buddhas and sentient beings as seen in Zhiyi's usage: “When goodness is about to emerge in the mind of sentient beings, the minute subtlety of this goodness will move accordingly, making it function as a trigger (衆生有將生之善。此善微微將動。而得爲機).”³² The sage's response is commensurate with any elicitations of sentient beings and simultaneously perfectly follows their subtle motions. Even when the elicitations *are about to emerge*, the responses precisely follow their incipient motions.

In Daosheng's usage of “elicitation and response,” we can see that he uses it not only to explain the relation between Buddha and sentient beings as commonly used, but to support his idea of resolving the seeming contradictions of Buddha's various teachings expressed in different

³¹ Ziporyn, Brook (Translator). *Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings*. 2020. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 129. Ikeda Rozan introduces this passage in his 感応思想の成立意義 [A study of the relation between the Buddha and the mind in Tien-tai thought (1971)].

³² T33.746c26-c27.

Buddhist texts—that is, the classification of teachings. He says:

How can it be that the Buddha preaches different sūtras because of the self-nature of Coherence? Rather, it is precisely because the elicitation of sentient beings is not one and their awakening is multifarious. Therefore, great sages show separate streams of rivers so as to reveal the variety of teachings.

所以殊經異唱者。理豈然乎。寔由蒼生機感不一。啟悟萬端。是以大聖示有分流之疏。顯以參差之教。³³

As Kanno points out,³⁴ Daosheng sees that the reason Buddha preaches different sūtras is not attributed to the side of Buddha but rather to that of sentient beings and their different levels of understanding.

As Daosheng’s usage of “elicitation and response (感應)” exhibits, what is crucial to the development of Chinese Buddhist thought is a creative adaptation of indigenous Chinese thought into Buddhist contexts. Chinese Buddhist categories rooted in Chinese thought played important roles of clarifying elusive meaning and nuance of Buddhist texts. Subsequent major schools of Chinese Buddhism were built upon these pioneering works that were shaped by Chinese concerns and topics of that time, as we saw above. Before we conclude the present chapter, let us look at one more example of this according to the Tiantai’s usage of the category of “root and trace (本迹)” that explains the structure of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the “long and distant (久遠)” relation between Buddha and his disciples. Understanding this will not only help us see another example of a distinct Chinese character of Buddhism but also give us a quick overview of how Tiantai interprets the *Lotus Sūtra*, the content of which will be the focus of subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

³³ Xuzang jing. Shinsan dai Nippon zokuzōkyō (卍新纂大日本續藏經). Edited by Kawamura Kōshō 河村孝照; Nishi Giyū 西義雄, and Tamaki Kōshirō 玉城康四郎. Tōkyō : Kokusho Kankōkai, Shōwa 50-Heisei 1 [1975-1989]. Originally published by the Dai Nihon zoku Zōkyō. Kyōto : Zōkyō Shoin, 1905-1912. Version of the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA) (Henceforth, “X”) 0577.

³⁴ Kanno, Hiroshi. 中国仏教の經典解釈と思想研究. 2021. 36-39.

6. Root and Trace (*Benji* 本迹)

While categories such as “root and branches” or “ocean and rivers” are perhaps easier to make sense as a pair, the category of “root and trace” may not sound as intuitive as other categories. Buddhist usages (including Tiantai) of “root and trace” have its origin in the Daoist text of *Zhuangzi*, whose fourteenth chapter (天運篇) contains the usage of “traces” and “that which leaves traces.”³⁵ Although the terms used were “that which leaves traces” and “traces” in the Daoist context, this set of categories crucially informed the later development as the “root” and “traces” in Buddhist philosophical texts. It was especially students of Kumārajīva who used the root and trace as an exegetical framework for the *Lotus Sūtra* and other Buddhist scriptures. For instance, before Tiantai adopted this philosophical category, Seng Zhao used it in his *Commentary to the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* (注維摩詰經), already making a crucial adjustment to their respective epistemological status: “If there is no origin, there is nothing that drapes down traces; if there are no traces, there is nothing that reveals the root. Although the root and traces are different, they are one in inconceivability (非本無以垂跡。非跡無以顯本。本跡雖殊而不

³⁵ Lao Dan says to Confucius, “The Six Classics are the stale traces (*chenji* 陳跡) of the former kings. How could they be that which left traces (*suoyi ji*)? What you are expounding is also just traces. Traces (lit. footprints) are that which issue from walking—but how could the footprints be the walking?” Ziporyn, Brook. *The Penumbra Unbound: The Neo-Taoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang*. New York: SUNY Press. 2003. 31.

Guo Xiang (252-312 CE) comments on this passage in his 『莊子注』, refuting there any claims that designate ‘that which leaves traces’ as “any transcendental essence or metaphysical absolute.” (Ziporyn. *The Penumbra Unbound*. 17.) In this regard, according to Guo Xiang, the relation between the traces and that which leaves them should not be equated as the relation that posits the ontologically asymmetrical dependence of one as essence and the other as its manifestations. In other words, this distinction does not refer to any ontological division between traces and their source. Rather, as Ziporyn argues, the distinction is *epistemological*. Hence, Guo Xiang explicitly rejected Wang Bi’s (226-249 CE) “fundamental Non-Being as the noumenal essence of the visible phenomenal world.” (Ibid. 43.) Instead, they are two views on the same event, or more accurately, the whole range of views of the event on one side and the event-as-it-happens itself on the other, the latter being construed both as inaccessible to any objective cognition and as the real locus of all efficacy.

思議一也)。”³⁶ We see here that the inaccessibility to objective cognition, which formerly was what distinguished “that which leaves the traces” from the traces, is now applied to both root and traces. The possible implications of this move are huge, and admit of a wide variety of options. From the fact that Zhiyi quotes this passage often in his works, we know that Seng Zhao’s thought was a precursor to Tiantai.³⁷

In the present dissertation’s fourth chapter, we will look at how this Buddhist category of root and traces is used in Tiantai to disentangle convoluted philosophical issues. In the present chapter, let us look at how the tradition uses the root and trace as an interpretative framework to read the *Lotus Sūtra* so that we can have a comprehensive picture of what is going on in the sūtra according to the eyes of Tiantai thinkers. Tiantai divides this sūtra that contains a total of twenty-eight chapters into two halves: the trace-gate (chapter 1 through the first half of chapter 15) and the root-gate (the latter half of chapter 15 through 28). The central idea in the former is the “one-vehicle” which claims that everyone Śākyamuni teaches and transforms are bodhisattvas and hence will become a buddha; the central idea in the latter is the “eternal life of the tathāgata.” According to Zhiyi, Śākyamuni’s disciples “hear the teaching of the trace-gate and equally enter the real-attribute. This is precisely the real-benefit of the cause. Then they hear the explanation of the root-gate, which is precisely to remove the passion that made them attached to what is near. This is how they attained the real-benefit of the result stage of what is long and distant. (聞迹門之說同入實相。即得因中實益。聞本門之說。即除執近之情。得於長遠果地之實益。)”³⁸ Here Zhiyi says that there are two “real-benefits” in the sūtra. The first

³⁶ T38.327b04.

³⁷ In his critical review of Swanson’s translation of *Mohezhi guan*, Ziporyn says, “[A]rguably, with Seng Zhao’s treatises, the first creative Sinitic breaks from Indian Buddhist conventions and conclusions, opening the road to all further developments in East Asian Buddhism. (*H-Net Reviews in the Humanities & Social Sciences*, 2)”

³⁸ T34.132a03-a05.

benefit is that the trace-gate reveals the one-vehicle—all śrāvakas are bodhisattvas and thereby enter the real-attribute and fulfill the cause of their Buddhahood. The second benefit is that hearing the revelation of the eternal life of tathāgata in the root-gate leads to the negation of delusions and attachments to “what is near” (which refers to a common assumption that the entirety of Śākyamuni is fully expressed in how he appears as a historical person) and thereby fulfills the long and distant result. The trace-gate deals with “cause” and the root-gate has something to do with “result.” Here the relation between the first and second half of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the trace and root gates, is considered from the viewpoint of causes and their results. But whose causes and results are they referring to? Why does Tiantai suggest that the fulfillment of these causes and results is a significant feature of the *Lotus Sūtra*?

According to Zhiyi, the trace-gate and root-gate each corresponds to *the real cause of disciples* and the *real result of teachers*. Both root and traces are “inconceivable (*bushi* 不思議),” meaning that they have the characteristic of being the inconceivable “wondrousness (*miao* 妙).” Zhiyi uses this term as a shorthand for “Middle,” in the sense that any two paired terms that define each other, like cause and effect, stand in a relation of neither sameness nor difference: the cause is not merely the cause but also the effect, and thus is both the cause (opposed to effect) and not the cause; and the effect is not merely the effect but also the cause, and thus is both the effect and not the effect—as we saw in these setup/punch-line structure. Hence, Zhiyi’s statement means that both “the real cause of a disciple” and “the real result of a teacher” are equally inconceivable. The juxtaposition of “cause” and “result” used in this passage suggests a further implication of the relation between them. For instance, in his *Shibuermen Zhanran* says that if one “grinds (*yan* 研)” a “cause (*yin* 因)” long enough, it turns out that it is from the beginning another name for “result (*guo* 果),” revealing this “inconceivable” mutually entailing

relation between cause and result.³⁹ This equation of cause and result is obviously a strange philosophical move of Tiantai, but as will see in detail in discussions in subsequent chapters about Tiantai ideas such as “opening the provisional to reveal the real,” “identity between Dharma-nature and ignorance,” and so forth, this peculiar move is undergirded in the tradition’s flagship concept of Three Truths. In case of the present passage, what is implied in Zhiyi’s words is the inconceivability of both “disciple” and “teacher” based on the *intersubsumption* of the cause and result of their practice. Here Zhiyi seems to be claiming that these causes and results of the disciple and teacher interpenetrate at the root. This means that it is not only the result of the teacher’s practice that realizes the “long and distant” life but also, strikingly, the cause of disciples’s practice that has continued for a “long and distant” period of time into the remote past. This is the real cause and real result according to the root-trace reading strategy of Tiantai. Thus, Zhiyi emphasizes that the *Lotus Sūtra* reveals the “long and distant” *relationship* that has continued between Śākyamuni and his śrāvaka disciples. Moreover, as we will see in Zhiyi’s next passage, Tiantai’s discussion of the root and trace that elucidates the thought of the *Lotus Sūtra* does not only show the mutually subsuming relation between the Buddha and sentient

³⁹ According to Ziporyn, the point of Zhanran’s this passage is to say: “[T]here is in reality no motion from cause to effect; rather, the situation is a more and more complete knowledge of the cause, such that one dwells there in the same ‘place’ throughout the whole process. This undermines the contrast of cause and effect and hence any one-sided or absolute division between them. ‘Knowledge’ in the Tiantai tradition means contemplation of identity with the Three Truths, and this is what time is viewed as: a more and more complete penetration of any given moment in the process, to see how it inherently includes all other subsequent and previous moments. In this sense, the initial moment never ends, and the subsequent moments never begin, as we have discussed above. In other words, time is transformative self-recontextualization. Time is the continual breaking of a wave of punch lines; each moment is a punch line with respect to its own past and to all other moments. This, strictly speaking, is what it is to be a moment of time: to be a punch line in the Tiantai sense, something that rewrites all other moments as versions of itself, precisely in their contrast to and exclusion from itself. And indeed, it is this alone, outside of Buddhist mythology, which guarantees the arrival of a punch line that will transform everything: punch line never stop arriving and transforming everything, that is what all experience is. This is precisely what we mean by the word ‘time’. (Ziporyn, Brook. *Evil and/or/as the Good: Omnicentrism, Intersubjectivity, and Value Paradox in Tiantai Buddhist Thought*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press. 2000. 355-356.)” I will explain how Ziporyn’s analogy of “setup/ punch line” metaphorically explains Tiantai philosophy at the outset of Chapter 2 (96-100).

beings, but also extends to entail the Mahāyāna idea of the “three-bodies of the tathāgata”⁴⁰ and show their oneness. The fifth chapter of this dissertation shows the crucial implications of this philosophical move in detail. At the moment, we should be aware that Zhiyi says in

Fahuaxuanyi:

The present [*Lotus*] *Sūtra* announces that śrāvakas have their root. The cause and result belonging to the root are here displayed as the cause and result in the traces for the sake of the two-vehicles. It [also] develops (let’s discuss this translation) the traces of the Buddha. The birth of [the Buddha’s] finite body at the palace of his kingdom, the birth of his dharma-body attained in his practice under a [bodhi] tree, and two bodies attained in the middle are all traces. Only what was attained in the primordial beginning is called true response [-body]. This is why [the present sūtra reveals] the root cause and root result of teachers and disciples. This is how [the *Lotus Sūtra*] is different from any other sūtras. The cause and result of teachers and disciples in the [sūtra’s] trace[-gate] have what is shared with and different from some other sūtras. However, no other sūtras talk about the cause and result of the root [-gate chapters]. If properly understood, this conception of cause and result is the wondrous thrust of the [*Lotus*] *Sūtra*.

今經發聲聞有本。本有因果。示為二乘迹中因果。發佛之迹。王宮生身生道樹法身生。乃至中間生法二身。悉皆是迹。但取最初先得真應名之為本。故師弟本因本果。與餘經永異。今經迹中師弟因果。與眾經有同有異。本中師弟因果眾經所無。正以此之因果為經妙宗也。⁴¹

Zhiyi claims that the *Lotus Sūtra* reveals the *root relation* between disciples and teachers, śrāvakas and buddhas. Hence, the root-gate of the sūtra reveals that the relationship between Śākyamuni and his disciples is not an accidental instance that occurred only in the present as *trace*. This proximate relation is recontextualized in the root-gate chapters and shows its ultimate

⁴⁰ The Buddha’s three bodies (*trikāya*) doctrine, one of Mahāyāna theories, refers to *nirmāṇa-kāya* (response-body), *sambhoga-kāya* (reward-body), and *dharmakāya* (dharma-body). As Yoshiro Tamura explains, “Shakyamuni is the awakened one (*the Buddha*), who became awakened to the truth (*Dharma*) of [the] reality of the universe. When he died, he left these words, ‘Let the truth be your teacher.’ However, the disciples and faithful always heard the truth through the great personality of Shakyamuni. For them, the truth was the Dharma of the Buddha himself as well as the Dharma he taught. Thus, after Shakyamuni died his disciples and followers began to cherish his memory, paid respect to his remains, and placed his bones in stupas where they were venerated./ On the other hand, some could not be satisfied with relics and came to question what he was now that he had died. Then the idea arose that Shakyamuni’s historical body [...] had perished and become one with the everlasting truth, while Shakyamuni’s original body—the *dharmakāya* or truth-body—had never perished. (Tamura, Yoshiro. *Introduction to the Lotus Sutra*. Translated by Gene Reeves and Michio Shinozaki. Boston: Wisdom Publications. 2014. 84-85).”

⁴¹ T33.795c06-c12.

root that is omnipresent throughout the beginningless past and the unendable future. As the fifth chapter of this dissertation explains in detail, revelation of the eternal life thereby massively expands the context of the relation between the teacher and disciples. This is their “root-cause and root-result (本因本果).” Zhiyi goes on to say, “Before tathāgata preaches [his life span], people are attached to traces because the root is obscured. But if the Buddha opens and reveals [his life span], they realize [what they conceived earlier was] what is near (proximate) and thoroughly comprehend what is distant (ultimate). They will also know the oneness of these in inconceivability. (如來未說闡本而執迹。佛若開顯悟近而達遠。亦知不思議一也。)”⁴² Hence, the significance of the revelation of the root is in *determining* that what was taught prior to it was in fact traces. The root determines traces by negating the ultimacy of what is conceived prior to Śākyamuni’s preaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* and thereby retrospectively posits them as traces. This brings traces into a continuity of the beginningless and endless process of the disciples’s practice (cause) and Buddha’s awakening (result). This vastly expanded context of their relation is undergirded by Zhiyi’s vital claim in this passage that *both the dharma-body and the response-body of the tathāgata exist both as traces and as root*; it is not that the dharma-body is the root and the response-body is the trace, but rather that the root referred to here is the response-body in the root position, as “what was attained in the primordial beginning.”

This is how Tiantai used the philosophical framework of root and traces to interpret the meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*. However, Tiantai uses the root and trace motif in more than one way. In the fourth chapter of the present dissertation, we will take a closer look at how this framework works in Zhiyi’s discussion about Six Levels of Root and Trace. The subsequent fifth chapter further elaborates the root and traces in our final discussion about Tiantai and Hegel.

⁴² T34.125b01-b02.

7. The Life of Zhiyi

Zhiyi was born in 538 CE in Huarong (華容) in Jingzhou (荊州) prefecture. Zhiyi's father Chen Qizu (陳起祖) was a government official of Liang Dynasty (502-557 CE). The capital was Jiankang (建康). It is said that Zhiyi had an unusual “double-pupils” in his eyes, and because of this his parents kept him home most of his childhood. However, at the age of seven, he visited a Buddhist temple in his area and was moved by the *Guanyinjing* (觀音經) that the monks of the temple recited. Hearing the recitation only one time, he immediately memorized it. Since then, he started visiting the temple daily, against his parents' wishes. In 554 CE, when Zhiyi was seventeen years old, his close family and relatives were involved in a political upheaval that led to the defeat of a previous government, and as a consequence Zhiyi's family lost their house as his Chen clan fell from power. This led Zhiyi to seeking a refuge in Buddhism and his visit to Changsha temple (長沙寺) where he pledged himself to become a Buddhist monk. However, when he broached this topic with his mother, she asked Zhiyi whom she could rely on if he leaves home. The political upheaval made strong economical and psychological impacts on the lives and minds of his mother and family. The *Lianyang-jing* has a passage that states, “If your parents do not accept your request to join a Buddhist monastic order, you are not allowed to do so.” This is a rule followed since the time of Śākyamuni. Zhiyi also followed this word of the Buddha and did not force his will to proceed. Given the refusal from her, Zhiyi spent his days by reciting sūtras and curving statues of Buddha. However, soon after these events, both of his parents died. Zhiyi had an older brother and disclosed his intention to become a Buddhist monk. While his brother took it to be another difficult farewell of his family, knowing Zhiyi's

unshakable resolution, he did not stop his brother's spiritual journey and accepted it. At that time, Wanglin (王琳), a former close friend of Zhiyi's father, came to know about this and offered a financial support for Zhiyi, who then was able to find a connection with a monk Fazhu (法緒), who was a relative of Zhiyi's late mother. He visited Fazhu at Guoyuan temple (果願寺) to become a novice monastic.

After two years of practice at Guoyuan temple, Zhiyi became a fully ordained monk, attaining permission to travel to study and practice under a Buddhist master. The first place he went was Mt. Daxian (大賢山), where he studied and recited the *Threefold Lotus Sūtra* and practiced a repentance ritual that uses incantation (dhāraṇī) taught in the *Dafangdengtuoluoni Sūtra* (大方等陀羅尼經). His next mission was to learn from Huisi in Mt. Dasu (大蘇山) in Guangzhou (光州). On his way to this destination was a border between Chen and Northern Qi where a fierce battle was underway. But Zhiyi managed to pass through the strict security and survived this perilous journey. Zhiyi's learning included the recitation of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the meditation practice called the "lotus samādhi (法華三昧)," which Huisi (慧思) developed based on his realization of emptiness during a study under his master Huiwen (慧文). After seven years of practice at Mt. Dasu, Zhiyi at the age of thirty-one moved to Jiangang, whose population exceeded one million, and brought forth the teachings and practice of important texts that included the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Dazhidulun*, and meditation manuals. During eight years of living there, Zhiyi's erudition and eloquence expanded, and many people, including Buddhists and government officials, came to learn from him. However, in 575, a year after the anti-Buddhist movement led by Emperor Wu occurred in the neighboring Northern Zhou, Zhiyi left Jiankang and lived in Mt. Tiantai (天台山). In 578, he founded Xiuchan temple (修禪寺), followed by the

arrival of Guanding (灌頂 561-632) in 583 who became Zhiyi's close disciple. Among Zhiyi's writings during this period were *Fajiecidichumen* (法界次第初門) and *xiaozhiguan* (小止觀). In 585, after multiple requests from the emperor of Chen, Zhiyi descended Mt. Tiantai to stay at the Guangzhai temple (光宅寺) of Jinling (金陵) where he taught the *Lotus Sūtra*. This is where he commented on each passage of the *Lotus*, which was transcribed by Guanding, forming a ten-volume commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra*. After two years passed, he moved to Mt. Lu (廬山) to escape from a political upheaval of that time and then eventually returned to his hometown in Jingzhou prefecture where he founded Yuquan temple (玉泉寺), where he taught philosophy and meditation practice based on the *Lotus Sūtra*. Guanding transcribed these lectures, leading them to the publication of *Fahuaxuanyi* (法華玄義) and *Mohezhiquan* (摩訶止觀). Together with *Fahuawenju* mentioned earlier, these texts are called the “three great treatises of Tiantai (天台三大部).” During final two years of his life, responding to a request from Emperor Yang (煬帝) he wrote commentaries to the *Weimojing* (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*) and offered them to the emperor before dying at the age of sixty. Guanding succeeded Zhiyi and became the second patriarch of Tiantai school. While the school successfully passed the leadership to subsequent patriarchs, it lost a vibrant presence in the Buddhist China until the rise of the sixth patriarch, Zhanran (湛然 711-782) whose essential works included commentaries to the three great treatises of Tiantai and the *Diamond Scalpel* (金剛錐) that presented a famous argument for the Buddha-nature of insentient beings from the viewpoint of the Tiantai Three Truths. His numerous contribution to the revitalization of Tiantai school was accomplished through an intellectual interaction with the rival Huayan school. Zhili noticed later Tiantai's tendency toward Huayan thought and proclaimed the necessity of returning to the Tiantai orthodoxy, but

this led to a schism between the “shanjia (山家)” group led by Zhili and its rival group of “shanwai (山外).”

CHAPTER TWO

ŚĀRIPUTRA'S JOY

In the *Lotus Sūtra*, Śākyamuni's preaching starts with revealing that buddhas use skillful means to appropriately guide sentient beings and liberate them out of suffering. According to him, buddhas deliberately make distinctions among different types of practitioners (e.g., śrāvaka, bodhisattva), while in reality there is no such distinction. Hearing this abrupt declaration, Śākyamuni's audience is surprised and wonder about his intention of making such a statement. Regardless, he continues to proclaim an unexpected truth: there are no śrāvakas but are only bodhisattvas, revealing that all his disciples are in fact a "buddha-to-be." This is the *Lotus Sūtra*'s famous teaching of "one-vehicle (ekayāna)" that advocates the universal Buddhahood inherent to all types of Buddhists including śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. However, the sūtra withholds any further explanation. In what sense there are "only bodhisattvas," while there are still those who self-identify as śrāvakas in the *Lotus Sūtra* assembly? Does it mean an elimination of śrāvakahood that thereby only affirms the value of bodhisattvahood? Unless there is a way of making sense of this contradictory relation between śrāvakas and bodhisattvas in a way that is something other than mutually exclusive, saying that there are only bodhisattvas seems to be merely producing an intractable problem. In light of this concern, the present chapter investigates to find a Tiantai solution to this conceptual barrier. In Tiantai, this does not mean an elimination of śrāvakahood but rather Buddha's wisdom that allows us to see the paradoxical identity between śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. With this in view, in this dissertation chapter, I will argue that this enigmatic claim of the *Lotus Sūtra* shows the intersubsumptive identity between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood, which is most prominently conveyed in Zhiyi's oxymoronic

notion of “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas (*dachengshengwen* 大乘聲聞).”¹ This seemingly self-contradictory expression is crucial for the conceptual reorganization of the relation between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood and is undergirded by the sūtra’s key passage from the fourth chapter where elder śrāvakas say to Śākyamuni: “We are now truly śrāvakas *because we cause all beings to hear the Buddha way.*” With this in view, śrāvakas’s paradoxical identity as bodhisattvas means to make a transition from being śrāvakas who used to merely *make themselves hear* the Buddha’s teachings into being those who reorganize their practice of voice-hearing and start to *make others hear* the teachings. This is how Tiantai sees the identity between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood. It is precisely to Tiantai’s point that this transformation is not achieved by abandoning or eliminating the śrāvaka practice, but rather by *thoroughly* being a śrāvaka and thereby striving for its dynamic activity of Buddhahood, the goal considered to be applicable to only bodhisattvas but to no śrāvakas. It is in this sense that there are no śrāvakas but are only bodhisattvas. As we will see, Zhiyi explains this intersubsumptive relation between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood in terms of the Tiantai doctrine of “Opening the Provisional to Reveal the Real (*kaiquanxianshi* 開權顯實)” that “opens up” a purpose of śrāvaka practice to reveal where it is truly leading to, Buddhahood.

The present chapter starts with a highlight of the *Lotus Sūtra*’s key stories and parables that help us understand Śākyamuni’s statement of “there are only bodhisattvas, but no śrāvakas.” Providing the contextual knowledge at the outset, our discussion next advances to looking into

¹ In history of Buddhism, the “Mahāyāna (great vehicle)” movement emerged out of conflictive interactions with preexistent Buddhist groups. Declaring to be bodhisattvas whose aim is to strive for the end of suffering of all sentient beings, Mahāyānists criticized the preexisting traditions by calling them “Hīnayāna (lesser vehicle).” As opposed to bodhisattvas of Mahāyāna, Hīnayāna was mainly composed of a group of “śrāvakas” whose focus of practice is to hear the teachings of Śākyamuni and thereby to attain a personal awakening. Because of this, Zhiyi’s usage of, instead of saying a typical Mahāyāna-bodhisattvas or Hīnayāna-śrāvakas, rather “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas” seems contradictory in terms at a glance.

Zhiyi's commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra* where he discusses Śāriputra's experience of joy of hearing Śākyamuni's teaching of one-vehicle. This is where we see a crucial interplay between conscious and unconscious aspects of one's purposive practice demonstrated in a mutually entailing relation between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood, the proximate and ultimate, the provisional (*quan* 權) and real (*shi* 實) goals. As I will show in a moment, this demonstrates a role of the ultimate misdirection of one's initial purpose that advances toward an unprojected hidden goal. In this sense, Śāriputra's conscious pursuit of his initial śrāvaka goal turns out to be a provisional goal, which functions as a lure to reveal his unconsciously pursued ultimate goal of Buddhahood. Thus, the notion that "there are only bodhisattvas" is a result of full comprehension of what it truly means to pursue a purpose of śrāvakas. In distilling what is philosophically at issue in the first half of the chapter, the remaining part considers how Zhiyi's discussion boils down to, as he says, the Tiantai doctrine of "Opening the Provisional to Reveal the Real." In light of this, I argue that the transformation of śrāvakas into bodhisattvas is undergirded by an intersubsumption of the provisional and real, cause and effect, and present and future. In a broader context of this dissertation project, the present chapter's argument will be a conceptual steppingstone to further investigate the inherent nature of sentient beings' desire that I will take up in the subsequent third chapter of this dissertation.²

2.1 A Textual Orientation: The Wondrous World of the *Lotus Sūtra*

² In the third chapter of the present dissertation, I will argue that this universally shared nature is the middle-way Buddha-nature anchored in Tiantai's interpretation of "emptiness" reorganized in their philosophical apparatus of Three Truths. It is important that this all-pervasive nature is not merely a static "potential" for Buddhahood of all sentient beings but rather a dynamic movement of desire that *tends toward* (*qu* 趣) the end of suffering of all sentient beings. This "tending and towardic" characteristic plays a crucial role in the transition from śrāvakahood to bodhisattvahood. I hope to build up my argument about the topic and prepare us for more detailed analysis of the Tiantai implications of this "tending toward (趣)."

Before we look into Zhiyi’s commentary, let us look at the *Lotus Sūtra*’s stories that appear in its early part, which will give us contextual knowledge about Zhiyi’s subsequent explanations. At the outset of the first chapter of the sūtra, before tens of thousands of his disciples and non-human creatures, Śākyamuni enters meditation and suddenly sends forth a ray of light illuminating eighteen thousand worlds.³ Wondering about this, Maitreya asks Mañjuśrī about this enigmatic matter and comes to know that this is a sign that the great Dharma is soon to be preached by Śākyamuni. According to Mañjuśrī, a similar instance occurred innumerable billions of years ago at a time of the Buddha named “Light of the Sun and the Moon.”⁴ One day, arising from concentration, this Buddha preached the *Lotus Sūtra* for Bodhisattva Wondrous Light, who then embraced and expounded the sūtra to people for billions of years. Among the disciples of this bodhisattva was “Fame Seeker” who was “greedily attached to gain and offerings.”⁵ As the sūtra says: “Even in reading and reciting many sutras, he could gain no fluency in them and could not remember much.”⁶ However, he eventually learned and practiced the Buddha’s teachings for a long time and finally saw billions of buddhas. Then Mañjuśrī reveals his striking karmic relationship with Maitreya: The Bodhisattva Wondrous Light is a past life of Mañjuśrī, while the fame seeker was no one other than Maitreya. This is truly intriguing, because the tradition regards that Maitreya is the next Buddha who will achieve his Buddhahood almost six billion years from now. It is significant that the outset of the sūtra reveals that the future Buddha’s past life is someone like a deluded and immoral ordinary sentient being. According to

³ In Buddhist literature, there is no systematic account of how many world system(s) are there in the Buddhist cosmos. Rupert Gethin says, “The early Nikāya/Āgama texts sometimes talk in terms of ‘the thousandfold world-system’, ‘the twice-thousandfold world-system’, and ‘the thrice-thousandfold world-system’. According to Vasubandhu, the last of these embraces a total of [one billion] world-systems—according to Buddhaghosa, [one trillion]. But even such a vast number cannot define the full extent of the universe (*The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 1998. 114).”

⁴ *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 47.

⁵ Ibid. 50.

⁶ Ibid. 50.

the Tiantai view of the root and trace, all forms of sentient beings in their beginningless and endless cycle of rebirth are traces of their eternal bodhisattva practice at the root time. Hence, Buddhahood acknowledges and embraces both Buddha like and not-buddha like aspects including one's greedy fame-seeking lifecycle as parts of this eternally past bodhisattva practice.

Thus orienting the sūtra's narrative, in the second chapter titled "Skillful Means," Śākyamuni arises from concentration and teaches his audience "one-vehicle," revealing that śrāvakas's goal of being an arhat taught in the pre-Lotus period was in fact provisional and hence, was a skillful means, a necessary pedagogical method to help them surpass this initial goal and ultimately pursue the greatest goal of Buddhahood. Śākyamuni revealed that Buddhahood had been what all śrāvakas were really up to (unbeknownst to them). The first disciple who understood and embraced this teaching was Śāriputra, who then had an extraordinary experience of joy. Seeing this, Śākyamuni said to him that the purpose of preaching the *Lotus Sūtra* is to help Śāriputra and all other śrāvakas recall a bodhisattva vow that they made in the distant past so as for them to fulfill it in the present and to ultimately attain supreme perfect awakening of Buddhahood. This experience dispelled doubts about Śāriputra's own Buddhahood, a matter from which he thought he was excluded and thus was saddened by an impossibility of his own. Given this, Śāriputra narrates in the sūtra's third chapter that he suffered from many years of anxiety and doubts about the destiny of his śrāvaka practice:

Since long ago, we have heard such teachings from the Buddha and seen him give the assurance of buddahood to the bodhisattvas. I and the others were never included in the matter, however, and so I felt deeply distressed that I myself would miss out on the immeasurable knowledge and insight of a tathagata. [...] World-Honored One, long have I spent whole days and nights in self-reproach [...]⁷

For many years, Śāriputra witnessed that Śākyamuni only gave an assurance of Buddhahood to

⁷ *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 84-85.

bodhisattvas. Self-recognizing himself to be a śrāvaka, Śāriputra never considered Buddhahood to be a matter about his own. Hence, up to the preaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*, he was with anxiety and uncertainty about his ongoing practice and the future that unfolds. As Śāriputra says, “I and the others,” his affective experience of anxiety represents the experience of all śrāvakas. In hearing the *Lotus Sūtra*, they learned and accepted that everyone Śākyamuni teaches and transforms including Śāriputra and all other śrāvakas are bodhisattvas. This was a moment in which they became certain about their Buddhahood, which was what initially appeared to be distanced and alienated from them. Then, in seeing that Śāriputra danced with joy, Śākyamuni recounts his karmic connections with Śāriputra in the remote past and gives him an assurance of Buddhahood.⁸ Śāriputra accepts the assurance and comprehends the meaning of being *truly* a śrāvaka. Similar to Maitreya’s ultimate self-positing of his own past (as “fame seeker”) as part of his unending bodhisattva practice, Śāriputra embraces who he really has been, unbeknownst to him throughout the distant past and distant future.⁹ This demonstrates how what initially seemed to be external to him ultimately converges with Śāriputra’s internal experience in the given present.

Śāriputra’s joy that arises out of certainty of his Buddhahood is not merely his personal experience, but rather speaks for the experience of śrāvakas who underwent initial doubts and anxiety and this ultimate discovery of the convergence between the provisional and real identity,

⁸ In *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*, Śākyamuni says to Śāriputra: “[L]ong ago I instructed you to aspire to the Buddha Way, but you remember none of that now, and accordingly thought that you had already attained extinguishment. Because I want you to recall the Way that in the past you originally vowed to follow, I now expound, for the sake of all shravakas, this Great Vehicle sutra called the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma, a teaching that instructs bodhisattvas and that buddhas protect and keep in mind.

Śāriputra, in an age to come after the passing of infinite, boundless, and inconceivable kalpas [...] you will become a Buddha named Radiant Blossom Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, Universally Wise, Complete in Clarity and Conduct, Well Departed, Fathomer of This World, Peerless Leader, Expert Trainer, Teacher of Heavenly Beings and Humans, Buddha, and World-Honored One. (88-89)”

⁹ I will explain more about this according to the Tiantai notion of “true śrāvakas” later in the present dissertation chapter. In light of this, the fourth chapter of this dissertation will discuss an intersubsumptive relation of past, present, and future from the viewpoint of the root and trace.

between their conscious goal as a śrāvaka and the ultimate goal of Buddhahood that they were undertaking unbeknownst to themselves. They gave rise to joy in discovering that what śrāvakas considered to be their goal (to be an arhat rather than a buddha) unexpectedly turns out to be provisional and hence are unknowingly becoming someone much greater than they could ever imagine as their own future—the Buddha. In this sense, the śrāvakas achieved a *perspectival breakthrough* that revealed their unending growth.

Understanding a goal to be provisional means to see something as “more than” the provisional. Taking a cue from the assurance of Buddhahood given to Śāriputra in the sūtra’s third chapter, four worn-out elder śrāvakas are the next disciples who give rise to joy of knowing the certainty of their Buddhahood. In the sutra’s fourth chapter, they express this joy by accounting a parable of the “rich father and poor son.” (More below.) Subsequent chapters further demonstrate the joyful experience of receiving the assurance of Buddhahood. All of these stories show that the śrāvakas’s conscious goal was being an arhat (provisional) rather than a Buddha (ultimate). This provisionality sets up the value of attaining a śrāvaka goal at the beginning of their śrāvaka-path as necessary for them to ultimately understand that their paths had been always already the paths of Buddhahood. What we see in the sūtra’s second through ninth chapters is how, after hearing the Buddha’s teaching of one-vehicle, his śrāvaka disciples realize that they were in fact bodhisattvas and will become a Buddha. As already noted in this dissertation’s first chapter, the central ideas of the sūtra is “one-vehicle” that appears in the second chapter and “the eternal life of the tathāgata” in the sixteenth chapter. The sūtra’s subsequent chapters from seventeen through nineteen talk about spiritual merits one will gain through comprehending and embracing these teachings. The remaining chapters mainly show how a practicing of bodhisattva would look like if based on these teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

2.2 Śāriputra’s Joy in Tiantai Commentary according to Four Siddhāntas

Now let us discuss Zhiyi’s commentary to Śāriputra’s experience of joy that appears in the third chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. As we will see in a moment, Zhiyi offers an interpretive method of “four siddhāntas (*sixitan* 四悉檀)” that discusses the sūtra from the four viewpoints of the “world,” “sentient beings,” “liberation from delusions,” and “the ultimate truth of emptiness.” Zhiyi uses this fourfold method throughout his commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra* including his interpretation of the passage we will examine below.¹⁰ The purpose of our discussion of this passage that presents Śāriputra’s experience of joy is to distill what is philosophically at issue with Śākyamuni’s teaching in the *Lotus Sūtra* that claims that there are no shravakas but are only bodhisattvas. In *Fahuawenju*, Zhiyi comments on Śāriputra’s experience of joy as follows:

An internal comprehension that resides in mind is called “joy [*xi* 喜].” Joy that manifests is described as “leaping [*yongyue* 踊躍].” If [one] hearing a wondrous dharma from a wondrous person and attaining a wondrous understanding and meets blissfulness of one [of his three karmic characteristics of body, speech, and mind, he will] become further joyous and claps [his] hands. How can one whose [all these] three [types of] joy are fulfilled not leap? The [*Lotus*] *Sūtra* says, “Now, hearing the World-Honored One gives voice to this teaching, my heart leaps with joy.”¹¹ Interiority and exteriority harmoniously join and cause this joy. This is an interpretation according to the worldly-siddhānta; One changes [his attitude toward] Hīnayāna [teachings] to learn Mahāyāna [teachings], and abandons a straw-hut made

¹⁰ Zhiyi uses four siddhāntas as interpretive frameworks for his textual engagement of the *Lotus Sūtra*. This is his way of repurposing the original Indian Buddhist idea of the Sanskrit term “siddhānta”, which means “established truths.” As Kanno points out, Zhiyi adopted this fourfold method from *Dazhidulun* that was attributed to Nāgājuna. The point of using this method is to see the consistency among Buddha’s teachings that appear to contradict each other. In spite of such appearance, from these four viewpoints, we can see that there is no contradiction among his seemingly contradictory teachings and hence can understand that we can make sense of them in terms of these four different perspectives. (法華文句I [*Hokkemongu I*], Tokyo: Daisanbunmeisha. 2007. 294.) In fact, in Tiantai usages, four siddhāntas fall under a further broader fourfold interpretive category of “causes and conditions (因緣)”, “in terms of teachings (約教)”, “root and trace (本迹)” and “contemplation on mind (觀心).” The first of these broader categories of “causes and conditions” is constituted by the four siddhāntas. According to Zhiyi, “causes and conditions” in this context means another philosophical category of “stimulus and response (*ganying* 感應)” that we saw in this dissertation’s first chapter. Hence, in Zhiyi’s commentary *Fahuawenju*, he interprets the texts of the *Lotus Sūtra* from four interrelated viewpoints about the relation between the Buddha and sentient beings.

¹¹ *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 84.

for small service to accept the business of a rich family. The [*Lotus*] *Sūtra* says, “For today I know that I am truly a child of the Buddha.”¹² Because of this, [one becomes] joyous. This is an interpretation according to the siddhānta for an individual person; Moreover, anxiety and regret are dispelled, and doubts and troubles are removed, so that obstructions between interiority and exteriority become vastly open and greatly clear. The [*Lotus*] *Sūtra* says, “Though already freed from defilements, / Only on hearing this am I free from worries and distress.”¹³ Because of this, [one becomes] joyous. This is an interpretation according to the therapeutic-siddhānta; Furthermore, what a Buddha’s child should attain has now been already attained. The [*Lotus*] *Sūtra* says, “I abide securely in the real knowledge / That I will surely become a buddha.”¹⁴ This is an interpretation according to the siddhānta of the ultimate truth.

內解在心名喜。喜動於形名踊躍。從妙人聞妙法得妙解。若值一幸尚復欣抃。況三喜具足寧不踊躍。文云。今從世尊聞此法音心懷踊躍。內外和合致此歡喜。即世界釋也。又改小學大。棄貧事草庵。受富豪家業。文云。今日乃知真是佛子。是故歡喜。此為人釋也。又憂悔雙遣疑難並除。內外妨障廓然大朗。文云。我已得漏盡。聞亦除憂惱。是故歡喜。此對治釋也。又佛子所應得者皆已得之。文云。安住實智中。我定當作佛。此第一義釋也。¹⁵

What does this discussion about Śāriputra’s joy where we can see the joining of the interior and exterior, the initially perceived separation and the ultimately comprehended intersubsumption between the provisional and real, cause and effect, the initial śrāvaka practice and its unexpected result of Buddhahood culminate into in a broader context of Tiantai’s philosophical apparatus? According to Zhiyi, this joining refers to Śāriputra’s comprehension of the identity between Provisional and Real, one of the key philosophical categories in Tiantai thought expressed in the doctrine of “Opening the Provisional to Reveal the Real (*kaiquanxianshi* 開權顯實).” He says:

In the past, Provisional and Real were distinct from one another as if two unjoined palms. However, now, like two palms coming together, [Śāriputra] comprehends that Provisional is identical to Real. As for “Toward the Buddha,”¹⁶ in the past, the Provisional [he was practicing] was not [known as] the cause for Buddhahood, and the Real [toward which he was moving] was not [known as] the result of Buddhahood. However, now, [he] comprehends that Provisional is identical to Real, and it becomes a great perfect cause. Since this cause necessarily tends toward the fruit, the sutra says,

¹² Ibid. 85.

¹³ Ibid. 85.

¹⁴ Ibid. 88.

¹⁵ T34.063c27-064a09.

¹⁶ This phrase “towards the Buddha (*xiangfo* 向佛)” is not found in the sūtra’s chapter.

“placed palms together toward the Buddha.”

昔權實為二如掌不合。今解權即實如二掌合。向佛者。昔權非佛因實非佛果。今解權即實成大圓因。因必趣果故言合掌向佛。¹⁷

Before we look at how Zhiyi elaborates the Śāriputra narrative in fourfold manner below, it should be noted that the underlying conceptual key to understanding each of the four ways of analysis is Tiantai’s doctrine of Opening the Provisional to Reveal the Real. Since knowing how this logic works and its important implications for Tiantai thought will help us understand what underlies Zhiyi’s discussions that we will see below, let us first look at this doctrine in detail as a conceptual preparation for looking into the fourfold analysis of the Śāriputra narrative.

This doctrine is how Tiantai interprets the thought in the *Lotus Sūtra*, where Śākyamuni reveals his disciples that all of his teachings he expounded for them prior to the *Lotus Sūtra* were *provisional* teachings that were employed as skillful means that responded to them according to their level of understanding and needs. However, Śākyamuni declares that the teaching of one-vehicle that he finally expounds in the *Lotus Sūtra* is no longer a provisional but rather the *real* teaching. This real teaching “opens up” the provisionality of all previously expounded teachings so as to reveal that what they were leading to was the real teaching of the Buddhahood of all of his students. One important implication of this is to say that provisional teachings were necessary to skillfully guide students so that they would believe and accept the real teaching about the certainty of their Buddhahood when they hear it. During the time of practice that is retrospectively known as provisional, Śākyamuni’s śrāvaka students are given to understand how supremely difficult it is to achieve Buddhahood, increasing a sense of spiritual distance between Buddhahood and śrāvakahood and thereby the value of becoming a Buddha. To śrāvaka disciples who are in such state of mind, giving them a real teaching that advocates their Buddhahood

¹⁷ T34.064a26-a29.

would make them unable to believe it or rather scare them away.

In order to avoid this and let them continue their path, provisional teachings were *necessarily* employed to prepare the ultimate revelation of the real teaching. The important philosophical question is what Zhiyi intends to show by “opening (*kai* 開)” the provisional teachings rather than “eliminating” or “denying” or “transcending” them. In Tiantai, importantly, an initially posited contrast between Provisional and Real is deabsolutized, showing that they are in fact two aspects of the same content. The oneness of these provisional and real aspects that are two alternate ways of talking about the shared content is achieved through the special feature that the real teaching has—that is, a retrospective effect of disclosing a new context of provisional teachings and thereby transforming the value and meaning of what it is to be provisional. This is how the original contrast between provisional and real, śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood, turns out to show their paradoxical oneness is the other *aspect* of the contrast. This is a counterintuitive way of talking about identity and difference, and yet is among with the foremost importance of Tiantai thought that is not easy to make sense of. However, as I introduced in the introductory chapter, this is typically where Ziporyn’s scholarship has extremely useful analogies that explain the seemingly wild logic of Tiantai doctrines.

Ziporyn says that the doctrine of opening the provisional to reveal the real “consists of a recontextualization of provisional propositions to reveal their further implications, which allow them to *always already have been* saying the ultimate [real] truth, without having to be changed in the least.”¹⁸ Tiantai’s method to exhibit this thought based on the stories in the *Lotus Sūtra* is

¹⁸ Ziporyn continues, “The *Lotus Sutra* tells us precisely this kind of story again and again. We have children who think they are running toward promised toys, but when more of the situation is revealed, these very steps toward the toys, which don’t really exist, turn out to have been steps out of the danger of a fire and toward a much more magnificent reward (Chapter 3). We have, as mentioned, as worker whose toil for minimum wage turns out to be, when the full context is revealed, actually a process of preparing himself to accept his status as son and heir to the

“first to make intricate divisions and contrasts, establishing various qualities and characteristics of things by means of their differentiations, and then ‘opening them up’ to reveal their identity in and by means of this very division. They are identical only because of, and as, their very difference.”¹⁹ Then he presents the analogy of “joke,” which exhibits this logic. For instance, let us consider a following conversation:

(Setup) Two strangers were chatting in a veterinarian’s waiting room. One told the other he was there to pick up his dog. “They’re doing some tests on him,” he said. “He’s an odd biological anomaly. He was born with no nose.”

“Really?” said the other. “How does he smell?”

(Punch line) “Awful.”²⁰

Let’s talk about how this joke resulted in producing humorousness. When we follow every part of the conversation prior to the punch line, it does not strike one as funny. It merely contains a piece of information and is rather *serious* instead of being *funny*. However, after we further follow this narrative carefully, we hear the punch line: “Awful.” Then this reveals funniness, which arises because of the revelation of the punch line. What is the special effect of this punch line that seemingly transformed the seriousness into humorousness? This punch line retrospectively transformed the meaning of the serious setup—what it was *really* up to. An interesting and essential point of this structure that produces the ultimate funniness is that the

household, who was already in possession of the treasury from which his meager salary was doled out (Chapter 4). We have travelers whose steps toward an illusory city are revealed to have been steps toward a treasure beyond it (Chapter 7). We have of course the Śrāvakas whose practice of ‘Hinayana’ Buddhism is revealed to be part of a larger Mahayana Bodhisattva practice (Chapter 2). All activities are to be regarded as recontextualizable to reveal that they have always been Bodhisattva practices both expressing and leading to Buddhahood; hence, a Bodhisattva says to the Śrāvakas who scoff at his prediction that they will become Buddhas, ‘I do not disparage you, since you are thereby practicing the Bodhisattva path, and will all become Buddhas’ (Chapter 20). That is, their very practices, even the rejection of Bodhisattva, can be recontextualized *by this very claim* to be revealed to be Bodhisattvahood. In Tantai exegesis, we find a method that corresponds to this feature of the sutra, which is first to make intricate divisions and contrasts, establishing various qualities and characteristics of things by means of their differentiations, and then ‘opening them up’ to reveal their identity in and by means of this very division. They are identical only because of, and as, their very difference. (*Beyond Oneness and Difference*. 206.)”

¹⁹ Ibid. 206.

²⁰ Ziporyn, Brook. *Emptiness and Omnipresence*, 154.

setup must first strike us as something unfunny. If it were already funny prior to the arrival of the punch line, it would ruin the retrospective transformative effect of the punch line. A setup initially being only serious is an essential condition for the formation of funniness to be revealed in the end. We must seriously follow the setup first before meeting with the humorousness of punch line. However, when we retrospectively look at the setup from the viewpoint of having already known the punch line, we will soon realize that the punch line alone can never be funny if revealed apart from a setup. If we only hear the punch line in isolation from the setup, if no context of punch line were given, hearing it would not have produced any humorousness.

Punch line can function as “punch line” only in relation to what precedes it as its opposite: a serious setup. Thus, the joining of a setup and punch line is necessary in order to make the entire experience of undergoing the narrative funny. Now this gets closer to an essential implication of the Tiantai doctrine of opening the provisional to reveal the real. What occurs in a joke is that a setup leads to a punch line, to something other than itself, and then by retrospectively seeing this process from the viewpoint of having already known the punch line that thereby determines that what preceded was a setup, we understand that these serious moments are not merely a serious setup. They are simultaneous also “funny” but *expressed as* “serious.” Hence, the special transformative effect of a punch line shows how humorousness is present both *as seriousness and funniness*, the omnipresence of the oneness of humorousness alternately expressed in two different *modes*. This explains Tiantai’s immanent process of Buddhahood expressed as non-Buddhahood (i.e., as sentient beings, as śrāvakahood) or Buddhahood undergirded in the doctrine of opening the provisional to reveal the real. Ziporyn says:

[T]he way in which you are a Buddha is the way in which the setup of a joke is funny: you are a Buddha precisely by *not* being a Buddha. By struggling toward Buddhahood,

toward something *else*, toward something you are *not*, but by revisualizing or recontextualizing or expanding awareness, which has been the preferred technique in Buddhism all along, those very things that are the details of daily life, of the struggles to interact, to deal with conditions and suffering and lack of control are not just a means to Buddhahood. They are themselves Buddhahood qua the life of a sentient being, expressing itself in the form of the life of a sentient being, as the funniness of a joke is expressed in, present in, the serious unfunniness of its setup.²¹

The “setup” is the *provisional* teachings of the Buddha taught before the *Lotus Sūtra*; and the “punch line” is the *real* teaching in the *Lotus*. From what is discussed above, we can say that what the real teaching does is that it reveals that what preceded it itself was also the real *expressed as provisional*. The point here is that as soon as the real teaching is revealed, the initial contrast between the real and provisional and their ultimate identity are both cancelled and preserved. The special effect of this paradoxical relation of identity between them is that what we normally take to be serious turn out to be also funny according to the unexpected and significant alteration of the context.

And in the same way, what is taken to be funny also reveals its seriousness when considered apart from its supporting conditions of setup. In this sense, we can say that what we are seeing here is serious *as* funny, and funny *as* serious, showing the interpenetration of funniness in every single moment of seriousness, and alternately the omnipresence of seriousness in all instances of the entire joke. The doubleness of funniness and seriousness are mutually entailed and embodied in a particular detail of a joke in every single moment of its process. This is how a punch line reveals a new context that thereby transforms the value and meaning of contents within it. Thus, the most striking philosophical implication of this identity is to say, according to Ziporyn:

Each is now a center that subsumes of the other; they are intersubsumptive. As a consequence, the old pragmatic standard of truth is applied more liberally here: all

²¹ *Beyond Oneness and Difference*. 207-208.

claims, statements, and positions are true in the sense that all *can*, if properly recontextualized, lead to liberation—which is to say, to their own self-overcoming. Conversely, none will lead to liberation if not properly contextualized.²²

Thus far we saw how Ziporyn’s “setup / punch line” analogy clarifies the philosophical implications of the Tiantai doctrine of opening the provisional to reveal the real. In Zhiyi’s explanation of the Śāriputra narrative that we will see below, his point is that Śāriputra’s pursuit of śrāvaka goal through studying and practicing Śākyamuni’s teachings is provisional, which is then opened up to reveal that his real goal is to reach Buddhahood, and it is exactly what is occurring, unbeknownst to him.

This means, from the viewpoint of comprehending and embracing the certainty of his Buddhahood, that he can retrospectively understand that his longtime practice as a śrāvaka is also a fulfillment of his real goal of Buddhahood expressed *as* a fulfillment of something else. This immanent conception of Buddhahood is the result he attains through seriously following the provisional teachings that make the real teachings effective, revealing that every single moment of his practice has been always already where the real goal of Buddhahood is being expressed as not-Buddhahood. Hence, the structure of joke discloses the intersubsumptive identity between the provisional and real. We can also say that this doctrine exemplifies how the Three Truths operate. The particularities of Conventionality (setup) reveal the ultimate truth of Emptiness (punch line). What this leaves us is the Middle: their identity that both cancels and preserves their contrast and thereby exhibits the omnipresence of both in every single moment of any of these truths.²³ With these implications in mind, let us look at Zhiyi’s fourfold explanations of the

²² Ibid. 208.

²³ In terms of the Three Truths, Ziporyn says, “This is the sense in which the Third Truth, the Mean [Middle], reveals the ‘identity’ between Provisional Positing and Emptiness. Provisional Positing *is* Emptiness only inasmuch as it is the very opposite of Emptiness, the temporary exclusion of Emptiness. It is by being Non-Empty (i.e., something in particular) that it is Emptiness (i.e., devoid of any unambiguous or unconditionally self-determining self-nature). It is only because it is Locally Coherent that it is Globally Incoherent. Its Global Incoherence is present

Śāriputra narrative.

2.2-1 First Siddhānta

In this passage, we see the application of the Four Siddhāntas. In the first explanation, Zhiyi says, “hearing a wondrous dharma from a wondrous person and attaining a wondrous understanding and meets blissfulness (從妙人聞妙法得妙解).” This shows how interiority and exteriority converge into one another: using one’s sense organ (interiority) to hear its objects (exteriority) leads to comprehension (and their joining) in—the Tiantai concept of—absolute wondrousness (*juedaimiao* 絕待妙). In the *Lotus Sūtra*, this convergence generates joy in the mind of Śāriputra and other śrāvakas. It is significant that the joining of subject and object here is not described as an abstract convergence that lacks an affective power of appealing to one’s feelings. This joining rather essentially involves one’s affective quality, the emotional character of “joy (*xi* 喜)” as the Śāriputra narrative shows, suggesting that one’s affective character is essential to the Tiantai contemplation practice. As upheld in the doctrine of “Three Thousand Realms in One Moment of Experience (*yiniansanqian* 一念三千),” the tradition regards the practitioner’s mind, a status of mind with a particular affective quality (including delusion), as an essential starting point of practice and an aspect of enlightenment.²⁴ In the same way, Śāriputra’s moment of joy is an essential aspect of his practice of bodhisattva paths.²⁵

as Local Coherence, just as Humor is present in the deadpan setup *as* seriousness. This same form of ‘identity’—really neither identity nor difference, or both identity and difference—then applies at the metalevel between the Mean [Middle] itself and the other Two Truths: they ‘are’ the Mean [Middle] precisely because they are not the Mean [Middle], because they are the two opposed extremes. (Ibid, 207)”

²⁴ The third chapter of the present dissertation will discuss this in terms of the relation between ignorance (*wuming* 無明) and Dharma-nature (*faxing* 法性).

²⁵ 戀 *lian* is among the most important affective term to mean “to love.” The *Lotus Sūtra*’s pinnacle chapter, titled “Lifetime of Tathāgata”, shows that this “loving” in a sense of “affective longing (戀慕渴仰)” is an essential condition for one’s encounter with a Buddha. In the Tiantai context, longing for liberation is sentient beings’

The role of this affective moment of “joy” is significant and appears many times in the *Lotus Sūtra* narrative, inviting a following elaboration. Joy used in the sūtra describes a moment of one’s affective experience of timelessness where a sense of past, present and future is momentarily forgotten. Let me explain. Since among the necessary conditions for the buddhist idea of “suffering (*dukkha*)” to arise is an experience of a gap of time between where one desires to be (future or past) and where one already is (present), the experience of timelessness in an affective moment of joy undermines the generative condition of suffering. *Thus, the affective experience of joy as depicted in the Lotus Sūtra reveals a moment of absence of suffering in one’s conscious experience as a result of the convergence between the interiority and exteriority, between what is conscious and unconscious.*

However, what is the difference between “joy” that appears in the *Lotus Sūtra* and “joy” that we experience in our everyday life? In light of this, let us investigate how Tiantai commentaries consider this joy in the sutra’s Śāriputra narrative. According to Zhanran, Śāriputra’s hearing of Śākyamuni’s unprecedented teaching “surpassed what his mind seeks (過意所謀).” Zhanran thinks that Zhiyi’s comments on Śāriputra’s joy does not merely explain his personal experience but rather speaks for all śrāvakas in the Lotus Sūtra assembly who heard Śākyamuni’s teaching of one-vehicle and became joyous. As he explains further, this idea of surpassing what the śrāvaka’s mind seeks also appears in four elder śrāvakas’ speech in the sūtra

“elicitation” that calls buddhas and bodhisattvas. While the term is no doubt associated with a negative value of being attached to dharmas (as in “戀著戲處者。前明善弱此明惡強。即是因時深著見愛。果時深著依正。” in *Fahuaxuanyi* [T34.068c24-c26.]), it is noteworthy that Tiantai thinkers equally show a necessary liberative aspect of the affective quality of 戀. Zhiyi comments on the chapter, “亦復現言當入涅槃者。應以滅度而得度者。即現滅度也。令其戀仰而得解脫。(T34.130c22-c24.)” This shows that Śākyamuni’s announcement of the approach of his extinction is announced so as to make it a necessary condition for those who will long for his presence to attain liberation, that is, to know about and embrace the unexpected truth about his eternal lifetime. Moreover, the final chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, “Encouragement from the Bodhisattva Universal Sage”, is where Zhiyi brings up “love toward dharmas (戀法 *lianfa*).” He says, “勸發者戀法之辭也。遙在彼國具聞此經始末既周。欲令自行化他永無已。故自東自西而來勸發。具四悉檀意(云云)。(T34.148a15-a17)”

(and many other places) where they express their experience of hearing Śākyamuni's teaching that there exist no śrāvakas, but instead, that there exist only bodhisattvas. They say, "What we did not seek / Has now come to us by itself (非先所望而今自得)." This means the joining of the initially unconscious and the ultimately conscious moments in their experience as a śrāvaka. As we will see in a moment, implications of this statement are at the heart of the philosophical concern of the present dissertation.

As we saw earlier, Śāriputra's acceptance of his Buddhahood dispelled his feelings of distress and self-reproach attributed to his experience of alienation from attaining the supreme awakening (Buddhahood). In this sense, on the one hand, what was initially considered to be interior to him was the experience of which he was *aware*, that is, his śrāvaka practice. On the other hand, what was considered to be exterior was his Buddhahood that seemed to be in no relation with him and yet was *thereby* being fulfilled unbeknownst to him in his unconsciously advancing bodhisattva practice expressed *as* his self-conscious śrāvakahood. His initial śrāvaka goal was his conscious telos. But the pursuit of this conscious goal was actually his bodhisattva practice that had been unconsciously fulfilling his Buddhahood. The ultimate telos was pursued unbeknownst to him and could never arise in Śāriputra's consciousness in the pre-Lotus period of his practice. For Śāriputra, hearing the *Lotus Sūtra* became the moment in which he realized that he had been a Buddha-to-be unbeknownst to himself—the moment of his unexpected discovery of his own Buddhahood in the very experience of his śrāvakahood whose meaning was thereby opened up. In this sense, the unexpected discovery of his Buddhahood "surpassed what his mind seeks," giving rise to his experience of joy. What is crucial here is that the meaning of Śāriputra's pre-bodhisattva practice, all moments of being a śrāvaka, is transformed from the viewpoint of having already known the certainty of his Buddhahood that retrospectively looks

back at its own initial practice to find a transformed meaning of it, revealing that his consciously pre-bodhisattva training was—unbeknownst to him—always already his bodhisattva practice expressed *as* śrāvaka practice. This retrospective meaning-transforming comprehension of which he was not initially aware is part of his bodhisattva practice all along, part of the fulfillment of his “original vow,”²⁶ bringing both initial and ultimate goals into a meaningful coherence of Śāriputra’s lifestory, just as the setup / punch line motif exhibits the mutual entailment and the interpervasion of seriousness and humorousness. Hence, one of the chief marks of the “joining of interiority and exteriority” is a *convergence of the unconscious and conscious moments, known and unknown aspects of experience* from the viewpoint of Buddhahood. It is precisely this unexpected divergence that turns out to show the retrospective convergence between two seemingly different telos that gave him a great sense of joy. This is, as I call it, Tiantai’s “omnitelic” approach that embraces the paradoxical identity between what appears to be in opposition to one another. According to Tiantai’s omnitelic interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Śāriputra was for many years seeking to become an arhat, but now what he attained, what came to him “by itself,” both fulfilling and surpassing his expectation, evading to be an object of Śāriputra’s śrāvaka purpose, is a certainty of his Buddhahood. This is an unexpected mismatch of his initial desire and his ultimate attainment. In this sense, Zhiyi asserts that “interiority and exteriority harmoniously join and cause this joy.”

The unexpected ultimate mismatch between what one seeks and what one attains as a way of liberation from suffering presents Tiantai’s unique philosophical overturning of a classical buddhist view on the cause of suffering. As the present dissertation’s first chapter investigated, in

²⁶ In the third chapter of *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*, Śākyamuni says, “Śāriputra, long ago I instructed you to aspire to the Buddha Way, but you remember none of that now, and accordingly thought that you had already attained extinguishment. Because I want you to recall the Way that in the past you originally vowed to follow, I now expound, for the sake of all shravakas, this Great Vehicle sutra called the Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma, a teaching that instructs bodhisattvas and that buddhas protect and keep in mind. (88)”

Buddhism, one of the major contributing conditions for the arising of suffering is one's misconception of selfhood that thereby results in giving rise to frustration caused by a gap between what is given and what is not given to a moment of one's experience. What problematizes this gap is one's desire for what is not given that thereby leads to an enhanced experience of a sense of lack and deficiency conceived as an existential threat for maintaining one's self-imposed imaginary "fullness" of selfhood. This desire to control one's selfhood perpetuates a loop of the desire's external search for finding a solution to remove a sense of lack somewhere outside one's given experience. This is a classic buddhist analysis on the problematic attribute of desire. Hence, the goal suggested in early Buddhism was the end of desire in a sense of willlessness.

However, as we saw in the present commentary to the *Lotus Sūtra*, the Tiantai interpretation of desire importantly, or perhaps even shockingly, seems to diverge from this classic motif by going toward the opposite, shedding light rather on a *salvific value* of this gap between what one expects and what one attains in a new way. How does this process of the reversal of value take place in the Śāriputra narrative? According to the sūtra's narrative, there is initially a gap between Śāriputra's desire to fulfill a śrāvaka goal and his unexpected fulfillment of his Buddhahood. What is significant in how this gap is used is that the ultimate attainment of Buddhahood does not arrive without first undergoing the pursuit of a śrāvaka goal. Śāriputra's initial goal of being an arhat is setting up a necessary condition to reveal his Buddhahood that brings out a far greater fulfillment of his initial desire. In this approach to desire, instead of seeing one's telos as problematic, desire and its associated experience of the gap between what is and what one wants are rather used as a therapeutic device for liberation. Rather than the absolute willlessness, what is happening here is the opposite: the maximum willfulness that no

longer creates a distinction between willlessness and willfulness. Something completely different from the practice of willlessness as in the case in early Buddhism is occurring in the Tiantai picture where the śrāvaka goal is “opened up” (rather than “being removed”) to reveal something that develops this provisional goal so as to expand it to its ultimacy, revealing it to be the real goal of Buddhahood.²⁷ This is the implication of Zhanran’s statement: What Śāriputra attained surpassed what his mind sought. In this model, the ultimate purposelessness of Buddhahood is never outside Śāriputra’s purposive practice but is revealed in the fulfillment of this purposive act. It is nothing other than the ultimatization of this initial śrāvaka practice that turns out to be a content of his bodhisattva practice. But this ultimatized version was excluded from the vision of Śāriputra in his pre-ultimatized śrāvaka practice. In this sense, as Zhanran says, “Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna are both called joy. (大小兩乘皆名歡喜),”²⁸ to which our discussion now turns.

2.2-2 Second Siddhānta

According to the second siddhānta, “One changes [his attitude toward] Hīnayāna [teachings] to learn Mahāyāna [teachings] and abandons a straw-hut made for small service to accept the business of a rich family. (改小學大。棄貧事草庵。受富豪家業。)” We can see a transition from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna is indicated here because Zhiyi quotes the sūtra’s line about taking over a

²⁷ As touched on in Introduction of the present dissertation, in Tiantai, purposive practice is posited as a provisional truth but only to reveal that all practices are ultimately the Buddha’s enlightened act whose character is non-purposive, non-teleological. Buddhahood means the end of desire, the end of telos. Hence, the goal of telos is precisely to reach goallessness, purposelessness—that is, Buddhahood.

²⁸ In Tiantai, a diversity and distinctions among all different teachings of the Buddha are appropriately established counter-measure that help particular needs and desires of sentient beings end their experience of suffering. A contemplation practice on Tiantai three truths reveals the ultimate Intersubsumption among all different teachings of the Buddha including a provisional distinction between Hīnayana and Mahāyāna.

The lure of desire is to go beyond itself, to reach a goal of desirelessness (purposelessness of Buddhahood). What this desirelessness ultimately reveals is not an elimination of desire but rather the necessity of using all kinds of desires as a lure to liberate all sentient beings. As the present dissertation’s second chapter discussed, this reveals the innumerable meanings of all purposes and shows how sentient beings’s unenlightened desires and attachments have been always already embodying their bodhisattva practice. This paradoxical embodiment is undergirded by the Tiantai philosophical category of the root and trace.

magnificent family business, distinguishing this move from the first siddhānta. However, what kind of distinction between “interiority” and “exteriority” that Zhiyi may have in mind in this passage is unclear. In order to consider this, we first need to be clear about where in the *Lotus Sūtra* his references of “the straw-hut” and “rich family business” appear. This textual reference is attributed to the sūtra’s fourth chapter, titled “Faith and Understanding,” where four elder śrāvakas Subhūti, Mahā-Kātyāyana, Mahā-Kāśyapa, and Mahā-Maudgalyāyana tell a parable to express their joy of hearing Śākyamuni’s teaching of one-vehicle that made them realize the certainty of their Buddhahood.

The parable is called “A rich father and a poor son,” and the story goes like this: One day, a man who left his father and lived frugally for a long time, wondering from village to village in different countries, finally arrived back at his hometown in his native land. Throughout fifty years of separation, the father searched for his son in vain, as his estate became wealthy. But as he grew old, he regretted that he had no one in his family to take over his great family business. One day, looking for a lowly job to make daily ends meet, the son arrived at the front of the father’s house (without realizing that it was his alienated father’s residence) and saw a man sitting on a lion seat that was decorated with gems. Being intimidated, the poor son regretted he came to a wrong place and ran away. Catching sight of his own son, the rich father was overjoyed to have finally discovered him and sent his attendants to bring him back. But the son fainted out of terror. Hence, the father ordered the messengers to release him.

At that moment, no one but the father knew this poor man was his son. Next, the father ordered two undignified men to tell him about a lowly job for double wages and to bring him back if he agreed. The son agreed and went with them to clear away dung, a labor which lasted for over twenty years. During these years, the father concealed their true biological relationship,

smearing his body with dirt and occasionally clearing away dung with him. One day he promised him to increase his wages and gave him a new appellation, to call him his “son.” Trust and understanding of each other grew as the years passed. Eventually the father fell ill and asked the son to count all his assets. Seeing that the son’s sense of inferiority was gradually removed and he was starting to aspire to greatness, the father gathered everyone in his palace where he finally revealed his true relationship with his son and declared that the son would take over the entire wealth. The son felt ecstatic to hear what he never expected and accepted it with joy.

The wealthy father symbolizes the Tathāgata, and the poor son represents four elder śrāvakas who are likened to have diligently practiced and received the day’s wages of reaching “nirvāṇa” and eventually gave rise to joy by hearing and embracing the great nirvāṇa of Buddhahood.²⁹ Now we know that Zhiyi’s reference of “abandoning the straw-hut to accept the rich family business” comes from the imageries that appear in this parable. As Ziporyn points out, what is important to the Tiantai interpretation of this parable is that the son’s initial job and his ultimate taking over of the wealthy business are not separate from each other.³⁰ According to him, however, the tradition’s real point is not in showing their *inseparability* but rather advocating their *identity* in a sense of mutual subsumption. From the viewpoint of having already become the one who takes charge of what was always already inherent to him by virtue of being the son of his father, the day’s wages he earns is retrospectively understood to be from the

²⁹ In *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*, the elder śrāvakas further state: “In this sutra, he now teaches only the One Vehicle; and though previously, in the presence of bodhisattvas he disparaged shravakas who were content with lesser teachings, in reality the Buddha was teaching and transforming us with the Great Vehicle. Therefore we say that although we never had any intention to seek the great treasury of the king of the Dharma, it has now come to us of its own accord, and we have come to possess everything that a child of the Buddha should have. (127)”

³⁰ In his *Emptiness and Omnipresence*, Ziporyn says, “The irony here, of course, is that the real reason the son gets promoted has nothing to do with the quality of his work. He was a blood son from the beginning; he is only gradually coming to a state where his own sense of himself can accept his own patrimony, which actually was his own possession, his own birthright, from the beginning. Similarly, the śrāvakas think that their progress on the path is due to their good work, that they have attained something new, that their state of relative peace and small enlightenment is achieved by their practices. Actually, it is a meager first taste of what was always already theirs, which they are only gradually getting mentally prepared to accept as their own. (96)”

beginning his own inheritance. This means that the rich father’s business is a necessary outcome of full comprehension of what the son was *truly* doing. In this sense, the abandonment of the straw-hut must not be conceived as something alienated from the ultimate acceptance of the family business and hence not be eliminated from the matter of attaining the greater family business.

Rather, in the Tiantai context, this means *abandoning a partial comprehension* about the straw-hut and thereby opening up a full comprehension that discloses the true meaning of it—an ultimate experience of accepting the greater business of a rich family. Hence, this mutually subsuming relation of identity (rather than mere inseparability or Swansonian “indivisibility”) between the straw-hut and the great family business demonstrates how the provisionality of the initial practice with the straw-hut (Hīnayāna) opens up to ultimately reveal the reality of *that* practice, that is, an attainment of the great family business (Mahāyāna) expressed *as* the straw-hut. When we have this in view, we can better make sense of Zhanran’s comments: “‘Abandoning what is small to accept what is wealthy’ means *opening up* the rare toys of the *tripitaka*. Attaining the truly good and keen [faculty], the goodness arises in its ultimacy. (棄貧受富者。開三藏珍玩也。得真善利生善中極。)”³¹ As we discussed in the first siddhānta, this “opening up” is key to understanding the relation between the tripitaka teachings and what they ultimately lead to. Tiantai’s doctrine of Four Teachings exhibits the retrospective coherence among all teachings of the Buddha. In this sense, one’s initial pursuit of the practice of the straw-hut has always already been a partial content of the great family business. In this sense, teachings for śrāvakas, the *tripitaka* teachings, are “opened up” to reveal their ultimate identity with teachings for bodhisattvas. Just as there is no hierarchical relationship of

³¹ Italicized by me.

employer-employee in the eyes of the rich father with respect to his son, from the Buddha's viewpoint, there is no real distinction between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, śrāvakas and bodhisattvas (*qua* interior and exterior, as we saw in the discussion about the first siddhānta) and Buddha.³² This is where we can again see how opening the provisional to reveal the real is at work: the provisional setup is “the straw hut (Hīnayāna)” and the real punch line is “the great family business (Mahāyāna),” suggesting their mutually entailing relation. As we will see in the discussion about the Tiantai concept of the Mahāyāna-śrāvaka below, this leads to a surprising implication that the true Hīnayāna teaching *is* Mahāyāna, and alternately—but further shockingly—true Mahāyāna *is* Hīnayāna. The Tiantai doctrine thus presents a new conception about their contrast in a new light. In the latter half of the present chapter, we will discuss how Tiantai makes sense of this counterintuitive and seemingly outlandish claim.

In summary, the second siddhānta suggests the intersubsumptive identity between śrāvakahood and Buddhahood seen from the viewpoint of the Buddha by referring to how the practice of one's small financial practices (śrāvaka practice) have been always already an aspect of the great family business (bodhisattva practice). According to the Tiantai commentary, it is

³² The reason for the absence of these distinctions does not seem to me quite convincing at a glance. According to Zhanran, “śrāvakas and buddhas are not different according to their inherent nature (聲聞與佛天性不殊).”³² Let us carefully consider what this “inherent nature” means because “nature” can easily evoke some kind of a permanent essence, which would be a violation of the fundamental Buddhist principle of the “impermanence of all activities (諸行無常).” Buddhists see that all dharmas dependently originate, meaning that no dharmas have unchanging nature or essence that unconditionally endures. All dharmas are without self-nature that causes itself or self-supports its own existence. In this sense, all dharmas including all activities are “empty” *qua* “essencelessness.” With this standard Buddhist ontology of emptiness in view, Zhanran's notion of “inherent nature” may sound like a violation of this fundamental Buddhist tenet. However, this counterintuitive move reflects how Tiantai further developed the implications of the Nāgārjunian conception of “emptiness.” In this sense, the “inherent nature” is not any kind of nature that has essence and evades being subject to change. As the second chapter of the present dissertation discussed, Tiantai took emptiness to mean the ambiguity of all dharmas and “the unlimited openness to infinity.” This leads to the Tiantai's innovative interpretation of “emptiness” to mean the omnipresence of all dharmas *qua* middle-way Buddha-nature. Thus, when it comes to the notion of the “inherent nature” in Tiantai context, it means, emptiness *qua* omnipresence, Buddha-nature *qua* omni-naturelessness or omni-impermanence that is pervasive throughout all dharmas, activities, ten dharma realms, which will be the central topic of the fourth chapter of the present dissertation. In a broader context of Tiantai, it is important to note also that it is not only buddhas and śrāvakas whose inherent nature is shared.

this intersubsumptive identity that was revealed to Śāriputra in the third chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* where he gives rise to joy. After hearing the teaching of one vehicle, following Śāriputra, four elder śrāvakas next comprehended and accepted what it really means to engage in the small business (*qua* great family business) of Hīnayāna practice. śrāvakas were conscious about their pursuit of a straw-hut (Hīnayāna teachings), while they were not aware that their purposive aspiration for attaining a śrāvaka goal was unbeknownst to them building up to reveal the unexpected attainment of the great family business (Mahāyāna teachings), the *true meaning of* Hīnayāna teachings.

In this sense, the second siddhānta implies the joining of interior and exterior in terms of the convergence of one's unconscious and conscious practice. What is occurring here is a retrospective repositing of one's past by seeing it from the viewpoint of now knowing the certainty of the future (Buddhahood) about that past.³³ This is when śrāvakas come to realize that they will become a Buddha, significantly altering the meaning of the presently given śrāvaka practice. As soon as this new meaning of the present practice is discovered, the past of that present is no longer understood as alienated from this meaning. By embracing the great family business, one looks back at his past, and retrospectively comprehends and truly embraces the straw-hut that is seen as an aspect of the great family business (the past being seen as an aspect of what one now knows with certainty about the future). This is how what seemed to be initially outside one's consciousness is retrospectively discovered to be always internal to the conscious moment of practice. Buddha's wisdom has liberative power that opens up the *meaning* of what is already given and thereby reveals the true reality of it. During the practice of the straw-hut life,

³³ This elevation of śrāvaka to bodhisattva by way of repositing of their self-knowledge resembles to the Hegelian epistemology of the immediate and mediate knowledge. I will discuss this comparative reference toward the end of the present chapter.

the real meaning of what it is was not revealed to Śāriputra. The problem was not the practice itself, but rather his *perspectival limitation about* such practice. This limitation was associated with his delusions that did not allow him to comprehend the real meaning of what his practice truly was (e.g., who the poor son truly was) and concealed the inherent nature (see Chapter Four) shared in both the straw-hut practice and the great rich family business. In Tiantai contemplation practice, it is this perspectival limitation that creates one’s unwholesome karma. However, when one “fully penetrates (*da 達*)” an object of contemplation, their perspective opens up to reveal its real nature. Thus, the issue at stake is primarily epistemological, about which the third siddhānta offers more detailed analysis.

2.2-3 Third Siddhānta

This ultimate comprehension of one’s initial śrāvaka practice that shows the joining of interiority and exteriority or Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings, is further discussed in the third, therapeutic-siddhānta. Zhiyi says, “anxiety and regrets are dispelled, and doubts and troubles are removed, so that obstructions between interiority and exteriority become extensively self-so and greatly clear. (憂悔雙遣疑難並除。內外妨障廓然大朗。)” According to Zhanran, “Since worries and doubts are forever removed, the evil is removed to its ultimacy. (永除憂疑故除惡窮也)”³⁴ Śāriputra’s distress was blocking a thorough comprehension of his practice. In the context of Tiantai meditation, “evil” refers to *perspectival partiality* of one’s contemplation practice that restricts one’s comprehension. Once this partiality is overcome and one starts to go beyond it, what is “evil” qua partiality of comprehension is no longer evil, allowing a process of thorough

³⁴ Ziporyn already investigated the topic in his *Evil and/or/as the Good* and elsewhere in his meticulous works with his mastery of Tiantai materials.

comprehension of it to emerge, revealing how this evil has been in fact a bodhisattva way, an expression of the dynamic activity of Buddhahood.³⁵

This is in Tiantai how evil is “opened up” and thereby removes worries and doubts to further disclose its full meaning. These evil obstructions are themselves precisely in this sense the joining of interiority and exteriority. This is how the notion of evil is linked with Zhiyi’s reference: “obstructions between interiority and exteriority become extensively self-so and greatly clear. (內外妨障廓然大朗).” Zhiyi’s *Mohezhiqian* (*Great Cessation and Contemplation*) contains a usage of “greatly clear (大朗)” where it says, “There is neither beginning nor end in all dharmas. There is neither penetrating nor blocking among all dharmas. If you know dharma-realms, it is without beginning, end, penetrating, or blocking. They are all greatly clear like this and free from any obstructions. (法無始終法無通塞。若知法界,]法界無始終無通塞。豁然大朗無礙自在。)”³⁶ This passage shows that the notion of “greatly clear” is a result of Tiantai contemplation, and hence is an epistemological rather than an ontic achievement: it means that these inner and outer obstructions are seen to be omnipresent, and thus no longer to obstruct each other, or anything else. As Ziporyn discusses,³⁷ if anything is beginningless and endless, it is by definition unconditional. Thus, in Tiantai, any moment of one’s experience is itself the absolute middle-way Buddha nature that is omnipresent and without beginning or end.

³⁵ But this “x being an aspect of y” does not mean that x is subsumed into a more refined y. Rather, this means that an inconceivable nature of x and y is shared and hence whatever about either x or y becomes a referent, it also means the shared nature of both x and y through and through. As stated earlier, in this chapter I argue that this inherent nature is one’s compassion, or more specifically, one’s compassion *qua* desire for the end of suffering. According to my reading, this is a logical heart of the Tiantai middle way.

³⁶ T.46.4a16-a17.

³⁷ In *Emptiness and Omnipresence*, Ziporyn says, “Anything you can point out, identify, conceptualize, mention, consider is not Nirvana. If anything is mentioned as a candidate for what Nirvana is, that thing is thereby proved not to be Nirvana. Nirvana is ‘neither this nor that.’ It is the unconditioned. [...] If Nirvana is ‘unconditioned,’ it has to be omnipresent. It also has to be happening all the time. For if there were any ‘conditions’ under which Nirvana were not occurring, Nirvana would be conditioned. It would be conditioned by the absence of those conditions. [...] (55-56)”

The meaning of this position will be a central topic of the next chapter where we will investigate interpenetration of ten dharma realms (十界互具).³⁸

2.2-4 Fourth Siddhānta

The joining of interiority and exteriority in a sense of the intersubsumptive identity of śrāvaka's practice that takes place both consciously and unconsciously is further articulated in the fourth siddhānta, which discusses the relation between the future and present. What is going on here is structurally the same as what we saw earlier: Buddhahood expressed *as* śrāvakahood, or the rich family business expressed *as* the small straw-hut. Zhiyi says, “What the child of the Buddha should attain has already been attained (又佛子所應得者皆已得之).” This seems to be suggesting that the certainty of one's future Buddhahood (what one *should* attain) coincides with the immanent process of Buddhahood (what one *has already* attained), which has been already occurring in the present. The former is futural and hence is in this sense “exterior” to the given present experience of Śāriputra, while the latter refers to his proximate experience of the present and is in that sense “interior” to him. This futuristic aspect is the “not-yet-given future” that, according to Zhiyi, is already attained. With our earlier discussions in view, we can say that he is here claiming that what is considered to be exterior has been in fact always already interior. In this sense, this is a moment in which Śāriputra realized that the not-yet-attained has been always

³⁸ As we will see more in the third chapter, Zhiyi in *Fahuxuanyi*, for instance, says, “The characteristics and nature of four lower realms are evil, while those features of the human and heavenly realms are good. However, as soon as they purify their minds, there will be analytic and embodying emptiness as the characteristics and nature of two vehicles. If they enter the provisional to purify their minds, they are the features of bodhisattvas. When they enter the middle to purify their minds, they are the features of the Buddha. If one is able to comprehend the characteristics and nature of all ten realms as being in accordance with all the various commentaries and precepts, this is precisely the comprehensive mastery of tripitaka, shared, and separate teachings. Then it will be known that all dharmas are free from obstructions, and the ultimacy of the characteristics of the dharmas of sentient beings are broadly revealed 四趣相性即是諸惡。人天相性即是眾善。自淨其意。即有析體淨意是二乘相性。入假淨意是菩薩相性。入中淨意是佛界相性(云云)。若能解十相性。與眾經論律合者。即通達三藏通別。識一切法無有障礙。廣明眾生法相竟。(T33.695c28-696a04.)”

already attained throughout his śrāvaka practice from the past up to the present.

The future has been always already expressed *as* the already-attained present. In the parable of the rich father and poor son, this means that the poor son ultimately hears and embraces that he has been always already a real son of the rich father, thus revealing that the daily wages he kept receiving for more than twenty years of work at the father's palace were not really the "reward" he earned from someone else, but was always from his own inheritance. What appeared to be "external" to him, as soon as the truth about it was announced by the father and embraced by his son, is understood to be something that has been always already "internal" to him (and his father). As we will soon see, this is an application of the *reversibility* of the cause and effect, present and future, that thereby shows a thoroughgoing lack of primacy between them in their intersubsumptive identity. Hence, the ultimately attained entire family inheritance is found precisely in what was given to the son as his day's wages. But this equally means that such a small wage (and even the ability to dole it out in such carefully limited doses) is nothing other than an aspect of the abundance of the wealth. In the same way, śrāvaka practice is an aspect of Buddhahood, which is found precisely in non-Buddhahoodly-appearing practices, including śrāvakahood. In this sense, the son's future (the ultimate takeover of the father's rich family business) and his present (the initial job he engaged in as a dung remover) have always been identical to each other.

The initially perceived gap between the future and present, the goal of Buddhahood and the practice of śrāvakahood, is used as a skillful means that thereby sets up the value of the goal in the distance. After this gap has been deployed long enough, it disappears, revealing a liberative experience to those who accept this ultimate identity, the presence of the ultimate attainment of the goal in the distance in the initial moment of experience.

The intersubsumptive identity between the future and present seems to reiterate Tiantai's overturning of the salvific value of the cause of suffering that we saw in our discussion about the second siddhānta. While the earlier discussion proved that the tradition uses the gap between what is attained and the unattained object of desire as a necessary condition to reach, or rather reveal, the end of suffering, the fourth siddhānta shows that the gap is not merely used as a therapeutic device but also is itself not ultimately existent in the immanent process of Buddhahood.³⁹ This convergence of “going to attain it” and “already attained it” then means a convergence of Śāriputra's future (Buddhahood) and present (śrāvakahood). In this sense, Zhiyi comments on Śāriputra's experience of joy: “[Although] the Buddha previously gave an assurance of Buddhahood to bodhisattvas, there was no place for me to take part in that matter.’ Since the meaning of the Buddha was far away [for Śāriputra] and because of [his] still not seeing the Buddha, there was no joy for the bodily-karma. (昔佛為菩薩授記。我不豫斯事。見佛義遠既不見佛故無身喜。)” This is to show a Tiantai way of how ultimate and proximate moments of time converge into one's single moment of experience.

Our discussions about the four siddhāntas showed that the joining of interiority and exteriority means 1) the convergence of the initially unconscious and the ultimately conscious practice of śrāvakas; 2) the intersubsumptive identity between the small business (śrāvakahood)

³⁹ This philosophical move is typical of Tiantai and is seen most prominently in the work of Siming Zhili, where he comments on one of the pureland sūtras and argues that *waiting for the future* to become a Buddha is not a proper immanent process of Buddhahood. In *The Sūtra of Contemplation on the Innumerable Life of the Buddha* (觀無量壽佛經), the Amitābha Buddha says, “This mind that makes Buddha is precisely the Buddha. (是心作佛，是心是佛。[T12.343a21.])” According to Zhiyi, this means, “Saying that this mind creates the Buddha means that the Buddha does not originally exist. It exists only when the mind is pure, this is also because of the mind of samadhi, which in the end is able to create the Buddha. (是心作佛者，佛本是無，心淨故有；亦因此三昧心，終成作佛也。[T37.192b10-b11.])” In this passage, Zhiyi sees that creating the Buddha means to visualize it. Hence, the Buddha in this sense is a *thought* about the Buddha. In the same passage, Zhili says, “How would you have to wait for the future and only then become the fruition of Buddha? (豈待當來方成果佛？[T37.220b15.])” Further implications and the full length of Zhili's this passage will be discussed in detail in the present dissertation's fifth chapter whose central topic is the Tiantai conception of time expressed in the doctrine of “stimulus and response (感應).”

and rich family business (Buddhahood), which is undergirded by the “inherent nature” that śrāvakas and buddhas share; 3) a removal of perspectival obstructions to thereby show the identity between the internal and external from the viewpoint of the non-obstructive interpenetration of dharma realms; and 4) the immanent process of Buddhahood that shows the convergence between present and future. In all of these cases, what is at stake is a perspectival limitation that conceals the dynamic immanent activity of Buddhahood. We saw that Tiantai contemplation practice advocates the necessity of opening up and developing one’s perspectives based on the Tiantai interpretation of emptiness to mean the unlimited openness to infinity. Once this is opened up, what happens is a removal of the perspectival obstruction and thereby a retrospective transformation of the *meaning* of what is already given. This reveals something new about the present that then extends toward different meanings. This is a great transition from the chronological temporality toward the world of meanings where time is experienced as timelessness of interdirectional time.

2.3 The Tiantai Doctrine of “Opening the Provisional to Reveal the Real”: Why to be a true śrāvaka *is* to be a Bodhisattva

As we saw at the outset of the present chapter, according to Zhiyi’s conception of opening the provisional to reveal the real, to know that the provisional practice is the cause of Buddhahood, which is its real result, is also to know that this cause and this result are themselves “identical.” This understanding is foundational to understanding Zhiyi’s comment about the “great perfect cause,” which shows that “causes necessarily tend toward results.” However, there seems to be a few intertwined ideas whose meaning and conceptual functions need to be clarified in order to understand this passage. In light of this concern, in what follows, I argue that this identity means

a *necessary inheritance* of the causes (provisional) to the result of Buddhahood (real) that thereby reveals the *intersubsumption* of cause and effect, which philosophically underlies Zhiyi's oxymoronic notion of "Mahāyāna-śrāvakas" that embodies this intersubsumption in their practice as śrāvakas *qua* bodhisattvas. As we will see soon, this paradoxical expression exhibits the identity in contradiction that is grounded in the Tiantai concept of "non-exclusive middle" that significantly alters an ordinary image of śrāvakas as mere "voice-hearers" and thereby reveals the true meaning of their voice-hearing practice.

This is how Tiantai, based on the tradition's flagship doctrine of Three Truths, argues for the intersubsumptive identity between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood without eliminating any of these original characteristics, which further leads to revealing the identity of all ten dharma realms. What underlies this intersubsumptive relation is the Tiantai concept of "inherent nature (*ju* 具)," whose crucial philosophical feature that I will take up in this chapter is its implication of the "conception of change" that entails neither movement through space nor the replacement of any parts that occupy the space shared between them. I hope this insight unique to Tiantai thought makes an unignorable philosophical intervention to contemporary academic discussions in the field of philosophy of religions. In light of this, I will discuss below the implications of this concept so as to investigate Zhiyi's notion of "the great perfect cause (*dayuanyin* 大圓因)" that describes the reality of śrāvaka practice. As we will see in a moment, this investigation will lead to Zhiyi's distinction between the "sequential (*cidi* 次第)" and "non-sequential (*bucidi* 不次第)" śrāvaka practices, which reveals that the former expresses the Tiantai's penultimate "exclusive middle" position, while the latter embodies the tradition's ultimate "non-exclusive middle" applied to the voice-hearing practice of śrāvakas. We will consider a difference of these distinctions of the Tiantai concept of the "Middle," which is essential to understanding Zhiyi's

usage of “causes *necessarily tend toward* the effects” that undergirds his paradoxical notion of “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas.”⁴⁰ I hope discussions of this chapter help us understand the important Tiantai implications of the causes’ “tending (*qu* 趣)” nature that is omnipresent in all ten dharma realms. However, a full exposition of the “tending toward” has to be undertaken in the present dissertation’s next chapter because it would require extensive discussions about the nature of the tending that needs to be investigated from the viewpoint of the nature of “desiring (*yushi* 欲事),” which is a conceptual key to understanding the intersubsumption of cause and effect, delusions and awakening, and hence all ten dharma realms that ultimately culminate into the Tiantai doctrine of “Three Thousand Worlds in One Moment of Experience (一念三千).” With all of these in mind, now let us turn to Zhiyi’s discussion.

Prior to hearing the *Lotus Sūtra*, the true meaning of Śāriputra’s śrāvaka practice, what it was really up to, was not yet revealed to him. However, as the fourth siddhānta suggests, future Buddhahood is inherent to the present śrāvakahood, revealing that the present is the “perfect present.” In this picture, there seems to be occurring a perspectival transition from the ordinary Buddhist usages of the “cause” to Zhiyi’s specific notion of “the great perfect cause.” The former regards “cause” and “effect” as two separate entities, while the latter reveals their mutually entailing relation between them. Here we see the Tiantai insight of “inherent to (*ju* 具),” which will be a key concept for the rest of our discussion of this chapter. When something “tends toward” (as Zhiyi says in the passage quoted above) somewhere, it normally evokes a spatial relationship between two points and the movement traveled between them. However, the Tiantai idea of “inherent to” is primarily getting at a *perspectival* “distance” or more precisely the

⁴⁰ The present dissertation chapter will be limited to showing this logical sequence and hence cannot dive into an investigation of the enigmatic notion “necessarily tending toward (*biqu* 必趣),” which will be a central topic of the next chapter of this dissertation.

“alternate conception of change” that does not require the notion of space which has mutually exclusive parts. (This is similar to the idea of “aspect change” in the Wittgensteinian duck-rabbit. I will make this comparative reference toward the end of the present chapter.)

Thus, revealing the Buddhahood that is inherent to all dharmas does not mean closing a material distance between buddhas and unenlightened sentient beings, nor altering the component parts of those unenlightened beings, but rather getting over the *perspectival limitation* that blocks the nature of Buddhahood from being revealed in all beings. Hence, seeing causes “necessarily tending toward” means a breakthrough of one’s perspectival limitations, which thereby reveals the identity between the provisional and real, causes and effects, and śrāvakahood and Buddhahood. It is the alternate conception of change that makes this perspectival identity possible. As we will see in a moment, this is what is philosophically at the heart of the matter of the notion of Mahāyāna-śrāvaka. This sense of “tending toward” means developing one’s perspectives⁴¹ and thereby opening up the meaning of causes, the provisional, and śrāvaka practice to reveal their ultimate convergence with the real result of Buddhahood. Hence, the issue we are dealing here is primarily epistemological.

How would this explain the ultimately comprehended śrāvaka experience of becoming “the great perfect cause”? Now let us consider the meaning of “perfect” in the context of śrāvaka practice. According to Zhiyi, in order to be a “perfect” śrāvaka, one must make a shift of one’s standpoint from being a voice-hearer of the Buddha way to *making others hear* the Buddha-way. This means that the hearers of the Buddha way take the opposite stance of their initial position and thereby become preachers of the Buddha way for the sake of liberating others. When we consider being a hearer as cause and a preacher as a result of the cause, we can see that this set of

⁴¹ On a discussion about the Tiantai omniscience and its difference from relativistic perspectivism, see Ziporyn’s *Being and Ambiguity*. 234.

cause and effect shares the nature of their practice that neither decreases nor increases and is equally inherent to both of these practices. From the viewpoint of having already seen the shared nature of these practices, we will see that the effect was always inherent to the cause, revealing the “perfect” śrāvaka practice. Zhiyi says in *Fahuaxuanyi*:

Those who are in the small-vehicle merely hear the voice of four noble truths from others. Due to this, both voice and hearing are partial. However, now they can cause the entire dharma-realm to hear the voice of the Buddha-way of the one and real four noble truths. Since they make all hear it, the meaning of śrāvakahood becomes perfect (impartial).
彼但小乘從他聞四諦聲。則聲偏聞偏。今能令一切法界聞一實四諦佛道之聲。使一切聞則聲聞義圓。⁴²

According to Zhiyi, śrāvakas who cause all to hear the Buddha-way are called “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas (大乘聲聞)” who *make all hear the voice of the Buddha way*. (大乘聲聞。以佛道聲令一切聞。)” What kind of transformation is being made in this “Mahāyānification” of śrāvakas who were traditionally never considered to be the Mahāyāna practitioners? What is occurring in this transition is neither an elimination of śrāvaka practice nor replacing it with Mahāyāna, but rather is śrāvakas’ change of standpoint regarding their practice and thereby elevates the practice of voice-hearing to its ultimacy. (We can say that this is a practice of “the alternate conception of change” exhibited in śrāvaka’s achievement of such practice.) This makes them achieve a transition from mere voice-hearers into preachers *who make others hear* the teachings. By becoming a preacher of dharma, a former voice-hearer starts to produce other voice-hearers. What is shared in the practice as a hearer and a preacher is a practice of hearing the dharma as a content of their practice. The difference between them is a standpoint of their traditional śrāvaka practice where hearing of the dharma *for them* grows into preaching it *for*

⁴² T33.732b21-0739c09.

others. Hence, the transition made here alters a direction of desire that seeks the end of suffering. The former receives preaching *from* others, desiring to end *one's own* suffering, while the latter offers the preaching *to* others, reorienting and thereby maximizing this original desire for the end of suffering so as to extend it also *toward all sentient beings*, desiring all to hear the Buddha way. Here we can finally see a clear meaning of Zhiyi's oxymoronic notion. According to him, the latter is the practice of true śrāvakas who are "Mahāyāna-śrāvakas," which does not eliminate the initial śrāvaka practice, but rather fully entails and magnifies it by redirecting its purpose toward the suffering of all sentient beings. In the story of the *Lotus Sūtra*, according to Zhiyi, this is the insight revealed to Śāriputra and other śrāvaka practitioners who experienced an extraordinary moment of joy that arose out of the unexpected discovery of what it truly means to be who they are as a śrāvaka.

However, understanding this transition still does not fully reveal the ultimate meaning of the "perfect (*yuan* 圓)," the chief mark of Mahāyāna-śrāvakas. Zhiyi advances his discussion to explain further implications of this notion. According to Zhiyi, *merely* making others hear Buddha's teachings is not sufficient to make śrāvakas "perfect," because "those who cause others to *sequentially* hear the buddha way are [still] śrāvakas of separate teachings, while those who do so *non-sequentially* are perfect śrāvakas [of Perfect Teachings]. (令他次第聞佛道。是別教聲聞。令他次第聞佛道。即圓聲聞。)" What kind of subtle point is Zhiyi making by distinguishing "sequential" and "non-sequential" in this passage? This is, in fact, an important distinction for Tiantai contemplation. In *Mohezhi guan*, Zhiyi says, "Sequentially destroying [delusions] is not called pervasive [destruction]. Only non-sequentially destroying them is called pervasive

[destruction]. (次第破者則不名遍。不次第破乃名為遍耳)”⁴³ Hence, it is a contrast between “partiality” and “pervasiveness” that correlates to sequential and non-sequential practices. This suggests that causing others to hear the Buddha way *sequentially* means to do so in a partial, non-all-pervasive manner, i.e., to see this activity as located in only one position rather than to see it as pervading every possible locus of every exchange. In this case, the one who preaches is thus the only locus of what is doing the causing, thereby making his hearers merely “the caused” whose value is secondary to the preacher who “causes.” In contrast, making others hear the Buddha way *non-sequentially* does not create this cause-caused hierarchy because the non-sequential practice is based on the pervasiveness of the voice-hearing practice revealed as a result of seeing that all sentient beings are always already preaching the Buddha-way in each moment of their practice regardless of their diverse appearances. The sequential practice posits a hierarchical relation between one who causes and the other caused to hear. In contrast, the non-sequential practice exhibits the absence of this sequentially created hierarchy. However, this absence does not mean an elimination of the causal relation. Rather, it means the most intensified presence of causation, or what Ziporyn calls the “hyper-presence”⁴⁴, of causes which reveal the identity between causes and results, and hence their simultaneous intersubsumption. This is perhaps something we can refer to as “timeless causality” in Tiantai.

The transition from the presence to the absence *qua* hyper-presence of causes is articulated in the Tiantai doctrine of the “non-exclusive middle.” In the Tiantai context, the sequential practice is grounded in the “exclusive middle” where a centrality of “making others hear” is limited to a single center of those who cause, making whatever is non-center secondary to this exclusive centrality. In contrast, the non-sequential practice allows centrality to be found not

⁴³ T.46.080b14-b15.

⁴⁴ *Being and Ambiguity*. 155-164.

only in one locus but rather *everywhere*, revealing the pervasiveness of the center, which demonstrates the chief characteristic of the Tiantai “non-exclusive middle.” In the sequential practice, śrāvakas who cause others to hear are the only center of the preaching-preached interaction that thereby makes hearers merely hear rather than preach. This unidirectional relationship between preachers and the preached never allows hearers to also be preachers. In this sense, the sequential practice does not exhibit “perfect śrāvakas” in the Tiantai sense. In contrast, this irreversibility of the preacher-preached hierarchy is overcome in the non-sequential practice of śrāvakas by allowing both śrāvaka preachers and hearers of the preaching to be preachers, revealing that all of them have always been preaching the dharma. This is how the entire dharma realm is instantly, *non-sequentially*, transformed into the all-pervasive site of perfect śrāvaka practice where everyone is hearing the Buddha-way from each other. It is in this sense that Zhiyi says, “If you follow the meaning of this sūtra, then all are hearing this sutra from one another, and all beings are giving assurance of Buddhahood to one another. As soon as a single instance of this opens up, there will be no space between [speaking it and hearing it]. (準今經意既彼此聞經。必彼此與記。一開之後無所間然。)”⁴⁵ Thus, the Tiantai position of the non-sequential practice makes the perfect śrāvakas evade a traditional causal narrative of sequence and instead reveals the “instantaneousness” of timeless causality where the pervasive practice of voice-hearing that takes place non-sequentially is discovered everywhere. This is how the Tiantai notion of “inherent to” implicitly plays a crucial role in the perspectival transformation of śrāvakas into bodhisattvas. In the sequential practice, the heart of the matter is considered from the viewpoint of how the preaching of śrāvakas spread out to hearers. In contrast, in the non-sequential practice, this naïve sense of outward expansion of preaching is

⁴⁵ T34.226c25-c26.

reconfigured through a perspectival shift: a conception of change in śrāvaka’s comprehension of what was always inherent to the śrāvaka practice.⁴⁶ According to the Tiantai doctrine of the interpenetration of the ten-realms (*shijiehuju* 十界互具), this transformation of śrāvakas into bodhisattvas has a tremendous implication, as it reveals the universally shared nature of Buddhahood not only in the two realms of śrāvaka and bodhisattva, but also in all ten realms including the lower six realms of desire.⁴⁷ This further leads us to considering Zhiyi’s reference of “the opening the provisional to reveal the real” in terms of cause and effect. In Tiantai context, the categories of “cause and effect (or result)” are considered in the doctrine of “ten suchnesses” that appears in the second chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* where it says:

[T]he Dharma the buddhas have attained is understood only rarely and with great difficulty. Only a Buddha together with a Buddha can fathom the ultimate reality of all things. That is to say, among all things, each has such an appearance, such a nature, such an embodiment, such a potential, such a function, such a cause, such a condition, such an effect, such a reward, and from the first to the last, such an ultimate identity.⁴⁸

Although the present passage from *Fahuaxuanyi* we are discussing specifically determines “cause” to be Śāriputra’s shravaka practice that leads to the “effect” of his Buddhahood, in a broader context of Tiantai contemplation practice, “cause” generally means “the deluded minds

⁴⁶ Tiantai sees the value of cause of suffering and reorganizes it as a seed of Buddhahood, the ultimate end of suffering of all beings. This cause is attributed to one’s desire to close a distance between what is given in his present experience and what is not given in that moment. The non-sequential practice gets sentient beings out of this condition for the possibility of the arising of suffering because by getting away from the ordinary conception of the world in terms of space and matter, it offers a non-spacial way of being in the same world. Since the conceptualization of space makes room for the concept of distance to arise, when such spacial way of world conception ceases, the arising of such distance also necessarily ceases, revealing a distance-free non-sequential world, where thereby one can find what he seeks in the given moment of experience.

⁴⁷ The content of the shared practice among śrāvakas and bodhisattvas is pertinent to “hearing the dharma.” The former is the doer of this practice, and the latter is a party who makes others engage such practice. Furthermore, ten realms include non-practitioners of the act (aśura, hungry ghosts, etc.). But the desire for such an act is universally shared in all ten realms. They hear it with desire to end the suffering of someone. In other words, what is inherent to finite beings is an internal contradiction between different desires of all nine realms and one spectrum of desirelessness of the Buddha realm. Hence, the perspectival shift of non-sequential practice is a necessary result of the fundamental internal contradiction of the ontological status of all finite sentient beings. The universally shared nature of Buddhahood in all ten realms, which is at the heart of the argument of the present dissertation, will be further investigated in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 58.

of sentient beings.” Zhiyi’s claim is that the cause, an ordinary deluded mind, entails both all ten suchnesses and all ten dharma realms. As the third chapter of the present dissertation will discuss in detail, this ultimate entailment of all dharmas (that include ten suchnesses and ten dharma realms) that is inherent to a single moment of the sentient being’s experience is at the heart of the Tiantai contemplation practice. Zhanran discusses these ten categories of suchness from the viewpoint of the mutual entailment of cause and effect, sentient beings’ minds and their Buddhahood. He says:

In reality, causes and effects of all ten realms and one hundred realms are inherent to a cause that is the mind of one’s single moment of experience. What does this mean? It is just like when we say the ten realms and ten suchnesses are precisely inherent to the arising of the mind of each realm. For all ten suchnesses are nothing other than the dharmas of causes and effects. From “characteristics” through “causes” and “conditions” belong to “cause.” “Effects” and “recompense” belong to “effect.” It should be known that the cause and effect of both living beings and their environments constituting the hundred realms are eternally inherent to a single moment of experience. Therefore, the *Sūtra of the Great Vaipulya Tathāgata* [大方等如來藏經] says, ‘When Buddhas see inside the minds of all sentient beings, there they see a tathāgata sitting cross-legged in every single one of them.’ The result of Buddhahood is already inherent [to the minds of sentient beings.] This is the same for the results of all other realms.

一念因心實具十界百界因果。何者。如云起一界心即具十界十如。十如祇是因果法耳。相至因緣以屬於因。果報屬果。當知一念恒具百界依正因果。故佛藏云。佛見一切眾生心中。皆有如來結跏趺坐。尚具佛果。餘果亦然。⁴⁹

The minds of all sentient beings are causes, and Tathāgata sitting cross-legged in their minds are the fruit of these causes. The former is the present, while the latter is the future. Now the sutra’s passage Zhiyi mentions shows that Tathāgata, the ultimate result (effect) of one’s initial practice (cause), is inherent to the present practice. Buddhahood that seemed to be only in the distant future is, in fact, *inherent* to the present moment of sentient beings’ striving for the end of suffering. This is a point we saw in the fourth siddhānta where the future is subsumed into the

⁴⁹ T46.289c07-c12.

present. This reveals that causes and effects culminate into being the same, and hence referring to “cause” necessarily ends up referring to “effect,” and its vice versa. Causes and effects are no longer separate because they are identical and one necessarily means the other, revealing the cause to be the “great perfect cause.” In this sense, cause necessarily tends toward the effect (and, note well, not only to the effect of Buddhahood, but to all other effects as well, including hellbeinghood, animality, and so on—themselves all subsumed into Buddhahood and vice versa). This suggests that the intersubsumptive identity between cause and effect has a characteristic of *reversibility*.

A similar point of this reversibility is articulated in Wittgenstein’s “duck-rabbit,” where seeing a duck ends up seeing a rabbit, and vice versa, and yet none of them are findable apart from the one or the other.⁵⁰ This is because elimination of one would have to mean an elimination of the other. Since each is entailed in the other, the two are mutually subsumed into each other. In this sense, if we apply this to Zhiyi’s passage, we could say that the “duck necessarily tends toward the rabbit” and vice versa, revealing the “great perfect duck” (which is equally the “great perfect rabbit”) qua “duck-rabbit” (“rabbit-duck”). This intersubsumption qua reversibility explains the all-pervasive nature of cause and effect, between one’s initial and ultimate experience. If the duck is seen first, seeing of the rabbit follows in the next moment. In the two moments, the former is a conscious experience, while the latter is presently “experienced” only unconsciously. However, from the viewpoint of having already processed this recognition of the duck-rabbit, when the duck is seen in the third moment of experience, the seer knows that

⁵⁰ My usage of the “duck-rabbit” repurposes it in the context of the present dissertation and hence is not aiming at representing how this visual analogy is used by Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigation* (Part II) where he explains a distinction between *perception* in one’s visual sense-field and *interpretation* of this perception. For instance, someone looks at the duck-rabbit image and may say “I see a rabbit.” This is a report of a set of *perceived* sense data. But if the same person says, “I see it *as* a rabbit,” this is an *interpretation* of what is perceived. Moreover, if this person says, “*Now* I see a duck,” this is a description of a new perception, which Wittgenstein explains as “aspect change.”

the absence of the rabbit in his moment of seeing the duck is how the rabbit is expressed in form of its absence, and hence he is “seeing” the rabbit *as* duck. In order to see the duck, one does not have to or more precisely *cannot* leave the rabbit, and its vice versa. There is no duck anywhere outside the rabbit, and alternately no rabbit outside the duck. This is the above-mentioned “alternate conception of change” expressed in how Tiantai considers that delusion, when seen from the viewpoint of having already become enlightened, is seen *as* an expression of Buddhahood qua delusion. In the same way, Śāriputra’s self-recognition as a śrāvaka was his bodhisattvahood in the form of absence in his immediate śrāvaka experience. However, if this immediate knowledge “opens up (*kai* 開)” and is recontextualized in one’s new comprehension, it “reveals (*xian* 顯)” the mediated relation between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood, revealing the identity between them in Śāriputra’s “great perfect śrāvaka” experience. Comprehended thus, for Tiantai, śrāvakahood is nothing other than bodhisattvahood. Everywhere Śāriputra goes and whatever he does as a śrāvaka is his practice as a bodhisattva, a Buddha-to-be, unbeknownst to himself. This shows the truth about śrāvakahood whose nature is the illimitable openness to infinity.⁵¹ In this sense, śrāvakahood as a cause necessarily tends toward the effect of bodhisattvahood. As the duck is a duck-rabbit, a śrāvaka in this picture is from the beginningless past already a bodhisattva and hence is a “śrāvaka-bodhisattva.” In the same way, the distinction between “Mahāyāna” and “śrāvaka” ends up meaning their reversibility and intersubsumptive identity. This is how we can make sense of Zhiyi’s oxymoronic expression of “Mahāyāna-śrāvaka” qua the “great perfect cause,” the “great perfect śrāvaka.”⁵²

⁵¹ See Chapter 4 of the present dissertation.

⁵² Hans-Rudolf Kantor discusses a “circular” relation between the root and traces is good, but his translation of *ji* as “inseparability” shows that his take diverges from Ziporyn’s Tiantai where he considers *ji* to mean “identity” rather

Now we have completed an essential groundwork for discussing the Tiantai notion of “inherent nature,” which we will investigate in the next chapter. As we saw in the present chapter, Tiantai’s pseudo conversation with the “duck-rabbit” makes some valid philosophical points that are relevant to our concern. As the next chapter will discuss in detail, Mahāyāna-śrāvaka is a key concept that helps us further investigate the Tiantai usages of “inherent nature.” This nature shared in śrāvakas and bodhisattvas resembles to how it is also shared in the duck and rabbit. In the moment of seeing the duck, there is nowhere in the picture that does not express the “duck-nature.” Simultaneously, when the rabbit is seen, any point of the picture expresses the “rabbit-nature.” Since we saw that the duck and rabbit are mutually entailing and reversible, duck-nature is seen as identical to the rabbit-nature, both of which are pervasive in either of these two reversible cases. In the same way, as Zhanran says, this all-pervasive nature applies to the “inherent nature (*tianxing* 天性)” shared in śrāvakas and the buddhas that is omnipresent in all three thousand worlds. Whenever the śrāvaka practice takes place, it always necessarily expresses Buddha’s practice by virtue of their universally shared all-pervasive “inherent nature.” But the question is what this “inherent nature” is, whose “nature” is in Tiantai empty, provisional, and the middle all at once, to which we will turn next.

than mere “inseparability.” (‘Referential Relation and Beyond: Signifying Functions in Chinese Madhyamaka.’ in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol.47, No.4. 2019.)

CHAPTER THREE

WHY SUFFERING (CAUSE) *NECESSARILY* BRINGS OUT BUDDHAHOOD (RESULT)

In the last chapter we considered the “alternate conception of change” to be a feature of non-sequential practice of “Mahāyāna-śrāvaka.” The starting point of our discussion was Zhiyi’s notion that “causes necessarily tend toward results (因必趣果)” and described Śāriputra’s joy of knowing the certainty of his Buddhahood. In this context of the *Lotus Sūtra*, “cause” is Śāriputra’s voice-hearing practice as a śrāvaka, and “result” is the fruition of his practice, Buddhahood. In his pre-joy moment, Śāriputra’s conscious goal of practice was to become an arhat (who is enlightened, and yet unlike the Buddha, does not teach and transform others). What the *Lotus Sūtra* revealed in this scene was that—to his surprise—Śāriputra would rather become a Buddha, revealing that the real goal of his practice was not to be an arhat, but to surpass it to ultimately become a Buddha. What the Buddhahood, his real goal, revealed was that his initial goal was provisional (*quan* 權), which was appropriately set up to lead him to the real (*shi* 實) goal of *goallessness* qua Buddhahood.¹ The therapeutic function of this unexpected revelation of the real result is in the transformation of the meaning of “cause.” This is Śākyamuni’s pedagogical approach in the *Lotus Sūtra* that presents the absolutization of the projected future “result” (Buddhahood) that retrospectively “co-transforms” and absolutizes the “cause,” revealing it to be the “great perfect cause (*dayuanyin* 大圓因),” which would be equally called the “great perfect result,” as it were. From the viewpoint of Tiantai’s flagship doctrine of

¹ As discussed in Introduction, Buddhahood is not a goal in a sense of purpose or desire. It is rather a realization of the true goal of goallessness, the ultimate purposelessness of the purpose (or desirelessness of the desire). What is interesting here is that the real object of his practice is never a conscious object. This means that the ultimate object of practice or true goal of it is only present *as* absence (not as “lack” because this absence is fulfilling) and that this absence is precisely how it shows its presence.

“opening the provisional to reveal the real,” we saw a process of absolutization of causes and effects and their intersubsumption by investigating Zhiyi’s notion of Mahāyāna-śrāvaka. By consistently calling all of saṃsāra the “cause” of Buddhahood, Zhiyi means to imply that, just as a cause is only a cause if it necessarily brings about its result, saṃsāra *necessarily* brings about Buddhahood. What is at stake here is the enormous claim of universal future Buddhahood for all sentient (and perhaps even insentient) beings. What are some remaining questions that need to be discussed regarding Zhiyi’s notion of “tending of causes toward results,” the nature of this “bringing about,” that would make this highly extravagant and controversial claim intelligible to us?

We already saw *what it means* to tend toward, but *why* would all of saṃsāra qualify as a cause that “tends” in this way, such that it *necessarily* (*biqu* 必趣) brings about the effect of Buddhahood, rather than *contingently*?² Is this necessity of tending controlled by some kind of invisible force that is external to saṃsāra qua saṃsāra? Or, in contrast, is this tending an inherent “nature” of saṃsāra? Is it why this tending occurs and it is *necessary*? In what sense is such nature “inherent”? The present chapter takes up these questions and investigates the reason for this “necessity” according to Tiantai. In brief, in Tiantai, “necessity” means “necessary omnipresence” qua inescapable ineradicability of all dharmas, which the tradition calls “Real Attribute (*shixiang* 實相)” that is grounded in Tiantai’s Three Truths. From the viewpoint of Real Attribute, any single moment of experience that appears to be present only in a particular locus is in reality omnipresent. Hence, “this cause *necessarily* tends toward this result” occurs because both the cause and the result are from the beginning everywhere without interfering but rather complementing each other’s omnipositionality. Thus, wherever the tending of this cause

² Zhanran’s *Shiqian* (釋籤) also has a usage of “*biqu*.”

occurs, what it encounters is *necessarily* both the cause itself and every result (which is a “result version” of the cause itself). This is obviously a very unusual notion of causality, one that must be understood as having quite a different set of entailments than might otherwise be expected. Therefore, this Tiantai notion of “necessity” is a necessary result of the omnipresence and omniavailability of all dharmas (e.g., causes, results) entailed in a single moment of experience that thereby reveals the equality in Real Attribute. This means that the “tending” transition from causes to effects does not mean that the former changes into something else. Rather, this “transition” means a *necessary discovery of one in the other* (e.g., cause in the effect, effect in the cause, hence Buddhahood in sentient beings and vice versa). It is only the special nature of this “effect,” Buddhahood, as explicitly including within itself every other possible state that makes this notion of causality coherent.

This peculiar conception of causation is prominently expressed in the Tiantai doctrine of Ten Suchnesses (*shirushi* 十如是) that we briefly saw in Chapter 2. In particular, it is in Tiantai’s intricate discussions about the basic Buddhist doctrine of Twelfefold Chain of Cause and Effect (*shieriyinyuan* 十二因緣) and Ten Suchnesses. In light of this, in the present chapter, I argue that “causes tending toward effects” is necessary because of the ontologically inherent universally shared nature of all dharmas, including causes and effects. Furthermore, based on this notion of the omnipresence of dharmas, I will take up Tiantai analogies of intersubsumptive relation between “ignorance” and “dharma-nature” that presents therapeutic functions liberative to the suffering of sentient beings. An importance of comprehension of omnipresence is in the salvific effects to the minds of sentient beings that transform their desire (cause of suffering) into something expansive rather than into a limiting and narrowing of their perspectives. This is liberative because it shows the necessary ineliminability of desire and suffering and hence, in

turn, the necessity of fully accepting and mastering them as a way of liberation without desiring to end suffering any longer. The present chapter walks us through the logical steps that explain this conclusion.

In accordance with the procedure of Tiantai contemplation practice, we may begin with a relatively more intuitive example of this structure of mutual entailment available to meditative introspection, as applied to subject and object, before moving on to the less intuitive extension of the analogous structure to the case of causality. Our discussion will start with Zhanran's notion of the inseparability of sentience (subject) and insentience (object) in the act of knowing (3.1). This will show us a logical structure that undergirds the intersubsumption between subject and object according to Tiantai. A crucial insight of this discussion is the *subject's ultimate recognition of itself being an object* seen by a "subject" (a post-subjectivized version of the initial object) that is found to be a flip side of what is perceived by an initial knower. This counterintuitive act of "seeing" *performed by an object* of cognition is an essential part of the distinct Tiantai interpretation of knowing. I will next discuss how Tiantai thinkers explain this contemplation procedure with the notion of "mutual pouring" of subject and object on the basis of Real Attribute (3.2). An important point in this discussion is mutual entailment of different moments that occur *non-sequentially* (which, as we saw in the discussion of Mahāyāna-śrāvaka, is a marker of the non-exclusive middle of Tiantai Three Truths). With these premises in view, the next section (3.3) investigates the mutual entailment of "ignorance (*wuming* 無明)" and "dharma-nature (*faxing* 法性)" that finally discusses the distinct meaning of "causation" according to Tiantai. I argue that according to Tiantai Three Truths, the nature that ignorance and dharma-nature share is "recognition of suffering" that thereby indicates that saṃsāra, the unendable cycles of suffering, is qualified as a cause of the equally unfinishable process of

Buddhahood. Based on this view, the final section (3.4) concludes our investigation by looking into how “causation” is considered in a broader philosophical apparatus of Tiantai with a particular focus on a correlation between Ten Suchnesses and Twelffold Chain of Cause and Effect.

There are two key concepts that continue to appear throughout this chapter and hence are worthy of being mentioned at the outset. First is a mind’s role of “limiting” reality³ and second is how this limiting ultimately leads to omnidirectional alternate movements of perspectives, which describes the nature of this intersubjective relation. This chapter attempts to walk through these weird Tiantai procedures that are likely unfamiliar to Western thought. Mind that limits the reality means its act of conceptually disambiguating what it perceives. This habitual act of mind is a cause of suffering, and yet, in Tiantai, it is used as an essential aspect of liberation. This is because the mind’s act of limiting means that reality, whose entirety is uncapturable by our mind, is always something more than what the mind perceives. If the mind’s act is to disambiguate its encounter, the reality that exceeds it is always ambiguity.⁴ In short, in Tiantai, an ignorant mind’s act of disambiguation entails its flipped liberative side, that is, an infinite possibility of the mind’s perspectival and conceptual unending growth. It is this ever-growing perspectival possibility of mind that Tiantai’s contemplation practice articulates.⁵

3.1 Alternate Conception of Change

In his final work, *Jinganpi*, Zhanran argues for the inseparability of sentience (subject) and

³ Zhili’s Shanjia school of Tiantai advocated this position called *Wangxinguan* (妄心觀 or “contemplation on a deluded mind”) as opposed to Shanwai standpoing of *Zhenxinguan* (真心觀 or “contemplation on a pure mind”).

⁴ See Chapter 2 for more details.

⁵ The tradition’s flagship doctrine “Three Thousand Dharmas Inherent to A Single Moment of (Deluded) Experience (*yiniansanqian* 一念三千)” demonstrates this liberative aspect of one’s experience, through which the real-mark of all dharmas and their absolutization (*miaofa* 妙法) are revealed.

insentience (object) manifest in the act of knowing. He says: “[How can] non-awareness remain [only] non-awareness once you are aware of it? [So, how can you] instead say that the object of awareness is separate from the subject of awareness? (七覺不覺不覺猶不覺耶。反謂所覺離能覺耶。)”⁶ The logical sequence of his argument is that he starts with saying that to know is always to know something that is not itself the knowing—an object. However, once it is known, this non-knowing object is itself an aspect of knowing, of sentience. Thus, insentient beings, as soon as they are known to be (or named as) insentient, are themselves not separable from sentience. This is the logic that underlies the intersubsumption between sentience and insentience, awareness and non-awareness, subject and object. A crucial point of this subject-object relation for our present discussion is that the subject is first a partial subject in the sense that it starts out with non-awareness of itself being an object from the viewpoint of the post-subjectivized object. An extended sense of subjectivity is here established by way of embracing its own constitutive non-awareness, including its retrospective awareness of its unconscious precedent moment, and all the other constitutive non-aware elements that are nonetheless intrinsic to its awareness. It is noteworthy in addition that the subject’s “being an object” moment is constitutive of this “intersubjective” experience. The true object, the unknown aspect of the subject, of which it needed to be aware for its liberation,⁷ was always already with itself all along in its awareness and non-awareness. If a subject is an unenlightened sentient being who sees Buddhahood as its object, a successful Tiantai contemplation leads to the subject’s retrospective recognition of itself being an object all along, that which is seen by an object (of Buddhahood) that sees the subject as a Buddha-to-be. (More on this in a moment.) In this moment, what was initially only an object,

⁶ T46.783a11-a12.

⁷ As we saw in previous chapters, “liberation” in Tiantai means overcoming perspectival obstacles that obscure the inherent entailment of all dharmas in one’s instance of moment of experience. In other words, awareness means to becoming aware of this inherent entailment and hence is liberative.

the idea of Buddhahood, will be no longer seen as an object but as an aspect of the subject, but one which is itself an awareness aware of the subject, revealing the oneness of awareness and non-awareness, subject and object, on both sides. This is why Zhanran proceeds to say: “There is no difference in principle, yet ordinary people deem a separation between them to exist. Thus, [the Buddha] instructs sentient beings so as to make them aware of non-awareness. Consequently, awareness and non-awareness naturally unite in a single suchness. (理本無殊。凡謂之離。故示眾生令覺不覺。故覺不覺自會一如。)”⁸ Because of this intersubsumptive identity between subject and object, mutual recognition between them becomes possible.

An interesting philosophical insight vital to our discussion is a multidirectionality of perspectives in this intersubjective field of experience between subject and object. What occurs in such experience is a mutual tending of perspectives. First perspective comes *from* the subject and tends *toward* an object (which means any possible quiddity such as “a chair,” “anger,” “Buddhahood” etc.), a conscious and hence is a *conceivable* object, which was in fact tending *toward* the ultimate *inconceivable* object, which then becomes an aspect of the subject.⁹ Then a

⁸ T46.783a14-a15.

⁹ In Tiantai, the emptiness of all dharmas means that they are ontologically ambiguous, illimitably open to otherness, and omnipresent. This is the nature of all dharmas and equal to the nature of Tiantai Three Truths, which reveals that all dharmas are ultimately “*inconceivable* (*bushi* 不思議)”—the point we saw in Chapter 2. However, Tiantai’s contemplation starts with a relatively intelligible step of contemplation by focusing on rather “*conceivable* objects (*siyijing* 思議境)” that posit distinctions and then advance toward the contemplation on “*inconceivable* objects (*bushiijing* 不思議境)” that are free from all distinctions. As Ziporyn points out, in terms of the Tiantai doctrine of ten-realms, this would mean a progressive procedure of “both evil (the first four) and good (the next four), and the transcendence of both (bodhisattva), and the transcendence of this transcendence (buddhahood) (*Evil/and/or/as the Good*, 245).” Here, the third position that overcomes the opposition of the evil and good is Tiantai’s penultimate “exclusive middle” position, according to which the centrality of value is exclusively placed onto the transcendence but never on the transcended opposites. By excluding the transcended from the centrality, the transcendence makes itself “relative transcendence” that only constitutes itself by way of establishing a contrast to (and hence dependence on) the transcended (non-transcendence). Since all is relative to each other, the evil, the good, and transcendence all show distinctions and hence are in this sense “conceivable.” In the ultimate “non-exclusive middle” position, this asymmetry between transcendence and the transcended is overcome (transcendence of transcendence) by Buddhahood that entails all three thousand dharmas within it. The special status of Buddhahood is in its double function of showing this ultimate transcendence and thereby revealing the ultimate identity between Buddhahood and all other nine-realms. This means that as soon as Buddhahood is revealed, it shows that Buddhahood cannot be

weird move occurs: *from* this ultimate object (that dwells in no position) tends *toward* its own past, that is, *from* the object back *toward* the subject. This is part of the process of absolutization of subject and object, revealing this multidirectional tending of “from” and “toward” as universally shared “nature” of all moments of the subject-object relation. This ultimate reversal of tending transforms the initial subject into the seen, an object, an aspect that the subject was not aware of. Moreover, the reversed movement from the object turns out to be something always already going on *at the time of tending from* the subject *toward* the object moment. This process of an extension of finite dharmas into their absolutization by revealing how they entail all other dharmas in them expresses how Tiantai thinkers see the reality of all dharmas based on Three Truths as prominently expressed as Real Attribute, to which our discussion turns next.

3.2. Toward and from Subject-Object Interpenetration

What philosophically undergirds Zhanran’s argument for the mutual subsumption of awareness and non-awareness is Tiantai’s distinct concept of Real Attribute (*shixiang* 實相). In what follows, let us look at the usages of Real Attribute in Tiantai’s meditation texts by Zhiyi and Zhanran. This is where we will see the Tiantai application of Real Attribute in the “mutual pouring” of subject and object, which is structurally analogous to Zhanran’s discussion of the intersubsumption of awareness and non-awareness that we saw in Section 3.1. As we will see soon, a crucial insight in this discussion is the Tiantai conception of “non-sequential moments,” which is different from an ordinary conception of time that unidirectionally moves from the past

separable from other “lower” realms and further that it cannot be found anywhere other than nine realms that are initially conceived as non-Buddha-realms. The special status of Buddhahood is not about its transcendence that creates a further distinction, but rather is in that it transforms all other realms special and makes them equal to itself. Buddhahood is an inconceivable object because it unexpectedly shows its omnipresence in all realms, making all realms inconceivable objects.

to the present and from the present to the future. It is important to know at the outset that “moments” in Tiantai context means “moments of *experience*.” Hence, the non-sequential intersubsumption of moments means the mutual entailment of different moments of experience that Tiantai thinkers here explain as “mutual pouring” between the mind and its object. Tracing the logic of this procedure in the present section will let us see how the intersubsumption between sentience and insentience (3.1) is practiced in Tiantai contemplation in the subject-object relation and will be a conceptual foundation for investigating the shared “nature” between ignorance and dharma-nature (3.3) and the subsequent discussion that attempts to answer our inquiry regarding why *samsāra* is qualified to be a “cause” of Buddhahood (3.4). With this in mind, let us first look at Zhiyi’s notion of Real Attribute from his *Mohezhi guan*:

Perfect and Sudden [cessation and contemplation] from the beginning tracking the Real Attribute itself. Any object [of contemplation] encountered is precisely the Middle. There is nothing among them that does not express this truth. Tying the attention to only the dharma-realm is to realize the oneness of the mind and entire dharma-realm. Whether it is a single experience of seeing color or smelling, there is nothing that is not the Middle-way. This is the same whether it is the realm of self, Buddha, or sentient being. [...] There [only] is pure and singular Real Attribute, outside of which there are no other dharmas that are separate from it. The tranquil reality of dharma-nature is called cessation. Being tranquil and yet eternally showing is called contemplation. Although we speak of what is prior and posterior, they are neither two nor separate from each other. This is called Perfect and Sudden cessation and contemplation.

圓頓者。初緣實相造境即中無不真實。繫緣法界一念法界。一色一香無非中道。己界及佛界衆生界亦然。[...] 純一實相。實相外更無別法。法性寂然名止。寂而常照名觀。雖言初後無二無別。是名圓頓止觀。¹⁰

¹⁰ T46.001c23-002a02. In *Zhiguanyili*, Zhanran comments on Zhiyi’s notion of Tiantai contemplation of cessation and contemplation: “Single-mindedly tying the attention to the dharma-realm to realize the oneness of mind and dharma-realm. Tying the attention is precisely ‘cessation’; and one moment of thought [in a sense of realizing the oneness of mind and dharma realm] is precisely ‘contemplation’.” (但專繫緣法界，一念法界。繫緣是止，一念是觀。) It is in this sense Zhiyi says: “A subject and object of contemplation all dependently co-arise. This co-arising is precisely emptiness. This is the teaching of cause and effect for [practitioners of] two-vehicle. If one contemplates and finds that there is emptiness, then he falls into two poles [of extreme] to sink in emptiness and get stuck there. [Bodhisattvas] give rise to great compassion and enter the provisional to transform living beings. Although there is no body in Real, they provisionally create body. Although there is no emptiness in Real, they provisionally preach about emptiness. Transforming and guiding them is precisely the teaching of cause and effect for bodhisattvas. If you contemplate this dharma, liberators and the liberated are both dharma of the middle-way real-mark, then [all of

Let us first consider the meaning of Real Attribute in this passage and then move to looking into the “neither two nor separate” relation of priority and posteriority, which will be a segue into a subsequent discussion about the mutual “pouring” of subject and object. Regarding this passage of Zhiyi, in *Hongjue*, Zhanran quotes a line from the *Mahāyāna Nirvāṇa Sūtra* where Śākyamuni says, “The attribute that has no attribute is called Real Attribute. (無相之相名爲實相)”¹¹ The appearance of any specific “attribute” or “characteristic” (*xiang* 相) is here conceived as a provisional aspect of all dharmas, based on sentient beings’ passion and deluded mind that misconceives the Real Attribute (which is inconceivable) because of its habit of conceptual disambiguation. In order to counter this perspectival hindrance, the Buddha teaches “no attribute (*wuxiang* 無相)” as a remedial measure. This is why in the same text Zhanran says, “The Buddha taught two kinds of truths: one is conventional truth and the other is the ultimate truth. Although there are attributes in the conventional truth, there are no attributes in the ultimate truths. (佛法二種世諦第一義諦。世諦有相。第一義諦無相。)”¹² As we saw earlier, the Real Attribute expresses Tiantai’s “Middle” in the tradition’s Three Truths doctrine of Emptiness, Provisional, and Center. The significant philosophical contribution of the tradition is in its assertion of this middle that shows the mutual entailment of Emptiness and Provisional Truths. Let us take a moment to consider this in terms of the omnipresence of illusoriness of dharmas, that is, the omnipresence of the misconception of dharmas as being in any way determinate fixed entities. For instance, if dharmas are considered illusory on the grounds that they dependently

them are] the ultimate purity. What is good and evil, who there is and there is not, who liberates and does not, all dharmas are like this. This is the cause and effect of Buddha-dharma.

能觀所觀悉是緣生。緣生即空。並是二乘因果法也。若觀此空有墮落二邊沈空滯有。而起大慈悲入假化物。實無身假作身。實無空假說空。而化導之。即菩薩因果法也。觀此法能度所度。皆是中道實相之法。畢竟清淨。誰善誰惡。誰有誰無。誰度誰不度。一切法悉如是。是佛因果法也。(T46.052b26-052c04.)”

¹¹ 大般涅槃經 *Dapanniapanjing*. T12.603b20-603c03.

¹² Zhanran. 止觀輔行傳弘決 *zhiguanfuxingzhuanhongjue*. T46.336c12-336c13.

co-arise instead of independently arising on their own, and thus are determined to be definitely non-real, this non-realness becomes meaningful only in contrastive reference to some conception of “real” that is conceptualized in opposition to non-real. If this interdependent nature of illusoriness (non-realness) of dharmas is pushed to the ultimate, real becomes identical to illusion because by virtue of the universal inescapability of the all-pervasive illusoriness there is nothing outside illusion. If *everything* is illusion, and *necessarily* illusion, that is, if there is nothing other than illusion, even as a possibility, even as a coherent alternative, there will be no contrast between what is illusory and real, no mutually exclusive relation between them. This absolutized true universality of the illusoriness of all possible quiddities (dharmas) then transforms the meaning of the initially conceived abstract idea of “illusion,” which then no longer means “illusion” in a provisional sense of being an opposite of “real.” Then together with the initially conceived abstract notion of “illusion,” what is the abstract idea of “real” also necessarily collapses. What is left now is the absolutized sense of illusion, which is the only locus where real is found, which can even be redescribed as simply all that “real” can mean.¹³

The Real Attribute of both illusoriness and realness is “Real” in a sense that it reveals their reality of illimitable and absolute omnipresence throughout the entire dharma-realm. When illusion is *everywhere*, it does not allow anything to be outside illusion. One may first purposefully seek a way out of illusion with an expectation to find what is non-illusion, a pure liberative experience that evades an influence of illusion. However, in the Tiantai universe, what

¹³ However, this “locus” does not mean a phenomenal positionality. Being omnipresent, illusoriness—and thus realness—cannot be located in any particular position. Locating means to limit the positionality of what is located. But in Tiantai all dharmas are illimitable because the nature of all dharmas is the “illimitable openness to otherness,” “ambiguity,” or in the terminology of the present chapter, “Towardic Fromicity.” Because of this, Real takes no position and cannot be pointed by any linguistic discourse. This is how Real qua all dharmas expresses itself in omnipositional ways. In this sense, Zhiyi says (as we saw in Chapter 2), “Real Attribute cannot be pointed because it is not located. The attribute of words and speech is tranquil because it is not the course of language. (實相非方所故不可示。非言語道故辭相寂滅。)”

this purposive practice leads to is an impossibility of the discovery of non-illusion because of the inescapability of illusion (and equally any other dharmas) that is all-pervasive. When one comprehends the inescapable omnipresence of illusion throughout the entire dharma-realm, that is, what a provisionally conceived idea of “illusion” truly entails, his or her desire and expectation to find what is outside the illusion ceases because he or she is now aware of the illusoriness of what they conceived as real entities (including Buddhahood, Nirvāṇa, Liberation, Enlightenment and so on). This means that there can be no criterion to determine what is illusory about any putative entity as contrasted with what is real about it, including its extent, its range, where it divides from other entities, its relation of oneness or difference to other entities and so on.

Any of these ways of appearing is true and false in exactly the same sense. In this sense, no determinate dharmas can be separated from the entire dharma-realm. What each of them in this way “inherently entails,” the entire dharma-realm, cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, living beings pursue their narrowly conceived coherence of desire and passion, going against the nature of this inherent entailment to only result in perpetuating their experience of suffering. (As we will see in Chapter 5, recognizing this ironic cycle of saṃsāra, out of compassion, Buddhas and bodhisattvas respond to these moments of saṃsāra for the sake of liberation of suffering living beings.) With this change of desire brought out as a result of clearly seeing the inescapability of illusion, he or she understands that there is no liberation except for fully accepting the all-pervasive presence of illusion. Hence, in this picture, liberation is found within illusion, but since this illusion is an absolutized omnipresent Illusion, the meaning of liberation is also absolutized without positing its old provisional contrast to illusion.

With this in mind, let us return to Zhiyi’s passage about Perfect and Sudden contemplation whose crucial insight is his notion of the unusual relation of moments: “Although we speak of

what is prior and posterior, they are neither two nor separate from each other. (雖言初後無二無別。)” As discussed in earlier chapters of the present dissertation, in typical Tiantai fashion, in this passage the emptiness of all dharmas is considered to show their Real Attribute, their Middle-way Buddha-nature. Here Zhiyi shows that the mind’s function of “focusing attention on the dharma-realm (繫緣法界)” to “realize the oneness of mind and dharma-realm as a single instant of mentation (一念法界)” is essential for the Tiantai practice of cessation and contemplation. According to Zhanran’s commentary to this passage, oneness of “tranquility” and “showing” means the identity between “cessation” and “contemplation,” “object” and “subject,” the Real Attribute of each of which is the entire dharma-realm. In this passage, the result of the absolutization of all dharmas through meditation practice is to reveal the alternate tendencies of *different versions* of the entire dharma-realm themselves that “mutually pour into (*xiangzhu* 相注)” all dharmas (each of which is equally the entire dharma-realm). Let us investigate the details of this peculiar usage of “mutual pouring.” According to Zhiyi, as reported in a few places of Tiantai texts, he said, “When the real-mind is tied to the real-object, real-relations will arise one after another. These real mind and object alternately pour into each other and enter the real-*Li* on their own. (實心繫實境實緣次第生。實實迭相注自然入實理)”¹⁴ Zhanran comments on this passage:

I interpret this and say that if mind is tied to an object [of contemplation], this object is necessarily tied to the mind. When these mind and object are mutually tied, it is called real-relation. From the next moment of mind onward, moment after moment of mind is seen to follow continuously. Each of these momentary minds is mutually tied and alternately pours into each other. This is precisely the mind pouring into an object, the

¹⁴ *Guanyinyishuji* 觀音義疏記 says, “如大師示衆偈云實心繫實境實緣次第生實實迭相注自然入實理” (T34.0957c07-0957c08).” *Zhiguanyili* 止觀義例 says, “師嘗教誠言。實心繫實境實緣次第生。實實迭相注自然入實理 (T46.0453a04-0453a05).” *Tiantaizhizhedashichanmenkoujue* 天台智者大師禪門口訣 says, “師教誠常言實心繫實境。實緣次第生實。實迭相注自然入實理。(T46.0581c25-0581cc27).”

object [-subject] pouring into another object [that then reveals itself to be an aspect of the mind], and the object [-subject] pours into the mind. Minds, objects, and thoughts mutually pour into each other as if there are no space between sequential instances of each moment one after another.

釋曰。心若繫境。境必繫心。心境相繫名為實緣。復由後心心心相續。心心相繫名迭相注。即是心注於境境注於境。境注於心。心心境境念念相注如是次第刹那無間。¹⁵

Similarly, Zhanran says in *Fahuaxuanyishiqian*:

Refining an instance of moment [in contemplation practice] already becomes an aspect of the contemplation, meaning precisely that this contemplation goes on to contemplate a postcedent mind. Then the postcedent mind [that was initially an object of contemplation] becomes an aspect of the contemplation, making the object [of contemplation] a subject again. They will mutually continue like this one after another. This is called the one moment of mind instructing the other moments of mind.

研一刹那既成觀已。即以此觀復觀後心。後心成觀所復成能。後後相續名教餘心。¹⁶

Everything is inconceivable qua Real Attribute. The inconceivability of the object of contemplation, whatever it may be, makes it an absolute object that Zhiyi calls the “real-object (*shijing* 實境).” What is happening here is an alternate illumination of the subject and object (e.g., pre-joy subjective mind of Śāriputra and its inconceivable object of Buddhahood). The way the subject’s mind is tied to this inconceivable object is first being tied to a provisionally set up conceivable object of non-buddhahood (e.g., the śrāvaka goal of being an arhat), but as soon as this mind-object tie is achieved, this conscious object shows its absence, which then alternately shows its presence *as* a response to the mind by way of transformatively revealing its real-relation (*shiyuan* 實緣)—i.e., a relation between subject and object that is understood to itself be yet another version of the Real Attribute, the entire Dharma-realm, as are both of its

¹⁵ T46.453a04-a09.

¹⁶ T33.829b19-b20.

Zhili takes this up in his discussion of Avalokiteśvara (觀音 *guanyin*), 實心繫實境。實緣次第生。實實迭相注自然入實理。言實緣者。刹那念也。次第而起。一一皆是實觀之緣。如是繫念唯慎生疑。(Guanyinyishuji 觀音義疏記. T34.957c07-c09.)

relata. Once this tie with the inconceivable object is achieved, the object is no longer an object; it rather is an aspect of the subject. But at this moment of contemplation, it is no longer known whether the initial mind was a subject or the latter that responds to the subject. In that moment, both are alternately subject and object at the same time, tying to the other and responding for each other.¹⁷ According to Zhanran, Zhiyi is talking about the procedure of absolutizing subjective mind and its object, hence their omnipresence in Tiantai meditation practice. He emphasizes the process of the mutual reduction of different moments into the real-relation (*shiyuan* 實緣) of each other. Hence, the above-mentioned mutual pouring into each other is seen from the viewpoint of this absolutization of all dharmas. But what exactly is “Real-relation?” According to Zhili, “Real-relation means one instance of thought that arises one after another. Each one of these thoughts is precisely the relation [of subject and object] of Real-contemplation. (言實緣者。剎那念也。次第而起。一一皆是實觀之緣。)¹⁸ Here we can find typical Tiantai contemplation of the “deluded mind (*wangxin* 妄心)” rather than the “pure mind (*zhenxin* 真心).” The meditative procedure of the mutual pouring of the subject and object does not lead to a pure mind that is separate from the deluded mind, which is a starting point of meditation practice. Rather, what this procedure reveals is that as soon as the deluded mind, nature of desire, and delusion in one’s ordinary mind is thoroughly comprehended, it then shows that the reality (*shi* 實) of this deluded mind entails all three thousand dharmas and is precisely an enlightened mind.

In Zhanran’s commentary, what is noteworthy is his notion of “no space between sequential instances of each moment one another,”¹⁹ which similarly appeared in our discussion

¹⁷ As we saw in the first chapter of the present dissertation, this mutual subsumption is what underlies the “stimulus and response (*ganying* 感應)” relation between the minds of Buddhas and sentient beings.

¹⁸ T34.0957c08-c09.

¹⁹ This normally means “without ceasing for a moment.”

of Mahāyāna-śrāvaka. In Zhanran's this passage, however, an emphasis of non-sequentiality is put on the difference of *moments* in time. What implications does this discussion have when we consider the non-sequentiality of moments from the viewpoint of the absolutization of subject-object relationship, their Real Attribute?²⁰ When we think of "moments" in Tiantai context, we should be aware that there are no moments that exist apart from our mind. This means that any moment is always an *experience of moments*. This is why in both of Zhanran's passages he says "postcedent minds (*houxin* 後心)." In light of this, we can say that Three Thousand dharmas are inherent to a single moment of experience, revealing that each moment is all-pervasive and absolute, according to the same logic of absolutization that we saw earlier. This means the difference of each moment of experience is how Real Attribute is experienced differently in each moment, which is through and through a place where all moments converge. Each moment is constituted by the same content but with a different focus. In this sense, there is no sequential space between moments, no priority and posteriority between them.

The forward movement of mind, tying it to an object of contemplation, leads to making what is initially an object of contemplation an aspect of the contemplating subject. What happens in these instances is the retrospective positing of its own unconscious past by this object qua mind. (The "object" pours back into its own past, making itself a subject qua object, from the viewpoint of having already known that the initial contrast between the subject-object was due to the limitation of the subjective mind.) This demonstrates how the doubleness of "from" and "toward" is expressed in the idea of mutual pouring of mind and its object. This joining of the

²⁰ This inquiry is important not only to Tiantai thought but for Buddhist thought in general. Being no space between moments touches on the fundamental condition of suffering that arises because of an experience of gap in time. In other words, suffering arises when we desire what we want and depreciate what we already have. This can manifest either as a gap between the given present and ungiven(-ly experienced or conceived) future or past. Thus, if Zhanran's non-sequential relation of moments is established, the significance of that would be in undermining the condition of possibility for the arising of suffering.

“from” and “toward” aspects has a therapeutic value because what one initially desires turns out to be omnipresent, allowing the subject to discover the desired object (expressed *as* not-that-object) already in the given present, undermining the passion of its initial desire (that thereby no longer needs to seek outside the given present). Thus, there will be no gap between what one wants and already has, between one moment and another. This is a moment of her realization of the liberative value of the mind’s function of limiting what is otherwise Real Attribute of the object of perception. An object of desire turns out to be something much more greater than what she initially expected, revealing the absolute Middle-way nature of that object and all dharmas. This alters the nature of her desire, her purpose. Given that Real Attribute of all dharmas has no attribute or no positionality, and is omnipresent, her object of desire is equally inescapably and hence *necessarily* omniavailable. This is revealed when she “opens up” to delimitize her perspectives about time, whose omnipresence is comprehended.

3.3. Toward and from Omnipresent Buddha-Nature in the Intersubsumptive Relation between Ignorance and Dharma-Nature

The present section investigates the mutual entailment of “ignorance (*wuming* 無明)” and “dharma-nature (*faxing* 法性)” and discusses the distinct meaning of “causation” according to Tiantai. In the introductory chapter, we already evaluated academic studies regarding the topic undertaken by recent scholars of the field such as Brook Ziporyn and Ng Yu-Kwan. Anchored in those discussions, in the present chapter, I argue that according to Tiantai Three Truths, the nature that ignorance and dharma-nature share is “recognition of suffering” that thereby indicates that *samsāra*, the unendable cycles of suffering, is qualified as a cause of the equally unfinishable

process of Buddhahood. With a hope to make this argument more intelligible, the present section will take up Tiantai analogies that show the identical relation between ice and water, and clarity and muddiness respectively. Based on this, the final section (3.4) will further discuss another implication of the “recognition of suffering” from the viewpoint of the Tiantai doctrine of Ten Suchnesses (*shirushi* 十如是) that we already started to see toward the end of second chapter.

In *Mohezhi*guan, Zhiyi claims that the salvific transformation of ignorance (*wuming* 無明) into illumination (*ming* 明) simply resembles the melting of ice into water. He says, “Ignorance precisely turns into illumination. This resembles the melting of frozen water (ice) into water. There are no further things to supplement from afar nor any additional things to join [with water]. Just a single moment of thought thoroughly entails all things. [無明轉即變為明。如融水成水。更非遠物不餘處來。但一念心普皆具足].”²¹ Zhiyi says that ignorance’s transformation into dharma-nature resembles to the ice that melts into water. How is this the case, and what does it imply? Ice is how water appears *in the mode of* ice, and water is how ice appears *as* water. One is the version of the other. One is nowhere outside the other. The point of the metaphor is to show the mutual entailment and omnipresence of both ignorance and dharma-nature. Tiantai contemplation reveals that dharma-nature is brought out not by eliminating ignorance but rather by thoroughly comprehending the nature of ignorance. Similarly, ice becomes water when it encounters with a proper condition of “warmth” but an *elimination* of ice would never make it water (because if ice is eliminated, there would be neither ice nor water). This is why Zhiyi can claim, “If you cut off ignorance, no dharmas of goodness will arise anywhere. All such things as the afflictive labors coming from obstructive dust [based on ignorance] are seeds of Tathāgata.

²¹ T46.009b01-b02.

All forms of liberation and non-ignorance arise without cutting off stupidity or attachment. (若斷無明一切善法則無生處。塵勞之儔是如來種。不斷癡愛起諸明脫。)²² If ignorance, the cause of practice, is a seed of enlightenment, what needs to be done to liberate the cause (e.g., a living being with delusions) is not an elimination of the seed but rather *properly nurturing* the seed to let it blossom and produce a fruit (*guo* 果) of Buddhahood. The meaning of this “proper nurturing” correlates with our present concern of “tending (toward the fruit).” The question we must ask is *why* this act of nurturing occurs out of *necessity*.²³

Here the ice/water metaphor has a further useful implication. From our discussion in the second chapter, we know this would mean that ice’s tending toward water is more than its physical transformation. The point of this transformation is perspectival and hence is to show that the relation between ice and water refers to the “alternate conception of change” (that we saw in the analogy of duck-rabbit in the discussion of Mahāyāna-śrāvaka). As seeing of the rabbit is unseeing of the duck and its vice versa, in the ice-water metaphor this means that seeing of ice is not to see water (the other aspect of the ice), and thereby determines its icy aspect by unseeing (but not necessarily *unknowing*) water. The same thing applies to an act of seeing water. Once we know this alternate conception of ice and water (seeing ice and unseeing water alternately), we know that awareness of ice *necessarily* entails the non-awareness of water, and its vice versa. In this case, “tending” means a perspectival tending that alternately tends from ice toward water and equally from water toward ice. In this sense, we can say that the necessity of tending is from the beginning inherent to an ontological nature of emptiness (that shows the absence of any essential nature that self-causes or self-supports its own being) of ice and water.

²² T46.047c06-c07.

²³ Another important question is to ask: Why is “ignorance” rather than a “bodhisattva vow” or “awareness” a seed of Tathāgata? This needs to be approached by first determining the meaning and implications of “ignorance” in Tiantai context. We will return to this in the final section of the present chapter.

Being one *necessarily* means being the other, and vice versa. However, how this ontologically inherent structural necessity relates to the *necessity of tending* between ice and water is yet to be revealed.

Once this mutual tending thoroughly penetrates both icy and watery aspects, one comprehends that *true* ice is “ice-water,” and *true* water is “water-ice.” When this is achieved, as ice ends up *necessarily* entailing water as its aspect, we know that ice(-water) is water(-ice), and water(-ice) is ice(-water). In the same way, an idea suggested in this metaphor is that ignorance(-dharma-nature) *is* dharma-nature(-ignorance).²⁴ The crucial point of this metaphor is

²⁴ At the end of this absolutization process (that will be a beginning of the unendable process), an object of contemplation reveals itself to be inconceivable. This is a result of Tiantai application of emptiness into meditation. It is not that a thing called inconceivable object emerges, but rather the reality of all dharmas is inconceivable. See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for detail.

Moreover, the metaphor of ice and water that shows the intersubsumptive identity between delusion and enlightenment (e.g., ignorance and non-ignorance) appears in different places throughout Tiantai texts. A prominent passage that bolsters my point here appears, for instance, in Zhiyi’s 金光明經玄義 *Jingguangmingjingxuanyi* (*The Profound Meaning of the Sūtra of the Golden Light*) where he says: “*The Nirvana Sutra* says, ‘Ignorance and attachment are two, and what is between them is called the Buddha-Nature.’ What is between them is the Path of Suffering. It is here named Buddha-Nature, naming the body of birth-and-death as precisely the Dharma-Body, it is just as if one were to refer to ice as water. The Path of Delusion means Ignorance, attachment and appropriation. When we name this as itself Prajna-Wisdom, it is like referring to firewood as fire. The Path of Karma means volitions and states of being, including those of the bottommost purgatories. We say all of these are the attributes of Liberation, just as one might refer to fetters as release. We must understand that in themselves these Three Paths are Permanent, Blissful, Selfhood and Purity, and thus they are none other than the Three Virtues. Since gold, light and clarity stand as metaphors for the Three Virtues, they serve equally well as metaphors for the Three Paths. (大經云。無明與愛是二中間名為佛性。中間即是苦道。名為佛性者。名生死身為法身。如指冰為水爾。煩惱道者。謂無明愛取名此為般若者。如指薪為火爾。業道者。謂行有乃至五無間。皆解脫相者。如指縛為脫爾。當知三道體之即真常樂我淨。與三德無二無別。既以金光明譬三德。還以金光明譬三道也。)” (Translated by Brook Ziporyn.) This passage contains a set of three metaphors that shows the identity between 1) ice and water; 2) firewood and fire; and 3) fetters and release. At a first glance, these analogies seem to become progressively challenging as a conceptually acceptable statement. In particular, how can we accept the identical relation between “fetters” and “release from them”? Ziporyn interprets (as discussed in his course during Spring 2022 titled “Comparative Trinitarianisms”) these three as a correlate of Tiantai concept of “three forms of Provisional Positioning (三假 *sanjia*),” according to which the first identity shows the synchronic causal conditions, the second is about successive relation, and the third takes up the dependent relation between conceptual opposites. The point of these metaphors is to show how all three forms of Provisional Positioning (that are established by making *distinctions*) end up being emptiness (qua ontological ambiguity), hence being equivalent to one another according to the Three Truths. This is a process of transformation of the *obstructed* paths of saṃsāra into the *unobstructed* paths of liberation. But the question is how this transformation occurs according to the metaphors? Merely seeing distinctions in each pair of opposites of the metaphors means that the Real Attribute of each of the conceived items is “obstructed” in a sense of them being seen as something that has a determinate state of existence (e.g., “This is ice, but not water”). This resembles to the three paths (of saṃsāra) being obstructed by the mind’s habit of making distinctions (“conceptual proliferation,” as we will see soon). The distinctions are made based on the mind’s

in showing the necessity of the tending centered on “recognition of suffering” that is omnipresently shared in all activities of both ignorance and dharma-nature. As we will see in a moment, ignorance creates all dharmas in its (futile) attempts to remove suffering and frustration. In this sense, all activities of ignorance are centered on the *recognition of suffering*. However, because of the ignorant confusion of the mind, this attempt does not bring out a desired effect (end of suffering). Because of this, dharma-nature responds to it as a witness of suffering. In this case, too, it is the recognition of suffering that is central to the activities of dharma-nature. Hence, “ignorance” and “dharma-nature” are alternate aspects of their relation to the presence of suffering. One is deluded and the other is enlightened, and yet their nature is—as we will see below—the oneness of compassion that functions to bring out the end of suffering. Buddha’s compassion is the *content* of all ignorance-driven activities of all sentient beings, all dharmas of Three Thousand, and salvific activity of dharma-nature (and, *of ignorance!*). The essence of this all-pervasive content is emptiness, that is, in Tiantai, ambiguity (ambiguous because of essencelessness of all dharmas), which continues to transform, reveal, and grow because of this unendable inconceivability of the emptiness of all dharmas (illimitable openness to infinity). In this picture, we see that omnidirectionality undergirded by the doubleness of “toward” and “from” is unendingly taking place expressed as ignorance or dharma-nature. But importantly what is

fundamental ignorance that blocks one’s perspectives that does not allow him to comprehend the distinction-free Real Attribute of all dharmas. This is how one’s experience is conditioned by ignorance that obstructs three paths of saṃsāra. (Three paths themselves are not obstructions. They are rather *obstructed* by the mind’s ignorance.) However, when this obstruction is cleared, all paths reveal their unobstructedness (通 *tong*), uncovering the omnipresence of the liberative nature *of these paths*. In other words, it is not by “clearing” in a sense of eliminating the three paths that the liberative nature is uncovered. Rather, with a correlation of the above-mentioned “three forms of Provisional Positioning” in view, we can say that it is by 1) opening up or “melting” of the obstructed paths into the unobstructed ones (synchronic causal condition), 2) limitlessly extending or developing the beginning and end of the obstructed paths toward an unendable continuity (successive relation); and 3) recognizing the omnipresence of the ineradicable nature of obstruction and unobstructedness in each path (dependent relation between conceptual opposites) that the three paths of saṃsāra are discovered to be another way of speaking about liberation. In this sense, as Zhiyi says, “all of these [three paths of saṃsāra] are the attributes of Liberation (皆解脫相者).”

universally shared in all moments of finite experience, in all movement of “toward” and “from,” is the omnipresent ineradicable *content* of care for the end of suffering. However, we must not misconceive this omnipresent care as a third quiddity that is separate from ignorance and dharma-nature. Rather, the omnipresent nature of compassionate care is what thoroughly penetrates all dharmas, all ten realms, all desires, and unconditionally permeates in all conditional experience. Let us trace the logical sequence of this claim by starting with looking at Ziporyn’s discussion of Zhanran’s passage on the non-dual gate of purity and impurity (染淨不二門). Zhanran says:

If you recognize that the Dharma-nature has since beginningless time been present only as ignorance, you can comprehend how the ignorance of this present moment is precisely nothing but Dharma-nature. Ignorance *creating* all dharmas everywhere, with the participation of the Dharma-nature, is called taint. The Dharma-nature *responding* to all conditions everywhere, with the participation of Ignorance, is called purity. The water may be muddy or clear, but *both the wave and the wetness* are in any case no different. Although the water’s clarity or muddiness is due to conditions, this formation of muddiness has always been going on [*zhuocheng benyou* 濁成本有]. Although the muddiness has always been there, it is in its entire substance clear, because the Li of the two types of wave is omnipresently interconnected [*tong* 通], and the entirety of this substance [*ti* 體] manifests as [each] function [*yong* 用]. Thus all the Three Thousand, in all their various causes and effects, are called simply “dependent co-arising is one. But within this one Li there is [forever] a divisions, six realms [purgatories, animals, hungry ghosts, Asuras, humans, and gods] are impure and [Śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, buddhas] are pure. But looked in terms of the omnipresence [of each] [*tong* 通], each one of the ten is both pure and impure [or, each is interconnected to both the pure and the impure]. Thus we know that the tainted substance of each moment is pure... How could the person whose six sense organs are purified regard the ten realms as definitively and fixedly [*ding* 定] ten!?”

若識無始。即法性為無明。故可了今無明為法性。法性之與無明。遍造諸法名之為染無明之與法性。遍應眾緣號之為淨。濁水清水波濕無殊。清濁雖即由緣而濁成本有。濁雖本有而全體是清。以二波理通舉體是用故三千因果俱名緣起。迷悟緣起不離剎那。剎那性常緣起理一。一理之內而分淨穢。別則六穢四淨。通則十通淨穢。故知剎那染體悉淨。三千未顯驗體仍迷。故相似位成六根遍照。照分十界各具灼然。豈六根淨人謂十定十。²⁵

²⁵ Translated by Brook Ziporyn. This passage is quoted p.242 of his *Beyond Oneness and Difference: Li 理 and Coherence in Chinese Buddhist Thought and Its Antecedents*. 2013. New York: State University of New York Press.

This passage shows the mutually entailing relation between Dharma-nature (*faxing* 法性) and Ignorance (*wuming* 無明). As Ziporyn says, in this sense, “[E]ach one can appear *as* the other. [...] Each dharma always involves both Ignorance and the Dharma-nature. Purity and taint refer to the *relation between them* in any given instance. When Ignorance is central, it derives ‘assistance’ (*yu* 與) from its peripheral other form, Dharma-nature, to *create* all dharmas.”²⁶

The metaphor of the water’s muddiness, clarity, and waviness correlate to impurity/ignorance, purity/Dharma-nature and events/Three Thousand causes and effects. Alternation of centrality produces either deluded “creation of all dharmas” or liberative “responses to conditions.” But the creation and responses are both how the formation of muddiness is expressed in every single moment of ignorance and dharma-nature.²⁷ Ignorance and dharma-nature are co-primordial, and

²⁶ Ibid. 242-243.

²⁷ As Ziporyn points out, appearing in, for instance, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and the *Awakening of Faith*, this metaphor is meant to show that “the water represents the pure essence of mind, and the waves the phenomenal realm that disturbs its tranquility, stirring it into determinate discriminating thoughts. (Ziporyn 2013, pp.235-6)” In Tiantai context, treatment of this metaphor required the ingenuity of Zhanran and Zhili who adapted the Huayan conception of this twofold analysis of “water and waves” into Tiantai’s threefold version of the metaphor—“water, waves, and muddiness,” according to the Three Truths. How is it supposed to work? The key conceptual move is Zhili’s explanation that the unibility of “wetness” is to show the less obvious omnipresence of “the ‘waviness’ of the two types of clear and muddy water (清濁二波),” which is unconditionally “just one nature of motion per se (只一動性)” (Ibid, 245). Then Zhili argues, “It is because in its entirety everything is the motion of wetness that Zhanran says the entirety of substance manifests as [each] function [(e.g., as clear or muddy water)]. (而皆全濕為動，故云舉體是用。)” The ubiquity of motion qua wetness is equivalent to the all-pervasiveness of “dependent coarising (緣起 *yuanqi*)” in the entire dharma-realm. This is how the metaphor works for Tiantai, and its implications are supremely important to the present chapter’s argument for the omnipresence of “Towardic Fromicity” (another way of saying the “nature of motion 動性”) in our examples of the “mutual pouring” of subject and object, and intersubsumption of “ignorance” and “dharma-nature.” With this in mind, let us consider the meaning of Zhanran’s notion: the formation of muddiness that is present both in ignorance and dharma-nature.

It seems counterintuitive at a glance to say that the *muddiness is not only in muddy waves but also in clear waves*. How can we make it intelligible to us and see that *muddiness is present in clear waves, which are supposedly muddinessless*? To answer this, we must recall the reason of speaking about ignorance and dharma-nature in a broader context of Tiantai thought. In Tiantai, speaking about “dharma-nature” is a remedial measure to cure the subjective delusions of “ignorance.” In other words, a distinction between them is created as a temporary therapeutic device. Hence, the employment of dharma-nature and its contrast to ignorance are the “provisional posit (假 *jia*).” (See a discussion of “*Li* and event” in the second dyad of the six levels of the root and the traces that we saw in Chapter 2. There, Zhiyi discusses a therapeutic function of speaking about the unspeakable.) This means that, in reality, there is neither “ignorance” nor “dharma-nature” that intrinsically possesses a determinate state of existence. They are rather “empty,” ontologically ambiguous by nature, and hence are illimitably extensive to otherness. Thus,

ignorance is thus present from the beginningless past. Hence, dharmas have been created by deluded minds for eternity. But why do minds end up “creating” rather than “destroying” or better “responses to” all dharmas?

To create dharmas means a proliferation of conceptualization that habituates the mind into this mental act. Buddhists see that this proliferation increases one’s attachment to dharmas created by a deluded minds’ misconception and hence tends to be a cause of suffering. Conceptualization²⁸ means the mind’s act of disambiguating data that comes into one’s mind, as a way to avoid being overwhelmed by it. Strikingly, this means that the mind’s confused act of creating dharmas is an expression of its suffering and the simultaneously presence of compassion toward the ignorant mind itself. Hence, the ignorance mind creates dharmas through conceptual proliferation for the end of suffering of its own. This act derives from the mind’s delusion, and it

making a hard-and-fast distinction between “ignorance” and “dharma-nature” is only possible as their provisional identity since what is inherent to this identity is an impossibility to sustain such distinction. In other words, their contrast obstructs their true meanings and thereby establishes a shared condition for their provisional states of existence, while both of them are, in fact, distinctionless, unobstructed, omnipresent, and absolute in Real Attribute. (The identity between them will be discussed in detail in Section 4.4 of the present chapter.) Hence, in reality, ignorance is *in* dharma-nature, and its vice versa. With this in view, similarly, we can say that the speaking of “taint” (muddiness) and “purity” (clarity) is also a provisional posit based on a temporal obstruction of their meanings, and is a therapeutic method of speaking about the unspeakable. What there is in reality is the unobstructed meaning of “taint” and “purity” that mutually entail each other. The provisional contrastive relation between them is necessarily grounded in their being relative to each other. This means that their contrast, the contrasted relata (taint and purity), is always inherent to both taint and purity. The implication of this is enormous because it shows that every time “taint” is pointed at, what is pointed at is always a relative presence of “taint” that is constituted by a contrast to what is not taint, that is, “purity.” Hence, “taint” always necessarily points at both taint and its necessary condition, that is, the presence of “purity” that appears in a form of absence or appears as constitutive lack. In this sense, “taint” and “purity” are coexistent and are alternate ways of speaking about the same content seen from two different angles. In the same way, “muddiness” and “clarity” constitute their provisional identity by being relative to each other. Because of their ontological structure that requires this relation, what is intrinsic to their provisional identity is a contrast between them and hence an entailment of muddiness and clarity. As our discussion shows, there is no “pure” muddiness or “pure” clarity that exists apart from one or the other. Even “perfectly clear” waves, out of necessity, must always entail muddiness *expressed as its absence*. Hence, absence is not a total annihilation of something but is another form of presence that performs a constitutive function. Therefore, the absence of muddiness in clear waves is how muddiness is *negatively* expressed and hence is entailed in clear waves. This is why the formation of muddiness is present both in muddy and clear water, taint and purity, and ignorance and dharma-nature. (However, importantly, as our discussion proves, this would equally mean the ubiquity of the “*formation*” of clarity both in *ignorance and dharma-nature!*)

²⁸ “Conceptualization” in this context means the ninth element of twelvefold chain of cause and effect, “grasping,” or “appropriation” (upādāna).

precisely means it derives out of compassion expressed to a limited and ignorant extent. (More on this in a moment.) Nevertheless, in Buddhism, this mind's effort is unskillful and creates suffering because the nature of this act is *to control* conditional encounters that cannot be controlled. Mind's ambition for the end of suffering then ironically ends up causing more suffering instead of achieving its purpose of ending it. In contrast, the forefronting of dharma-nature is a remedial measure to cure these mental habits. Dharma-nature shows the absence of attachment that is caused by the conceptual disambiguation of ignorance. Hence, as a therapeutic measure, it merely *responds* to the deluded minds that create dharmas. Therefore, ignorance and dharma-nature seem to be in opposition to one another. We saw earlier how both of them center on the recognition of suffering, but this might be mistakenly interpreted as what Tiantai thinkers call an "exclusive-mean" position that prioritizes the sameness between them rather than clarifying the shared nature between them manifested as each of the opposed items, such that each of the opposed items is also manifested in the shared nature. If the recognition of suffering is to reveal such nature, how can we arrive there? And what would that nature be? What does it mean that ignorance and dharma-nature are identical to each other as Tiantai thinkers claim?

Here what we saw in Ziporyn's presentation of the water/mud/wetness metaphor is extremely useful. The question is how we can correlate our concern about the identical relation between ignorance and dharma-nature with the relation of mud and water. In order to answer this, we first need to consider the following premise: The nature of desire to control conditional environments based on ignorance is desire to liberate one from attachments to conditional encounters, and hence from suffering. This means that, to an extent that this desire is care for the self and for its own liberation, the nature of this desire is compassion, or even more

counterintuitively, dharma-nature appearing in the mode of self-centeredly oriented desire. In this sense, both ignorance and dharma-nature are “compassion,” appearing differently (either reacting by creating dharmas or responding to suffering), and this equally ends up meaning they are different expressions of “desire.” Thus, what these creation and response share (which is supposedly equivalent of the “formation of muddiness” in the metaphor, mediated by interpenetration of muddy and clear waves due to the unobstructedness of the water) is the recognition of *suffering*. Ignorance creates dharmas which then leads to suffering; dharma-nature responds to this suffering. Whichever is central, all derivations and functions are here centered around suffering. However, as pointed out earlier, something more needs to be said about this idea, “recognition of suffering.”

Dharma-nature’s “response” does not come from outside ignorance. In fact, such a response comes from suffering—“All such things as the afflictive labors of obstructive dust are seeds of Tathāgata (塵勞之壽是如來種).” “All such things as” here translates to *chou* (壽), which also has the meaning of “accompanying”—in the shared sense that “all such things” with something are all the things that “go together with” it. This “response” is another way of “accompanying (壽)” ignorance’s struggle that attempts to find a way-out of frustration. Here we recall the Mahāyāna-śrāvaka’s “Mahāyānification of śrāvaka” logic. Like the omnipresence of formation of muddiness in both muddy and clear water, formation of voice-hearing practice in both śrāvaka and bodhisattva practice is what has been a content of their practice all along. Although there is a difference of the mode of practice between them because śrāvakas focus on hearing the voice while bodhisattvas focus on making others hear, *the nature and content of their practice*—activity of voice-hearing—remain universally shared in every single moment of both of their practice. This resembles muddiness, the shared nature of muddy and clear water, that is

ever present in both muddy and clear water. For the ultimate transformation of śrāvakas into Mahāyāna-śrāvakas, we know that no renunciation of the limited practice of voice-hearing for themselves would make them become Mahāyāna-śrāvakas. What we are seeing here is how śrāvaka's desire for his personal awakening transforms into the greater desire for awakening all sentient beings. In other words, this is about how desire that is initially directed toward one's self expands into all beings. What is happening in this transition is not an elimination of, but rather a *growth* of self-centered desire into a bodhisattva vow, into the greatest Desire that desires the end of suffering of all beings. This is where we can see a paradox of desire that, as Ziporyn shows, is already present in early Buddhism.²⁹ A significant insight is that the universally shared content of the experience of śrāvakas and Mahāyāna-śrāvakas is precisely desire for the end of suffering but expressed differently. This is similar to the universally shared content of muddiness in both muddy and clear water.

With this parallel move in mind, what can we say about *content* universally shared between ignorance and dharma-nature? Here we can speak about the omnipresence of formation of both suffering and the variety of responses to this suffering. Suffering is ignorance, saṃsāra. The responses to suffering arise for the end of suffering. The end of suffering is dharma-nature, nirvāṇa. Hence, creation of dharmas is a deluded method and yet its purpose is directed at realizing the end of suffering, toward nirvāṇa, Buddhahood. Thus, to this “ignored” extent, at its innermost core creation of dharmas is an expression of compassion; it is how Buddhahood

²⁹ In *Emptiness and Omnipresence*, Ziporyn demonstrates how the Tiantai idea of the reversible identity between desire and enlightenment is already embedded in the ontological structure of desire per se. Ziporyn traces the logical sequence of this conclusion of what he calls “omnidesire” in ‘Omnidesire as the Ending of Desire: Zarathustra, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Tiantai.’ *Journal of Nietzsche Studies Vol.46, No.1 (Spring 2015)*. Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press. 25-41. Among modern Japanese scholarship, Taiken Kimura also shows his awareness of this conceptual move towards omnidesire that he calls “無限の大欲 (limitless great desire)”, “絶対欲 (absolute desire)” as a mark of the overall Mahāyāna Buddhism. *原始仏教思想論. (A Study of Early Buddhist Thought.)* Tokyo: Daihorinkaku. 1968. 238.

manifests in deluded creation of all dharmas. This makes us conclude that ignorance is a version of compassion. The formative power of this compassion is desire—what is normally considered to be a cause of suffering, but this desire is, at its innermost level desire for the end of suffering, an expression of Buddhahood manifested unskillfully. Then, dharma-nature responding to suffering created by ignorance is not based on two separate things interacting with one another. This relation is like—again—the duck-rabbit. The presence of one alternately means the presence of the other in the mode of absence. The mind’s act of creating dharmas is how it is attempting to liberate it from suffering. The response of dharma-nature is precisely this activity of compassion that is omnipresent in all moments of delusion and enlightenment. All activities derive from conceptual disambiguation, and this disambiguation is a proof of suffering and of the simultaneous presence of compassion. But saying “simultaneous” presence may be misleading because it evokes a sense of separation between suffering and liberation. What this presence truly means is that suffering *is* liberation. They are identical. We saw that desire creates dharmas as a way of attempting to end the suffering. Desire’s purpose is the end of suffering, the end of the cause of its own suffering, hence, the end of desire itself. The point of this deduction is to say that desire desiring the end of desire means that *desire really desires desirelessness*. It is weird to think of the purpose of desire as desire for its own absence. However, this is an unexpected conclusion, an embedded internal contradiction of desire.

3.4 Ten Suchnesses and Twelfefold Chain of Cause and Effect in Tiantai

Thus far we have seen the mutual entailment of awareness and non-awareness, subject and object, and ignorance and dharma-nature according to Tiantai. In what follows, we will investigate what this procedure looks like when seen from the viewpoint of Tiantai’s distinct conception of

“causation,” which entails a set of unusual premises and interpretations. By doing so, in this final section of the present chapter, I attempt to return to our questions that we flagged in the beginning of this chapter: *Why* would all of saṃsāra qualify as a cause that “tends” in this way, such that it *necessarily* brings about the effect of Buddhahood? Is this necessity of tending controlled by some kind of invisible force that is external to saṃsāra qua saṃsāra? Or, in contrast, is this tending an inherent “nature” of saṃsāra? Is it why this tending occurs and it is *necessary*? We should not hasten to investigate the reason of the cause’s tending as necessary. Rather, we should carefully approach these questions by starting to inquire about the meaning of “causation” in Tiantai context. In other words, what do the notions of “cause” and “effect” entail according to Tiantai Three Truths? In what context does the tradition discuss their particular understanding of “causation”? A prominent discussion about a relation of causation, saṃsāra, and nirvāṇa appears in Zhiyi’s *Mohezhiḡuan* where he shows the correlation between the early Buddhist doctrine of Twelfefold Chain of Cause and Effect and the Tiantai idea of Ten Suchnesses, to which now we will turn.

In Buddhism, the causal explanation of the beginningless process of saṃsāra of living beings is found in a doctrine of “twelfefold chain of cause and effect.” According to this doctrine, sentient beings’ cycle of rebirth that the tradition regards as “suffering (dukkha)” is based on their fundamental confusion called “ignorance” that ceaselessly perpetuates the cycle of rebirth. This ignorance is the fundamental force of desire, out of which all activities of life derive.³⁰ When this impetus of desire makes contact with sense organs, it creates perception.

³⁰ In 原始仏教思想論, Taiken Kimura extensively studies the nature of “ignorance (*mumyō* 無明)” in the context of twelfefold chain of cause and effect. His comparative reference to Schopenhauer’s “will-to-life” is shows a conceptual affinity between the two. Kimura says, “The root-origin of delusions is nothing other than ignorance. If we comprehend this ignorance intellectually, it is the beginningless non-knowing. However, when we consider it in relation to a life-theory, we must see it as something that has affective meanings. If we borrow words from Schopenhauer, we should see it as something that has the meaning of the primordial blind will that strives to live.

Then this perceived experience causes a reaction that fuels attachment and grasping, strengthening the formative power of selfhood and enhancing one's rebirth. What this ignorance in the mind of ordinary living beings "ignores" is the change and interdependent relation of all dharmas. Out of such ignorance, the mind ignores these boundless aspects of dharmas that are inherent to them and thereby "cuts out" a piece, as it were, of the reality (dharma-realm) that is inseparable from the piece that is believed to be successfully singled out "with no string attached" (but in reality, the entire dharma-realm is inherently attached to the cut piece). The problem of ignorance is precisely the limitation of perspectives that ignores what the perceived object inherently entails. In Tiantai, liberation is a result of rather than an elimination of the twelfold chain of causation but a full comprehension or mastery of such causal processes. This means the tradition holds that the nature of ignorance is shared with buddhas and bodhisattvas and living beings in other realms. Now, we will look into the shared nature from the viewpoint of the inconceivable object of contemplation in Tiantai doctrine of Ten Suchnesses in meditational context. As we saw in the last section, the nature shared among minds of ignorance and liberation is desire to end suffering. This desire is expressed as suffering or liberation depending on conditions. But this shared *nature* is ultimately Buddha's compassion, which now refers to the same content of ignorance. In Tiantai technical terms, the Real Attribute of ignorance is "Threefold Causes qua Buddha-nature (*sanyinfoxing* 三因佛性)" that pervades the entire dharma-realm and entails all dharmas from three different angles. However, since the omnipresence of the threefold Buddha-nature boils down to the all-pervasiveness of the nature of

(煩惱の根源はいうまでもなく無明である。しかるにその無明なるものは、これを知的に解すれば、要するに無始の無知を指すのであるけれども、これを生命論に関連して考察する時は、むしろ情意的意義を有するものと見ねばならぬ。すなわちショーペンハウエルの言葉をかりていえば、生きんとする、しかも盲目なる元本的意思を意味すると見るべきが至当である。126)"

Three Truths,³¹ this is a way of speaking about Three Truths applied to the concept of Buddha-nature. With this set of premises in mind, let us look at how Zhiyi correlates Twelfefold Chain of Cause and Effect and Ten Suchnesses. In *Mohezhi guan*, Zhiyi says:

As for the twelve-fold causes and conditions vis-à-vis Ten Suchness in the *Lotus Sūtra*, “Such nature” corresponds to “ignorance.” The *Vimalakirti Sūtra* says, “If you become aware of the nature of ignorance, then it will immediately become the nature of non-ignorance.” “Such attribute” corresponds to “action.” “[Such] substance” corresponds to the [next] seven elements including “consciousness” and so on. “[Such] power” corresponds to “attachment” and “appropriation.” “[Such] potency” corresponds to “existence.” Moreover, “causes” is the habitual cause (習因) of “ignorance,” “attachment” and “appropriation.” “[Such] conditions” correspond to “action” and “existence.” “Fruition” corresponds to the learning result of “ignorance”’s generation of “wisdom.” “[Such] consequence” corresponds to five types of Nirvāṇa of “action” and “existence.” “[Such] beginning” corresponds to the three types of Buddha-nature qua the Three Paths [i.e., Suffering, Affliction and Karma]. “[Such] ending” corresponds to Nirvāṇa qua the Three Virtues [i.e., dharmakāya, prajñā, Liberation]. [...] Next, if the twelve-fold causes and conditions, Ten Suchness, and ten objects of contemplation are thought of as in a different [moment of] mind, they all belong to the conceivable realm of arising and perishing. If they are all seen to be in one moment of experience then they are the inconceivability of neither arising nor perishing. The *Huayan Sūtra* says, “the twelve-fold causes and conditions dwell in one moment of thought.” The *Great Collection (Daji) Sūtra* says, “the twelve-fold causes and conditions are completely present in one man’s one moment of thought.” These statements do not explain [its full meaning]. [It should be modified to say that] all Ten Realms, Ten Suchness, and the twelve-fold causes and conditions are completely present in any one person’s one moment of thought. This precisely is the inconceivable twelve-fold causes and conditions of Mahayana teachings.

十二緣對法華中十如者。如是性對無明。淨名云。若知無明性即是明性。如是相對行。體對識等七支。力對愛取。作對有。因—又是無明愛取之習因。緣對行有。果對無明生智慧習果。報對行有五種涅槃。本對三道三種佛性。末對三德涅槃。[...] 復次十二因緣十如十境。在異心中是生滅思議。在一念心中是不生不滅不可思議。華嚴云。十二因緣在一念心中。大集云。十二因緣一人一念悉皆具足。此猶存略。若一人一念悉皆具足十界十如十二因緣。乃可稱為摩訶衍不可思議十二因緣耳。³²

³¹ Zhanran says, “Speaking of dharma-nature, the nature of Three Truths is inherent to all dharmas. This is because this nature also means the divided portion of nature and is unchangeable. Hence, the nature of Three Truths is obscure and from the beginning to the end without changing. Moreover, the ‘dharma’ of dharma-nature in ten-realms is precisely Real Attribute. Substance of the Realm Attribute is completely inherent to Three Truths. (言法性者亦是諸法具三諦性。性亦性分不可改故。三諦性冥始終無變。亦可界法性法即是實相。實相之體三諦具足。)[T46.0293a26-a27].”

³² T46.127a10-a24.

Figure 3.1 Correlations between Twelfthfold Chain of Cause and Effect and Ten Suchnesses

According to *Mohezhiquan*

十如是 Ten Suchnesses	十二因緣 Twelfthfold Chain of Cause and Effect
如是相 such attribute	行 action
如是性 such nature	無明 ignorance
如是體 such substance	識 consciousness, 名色 faculty, 六入 six senses, 觸 contact, 受 perception, 生 birth, 老死 old age and death
如是力 such power	愛 attachment, 取 appropriation
如是作 such potency	有 existence
如是因 such cause	習因 habitual cause of 無明 ignorance, 愛 attachment, 取 appropriation [= 性 nature + 力 power]
如是緣 such condition	行 action, 有 existence [= 相 attribute + 作 potency]
如是果 such effect	習果 habitual effect: 無明生智慧 ignorance gives rise to wisdom
如是報 such consequence	行 action and 有 existence of 五種涅槃 five kinds of nirvana
如是 such	
本 beginning	三道 three paths of 三種佛性 three types of buddha-nature
末 ending	涅槃 nirvana of 三德 three virtues
究竟等 ultimate identity of all	

As shown in a chart that I created according to Zhiyi’s explanation (Figure 4.1), he says that “such cause” is “a habitual cause of ignorance, attachment and appropriation.” What is striking is that this deluded samsaric “cause” leads to the non-deluded “effect,” which is the “arising of enlightened wisdom,” leaving its “consequence” of nirvāṇa. At a glance, this causal relation between ignorance and wisdom seems to make no sense. How does Zhiyi explain their *causal* relation? He starts by indicating this in an explanation of the correlation between “such nature” and “ignorance” where he quotes the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* and says that once the nature of ignorance is known, it becomes the nature of non-ignorance. What kind of “nature” is Zhiyi referring to? He answers this in the end of his discussion by pointing that all ten items of ten suchnesses are identical because what is inherent to all of them is the threefold Buddha-nature

from the beginningless time and the three virtues of nirvāṇa toward the endless future. Thus, the nature of ignorance is here considered to be Threefold Buddha-nature, whose *nature* refers to the nature of Three Truths. This Buddha-nature beginninglessly and endlessly shows the identity among them. This then shows, as we have been discussing throughout this chapter, the absolutization of cause, effect, and all others, and also mutual entailment of Ten Suchnesses and Twelffold Chain of Cause and Effect inherent to a single moment of one's experience. Although transformation of ignorance into non-ignorance seems to be an initial catalyst for this liberative change, this change would not be brought about without the inherent nature of ignorance that beginninglessly and endlessly expresses itself in its ceaseless creation of all dharmas that is aimed at ending its own suffering. Ignorance and dharma-nature are co-responding and co-creating, in a salvific rhythm. Since both ignorance and dharma-nature are essential to this salvific activity, both of them are necessary. This necessity of ignorance is, as we saw in the introductory chapter, what Ng could not see and yet is evident according to our discussion. Among prominent motif of the necessity of ignorance for the salvific interaction between Buddhas and deluded living beings is a "parable of the burning house" that appears in the third chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

In a nutshell, the parable goes like this: All of a sudden, fire breaks out on all sides of a wealthy man's mansion where a few hundred people live including his own children. But his children are all absorbed in their toys and unaware of the impending fire, even though their father warns them all to get out of the house. Then the father realizes that what they are attracted to is their toys, that is, the cause of their attachment and the impending danger. Then he cries out to them: "[T]here are several kinds of things you like, such as goat carts, deer carts, and ox carts, waiting outside for you to play with. If you immediately leave this burning house, I will give all

of you whichever one you want.”³³ Then the children run out of the house immediately. What seems to be heroic is how effective the Buddha’s skillful means prove. However, there is one extraordinary aspect that is unique to the *Lotus Sūtra*: an essential role of attachment and desire that function to release them from their initial attachment to playthings and ultimately free them from the burning house. If children were without attachment, what would happen? In that case, the Buddha’s skillful means would not have work. If their desire were eliminated, there would be no escape from the burning house. *It was only because they had a strong attachment that the buddha’s (father’s) skillful means functioned.* This echoes with our earlier discussions about the impossibility of eliminating ice to bring out water, ignorance to reveal dharma-nature, and so on. By offering the best toy to children, *their attachment and desire are, instead of being removed, rather greatly expanded to their ultimacy.* The nature of this ignorant force is essential, and this nature is the will to end suffering, which is precisely Buddha’s compassion whose nature is willlessness. This point perfectly resonates with what Zhili says about the mutual assistance of ignorance and dharma-nature:

If the dharma-nature’s inherent influence is powerless and the tainted function of ignorance is dominant, then the dharma-nature lends power to ignorance in order to allow it to create all dharmas qua tainted. If ignorance’s clinging affect is powerless and the inherent influence of the dharma-nature is strong, then ignorance lends power to the dharma-nature to give rise to all pure responses. [...] Even if one insists that the late stages of praxis do not depend on ignorance, how could the early stages of practice do without [ignorance emotions like] preferences, likes, and dislikes?³⁴

Liberative experience in the minds of living beings is a mutually assisting collaboration between delusion and enlightenment, ignorance and dharma-nature. In Tiantai, this salvific interaction is called “elicitation and response (*ganying* 感應)” that is inherent to each moment of experience in the minds of all beings in all ten realms. In the next chapter, with all these premises and

³³ *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*. 95.

³⁴ Translated by Ziporyn. *Evil and/or/as the Good*. 221.

mind-bending Tiantai concepts that we discussed so far in view, let us investigate the relation between bodhisattvas and deluded living beings from the viewpoint of the philosophical category of “root and trace (*benji* 本迹),” which will be the last conceptual stepping-stone necessary for our ultimate discussion about the Hegelian cunning of reason and the Tiantai version of the “cunning of Buddhahood.”

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERSUBSUMPTION AND REVERSIBILITY OF “ROOT AND TRACE”

In previous chapters two through three, we investigated what Tiantai means by “causes necessarily tending toward results (*yinbiquguo* 因必趣果)” and the reason this tending is necessary based on the tradition’s distinct conception of “causation” based on the Three Truths. An essential philosophical insight of these discussions was the intersubsumptive relation between entities that form a pair of contrast such as cause and result, ignorance and dharma-nature. The present fourth chapter will further consider this intersubsumption applied to Tiantai’s philosophical category of “root and trace (*benji* 本迹)” and examine the implications of their identity. As we saw in the first chapter, rather than using a pair of “root and trace,” it may look more intuitive to say “root and branch” or “tracer and trace.”

However, as I introduced in the first chapter, its historical roots are found in pre-Buddhist China, showing that this seemingly counterintuitive usage of the pair of root and trace was, in fact, adopted from *Zhuangzi*, which contains the usage of “footprints and its leaver” and was further used in Buddhist philosophical literature in pre-Tiantai China, including the time of Seng Zhao. Then this category was further adopted in Tiantai to establish the tradition’s philosophical arguments. For instance, in *Fahuawenju*, Zhiyi introduces stories of previous lives of the great disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha and others among the audience of the *Lotus Sūtra*. According to his account, among the advanced practitioners during the time of Śākyamuni, some were thieves in one of their previous lives, and others habitually cursed at the gods in another. Zhiyi says that their external manifestations as those who committed a moral offence in their past lives were, in fact, how they covertly practiced bodhisattva ways. The reasoning behind this statement is based

on his claim about root and trace. In terms of the root, all of those whom the Buddha teaches and transforms are bodhisattvas, while they manifest a variety of seemingly deluded practice in the trace. Moreover, Tiantai uses this category to interpret the thought of the *Lotus Sūtra* by dividing it into the “trace-gate” and “root-gate” chapters and thereby argues that the intersubsumption of these two gates (teachings) is aimed at showing the mutually entailing relation between Buddhas and his disciples.

As such, Tiantai uses this category to elaborate their arguments for the Three Truths by thematizing other sets of various philosophical terms and reconsidering them in the context of root and trace. A prominent example of this appears in *Fahuaxuanyi*'s relatively short discussion about “six levels of root and trace (*liuzhong benji* 六重本迹)” that is located in the beginning of a discussion about “ten wondrousness of root-gate (*benmen shimiao* 本門十妙)” that immediately follows his long discussion of “ten wondrousness of trace-gate (*jimen shimiao* 迹門十妙)” that occupies approximately forty five percent of the entire *Fahuaxuanyi*. Zhanran's commentary to this text includes his famous discussion of “ten non-dual gates (*shibuermen* 十不二門)” between these two famous sections, suggesting that Zhiyi's six levels of root and trace are with a philosophical importance. In light of this, the present chapter focuses on the six levels of root and trace by focusing on the following passage from *Fahuaxuanyi*:

Regarding root, Coherence-root is precisely the ultimate way of one Real-Attribute, while the traces are everything else besides the Real-Attribute of all dharmas. It is this multitude of everything else that is called trace. Again, when Coherence is contrasted to event [*shi*], it is called the root, but once one is speaking of Coherence and event, *both* are to be called teachings, and thus traces. Again, both Coherence and events as teachings are to be called the root, and the practice of this teaching by those who receive it is to be called the trace; it is like a man who leaves footprints in going to his dwelling place: by following the footprints the dwelling place can be found. Again, practice is whereby one realizes substance, and substance is the root; when function arises in accord with this substance, this is the trace. Again, to truly [*shi* 實] attain

substance and function is the root, and to provisionally put forth substance and function (in teachings and practice) is the trace. What manifests today is the root; but what is said in the past and future is the trace...¹

本者理本即是實相。一究竟道。迹者除諸法實相。其餘種種皆名爲迹。又理之與事皆名爲本。說理說事皆名教迹也。又理事之教皆名爲本。稟教修行名爲迹。如人依處則有行跡。尋迹得處也。又行能證體體爲本。依體起用用爲迹。又實得體用名爲本。權施體用名爲迹。又今日所顯者爲本。先來已說者爲迹。²

At glance, the point of the whole exposition of the six levels is obscure. But as we will see below, this discussion is aimed at showing the pervasiveness of Coherence in all six levels of root and trace. As Zhanran says, each of the six categories first posits a conventional contrast in terms of root and trace and then demonstrates the omnipresence of Coherence (*li* 理) inherent to all of these conventional attributes.³ In other words, this passage demonstrates how the six different versions of the *provisionally* (*quan* 權) posited contrast between opposed entities exhibit the *real* (*shi* 實) relation of their intersubsumptive identity in each level and *across* different levels. As we will see below, a remarkable point of this is that after seeing six levels in order, Zhiyi goes through the six in a *reversed* order, claiming that comprehension of the sixth level “past and present (*yijin* 已今)” transforms the nature of the preceding five levels.

This suggests that the six levels of root and trace are divided into a set of the first five and the last. According to Zhanran, among these five levels, the first three (Coherence and events, Coherence and teaching, and teaching and practice) are “cause (*yin* 因)” and the next two (substance and function, and provisional and real) are “result (*guo* 果).” This explains the point of Zhiyi’s ultimate reversal. First, it displays the linear progression of practice where the completion of the first three leads to attaining the fruit of the next two levels of root and trace.

¹ This translation was adopted from Ziporyn’s *Beyond Oneness and Difference*. 217-218.

² T33.764b11-b18.

³ T33.920a23-a24. (先釋本迹相。次明本迹。相顯理融。三引文證。)

Then Zhiyi shows the progress-in-reverse from the fifth back to the first level, which demonstrates the backward movement *from the result to cause*, suggesting rather a *non-linear* conception of causality that argues for the intersubsumptive identity between cause and result and, by extension, the immanent process of Buddhahood appearing as what is seemingly non-Buddhahood. This leads to questioning the enigmatic feature of the sixth level of “past and present,” without which the reversibility of causal relation would not occur. The “past” refers to what Buddhas taught before expounding the *Lotus Sūtra*. The “present” refers to Śākyamuni’s revelation of the *Lotus Sūtra*’s pinnacle concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata. Therefore, what seems to be the essential point of Zhiyi’s discussion about six levels is how the intersubsumptive identity between cause and result is determined in terms of root and trace and how the nature of this relation is transformed according to the Tiantai interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*’s concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata. The present chapter’s emphasis on “causation” is advantageous for us because we already discussed Tiantai’s conception of causation in terms of the Mahāyāna-śrāvaka expressed in Śāriputra’s joy whose discussion started with investigating the meaning of Tiantai’s “causes necessarily tend toward results (因必趣果),” “great perfect cause (大圓因)” and “opening the provisional to reveal the real (開權顯實)” (Chapter 2) and reason samsara is qualified to be a “cause” of Buddhahood in the discussion about “ignorance as dharma-nature (無明即法性)” and how Tiantai considers the topic in a broader view of Ten Suchnesses and Twelfefold Chain of Cause and Effect (Chapter 3).

In light of these concerns, the present fourth chapter examines how Tiantai’s category of root and trace explains the relation between Conventionality and Emptiness through Zhiyi’s analogy of “footprints and its leaver” that appears in the third level of root and trace. This is followed by a discussion about “tathāgata’s body” in the fourth and fifth levels. The final part of

the chapter examines the sixth level, which shows how the *Lotus Sūtra*'s pinnacle concept of the "eternal life of the tathāgata" puts the relation between the preceding five levels in a new context, revealing the *reversibility* of the linear conception of their causal progression. This distinct character of "causation" is conceptually undergirded in Tiantai's argument for the interpenetration of the tathāgata's three-bodies, which is rooted in the tradition's interpretation of the eternal life of the tathāgata. Building up on the investigation and argument in this chapter, the subsequent fifth chapter further examines the Tiantai interpretation of the eternal life of the tathāgata in detail according to the tradition's commentary.

4.1 The Six Levels of Root and Trace

4.1-1 Conventionality and Emptiness according to Root and Trace

The first level of root and trace says, "Precisely in examining these conventional traces, the Real is revealed." When one searches the traces, the usual assumption would be that this is meant to lead her to something else—the true root. This is an ordinary way of pursuing a purposive action, in which means is merely a tool that serves to achieve ends. However, in Tiantai, purposive practice is posited as a provisional truth to reveal that all practice is itself ultimately an enlightened action whose character is non-purposive. As we saw in the second chapter, according to the Tiantai interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the distinction between śrāvakahood and Buddhahood is posited only provisionally on the basis of claiming, in Ziporyn's words, "the former is susceptible to being recontextualized to reveal that it has always already also been readable as the latter."⁴ A pursuit of the śrāvaka goal is first posited, and yet this pursuit will be ultimately revealed to be identical to Buddhahood. The purposive pursuit is provisionally posited

⁴ Ziporyn, *Evil and/or/as the Good*. 108. This is Tiantai's flagship concept of "inherent evil (性具)."

to reveal that what it leads to is the real goal of reaching purposelessness. However, this does not mean the arrival at the real eliminates the provisional. As we saw in the discussion about the Tiantai doctrine of opening the provisional to reveal the real and Ziporyn's useful analogy of setup/punch line, what this means is rather that the revelation of purposelessness transforms the meaning of all purposes that are now understood to be identical to purposelessness, the self-canceling nature inherent to any purposes. In the structure of "in examining the traces, the real is revealed," one is initially examining the trace without looking forward to the root (just as one is practicing the śrāvaka path without seeking Buddhahood). However, as she continues this practice, what is revealed is that the purpose initially set up was actually a partial truth about her real goal. In practicing means, she realizes that there is ultimately no purpose other than the thorough engagement in the means itself. Hence, it is precisely in examining the traces that the root is revealed. This point is important and will be discussed in the third level where an analogy is employed.

However, what the revealing of the root means is showing the inconceivability of trace that is initially conceived in contrast to the root. The root does not show any determinate content of the root in its entirety, and the same thing applies to the trace. It is ultimately the rootlessness of the root ("the non-dwelling root") that establishes all traces, whose tracelessness alternately becomes the root of all other traces. In other words, what initially seemed to be means and end turn out to be inconceivable, revealing that the initial contrast of the means and end was a provisional distinction. There is no root other than traces and yet no traces other than the root. In the same way, the distinction between teleological and non-teleological is also found as temporary because each element of the contrasted pair turns out to be an alternate way of referring to the same thing, since each turns out to be a temporary one-sided designation for the

entire relation including both terms. Hence, what is really revealed is this ever-unending inconceivability of and the constant mutual reference between the root and trace. And yet this contrast is just as all-pervasive as its cancelation, which is why we find the twofold “root/trace” structure at every level. It is important to note that even at the first level, where the root is “the Real-Attribute” itself, which we would assume to include all things without exception, there is still a distinction made between this and “everything else.” This would refer to all the misconceptions of the real-attribute in the minds of sentient beings, which will be precisely what is later revealed to be the skillful means that 1) lead to and 2) are revealed ultimately to be identical to the ultimate truth, the Real-Attribute, the non-dwelling root itself. Their inconceivability is this rootlessness of the root that is equated to the tracelessness of the trace that is alternately the root of all dharmas. I will return to this distinction between purposive and non-purposive acts when we look at the third level of explanation. What is initially conceived as trace will be found to be the root becomes in the next step both the root, positing another trace, shifting into another level of the root and trace relation. This is how six levels of the root and trace show the rotation of positing a certain set of root and trace that then becomes the root in the subsequent set of root and trace, and thus keeps going. The initial contrast in the preceding level is integrated in each subsequent step, and this subsequent integration of the preceding contrast continues, revealing no final determinate end point.

At the second level, Zhiyi says that both Coherence and events are the root. Although events were trace at the first level, they are integrated into the root in the second step. In the transition from the previous level, the initial contrast between Coherence and events at the first level is integrated into oneness of the root. As we saw, the reason for this integration lies in one’s awareness of the ultimate identity of the initially contrasted entities, based on the

inconceivability of both root and trace—namely, the rootlessness and tracelessness. This subsequent integration of the preceding contrast continues throughout all the six levels of explanation. In the second level, trace refers to “teaching,” the speaking *about* Coherence and event. Zhiyi then says that the two-truths, when they are experienced as root-time, are both unspeakable and thus *both* are called root. As we examined in the introductory chapter of this dissertation where we discussed Ziporyn’s critique of Swanson’s works, in the Two Truths theory, it is normally conventional truth that is considered to be *speakable* and only ultimate truth that is unspeakable. However, here at the second level, *both truths are equally unspeakable*, and they are one in their unspeakability at the root-time.⁵ As we discussed in the introductory chapter, the point of Conventional Truth’s becoming “inconceivable,” the characteristic normally attributed to only Ultimate Truth of Emptiness, is *not* to say that Conventionality is eliminated to yield the way to or replaced by Emptiness, but rather that a close investigation of Conventional Truth reveals that it is inconceivable just as Ultimate Truth is, revealing them to be two different aspects of the same content, their reversible relation of the Middle. This point is articulated in the next level where Zhiyi brings up the analogy of the footprints and its leaver. Since the

⁵ Then he quotes the *Lotus Sūtra* passage, which seems to be rendered from the original text quoted from the second chapter, “Skillful Means.” Zhiyi seems to be referring to one or both of the following passages in the sūtra: 1) “This Dharma is inexpressible;/ It exhausts the capacity of words./ Among all other living beings,/ None can comprehend it/ Except those in the assembly of bodhisattvas/ Firm in the strength of faith.” (*The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 59. 是法不可示/ 言辭相寂滅/ 諸餘眾生類/ 無有能得解/ 除諸菩薩眾/ 信力堅固者); 2) “As all things are attributes of tranquil extinguishment,/ Which cannot be explained with words,/ I employed my power of skillful means/ To teach the Dharma to the five ascetics. (諸法寂滅相/ 不可以言宣/ 以方便力故/ 為五比丘說). (Ibid. 80.)”

As for the first passage, Zhiyi comments, “Real Attribute cannot be pointed because it is not located. The attribute of words and speech is tranquil because it is not the course of language. (實相非方所故不可示。非言語道故言辭相寂滅 [T34.044c04-c05.]” Regarding the second passage, Zhiyi says, “This means *Li* of the middle-way, no intrinsic nature, and the Buddha-seed. Because this *Li* is neither countable nor speakable, the present sūtra [the *Lotus Sūtra*] employs skillful means to craft three-vehicles to speak about it. Moreover, this *Li* is neither produced nor extinguished. Nevertheless, employing the skillful means, [the sūtra] makes [a distinction between] production and extinction to talk about it. However, [not only the *Li* of the middle-way but also] because *Li* of one-sided truth [of emptiness] is also irreferable, [the sūtra] uses skillful means to craft Four Noble Truths in order to speak about it. Accordingly, the Buddha first taught the dharma-gate of impermanence. (是前說中道無性佛種之理。此理非數又不可說。今以方便作三乘說。又非生非滅。而以方便作生滅說。又偏真之理亦非示說。以方便故作四門說。初為五人說無常有門也 [T34.062a02-a06.]”

significance of this analogy cannot be overlooked, let us examine this and its implications in detail.

4.1-2 The Leaver and Followers of Footprints

After he says that receiving the teaching to practice is the trace, Zhiyi uses a metaphor, “It is like a man who leaves footprints in going to his dwelling place: by following the footprints the dwelling place can be found. (如人依處則有行跡。尋跡得處也。)” As I already mentioned, this is the only place in all six levels of explanation where the metaphorical device is employed. The sentence seems to be saying that if one goes to someone’s dwelling place, all she should do is follow the footprints that lead to such a place. It seems to be the same person who goes to, dwells in, and leaves her footprints that lead to the dwelling place. However, it is unclear whether this person—the leaver of footprints—is the same as the follower of these footprints. Does the leaver of footprints toward the dwelling place follow the footprints? Probably not. When the leaver of footprints goes to the dwelling place, she does not need any traces to follow because she knows her path toward the place.

Hence, it seems that this metaphor implies two different types of people who play the role: leavers of footprints and their followers. The literal translation of the latter half of this metaphor is, “Examining the traces, attaining the place.” This could mean either: 1) When one examines the traces, it leads to the attainment of the place; or 2) It is precisely when one examines the traces that the place is attained. It seems that something similar to what we saw in the discussion of the first level is going on in these two different ways of reading the metaphor. There we saw the intersubsumption of the provisional contrast between purposeless and purposes. We can say that the first reading is a teleological interpretation, which makes a hierarchical distinction

between means and end. In this case, one examines footprints for the purpose of arriving at the dwelling place. However, while followers of the footsteps know that they are following footprints, do they also know that they are led to someone's dwelling place? Or do they follow without certainty of where they are going? In other words, is the attainment of the dwelling place their purpose, or are they not aware of such purpose because their purpose is to merely keep following the footprints? Although the answers are not clear from this metaphor itself, the ambiguity of these answers implies the provisional positing of the diversity of purposes among those who engage with their purposive act. In the context of the *Lotus Sūtra*, among the Buddha's audience some sought to become an arhat, and others aspired to become a bodhisattva. The diversity of purpose was posited. But then in the end they all come to know that, under the guise of each having a different purpose, they were always already practicing to become a Buddha unbeknownst to them. Here, the difference of purposes converges into the oneness of all purposes, namely, Buddhahood, which itself is purposeless. Hence, the first reading refers to the diversity of purposes because the dwelling place to be desired is different depending on each person. There are three kinds of division operative here: the division between the various purposes as conceived by the various practitioners, the division between what is sought and the means used to attain it (ends/means distinction), and the real division between what is sought and what is actually attained.

In contrast, the second reading suggests that regardless their purpose, it is in the act of examining where the dwelling place is attained, and as we will see, this "dwelling place" is, in fact, something much greater than what one initially expected. In the second reading, the contrast between means and end that appeared in the first interpretation is absent. In this reading, examining the trace and attaining the place become *alternate ways of describing the same*

practice. The distinction and the ordinary correspondence between means and ends drops out. What is also interesting and significant in the second reading is that people fail to attain what they initially desire, but this very failure undermines the sharp distinction between what is sought and what is attained. They initially examine and follow footprints, but what it reveals is something they didn't expect: attainment of the dwelling place. Their initial desire for x turns out to be the attainment of y . Then, retrospectively, it will be known that in fact seeking x always already meant the attainment of y . However, y itself can never be desired because y is unknown. They thought they were seeking x , but now they know that what they thought of x was actually something different from x and that x is unattainable by no other ways than by way of y . Hence, they did not, in fact, know what x was, the true meaning of the purposive act of following footprints. In this sense, x and y are both "inconceivable." Precisely through the radicality of the distinction between what is sought and what is attained, leading to the inconceivability of both, the distinction is *also* overcome.

Are the attainment of y and the awareness of the inconceivability of both x and y the end of the whole story? In the context of the present metaphor, the attainment of y does not close off this contemplation procedure because it simultaneously unfolds a further act: the non-purposive act. The leaver of footprints is someone who already attained the y , the dwelling place. This refers to someone who already realized the intersubsumption of Coherence and events (first level), Coherence and teaching (second level), and the teaching and practice (third level). As we saw earlier, at the first level, someone realizes both difference and oneness of Coherence and events. With this awareness, at the second level, she *speaks about* her awareness whereby it is expressed. In the same way, at the third level, she *leaves* her footprints. Hence, the attainment of

the dwelling place reveals the further steps. However, why are the footprints left? Are they left intentionally so that others can follow?

From the perspective of the followers, they can interpret the reason of footprints in many different ways and say, for instance, that the leaver of the footprints is greatly compassionate and thoughtful because they were left *for the purpose of* helping them to get to the same place as she is. In such a self-absorbed interpretation, footprints were considered something left purposefully, and the followers' action becomes purposive. This is the first reading of the metaphor. However, from the standpoint of the leaver of the footprints, her act was without purpose. She was merely going home, and it inadvertently and necessarily left her footprints. Hence, her footprints were left purposelessly. This is the second interpretation. Thus considered, both the first and second interpretations of this metaphor are possible ways of reading it, and show the purposelessness of enlightened act and purposefulness of unenlightened practice. However, the significance of the teleological and non-teleological reading is in showing that they are alternate ways of talking about the same thing. The distinction can be made depending on one's perspective: followers take it as teleological, and yet it is non-teleological for the leaver of footprints. This means that each is referring to the same practice but seen from different perspectives.

Thus, when their distinction is appropriately recontextualized, they alternately become readable as non-purposive, and the non-purposive becomes readable as purposive. (This is the supremely important point that we will look more closely in the subsequent fifth chapter where we discuss what I call Tiantai's *omnitelic* relation between purposelessness and purposivity, which is to be explained according to Zhiyi's discussion about the intersubsumptive *circular* relation between the ocean and rivers, the Buddha and sentient beings that highlights an essential contrastive point to Hegelian teleology.) Hence, this analogy seems to be making a

correspondence between the leaver as root and his footprints as trace that drapes down as a result of his nonintentional salvific activity, demonstrating the mutually entailing relation between root and trace, leaver and its footprints and their reversibility.⁶

The notion that the “dwelling place” and “y” are attained should be further considered. As we saw in Zhiyi’s commentary on the passage he quotes from the *Lotus Sūtra* to reiterate his discussion of the third level, the true extinction—reality of any possible entities—cannot be grasped, hence, cannot be any determinate truth that closes off the entirety of one’s field of contemplation. In Tiantai, “to be” is not merely to be no-self, empty, constantly unattainable, and inconceivable, but rather, to be “*constitutive openness to alterity*.”⁷ Ziporyn explains this:

[O]penness to alterity, if it is constitutive—that is, intrinsic to the constitution of any presence of any kind—is necessarily illimitable. For if there were a limit to openness to alterity, if some level could be reached where a being was closed off to further influence or interaction, that (whether it was the whole of existence or a specifiable absolute ground of existence) would be a substance, non-conditional, which is what is excluded by the stipulation of openness to otherness. Hence, we have “illimitable openness to otherness” as a synonym for “existing.” But to be open to otherness is to be, to that exact extent, ambiguous.⁸

⁶ Zhanran takes up the reversibility of the opposites in Tiantai contemplation practice. Commenting on the Vimalakīrti passage quoted in Zhiyi’s first level of explanation, Zhanran discusses the identity of ignorance (無明) and dharma-nature (法性) and says: “It should be also known that when all dharmas take dharma-nature as their root, dharma-nature and ignorance are [seen as] identical. [Conversely,] when dharma-nature takes ignorance as their the root, dharma-nature is [seen as] identical to ignorance. Because dharma-nature has no dwelling place, [conversely,] ignorance is also precisely the dharma-nature and has no dwelling place. [Although] there is nowhere to dwell for ignorance and dharma-nature, they assist all dharmas to become root. This is why the sūtra says, ‘All dharmas are established from the root of non-dwelling.’ 從無住本立一切法。When the root of non-dwelling thoroughly penetrates both [non-dwelling and all dharmas], they are both the genuine truth, which refers to *Li* [of the middle truth]. All dharmas as events are precisely the manifold of three-thousand. To say hanging down the trace from the root means the *Li*-nature of the root and trace. It is from this that there is the external employment of the root and trace. Therefore, [Zhiyi’s sixfold explanations] start with *Li* and event and ends with [what manifests] today and [what is said] in the past.” (當知諸法亦以法性為本。法性即無明。法性復以無明為本。法性即無明。法性無住處。無明即法性。無明無住處。無明法性雖皆無住而與一切諸法為本。故云從無住本立一切法。無住之本既通。是故真諦指理也。一切諸法事也。即指三千為其森羅。言從本垂迹者。此理性之本迹。由此方有外用本迹。是故始從理事終乎已今。[T33.920a26-920b05.]) The passage 無明法性雖皆無住而與一切諸法為本 means, “[Although] there is nowhere to dwell for ignorance and dharma-nature, they assist all dharmas to become root.” In Tiantai Three Truths, any of the three thousand will be the root. This rotation is a significance of the six levels of the root and trace. According to Zhanran, this is what is going on from the first through the last of the six levels.

⁷ Ziporyn, Brook. *Emptiness and Omnipresence*. 159.

⁸ *Ibid.* 159.

The notion of the “illimitable openness to otherness” also applies to the “dwelling place” or “y,” because what they really are is constitutive openness to alterity. Since *y* is a different way of experiencing *x*, the same principle should apply to *x*: *x* is illimitably open to otherness. The *x* and *y*, footprints and the dwelling place, traces and root, are all inconceivable. As we saw in the discussion of the post-enlightened act, their thoroughgoing inconceivability reveals the purposelessness of the Buddha’s enlightened act that thereby discloses the necessary entailment of the purposive activity of sentient beings. Buddha’s act is non-purposive, and yet, sentient beings’ act is purposive. What this ultimately means is the intersubsumption of purposelessness of the Buddha and purposes of sentient beings. The initial contrast between them reveals their reversibility and hence shows that their initial contrast was a provisional distinction. Once sentient beings complete their teleological engagement of Buddhist practice, what they will know is that they have always been engaged with non-teleological practice, purposeless activity. Deluded practice of sentient beings is how an enlightened act is embodied. In this context, being purposeless does not eliminate or replace the purposefulness of the other. Since the purposelessness itself is illimitable openness to otherness, it can posit purposes of all sentient beings. Furthermore, it does not only posit; it reveals the mutually subsuming character of different purposes.

4.1-3 The Thrust of the “Leaver and Footprints” Analogy

The discussion about the misdirection of desire suggests that one is doing much more than what he can imagine about his own doing (i.e., being a śrāvaka is being a bodhisattva). This Tiantai elaboration of the misdirection of one’s desire as a part of his bodhisattva practice is rooted in the *Lotus Sūtra*’s passage where four elder śrāvakas say to Śākyamuni that knowing the certainty

of their Buddhahood, the unexpected attainment of Buddhahood as a result of seeking a śrāvaka goal of arhathood rather than bodhisattva's goal of Buddhahood per se, is as if “without seeking, the infinite treasure was attained on its own. (*buqiuzide* 不求自得)” This passage, in fact, exhibits implications significant to Tiantai thought. The ultimate mismatch between what one sought and what was attained for Tiantai resembles to how the “elicitation” of sentient beings is “responded” to by sages such as Buddhas and bodhisattvas. One may argue against this by saying that the elicitation *can* consciously aim at the response and hence that this attainment of response is a result of *seeking* rather than *without seeking* what is attained. However, Tiantai would further counter-argue this because even if one *thinks* that the response is sought, what is attained is, by virtue of being inconceivable, the attained result and always surpasses what is conceived and hence is unseekable. At a glance, the mismatching relation of the desired and the attained and their relation to the Tiantai category of elicitation and response may not seem to go hand in hand. However, for Zhiyi, this precisely *is* the case, and it seems their correlation enhances the points of his philosophical argument that we saw in the third level of root and trace. Zhiyi has a few different usages of “investigating traces” that appear together with a reference of “elicitation and response” in his works. For instance, *Fahuawenju* says that contemplation on one's mind is investigating root and trace that correlates to the elicitation and response:

If one investigates trace, because of the vastness of the trace, he will be exhausted. If he investigates root, he learns how deep the root is and that it is unreachable. [...] [However,] when he single-mindedly contemplates the depth and vastness of his own mind, it taps the response of the inexhaustible sages, completing the trigger's elicitation to attain the merit for the self.

若尋迹迹廣徒自疲勞。若尋本本高高不可極。[...]但觀己心之高廣。扣無窮之聖應。機成致感逮得己利。⁹

⁹ T34.002b07-b10.

Zhiyi equates “investigating (尋)” to “contemplating (觀),” specifying that the object of this contemplation is the deep and vast *inconceivability* of one’s own mind. What this passage adds to our earlier discussion of the footprints and its leaver is that what this contemplation practice is doing is in fact completing one’s “elicitation” that triggers sages’s “responses” to it. As Zhiyi says a few pages prior to this passage, “Sentient beings are those who seek liberation. This trigger is indeed multitudinous. [Because of this,] responses that sages give rise to are also many, indeed. (夫眾生求脫此機眾矣。聖人起應應亦眾矣。)”¹⁰ As we saw in Daosheng’s usages in the introductory chapter, the category of “elicitation and response (感應)” is an important conceptual framework that shows the mutually entailing relation between Buddhas and sentient beings. For Tiantai, elicitation and response are two different aspects of the same content. They are intersubsumed and in the relation of “neither different nor the same. (*buyibuyi* 不異不一)” Although the present chapter does not have enough space to elaborate on the Tiantai doctrine of “stimulus and response” in detail, the thrust of this idea is that whenever there is a sentient being’s elicitation, there is always a “Buddha’s compassionate” response to it. Since the number of sentient beings is inexhaustible, the tathāgata’s salvific function that arises as a response to their elicitation is also inexhaustible (non-extinguishable). Sentient beings and sages come together wherever, as the third chapter discussed, there is “a recognition of suffering.”

Zhiyi’s extraordinary insight is that elicitation and response become synonyms just as the intersubsumption of root and trace shows that tracing multitudinous Conventionality reveals how Emptiness is expressed *as* Conventionality. However, unlike the standard usage of this philosophical framework, Zhiyi’s usages of “investigating trace” focus on the process of how

¹⁰ T34.002a29-b01.

one's pre-awakening moment of purposive practice (elicitation) leads to the attainment of Buddhahood (response) undertaken by the same person. *Fahuaxuanyi* says:

Speaking of “gathering trace to reveal the root,” this undertakes practice. In investigating various practice in the trace, either by following this Buddha one engages in practice to attain the assurance [of his buddhahood]; by following that Buddha one engages in practice to attain his assurance; one reveals the body of itself or other; or one follows the trigger [of sentient beings] to respond to it by manifesting its longness, shortness, largeness or smallness. All of these traces drape down from the root. If the Buddha of the past and the present are brought together, it completes the trace and thereby reveals the root. Although root and trace are different, their inconceivability is one.

會迹顯本者。此則就行。尋迹中諸行。或從此佛行行得記。或從彼佛行行得記。或示己身他身。隨機應現長短大小。諸迹悉從本垂。若結會古今。還結迹而顯本耳。本迹雖殊不思議一。¹¹

In this passage, Zhiyi shows that investigating trace is to pursue various practices of trace. This practice, a teleological activity that seeks liberation by striving to realize the purpose of the end of suffering, *is* itself sages' (i.e., buddhas and bodhisattvas) salvific act of “following the triggers [of sentient beings]” and thereby a “response” to them. This investigation leads to his *own* Buddhahood that thereby starts to respond to elicitation. Hence, he is not just talking about the identity between the elicitation and response, but also or rather more emphasis seems to be put on the single coherence of the elicitor and responder, making both elicitation and response an act of the single person who is to become a Buddha. This shows how a finite being engages a teleological practice and unexpectedly ends up attaining purposelessness (i.e., the above-mentioned x-y mismatch), and from that standpoint thereby starts his post-enlightened purposeless activity that responds to the elicitation of all beings, whose expressions entail “revealing the body of the self and other,” meaning—as Zhanran says—revealing dharma-kāya and nirmāṇa-kāya according to different needs that are elicited. All buddhas from the past and the present Śākyamuni take this course of process of purpose turning into purposeless. Their

¹¹ T33.798c17-c21.

manifestations as different buddhas are distinct from each other, but all of them equally reveal the root of their practice. The completion of the elicitation then means the completion of “cause” that, as we saw in the second chapter where we discussed Śāriputra’s joy, “necessarily tends toward result,” leading to the unlimited usages of response that freely employs the manifesting the form of different bodies of the tathāgata. This is why, as it seems, the subsequent fourth and fifth levels of root and trace take up the post-enlightened act that is rooted in the completion of the cause of Buddhahood, which is centered around the topic of the bodies of tathāgata.

The moment of teleological search of elicitation undertaken by unenlightened beings is the aspect of non-teleological response of sages. This is a perfect segue into the rest of the six levels of root and trace because it is in the subsequent fourth and fifth levels where the relation between dhama-yaka and nirmanakaya (Note: there is no explicit reference of sambhogakaya there) is discussed in terms of root and trace. What we will see below is the intersubsumptive relation between these two bodies of the tathāgata. We should not overlook this point because the final chapter closely investigates the unique Tiantai take of the interpenetration of three-bodies (dharma-kāya, sambhoga-kāya and nirmāṇa-kāya) of the tathāgata that reveals the ultimate identity between the Buddha and sentient beings based on the Three Truths according to Tiantai interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*’s pinnacle concept of the eternal life of the thathāgata. In light of this, let us investigate the fourth and fifth levels of root and trace both at once, followed by the final sixth level.

4.1-4 Bodies of the Tathāgata

As we saw at the outset of the present chapter, according to Zhanran, the first three levels (Coherence and events, Coherence and teaching, teaching and practice) of root and trace all

belong to “cause.” What is considered to be the “result” of this cause is the next fourth and fifth levels that take up the bodies of the tathāgata, which as we saw above is entailed in Zhiyi’s broader discussion about “investigating trace” and its relation to “elicitation and response” that is considered to be Buddha’s self-practice. At the fourth level, Zhiyi discusses “substance and function” and says that the realization of the substance gives rise to the function. If we consider this in accord with what we discussed in the third level, this rising of the function is another example of an enlightened act, which is to say that one’s realization of substance purposelessly reveals the rise of this function just as the investigation of trace leads to one’s assurance of Buddhahood that further reveals his salvific response expressed as showing different forms of the tathāgata’s body according to the elicitation of sentient beings. Zhiyi articulates this point by saying that other sūtras only refute the non-birth of the *nirmāṇa-kāya*, while the *Lotus Sūtra* correctly refutes any notion of non-birth for and birth for both *nirmāṇa-kāya* and *dharma-kāya*. He further says, “Therefore, one knows that presently the birth of *dharma-kāya* of both inferior and superior *nirmāṇa-kāya* is all refuted. Because of this, birth is not [really] birth. This is whereby [the *Lotus Sūtra* is] forever different from any other sūtras.”¹²

Here Zhiyi says that it is only the *Lotus Sūtra* that refutes any notion of *dharma-kāya*, while all other sūtras only refute that of *nirmāṇa-kāya*. What is at stake is, again, the issue of the inconceivability of all entities, and here specifically the problem of prioritization of *dharma-kāya*

¹² The entire passage reads, “然我實成下。明本實不生。但天人修羅。見此二種生法二身謂言始生。此則不然。然我久已得此生法二身。今日之生非實生也。故云久遠若斯。[若斯者。如上譬之長久也。]但以方便下。明既非實生何故現生為利樂小法人德薄垢重者使得佛道。故言但以方便教化眾生。作如是說者。非生而現生。[故云作如是說也。]餘經破劣應生身生非生。尚不破劣應法身生非生。今經正破勝應法身生非生。何者。我實成佛已來久遠若斯。故知今日劣勝兩法身生皆被破故生非生。與餘經永異也。(T34.131c03-c14.)” The notion of the eternal life of the Buddha is the *Lotus Sūtra* specific concept. It is interesting to compare to what passage Zhiyi quotes from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* for his fourth explanation of root and trace in 維摩經玄疏. He says, “故金光明經云。佛真法身由如虛空。應物現形如水中月。正由虛空有實月之本體故有一切水月之影用。今明理行合為不思議法身之理本。由此法身故能垂不思議應用之迹。由此應用能顯法身。故肇師云。非本無以垂迹。非迹無以顯本。本迹雖殊不思議一即其義也。(T38.545c14-c20.)”

over *nirmāṇa-kāya*, which would create a one way relation between the two. Moreover, seeing *dharma-kāya* as something determinate would not let the illimitable openness to alterity intact because it would put a cap of the determinacy at the top of the entirety of one's field of experience. This is a critique of misapprehension of *dharma-kāya* as a determinate truth. However, in the context of the *Lotus Sūtra*, how the notion of the birth and non-birth of *dharma-kāya* refuted is not obvious.¹³ As we will see below, the refutation of the primacy of *dharma-kāya* over *nirmāṇa-kāya* according to the Tiantai reading of the *Lotus Sūtra* has extraordinary implication that is taken up in the final section of the present chapter and the first half of the fifth chapter respectively.

The fifth level further discusses the bodies of the *tathāgata* but this time in terms of “provisional and real.” In relation to the preceding fourth level, Zhiyi says that at the fifth level, the *real* awareness of substance and function becomes the root, and trace is the *provisional* positing of substance and function. According to him, “the real” refers to *both dharma-kāya and nirmāṇa-kāya* that are attained in the long and distanced beginning of the real, and that trace means the provisional positing of the two bodies. Then he says there would be no provisional positing or any other teachings without the primordial real awareness at the root. The most important point of the fifth level is how it clarifies the implication of the negation of the primacy of *dharma-kāya* over *nirmāṇa-kāya*, which now thereby makes both of these bodies the root, overcoming one-way hierarchical relation between them as any other *sūtras* than the *Lotus* consider to be. This is how the discussions about first three levels as “cause” and the next two

¹³ There is a passage in the sixteenth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* which may correspond to what Zhiyi says in the commentary. However, their connection is not explicit. The *sūtra* says, “The *Tathagata* perceives the character of the threefold world as it really is. Birth and death do not leave it or appear in it. There is no staying in the world or departing from it for extinguishment. It is neither substantial nor insubstantial. And it is neither thus nor otherwise. This is not how the threefold world sees itself, but the *Tathagata* sees such things as these clearly and without error. (*The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 278.)”

levels as “result” complete the picture of their causal relation. Nevertheless, instead of ending this discussion, Zhiyi further adds the sixth level to transform the nature of this linear conception of causation. At the sixth level, Zhiyi takes up “past and present” and says:

As various teachings of the past and future already explained, [all pairs] from events and Coherence all the way up to provisional and real are trace. However, [all pairs] from event and Coherence up to provisional and real, [included in the] long and distance [career of the Buddha] that the present sūtra explains are all root. If there were no root of the long and distanced revealed by the present sūtra, there could be none that hangs down the trace as what was already expounded. [Conversely,] without the trace of already expounded, how can it reveal the root of the present [sūtra]? Although root and trace differ, they are one in their inconceivability.

前來諸教已說事理。乃至權實者皆是迹也。今經所說久遠事理乃至權實者。皆名為本。非今所明久遠之本。無以垂於已說之迹。非已說迹。豈顯今本。本迹雖殊不思議一也。¹⁴

Zhiyi says that all these different pairs of categories he explained so far are merely considered to be trace in all other sūtras. As he emphasizes, it is the teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* that transforms all of these trace into the root. That is how the “long and distanced” reveals a further context from which all the previous five sets of categories are seen as something new. Perhaps the most significant point of the sixth level is that after this explanation of this level, he goes on to discuss all the preceding five levels *in reverse*, starting with the fifth back to the first level. This implies that what Zhiyi is doing in his discussion of the six levels of root and trace is that after showing a progressive reading of the first five levels as linear steps that move from cause to result, what he then does is to start with the result to revert to the cause, suggesting the reversibility of the relation between cause and result unlike the ordinary conception of the linear causality. In the sixth level, Zhiyi starts by saying that the teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* is root and all other teachings expounded prior to it are trace. However, he further claims that from the viewpoint of the sūtra’s teaching, all six pairs are, in fact, root that is inconceivable just as trace is, showing

¹⁴ T33.764c16-c20.

that root and trace are two different aspects of the same content. With this in mind, we can say that Zhiyi took the *Lotus Sūtra*'s teaching of the eternal life of the tathāgata to be a special context that transforms the value and meaning of contents (i.e., five levels of root and trace, Buddha's teachings expounded prior to the *Lotus*) within it. (I will discuss this below.)

Tiantai's unusual conception of causation grounded in the Three Truths is what we extensively discussed in the present dissertation's second and third chapters. Reaching the present fourth chapter's investigation of root and trace, we are seeing what this distinct conception of causation culminates in: now in his usages of root and trace, Zhiyi is showing the reversibility of cause and result in terms of the intersubsumption of root and trace. This also means the intersubsumptive and hence reversible relation between purposive practice and purposelessness, delusion and enlightenment, and sentient beings and Buddhas. The sixth level of root and trace places all of these discussions in a new context of the eternal life of the tathāgata to argue that all contents in this specific context become both root and trace at the same time. This points us toward the enigmatic nature of the Tiantai exegesis of the eternal life of the tathāgata, to which we will turn next.

4.2 Emergence of a New Question

Tiantai uses the root and trace as an interpretative framework to read the *Lotus Sūtra* and says that the sūtra's first half "trace-gate" and the rest "root-gate" are in a causal relation. Zhiyi claims that the *Lotus Sūtra* reveals the *root relation* between disciples and teachers, śrāvakas and Buddhas. Hence, the root-gate of the sūtra reveals that the relationship between Śākyamuni and his disciples is not an accidental instance that occurred only in the present as *trace*. This proximate relation is recontextualized in the root-gate chapters and shows its ultimate *root* that is

omnipresent throughout the beginningless past and the unendable future. Revelation of the eternal life thereby massively expands the context of the relation between the teacher and disciples. This is their “root-cause and root-result (*benyinbenguo* 本因本果).” As we saw in the first chapter, the significance of the revelation of the root is negation of the ultimacy of what is conceived prior to Śākyamuni’s preaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*. This brings traces into a continuity of the beginningless and endless process of the disciples’s practice (cause) and Buddha’s awakening (result). This vastly expanded context of their relation is undergirded by Zhiyi’s vital claim that *both the dharmakāya and nirmāṇakāya of the tathāgata exist both as traces and as root*; it is not that the dharma-body is the root and the response-body is the trace, but rather that the root referred to here is the response-body in the root position, as “what was attained in the primordial beginning.” This is how Tiantai used the philosophical framework of root and trace to interpret the meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*. However, Tiantai uses the root and trace motif in more than one way. As the present chapter discussed above, we saw how this framework bolsters Zhiyi’s discussion about the six levels of root and trace whose ultimate point seems to be to show the non-linear conception of causality, hence, the immanent process of Buddhahood in Tiantai.

This made us inquire the nature of the sixth level that takes up the category of “past and present” that refer to teachings taught by buddhas in the past and what is taught in the Buddha in the present, referring to the *Lotus Sūtra*’s pinnacle concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata. As we saw in the introductory chapter, this concept is what determines the Tiantai interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra* and Buddha’s teachings expressed in all other sūtras. What kind of special features does the Buddha’s eternal life have according to Tiantai? How do these features retrospectively transform the value and meaning of what is, with precedent, considered cause and

result, revealing their intersubsumption and reversibility? In light of this, the rest of the present chapter starts a discussion about Tiantai's conception of the eternal life of the tathāgata. I will first introduce how Tiantai sees the point of introducing the concept of the Buddha's eternal life in the context of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Then after looking at how the concept of the eternal life is introduced in the sūtra, we will examine how Tiantai uses this concept to argue for the interpenetration of the three-bodies of the tathāgata. As we will see, the surprising insight of this Tiantai claim is how the tradition further argues that it is not only the bodies of the tathāgata but also all deluded activities of sentient beings are the *content* of the tathāgata's eternal life, revealing that all of these contents of the eternal life of the tathāgata themselves are eternal and hence "constantly abiding (*zhangzhu* 常住)." As our discussion is increasingly becoming counterintuitive, we will visit each of these philosophical moves carefully in both the rest of the present and the next chapters so as to better understand enormous implications of these unusual claims.

4.2-1 The Eternal Life of the Tathāgata

Let us first look at why Śākyamuni's revelation of the eternal life of the tathāgata is a groundbreaking concept in the history of Buddhist thought. Twenty-five centuries ago, Gotama Siddhārta was born in the ancient city of Kapilavastu as a prince of the Śākya clan and grew up in a secluded environment within his father Suddhōdana's kingdom for twenty-nine years. Siddhātra eventually abandoned his luxurious life and sought a spiritual path that ends human suffering. In pursuing six years of an ascetic practice, he sat under a bodhi tree in Budhgayā and finally achieved awakening at the age of thirty-six. A common understanding is that this was the moment he became a Buddha. However, the *Lotus Sūtra's* sixteenth chapter reveals that this

common conception about his awakening is merely a provisional truth about his true life. In reality, the chapter reveals, he had already attained awakening in the remotest past. According to the chapter, Śākyamuni first shows the proximity of his finite life so as to ultimately reveal the truth about his “long and distant” eternal life. Tiantai pays attention to this strategy of the *sūtra* and calls it “opening the near to reveal the distant. (*kaijinxianyuan* 開近顯遠).” But why did the *Lotus Sūtra* need to introduce the concept of eternal life? According to Zhiyi, this revelation has a therapeutic effect that makes Śākyamuni’s disciples overcome their attachment to their misconception that the historical Śākyamuni embodies the whole truth about his life. Zhiyi says, “It is to properly use negation of what is near so as to reveal what is distant. ‘To negate what is near’ refers to [negating] [the attachments and biased-views based in]one’s passion. [This means to] abandon the near to reveal the distant. (正用破近顯遠。破近謂情廢近顯遠。)”¹⁵

The negation of people’s attachment to the ultimacy of “the near” (Śākyamuni’s finite response-body) is employed as skillful means to thereby reveal a truth about his life from a viewpoint of “the distant” (the eternal life)—a negation that is literally a “breaking” (破) not in the sense of breaking something down but rather of breaking something open, a breaking through of an obstacle so that it becomes instead a doorway, restructuring it in such a way that one can see through it to what stands beyond it.¹⁶ Negating passion and attachments that restrict one’s views is therapeutic in a sense that it negates one’s misconception about the ultimacy of the near, and yet does not eliminate it but rather puts it in a new context and thereby “opens” its own truth as an access point to the distant, revealing at the same time that the distant vista beyond

¹⁵ T34.130a09.

¹⁶ The classical Chinese character for “negation” used in this passage is “破 *po*”, which is composed of a combination of “石 *shi* (stone)” and “皮 *pi* (skin)” to mean that a stone strikes skin and breaks it. Although a common meaning of this character is negative (“to break”, “to destroy”, “to separate”, and “to tear”), it also has a positive connotation of “to open.” Morohashi, Tetsuji. *大漢和辭典 Vol.8*. 352.

expresses itself not only in being revealed through the breakthrough of the near but also in the concealing of itself through the prior obstruction of itself provided by the near. We can think of this in terms of the mutually entailing relation between root and trace. The revelation of the awakening attained in the remotest past (root) negates the ultimacy of the response-body (trace) through this negation further *determining* what the response-body is as a trace. The root transforms the meaning of the traces and thereby determines what traces were truly up to, expanding them to the status of the root. Hence, negation leads to opening up and revealing something more about the negated object.¹⁷ In this sense, the negative meaning of “*po* 破” functions positively. As we will see below, the provisional refers to “cause (*yin* 因)” and the real means “result (*guo* 果).” Thus, negation of one’s passion and attachments to Śākyamuni’s response-body functions to *open up* the provisional truth about his finite life so as to reveal the real “long and distant” life of the tathāgata, the truth about Śākyamuni’s life.¹⁸ Hence, in the sixteenth chapter, the finitude of Śākyamuni’s life as cause opens up, and thereby the infinity of his true life as a result of his practice is revealed. We can see this point more clearly by understanding Tiantai’s strategy for the textual interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

It is significant that Zhiyi’s reading of the root-gate chapters suggest the absence of ontological priority between tathāgata’s bodies. This is not a surprising assertion if we think how Tiantai Three Truths can apply to the concept of the three bodies of tathāgata. However, how does the absence of ontological priority in the three-body theory contribute to clarifying the Tiantai understanding of the eternal life of the tathāgata that therapeutically functions to negate

¹⁷ This may resemble to Hegel’s concept of determinate negation that has both negative and positive functions. However, as a final part of the present chapter will discuss in detail, unlike Hegel’s usage of negation, in Tiantai negated finite objects are not preserved in the infinite merely as illusory beings but the name “finite” ends up meaning the “infinite” and its vice versa. This is a special effect of the infinity of Buddhahood.

¹⁸ His awakening as finite Śākyamuni is “trace,” while his awakening achieved in the remotest past is “root.” Oneness of the root and traces will continue to serve as a conceptual key to the rest of our discussions.

disciples's passion and vastly expands the historical context of their *root* relation to Śākyamuni? How does this peculiar understanding of the three-body ultimately relate to the concept of the eternal tathāgata's "life as wisdom"? In light of these concerns, let us look at how Tiantai takes the interpenetration of the tathāgata's threefold bodies as a content of the eternal life. In order to better understand this thought, first let us review how the sūtra builds up a context and storyline that ultimately lead to this pinnacle concept in the sūtra.

4.2-2 The Eternal Life of the Tathāgata in the *Lotus Sūtra*

In the first half of the *Lotus Sūtra* ("trace-gate" chapters), Śākyamuni declares that all śrāvakas are bodhisattvas, and hence that they are, unbeknownst to them, Buddhas to be. With this unexpected declaration about where their practice is truly leading them to, śrāvakas comprehend a certainty of their Buddhahood. This is the teaching of one-vehicle that dispelled the doubt and anxiety over their spiritual destiny and made śrāvakas including Śāriputra, four elder chief monks and others in the assembly give rise to joy. Knowing their awareness, Śākyamuni encourages them to continue their practice and instructs how to skillfully respond to the suffering of sentient beings. He also asks his audience who is willing to undertake a difficult task of spreading the *Lotus Sūtra* in the saḥā-world after his passing.¹⁹ These scenes show the spiritual transformation and enchantment of śrāvakas, occupying the first fourteen chapters of the sūtra, which is composed of the total twenty-eight chapters. Śākyamuni's central teaching in the sūtra's first half is "one-vehicle." The subsequent fifteenth chapter, titled "Springing Up Out of the Earth," changes the scene and serves as a prelude to revealing "the eternal life of the tathāgata," the pinnacle concept of the latter half of the sūtra. Indeed, in Tiantai commentary, this eternal life

¹⁹ At the time of preaching the *Lotus Sūtra*, as the sūtra sets up, Śākyamuni is supposedly in his eighties.

of a buddha is taken to apply to any and every buddha, which is why in Zhiyi's commentary even to the first half of the sutra, he makes the astonishing assertion that each figure introduced in the first half is not only a bodhisattva now, as the text explicitly states, but also that each has accomplished the practice of the Buddha-way in the remote past.

At the outset of the fifteenth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, responding to Śākyamuni's call, bodhisattvas from other universes say they are willing to undertake the task of spreading the teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*. But Śākyamuni declines their offer and says that he already has bodhisattvas who can undertake this task. Then a dramatic scene occurs that could be considered an ancient India version of the modern science fiction. The sūtra says:

When the Buddha spoke these words, the ground of the three thousand-great-thousandfold lands of the saḥā world began trembling and splitting open, and all at once, innumerable thousands of millions of bodhisattva-mahāsattvas sprang up out of it. These bodhisattvas had golden-hued bodies, the thirty-two marks, and immeasurable radiance. Up until then, they had all been dwelling in the empty space beneath this saḥā world.²⁰

Witnessing gazillions of bodhisattvas springing out of the earth, everyone in the *Lotus Sūtra*'s great assembly wonders who they are and who transformed them into bodhisattvas. Śākyamuni answers that he is the one who taught them. But this answer rather confuses his audience, making them further wonder, "How were you, the world-honored one Śākyamuni, within merely forty years of your life as a Buddha able to instruct and transform the innumerable number of bodhisattvas?" This enigma is solved in the subsequent sixteenth chapter that introduces the concept of the eternal life of the Buddha. If the Buddha's life is eternal, he should be able to have been teaching and transforming these bodhisattvas throughout innumerable lifecycles. Then saying that Śākyamuni is their teacher would make sense. Dramatically or perhaps hyperbolically setting up the sūtra's narrative thus, in the sixteenth chapter, Śākyamuni finally

²⁰ *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 263.

reveals the truth about his life:

All of you, hear clearly about the mysterious and transcendent power of the tathāgata. All heavenly beings, humans, and asuras in all worlds say, ‘This Śākyamuni Buddha left the palace of the Śākya clan, sat down at the place of the Way not far from the city of Gaya, and attained Supreme Perfect Awakening.’ In fact, my good children, *immeasurable, boundless hundreds of thousands of millions of myriads of kalpas have already passed since I became Buddha.*²¹

This is the sūtra’s famous concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata that, according to Tiantai, differentiates the *Lotus* from any other sūtras.²²

Śākyamuni goes on to say, “I am actually not now passing away, despite my proclamations that I will take the course of extinguishment. These are the skillful means used by the tathāgata to teach and transform living beings.”²³

4.2-3 Interpenetration of Buddha’s Three-Bodies

The Tiantai conception of the tathāgata’s eternal life negates a priority of dharmakāya and saṃbhogakāya over finite nirmāṇakāya and thereby argues that *all three bodies are traces* (and hence all three equally are the root), which are intersubsumed and identical to each other. The negation of an ontological priority between them leads to Tiantai’s reorganization of the nature of relationship of Buddha’s three bodies based on the root and traces. Zhiyi says:

For the root and traces of all other sutras, the root is precisely dharmakāya and saṃbhogakāya attained in the training place of tranquility; and traces are both the greater and lesser bodies of nirmāṇakāya that arises from this root. [On the contrary,] the present [*Lotus*] sūtra reveals that the three-bodies attained in the tranquil place through middle [periods] are all traces, and that those three-bodies attained in the training place in the remotest past are [equally] their root. This is totally different from [what] all other sutras [state].

²¹ Ibid. 276. My emphasis.

²² In Mahāyāna literature, notions of the unlimited life span of the Buddha can be seen in a few other sūtras.

²³ *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*. 279.

諸經所說本迹者。即寂滅道場所成法報為本。從本所起勝劣兩應為迹。今經所明取寂場及中間所成三身。皆名為迹。取本昔道場所得三身。名之為本。故與諸經為異也。²⁴

The aim of negating the ultimacy of Śākyamuni’s *nirmāṇakāya* is not to negate Shakyamuni’s finite body and thereby to assert the superiority of the nonfinite dharmakāya or saṃbhogakāya. Rather, this negation, far from aiming at showing such an ontological hierarchy between them, makes Buddha’s *all three-bodies (trikāya) as traces and shows the interpenetrated oneness of the three in both the root and the traces*. According to Tiantai, this is the uniqueness of the *Lotus Sūtra* that makes the sixth level of root and trace have a special feature of transforming the nature of causality. The essential implications of this uniqueness will be evident as we advance our investigation below.

As we saw in the last section, revealing the truth about the life of the tathāgata explains the root relation with his śrāvaka disciples. The eternal life is remedial in a sense that it helps them break a shell of complacency.²⁵ Hence, “[h]earing the life span [of the tathāgata], all bodhisattvas develop their vows.”²⁶ However, Tiantai commentary shows that this is not merely applicable to śrāvakas but also to the essential relation between Buddha *and sentient beings*, who are deluded, unenlightened, and in the midst of suffering.

Zhiyi says:

²⁴ Reconsideration of a pair of contrast into a subsequent level of progression for us by now should be a familiar strategy of Tiantai. As we saw in the last chapter in the discussions of Six Levels of Root and Traces (六重本迹 *liuchongbenji*), “coherence and events (理事 *lishi*),” for instance, start with making a contrast by former corresponding to the root and the latter to the traces at the first level. But in the second level, both “coherence and events” are subsumed into the root to make a contrast with “teaching (教 *jiao*)” as traces.

²⁵ As we discussed, the overcoming of complacency is in accordance with how śrāvakas do so in the earlier chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra*. For instance, in the fourth chapter of the sūtra, four elder śrāvakas publicly disclose their complacency: “We, the leaders of the sangha, are worn with years. Believing that we had already attained nirvana and that there was nowhere further for us to go, we did not go on to pursue Supreme Perfect Awakening. [...] Now we have heard this śrāvaka receive his assurance of Supreme Perfect Awakening from the Buddha, and our hearts greatly rejoice at something so extraordinary. We never expected that, all of a sudden, we would not be able to hear so extraordinary a teaching. (*The Threefold Lotus Sūtra*, 121-122)”

²⁶ T34.127b27. (諸菩薩聞壽量發願)

Regarding Buddha's *nirmāṇakāya*'s speaking of its extinction while it is not [truly] extinguished, this response is the function of *dharmakāya* and reward-body. Since there is no extinction in the *nirmāṇakāya*'s substance, how can there be an exhaustion of the function? This is what the non-extinction of the *nirmāṇakāya* means. Since sentient beings will be complacent if they always see the Buddha, for the sake of them the [*Lotus Sūtra*] states, "I will enter extinction tonight." [...(Thus,)] it is necessarily referring to both *dharmakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya* when the *nirmāṇakāya* speaks about its non-extinction. Since *dharmakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya* are permanent (常 *chang*) as they are, the function of the *nirmāṇakāya* is also never cut off (i.e., never ends). It is precisely because [the number of] sentient beings is not exhausted that the [function of the *nirmāṇakāya*] is not extinguished.

應身非滅唱滅者。應是法報之用。體既無滅用豈有窮。即應身不滅。但為眾生若常見佛則生憍恣故。唱我於今夜當取滅度。[...] 應身說不滅須約法報。法報常然應用不絕。眾生不盡即不滅度。²⁷

Non-extinction of the *nirmāṇakāya*'s function is undergirded by the non-extinction of the substance of the non-finite *dharmakāya* and *saṃbhogakāya*. Because of this, the Buddha's finite response-body is not extinguished. However, as a skillful means, as a function of the response-body rather than as its elimination, he announces his extinction in the process of his salvific interaction with sentient beings so that they evade becoming complacent and stopping short at their practice.

It is intriguing that Zhiyi says, "It is precisely because [the number of] sentient beings is not exhausted that the [function of *nirmāṇakāya*] is not extinguished. (眾生不盡即不滅度)" Why does he need to make this statement? An essential insight of this passage is that the relation that the interpenetrated three-bodies of the *tathāgata* forms is not merely with the *śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha* but also with *sentient beings*. This is important for the Tiantai interpretation of the *tathāgata*'s eternal life qua the "life of wisdom" because it shows that the eternal life *does not leave out the deluded activities of sentient beings* in the substance and function of the interpenetrated three-bodies of the *tathāgata*. But how does it

²⁷ T34.133b05-b14.

not leave them out? Zhiyi says:

The *nirmāṇakāya* is not separate from the formless *dharmakāya* that has no arising or extinction. It is sentient beings that trigger such arising and extinction and elicit the *dharmakāya*. Since the vow-power of *tathāgata* equally responds to this arising and extinction, the viewpoint of this arising and extinction emerges out of sentient beings.

顯於應身不離法身。法身無形，亦無起滅，眾生有起滅之機，感於法身，如來願力應同起滅，起滅之見出自眾生²⁸

This passage suggests that the *tathāgata*'s eternal life qua interpenetration of three-bodies functions and arises as a salvific “response” to the “elicitation” of sentient beings. This suggests not merely that the form of expression of the response body depends on sentient beings' elicitations, but further that sentient beings' elicitation desiring the end of their suffering together with the Buddha's salvific response to it simultaneously become the *content* of the interpenetrated three-bodies of the *tathāgata* whose activities eternally continue. The response-body itself is inseparable from the delusion of sentient beings.

As we discussed in this dissertation's third chapter, sentient beings' activities create suffering in their attempts to liberate themselves from suffering. This ironic proliferation of suffering means that a movement toward the end of suffering, the compassion of the Buddha, is inherent to each moment of the deluded activities of sentient beings. In this sense, surprisingly, diverse attempts to end suffering are a movement toward liberation *expressed as* suffering, or similarly are the “*dharmā-nature*” *expressed as* “ignorance.” This is why the *nirmāṇakāya* is never independent from sentient beings, and the presence of one always means the necessary copresence of the other. As we shall see in the beginning of the next chapter, Zhiyi says that what is experienced as true by Buddha and what is experienced by sentient beings are not two but rather a “single Coherence (*liyi*理

²⁸ T34.132a16-a19.

一).” Thus, strangely, as a typical conceptual move of Tiantai thought, this ultimately means that the Buddha’s salvific activity is another aspect of the sentient beings’ elicitation and hence that both of them are permanent or more emphatically, “eternally abiding (*changzhu* 常住).”²⁹ Therefore, in Tiantai, the eternal life of the tathāgata whose content is the interpenetration of the three-bodies not only shows that the tathāgata’s *nirmāṇakāya*, which is normally considered to be a non-eternal finite body, is eternal, but also shows that sentient beings and their elicitation too are the content of the eternally-abiding bodies of tathāgata. In the next final chapter, let us examine how the term “eternally abiding” is used in Tiantai texts so that we can have a better sense of how it determines the essential roles that sentient beings play in the context of the eternal life of the tathāgata. Comprehending thus will give us a final piece that builds a conceptual foundation for investigating Tiantai interpretation of the eternal life of the tathāgata in detail.

²⁹ Zhanran comments on this passage: “Sentient beings are in reality not yet exhausted even at the time of [the response-body’s] extinction. What does this mean? This question should be reversed on the questioner. It has been shown that as long as sentient beings are not yet exhausted, the response body is not extinguished. Therefore, the extinction is announced for the sake of those who have not given rise to the feelings of difficulties to encounter [the Buddha], not because of the exhaustion of [the number of] sentient beings. Thus, it should be known that the response-body is constantly abiding without extinction. How can the dharma-body alone be non-extinguished? If people do not understand this, dharma-body and reward-body will be also extinguished. How could the response-body alone be extinguished? ([言眾生不盡即不滅度者,] 滅度之時, 生實未盡, 其義何耶? 應反質云: 驗生未盡, 則不滅度! 故唱滅度, 為不生於難遭想者, 非為生盡。故知應身常在不滅, 何獨法耶? 若不了者, 法報亦滅, 何獨應耶?) (T34.338b04-b08.)”

The eternal life of the tathāgata that takes the interpenetration of the threefold-body is an all-pervasive immanent life that is eternally-abiding and positioned *unconditionally* in all *conditional* activities and experience of all beings. Here we can find a logical insight important to Tiantai: The unconditional conceived *in contrast to* conditional is still a *relative* unconditional. It becomes the true and *absolute* unconditional when it is unconditionally present in all conditionality to an extent that there is no gap between the unconditional and conditional experience. In this sense, the unconditional can prove itself when it thoroughly comprehends and penetrates into all conditionality, thereby revealing that the unconditional can be discovered nowhere other than in conditional experience (as the ability of each conditional experience to reveal all other conditional experiences unobstructedly). The meaning of “conditional” is thus transformed and elevated to the “unconditional.” Ultimately, in Tiantai, the unconditional means omniconditionality. In the same way, the unconditional life of the eternal tathāgata ultimately means the conditional life of all sentient beings whose life is in reality unconditional. This is how the Tiantai doctrine of “elicitation and response (感應 *ganying*)” exhibits the paradoxical oneness of the Buddha and sentient beings.

CHAPTER FIVE

TATHĀGATA’S ETERNAL LIFE—HEGELIAN PROGRESSION VS. TIANTAI CIRCULATION

The present dissertation chapter investigates the concept of “the eternal life of the tathāgata” as a central focus and considers its further implications in relation to what we started to discuss in the last chapter: the mutual entailment of purpose and purposelessness, hence, an intertelic conception of purposivity according to Tiantai commentaries. As we saw there, this concept is what differentiates the *Lotus Sūtra* from any other sūtras and transforms the nature of causal relation between practice and its result of Buddhahood, revealing the intersubsumptive identity between cause and result and their reversibility. But even so, according to the narrative of the sūtra, what kind of “life” of the Buddha he is suggesting by this concept is unclear. How do Tiantai thinkers interpret and explain the concept of the tathāgata’s eternal life based on the tradition’s doctrines? In the section on the Ten Wondrousness of the Root Gate of *Fahuaxuanyi*, Zhiyi answers this by saying, “Regarding [the section about] the root of the wondrousness of life, as discussed in the [section on the root of the] wondrousness of cause, *it is wisdom that is considered to be [the root-]life*. (本壽命妙者。上因妙中以智慧為命。)”¹ Here Zhiyi clarifies that the tathāgata’s eternal “life” is not referring to Buddha’s biological life but rather “life as wisdom.” However, this does not yet fully explain the implications of the eternal life. What does the non-biological conception of the tathāgata’s life as wisdom mean? How does such “life” play a role in a

¹ T33.769a20-a21. My emphasis. The root of the wondrousness of cause section states, “經言。我本行菩薩道時。所成壽命者。慧命即本時智妙也。(T33.766a29-766b01.)”

broader context of Tiantai Three Truths? How does the life as wisdom relate to our earlier discussions about the category of root and traces, or the voice-hearing practice of Mahāyāna-śrāvakas, if there are any links between them? As we started to see in the last chapter, the first conceptual key to answering these questions is Tiantai's reorganization of the Mahāyāna doctrine of three-bodies of the tathāgata.

Zhiyi argues that these three are interpenetrated and become the content of the eternal tathāgata's life. This curious equation of the tathāgata's body and wisdom is crucial for advancing our present discussion. There we saw the tradition's astonishing claim that all activities of both enlightened *and deluded beings* are the content of the eternal life. This enormous and yet seemingly outlandish claim is anchored in a set of Tiantai premises, in particular, as I will argue in this chapter, the *circular* relation between Buddha and sentient beings. As the middle section of the present chapter will discuss, a motif of this "circularity" appears in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (大般涅槃經) that speaks about the "ocean of the tathāgata's life (如來壽命海)." This analogy implies that the lives of all beings in all realms of the Buddhist universe resemble "rivers" that flow into the single "ocean" of the tathāgata's life. But indeed, this implication is implied by the very next line in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, which flips the metaphor and compares the Buddha's life to a lake *from which all rivers flow out*. This is the metaphor Zhiyi uses for an explanation of the tathāgata's eternal life. An essential implication of this river-ocean analogy is to say that river *is* ocean, and ocean *is* river; in the same way, sentient being *is* Buddha, and Buddha *is* sentient being, forming a *circular* relation of identity between sameness and difference. This analogy shows that the original contrast of different names (i.e., river and ocean, sentient being and the Buddha) demonstrates that they are ultimately different names for

the same content. Importantly, the original contrast of names is not eliminated but preserved while exhibiting their identity. It is this paradoxical unity of oneness and difference that is undergirded by the interpenetrated three-bodies of the tathāgata, which is the content of the eternal life of the Buddha, of the ocean of the tathāgata’s life, whose motif is the mutually entailing *circular* relation between the single ocean and different rivers that supplement each other. This is what the Tiantai interpretation of the tathāgata’s eternal life culminates in. The first half of this chapter will tie these technical Tiantai terms together to build a foundation for my argument about the significance of the tradition’s emphasis on the *circular* nature of the relation between Buddha and sentient beings. With this in mind, the second half of the chapter will put Tiantai into a conversation with Hegelian materials. (I will explain this below.)

The present chapter will commence with laying out Tiantai materials and investigating the tradition’s interpretation of the tathāgata’s eternal life qua “life as wisdom.” An essential insight is that the eternal life reveals the eternal relationship between the Buddha and his disciples that has continued since the remote past. This leads to the tradition’s another counterintuitive argument for the “eternally abiding (*chuangzhu* 常住)” nature of buddhas *and sentient beings*. With this in mind, we will look at how Tiantai shows that the Buddha’s wisdom comprehends that what is experienced as true by the Buddha and by deluded sentient beings are a “single Coherence (*liyi* 理一)” and not two separate entities. This means that it is not only the life and experience of the tathāgata that is eternal but also the conditional life and experience of sentient beings that is in fact the unconditional eternal life *expressed as conditional*. Hence, strangely and yet strikingly, this means sentient beings have been buddhas since the inconceivable past. I will next

discuss how Tiantai thinkers consider the interpenetration of the tathāgata’s three-bodies as content of the eternal life, which is supported by Zhiyi’s usages of two different metaphors (i.e., “an heir with short longevity” and “the ocean of the tathāgata’s life”) that originally appear in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. We will examine the meaning of these analogies, as doing so is extremely useful to clarify philosophical implications of the concept of the tathāgata’s eternal life. Tiantai’s analogy of the tathāgata’s life as “ocean” shows the tradition’s emphasis on the *circularity* of opposed (and hence seemingly *non-circular*) relations such as Buddha and sentient beings, liberation and suffering, and dharma-nature and ignorance. I claim that this *circularity* captures Tiantai philosophy’s characteristic of Buddhahood undergirded in “perfect teaching (*yuanjiao* 圓教—*literally*, “circular” teaching).”

Importantly, Tiantai’s circularity that presents the picture of flowing into and out of the ocean is decisively different from how, for instance, the Neoplatonist metaphysics considers the emanation from the One and returning to it.² Moreover, while one could point out that Tiantai’s emphasis on circularity undermines a non-circular movement toward enlightenment³, I contest that this is a common misunderstanding about Tiantai’s non-exclusive middle. In light of this, I argue that Tiantai’s circularity reveals the true meaning of what it is to engage in a teleologically considered progression toward Buddhahood and that the truth about such progression is an *atelic* movement of circularity whose nature is the “*omnitelic*” *circulation* of Buddhahood (and equally of śrāvakahood,

² I will take up the different usages of “circularity” toward the end of this chapter and briefly introduce how Tiantai treatment of it differs from Proclus’s metaphysics that presents multiple levels of circular movements composed of “resting,” “procession,” and “reversion.”

³ Tamura, Yoshiro. 田村芳朗. and Umehara, Takeshi. 梅原猛. *Bukkyō no shisō 5: Zettai no shinri 《Tendai》*. 仏教の思想 5 : 絶対の真理 《天台》 (Buddhist Thought 5: Tendai—The Absolute Truth.) Tokyo: Kadokawashoten. 1970. 36-38.

hellbeinghood, etc.) that is inherent to each moment of experience of all beings. Therefore, Tiantai does not exhibit the one-sidedness of circularity but rather values both circular movement and non-circular progression (which can be called “dynamic progression of circularity”) grounded in the tradition’s omniscient position of non-exclusive middle.

Displaying the Tiantai materials in the first half of the present chapter will place us in a good position to finally dive into a comparative thought experiment that the introduction of this dissertation discussed. In light of this, the latter half of the present chapter examines a philosophical issue of “the relation of negation” embedded in teleology according to Hegel’s concept of “determinate negation” as discussed in his *Science of Logic*, and his account of “the cunning of reason” in that text, as opposed to the account in the *Philosophy of History*. My claim is that Hegel and Tiantai share the idea of the middle: Hegel’s middle is “determinate negation” and that of Tiantai is “omniscientness.” However, this presents an intriguing difference between the exclusive middle (Hegel) and non-exclusive middle (Tiantai). In Hegel, when finite beings advance, they are sublated and subsumed into the infinite. The infinite is the center that preserves only itself through, as Hegel says, the “illusory show” of finite beings—though, as we shall see, this idea is not as straightforward as may first appear.⁴ This is Hegel’s exclusive middle that differs from Tiantai’s omniscient idea of the *non-exclusive* middle that is prominently expressed in the idea of “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas.” The śrāvaka’s voice-hearing practice reveals itself to be *a version of* the bodhisattva practice of causing all to hear the Buddha-way. Unlike Hegel, revealing Buddhahood does not sublimate the śrāvaka practice, but rather discloses the omnipresence of

⁴ For, as we shall see below, what at first appears to be the infinite (the end), which should subsume the finite (the means), turns out to be the finite that is subsumed instead—the infinite lies in the means rather than the end. Nevertheless, the subsumption, though reversed from the expected direction of ordinary teleology where the means are subsumed into the end (a view often still attributed to Hegel—mistakenly, as I read him), the surprise reversed subsumption remains unidirectional. We will be exploring these points in detail at the end of this chapter.

the universal Buddhahood and the infinity of their specific form of bodhisattva practice. Hence, instead of being subsumed into the infinite through sublation, each finite determination becomes *the infinite itself*, into which all finite determinations are subsumed. Hence in Tiantai, the finite practice of śrāvakas advances and ends up attaining a double-meaning of the practice of śrāvaka and bodhisattva. In light of this Tiantai omniscience, we can see a weird result of this process: *the word “finite” becomes a name for the “infinite,” as “śrāvaka” becomes a name for “bodhisattva” whose practice advances toward the infinity of Buddhahood.* This is how the tradition presents a process of *the absolutization of the finite*, elevating their status to ultimacy.

Furthermore, the result of revealing the alternate names (or “versions”) for the same content exhibits an important Tiantai claim of the *circular* relation between ends (qua unendability) and means. As I will discuss in detail toward the end of the present chapter, this becomes particularly clear when we put two traditions (Hegel and Tiantai) into a conceptual dialogue within the Hegelian philosophical framework of “the cunning of reason.” This comparative thought-experiment clarifies both similarity and contrast between different philosophical traditions and thereby bolsters our understanding of both Western and Chinese Buddhist materials.⁵ In light of this, the present chapter aims at demonstrating this by borrowing the Hegelian idea of “the cunning of reason” as a conceptual framework to elucidate Tiantai’s claims about the intersubsumption of Buddhahood and sentient beings that is rooted in their mutually entailing *circular* relation.

Based on this method, I will argue that while Hegelian thought of the cunning of reason

⁵ However, as discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, such creative and useful method of using a Western framework to investigate elusive implications of Buddhist materials is rarely practiced in the modern study of Chinese Buddhist thought except for Brook Ziporyn, Steve Odin and a few others. In particular, when it comes to specifically Tiantai thought, Ziporyn is the only scholar who is capable of undertaking this difficult task of comparative investigation. However, scarcity of this form of study does not reflect the strength of this approach.

exhibits *dialectical progression*, the Tiantai version of “the cunning of Buddhahood,” as it were, exhibits *omnitelic circulation*.

Although a full exposition of this comparative point must be postponed to the end of the present chapter, the gist of my argument should be stated at the outset. As I mentioned above, traditional reading of Hegel’s cunning of reason as stated in *the Philosophy of History* shows that finite beings are an instrument for the world-spirit. The former is a means to an end of the latter that exploits the former for a realization of the end itself. However, as the revisionist reading of Todd McGowan argues, this traditional picture is in tension with how Hegel develops more nuanced discussion about the cunning of reason as expressed in the *Science of Logic* where we can see that the traditional account of the relation between ends and means is reversed and thereby shows that ends are subordinated into means. The traditional *teleological* picture undergoes a revision and ends up showing rather nonteleological or *atelic* relation between ends and means. However, this ultimate celebration of means does not dissolve the tension between ends and means because what this atelic reading shows is that the expansion of means becomes a new end. Therefore, atelic is still dealing with a gradual overcoming of the idea of external teleology. In contrast, what we will see in Tiantai is neither teleology nor atelic conception of ends and means. Rather, it is the *omnitelic* conception of ends and means where the mutual entailment of teleological and atelic, purpose and purposelessness becomes pervasive in each moment of purposive practice and purposeless activity.

In the present final chapter of this dissertation, I will make this fruit of our comparative thought-experiment an opportunity to defend Tiantai’s characteristic of circularity by bringing our earlier discussions about the mutually entailing relation between

ignorance and dharma-nature (Chapter 3), purpose and purposelessness (Chapter 4), and the ocean of the tathāgata’s life (Chapter 5) together into this final discussion. My position is consistent that the circular nature of Tiantai is the life-blood of the tradition’s philosophy undergirded in Three Truths that dynamically generates the power of practice for the universal Buddhahood.

Regarding the treatment of Hegelian materials, while covering the entirety of Hegelian scholarship is far beyond the scope of the present dissertation, I hope this constructive thought-experiment demonstrates the usefulness of using a Western method of thinking for the investigation of Chinese Buddhist materials and thereby contributes to initiating an interesting and meaningful conversation that enriches a philosophical study of the Hegelian and Tiantai materials bridging across traditions.

5.1 Tathāgata’s Eternal Life according to Tiantai

5.1-1 The “Single Coherence (*liyi* 理一)” of “Eternal Abiding (*changzhu* 常住)” Buddha and Sentient Beings

One of the most prominent places in Tiantai literature that extensively discusses the term “eternally-abiding” is the tradition’s commentary on the verse section of the second chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* where the sūtra says, “This dharma [of the *Lotus Sūtra*’ one-vehicle] abides in the dharma position. The worldly-attributes [of sentient beings, five-aggregates and their environment] are *eternally-abiding*. (是法住法位 世間相常住)”⁶ Zhiyi comments on this passage:

⁶ T9.009b10.

The sentence that reads “this dharma abides in the dharma-position” celebrates the oneness of Coherence (*li* 理). Sentient beings and Buddha are a single suchness and so are not two. Nothing goes beyond this suchness, and hence all dharmas take suchness as their “position.” “Worldly attributes are eternally abiding” means the enlightened Buddha takes “suchness” not only to be “position” and also to be “attribute.” [In this sense,] both “position” and “attribute” are [also] eternally abiding. It is also unenlightened sentient beings that take “suchness” to be “position” and also to be “attribute.” [Given this,] how can it not be the case that “position” and “attribute” are eternally abiding? [Moreover, i]f the attributes of this world are already eternally abiding, how can it not be that all of their Coherence is one?

是法住法位一行，頌理一也。眾生正覺，一如無二，悉不出如，皆如法為位也。世間相常住者，出世正覺以如為位，亦以如為相，位相常住。世間眾生亦以如為位，亦以如為相，豈不常住？世間相既常住，豈非理一？⁷

⁷ T34.058a09-a14. According to Zhanran’s subcommentary, this passage means: “Zhiyi speaks about “this dharma” and other matters in his discussion about the oneness of Coherence. First of all, the passage on “this dharma” directly displays the oneness of Coherence. The Coherence-nature of everyone in the world is originally pure. But if their Coherence was [truly] originally pure, why would they need to practice [anything]? Conversely, if their nature was originally tainted, their practice would never be brought to completion. This passage speaks of the purity of Coherence (i.e., in principle, as the truth to be discovered about them rather than the conscious realization of this truth), but not about purity as already accomplished phenomenally. What comes after saying “sentient beings” is an interpretation of “abiding in dharma position.” The implication of “this dharma” reappears in his reference of both “sentient beings” and “Buddha.” Since no dharmas surpass “suchness,” the “suchness” of all dharmas itself becomes “position.” This is the Coherence of “sentient beings,” and “the Buddha” is the one who already realized it. Thus, it is called “abiding.” Because of the oneness of “suchness” and “position,” both of them are called “position.” Dharmas of taint and purity are both called “this dharma.” The tainted refers to sentient beings, and the purity is precisely the Buddha. Sentient beings and Buddha are dharmas that can abide. The one suchness of taint and purity are positions where they abide. Since they are divided, limited, fixed and determined, they are called ‘position.’ There are not two names for position as it equally establishes the oneness of suchness. Since the position never leaves true suchness, it is only limitation about this. This limitation is omnipresent, because it pervades in all. This limitation is the utmost limit and at the same time the supreme pervasiveness. Like the “position” of a king in the secular world, [this “position”] becomes where a person abides (*zhu* 住), but this “position” itself is also his “nature.” [Because of this,] both “position” and “nature” are unchangeable. Like the kingly nature of this person, it does not alter from the beginning to the end. Whether he is clothed as a commoner or ascending the throne, his nature is the same, although his “attributes” (i.e., his appearance and clothing) are different. As for the passage explaining “the worldly attributes are eternally abiding”: “attribute” is what can be identified outwardly, while “position” is what can be abided in for a long time. There is no duality between “sentient beings” and “the Buddha” in their “attributes” and “position.” Revealing [the nature of] delusions is precisely Coherence, and [this] Coherence precisely means eternal-abiding (*changzhu* 常住). “The Buddha” has already realized the eternality (*chang* 常), which is also the unrealized Coherence of “sentient beings.” Therefore, the “attributes” and “position” of “the Buddha” and “sentient beings” are [also] eternally abiding. The “attributes” and “position” of the tainted and purity are already equally single suchness. Because of this, the Coherence of their “attributes” and “position” must be also like this. The Buddha depends on the practice of worldly beings that complete the ultimacy of Coherence. If you investigate this, you will be aware that there is this Coherence among the worldly beings. Therefore, they are [all] said to be “eternally abiding.” (理一中云是法者，初是法者，正示理一。世人悉謂理性本淨，理若本淨何用修之？若本不淨，修亦不成。今云理淨，非已淨也。眾生下，釋住法位。眾生、正覺，重出“是法”。法不出如，皆如為位，眾生理是，佛已證是，故名為住。如位一故，故名為位。染淨之法皆名是法，染謂眾生，淨即正覺。[眾生正覺，是能住法；染淨一如，是所住位。分局定限，故名為位；位無二稱，同立一如，不出真如，故唯局此。此局即通，遍一切故，局之極也，通之盛也。] 如世王位，為人所住，位亦性也，不可改故。如人

While it is intuitive to understand that the tathāgata’s life is eternally abiding, this passage from the *Lotus Sūtra* rather makes a less intuitive claim of the eternal abiding of the finite *worldly*-attributes. According to the sūtra, the reason for this is that “this dharma abides in dharma-position.” Zhiyi says this reasoning is undergirded by the oneness of Coherence between “attributes” and “position,” “sentient beings” and “the Buddha” to ultimately claim that by virtue of the oneness of all-pervasive Coherence they are all eternally abiding. What does this mean?

We can consider this through the Tiantai teaching of Four Onenesses (*siyi* 四一) that discusses the oneness of Buddha’s knowledge in terms of four aspects: “person,” “teaching,” “practice,” and “coherence.” *The Lotus Sūtra* reveals that Śākyamuni Buddha appeared in the world to teach and transform sentient beings so that they will attain supreme awakening that is equal to Buddha’s. Tiantai elaborates this idea of the Buddha’s appearance in the world based on Four Onenesses. “Oneness of person (*renyi* 人一)” means that Śākyamuni’s all types of disciples (e.g., bodhisattvas, śrāvakas, lay devotees, etc.) are, in fact, bodhisattvas, buddhas-to-be. The oneness of person is linked with the “oneness of teaching (*jiaoyi* 教一).” In the *Lotus Sūtra*, Śākyamuni reveals that while he instructs his disciples with different teachings to different types of his disciples, all these teachings have a single function of helping them to achieve their Buddhahood. This oneness of teaching is further linked with the “oneness of practice (*xingyi* 行一)” which shows that all practices undertaken by Śākyamuni’s disciples are bodhisattva practice. As

王性，始終不改，布衣登極⁷，相殊性一。世間相常住者，相可表幟⁴，位可久居，眾生正覺相位無二。顯迷即理理即常住，佛已契常眾生理是，故正覺眾生相位常住。染淨相位既同一如，是故相位其理須等。佛依世間修成極理，驗知世間本有斯理，故云常住。[T34.247a24-247b12.]

Zhiyi says, the vision of the Buddha-knowledge (*fozhijian* 佛知見) reveals that Śākyamuni's diverse types of disciples, teachings given to them, and their practices demonstrate all of their “*real* (*shi* 實)” (rather than “provisional”) aspect.

What is revealed by this single realness of the multiplicity of person, teaching, and practice is the oneness of coherence (*liyi* 理一): that the deluded experience of sentient beings is itself the “Buddha-knowledge” experienced by the Buddha.⁸ The Four Onenesses's elusive and yet crucial insight is, as Ziporyn captures, that the oneness of persons, for instance, of bodhisattvas and śrāvakas, means “they are one by being different, different by being one.”⁹ This applies not only to the persons, but also to what they think and do: it is not only that one and the same person is both a śrāvaka and a bodhisattva, but that śrāvaka ideas are bodhisattva ideas, and śrāvaka deeds are bodhisattva deeds, and the śrāvaka experiences are bodhisattva experiences, the truths realized in śrāvakahood are the truths realized in bodhisattvahood. The ingenuity of his explanation comes to fruition when he says,

A Bodhisattva must also at times limit his practice, his teaching, his person, his *own understanding* to the lesser, the truths of the Śrāvakas, in order to be a Bodhisattva at all: both as a phase of self-forgetting sometimes necessary in his Bodhisattva practice, as in the *Lotus* stories, and as a mastery of the viewpoints and truths accepted by the benighted sentient beings whom it is necessary to communicate with in order to practice the Bodhisattva Way. *All* objects of cognition are Li [coherence] because all without exception are what is to be realized to liberate oneself from suffering, to become a Buddha.¹⁰

⁸ Zhiyi says, “昔方便教亦得義論開示悟入，而非佛知見，故是權。今明佛知見，故是實，實即理一也。(T34.051c26-c28.)” From the viewpoint of śrāvaka disciples who hears Śākyamuni's teaching of one-vehicle, Four Onenesses will be: “真羅漢者，濁除根利，知非究竟。信真實法，未是後身，不起上慢。知非究竟，信於究竟，即信理一；無增上慢，即成行一；信則信教，是為教一；是佛弟子，則人一也。(T34.053c16-c19.)”

⁹ *Beyond Oneness and Difference*. 215.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 216.

Activities and cognitions of a bodhisattva must be limited to those of a śrāvaka in order to be a bodhisattva. This appears to be a contradictory claim if “bodhisattva” and “śrāvaka” are considered to be completely distinct from each other. The meaning of this paradoxical claim will be clear when we extend this relation to meaning that to be a Buddha is to be an unenlightened sentient being. In this Tiantai context, in order to be a Buddha, Buddhas must limit them to being ignorant, deluded and suffering that are normally considered to be the opposite cognition and experience of Buddhas. This astonishingly counterintuitive assertion is prominently expressed in Zhanran’s words:

In all cases, they are said to have a “position,” and it is for this reason that we speak of “the one Suchness.” They never leave Suchness, so they are limited to just this [state of “having a position,” i.e., being finite, determinate, locally coherent, and thus apparently simply located]. This limitation is omnipresent, is identical to interpenetration, since it pervades everywhere. *It is the utmost limitation, and at the same time the fullest omnipresence.*

不出真如故唯局此。此局即通遍一切故。局之極也。通之盛也。¹¹

To commonsense, the equation of the utmost limitation and the fullest omnipresence may sound like madness or a hallucination. What is truly going on in this passage? As we will see below, this counterintuitive claim shows that Buddhahood means a total inclusion and thorough interpenetration of the cognition of all non-buddha beings, and in this sense the unrestricted usages of limitation expresses the unlimitedness and ability of Buddhas. In order to make sense of this, let us consider this paradox from the viewpoint of the eternally-abiding “position” and “attribute” of Buddha and sentient beings according to Zhanran and Zhili.

In his *Shibuermen*, Zhanran uses the term “limitation (*ju* 局)” and says, “The dharma-substance of all buddhas is not omnipresent and yet is omnipresent. [In the same

¹¹ Ibid. 248. My emphasis.

way,] the coherence-nature of sentient beings is not limited and yet limited. (諸佛法體, 非遍而遍, 眾生理性, 非局而局。)” Here Zhanran shows that “limitation” pertains to sentient beings, and omnipresence is about Buddhas. How can we comprehend the relation between buddhas’ omnipresence and sentient beings’ limitation? If Zhanran is saying that they are two versions of the same thing, in what sense is one’s omnipresence *a version of* the other’s limitation and vice versa? According to Zhili, this line means, “Buddhas can pervasively penetrate wherever a limitation arises. [Alternately,] wherever buddhas pervade is where a self-limitation and self-determination [that sentient beings set by themselves] arise. (於生局處, 佛能遍融。於佛遍處, 生自局限。)”¹² Buddhas pervade where the limitation of sentient beings arises. Alternately, wherever buddhas are present is where sentient beings are present. This means that different attributes of the “omnipresent Buddha” and the “limited sentient beings” take the same “position.” Omnipresence pervades where a limitation arises, but also wherever what is omnipresent is present is where what is normally considered to be non-omnipresent, limited and determined is also present. Hence, both omnipresence and limitation are absolutely present in each other, taking precisely the same position.

In Tiantai, “limitation” refers to distinctions that the mind of sentient beings make based on their self-centered ignorance, that is, their limited perspective. As we discussed in the third chapter of the present dissertation, “dharma-nature” is used as a therapeutic antidote to “ignorance,” forming a mutually subsuming co-present relation between them. In Zhili’s present passage, something similar to this relation seems to be occurring. Buddha’s omnipresence allows him to freely limit and delimit himself. In this sense,

¹² T46.717c09-c10.

Buddha's limitation is the ability of his omnipresence that expresses the unobstructedness between limitations and unlimitedness. When a sentient being undergoes suffering due to his utmost perspectival limitation, a Buddha limits himself to this utmost limitation by virtue of his omnipresence in order to "match (*guan* 關)" with the moment of suffering, just as the rich father limits his external appearances in order to appropriately approach the poor son. This act of limiting is possible because, as Zhili says, buddhas can freely use any limitation and delimitation and thus pervasively penetrate wherever a limitation arises. In this sense, the utmost limitation is omnipresent and is at the same time the fullest omnipresence. However, as we saw in Zhiyi's passage above, they are not two distinct things but rather "single suchness (*yiru* 一如)." Sentient beings' moment of suffering always tends toward the end of suffering.

However, suffering and the end of suffering are not two distinct things converging into one place as if two different material objects from two opposite directions are thrown into the same space. Rather, they are two alternate ways of expressing the shared content. The motion toward the end of suffering is the cognition and experience of Buddha's compassion that is inherent to the unenlightened moment of suffering. Strikingly, then, what is inherent to each moment of suffering is an internal contradiction of the copresence of a force that creates suffering and attempts to end suffering. This is a movement toward suffering's end of itself, toward Buddhahood, the unlimitedness inherent to the deluded mind's limitation. Hence, we can say that wherever the suffering of sentient beings arises is where the Buddha's salvific presence thoroughly penetrates this suffering and vice versa. The mind's act of *limiting* dharmas is an attempt to liberate him or her from suffering. In this sense, limitation is an expression of the unlimitedness of Buddhahood appearing *as*

limit. A sentient being's mind's limitation is *a version of* buddhas' omnipresence. Hence, since the Buddha and sentient beings are co-present, omnipresence and limitation are also co-present in a sense of being an alternate version of each other. Sentient beings' limitation and Buddha's omnipresence are both everywhere and everywhen. Their "attributes (*xiang* 相)" and "position (*wei* 位)" both eternally abide.

In light of this, it is worth noting that in the end of Zhanran's sub-commentary to Zhiyi's passage says, "The Buddha depends on worldly phenomena to practice and accomplish the ultimate of Coherence. This shows that there is this Coherence among the worldly phenomena. Therefore, they are [all] said to be eternally abiding. (佛依世間修成極理，驗知世間本有斯理，故云常住。)" What does it mean to say that the Buddha *depends on* worldly phenomena for the ultimate completion of Coherence? "Coherence" in this context refers to the Three Truths: ontological ambiguity (Emptiness) qua determination (Provisionality) qua intersubsumption of all determinations, amounting to the ability of any determinate being to freely settle in any position, in any other determination. This is the "nature" shared by Buddha and sentient beings. However, from a viewpoint of "practice," the Buddha is the only one who has realized this Coherence, and sentient beings are yet to realize this nature and hence yet to complete the ultimacy of this Coherence. Zhanran's comment reminds us of its resemblance to "purity's" dependence on "taint" for the completion of Coherence. As we saw in the third chapter, purity and taint correspond to "Dharma-nature" and "ignorance" respectively. The former is a therapeutic device employed to create a contrast to and change a condition of the latter. This means that neither of them has a determinate state of existence. They are rather "empty," ontologically "ambiguous" by nature, and are illimitably open to otherness. The ultimate

point of this discussion was to claim that one is found in the other because neither exists apart from the other. Since the starting point of practice is ignorance by which their Coherence is not yet realized in practice, we can say that the completion of Coherence *depends on* the ignorant consciousness's ultimate awareness about its own ignorance.

In terms of the Buddha and sentient beings, the former depends on the latter's practice that completes their Buddhahood. With what we saw in the discussion about "eternally abiding" in mind, we can say that Buddha's omnipresence *depends on* the limitation of sentient beings *not* in a sense that one thing that is separate from the other depends this other to arise but rather in a sense that, as we discussed, one is a version of the other and vice versa. In this sense, both the realization of the Buddha and the activities of sentient beings are the eternally abiding content of the eternal life of the tathāgata. Perhaps, Zhiyi brings up the "ocean of life of the tathāgata" because it captures the oneness of Coherence that is universally shared in the attributes and position of the Buddha and sentient beings.

5.1-2 The Tathāgata's Life as the Ocean

Zhiyi claims that the eternal life of the tathāgata is expressed *as* various activities of causes and results practiced by sentient beings. He says:

It is like people in this world practice various activities, gather various treasures, and seek various ranks. However, if there were no life, how could there be any use of the ranks and wealth? The *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says, 'Like a wealthy man who begets a son who has a mark of short longevity according to a fortuneteller, and so is unable to inherit the family business. Once the parents find this out, they begin to ignore him as if he were a weed.' Dharma gates are the same as this. Practicing various causes, attaining various results, manifesting various penetration, transforming various sentient beings, preaching various dharmas and liberating various people, all of these reside in the ocean of the life

of the tathāgata. The heart of this ocean is dharma-nature, wisdom and response-body.

譬如世人修種種業，集種種寶，求種種位，若無壽命，用財位為？大經云：「譬如長者生育一子，相師占之有短壽相，不任紹繼。父母知己，忽之如草。」法門亦爾，行種種因，獲種種果，現種種通，化種種眾，說種種法，度種種人，總在如來壽命海中。海中之要，法性智應。¹³

Here Zhiyi brings up the intriguing analogy of “an heir with short longevity” to articulate that the salvific value and function of variously expressed dharma-gates are determined by the fact that they reside in the single “ocean of the tathāgata’s life,” without which dharma-gates would be with no use and value. For an accurate comprehension of the meaning of this passage, we must not overlook the fact that this usage of “tathāgata’s life as ocean” appears in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*¹⁴, and Zhiyi alludes to the sūtra in order to support his point. The sūtra states:

Mahākāśapa! In the same way, all the great rivers of life of people, gods heavens, on the earth and throughout space, enter the ocean of the tathāgata’s life. Therefore, the tathāgata’s life is immeasurable. Next, Mahākāśapa! Like four great streams of river flowing out of Lake Anavatapta, *all lives flow out of the tathāgata*.

迦葉！如是一切人中、天上、地及虛空壽命大河，悉入如來壽命海中，是故如來壽命無量。復次迦葉！譬如阿耨達池出四大河；如來亦爾，出一切命。¹⁵

Zhiyi’s passage says that all activities based on dharma-gates reside in the ocean of the tathāgata’s life. But the sūtra’s original passage reveals a further important implication of “residing” by stating that different rivers do not only flow into the single ocean, but also *different rivers flow out of the single lake just as all lives flow out of the tathāgata*. The

¹³ T34.129b20-b26.

¹⁴ It may seem strange that Zhiyi brings up this passage from the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* in order to explain the *Lotus Sūtra*’s concept of the eternal life. However, this seems to be based on an adequate reason. Since the *Lotus Sūtra* does not give any clue of a visualized image of the eternal life of the tathāgata, it makes sense that Zhiyi shows passages from other sūtras to explain the concept of the eternal life. The free textual usages also suggests that Zhiyi’s interpretation of the *Lotus* as “Perfect Teaching (圓教 *yuanjiao*)” by virtue of which *any* sūtras can inform of the *Lotus*.

¹⁵ T12.381b29-c04.

sūtra strangely juxtaposes next to each other two things that are normally considered to be opposites. This suggests that the relation between ocean and rivers, or the life of tathāgata and sentient beings, is undergirded by something we can think of nowadays as the actual process of the *circulation* of water. Whatever the original intention of the sutra may have been, here we can see that Zhiyi's usage of the sūtra's passage is a Tiantai appropriation of it. As I will show below, I argue that this *circular* nature of the relation between ocean and rivers has an unignorable significance for understanding how Tiantai considers the intersubsumptive relation between Buddha and sentient beings through the idea of the eternal life of the tathāgata.

With this in mind, first let us consider the implications of both of the metaphors Zhiyi alludes to. The point of the heir with short longevity seems to be that if the life of the child does not last long enough, a future inheritance of his family business cannot be realized. This shows the relation of dependence between them. The value of the heir depends on him having life that is long enough to succeed his parents.¹⁶ However, what is more important about this analogy is that the heir's longevity alters the meaning and value of the parents' inheritance, of *what they already established and have*. The short life of the heir changes the parents' activity—indeed, we should read this as implying that it changes not only their attitude toward their son but also their attitude toward their fortune, which now loses its meaning. The absence of a son changes the parents themselves. Absence of the longevity would prevent a takeover of the inheritance. Hence, it is the presence of the heir's long life that alters the future of their business that they already have in the present.

¹⁶ The value and dignity of the life of one's child should not be altered depending on his or her longevity. The present metaphor's point is not to argue about how such value arises but rather to explain the transformative effect it makes depending on whether there is a life lived or no such life to be lived.

In other words, the value of family inheritance *depends on* the life of an heir; but simultaneously, for the heir's functions to be fulfilled, he also depends on the fact that there is something to inherit from his parents. The inheritance is what is already there, and the heir's long life that extends into the future is what reveals the true value of this inheritance. This is how the continuous presence of the heir makes the family business truly meaningful. Similarly, without the presence of those who continue to develop the practice of the tathāgata after his extinction, what he taught to his disciples and a variety of his salvific activities in the past and present will meet with no future and hence will be extinguished. The non-extinguishment of these teachings depends on the tathāgata's long life and also the continued life of sentient beings who take over and manifest the tathāgata's salvific activities. Being a sentient being who will receive the Buddha's teachings resembles being an heir who inherits Śākyamuni's wisdom expressed in the *Lotus Sūtra* and takes over his pedagogical role to respond to the suffering of all sentient beings. How does this analogy relate to the other analogy of the "ocean" of the life of the tathāgata that appears in this passage?

From the viewpoint of the category of root and traces, we can say that the tathāgata's long life is root that retrospectively transforms the meaning of all traces, all dharma-gates, or any other teachings about the life of the Buddha given in the past. In the same way, as Zhiyi explains with the analogy of the ocean, all activities of the tathāgata return to "the ocean of the life of the tathāgata (如來壽命海)." In this sense, both the long-lived heir and the ocean function as placeholders of all activities that arrive at them. As a family business belongs to the heir, so do all dharma-gates of the ocean enter all the waters that flow from it, and vice versa. The ocean would not be what it is if the outflows and inflows were not

there, just as the family fortune loses its value without an heir. According to Zhanran, Zhiyi's characterization of the ocean of life as "dharma-nature, wisdom and response-body" refers to the tathāgata's three-bodies. Thus, here Zhiyi claims that the content of the ocean of the eternal life is the interpenetrated threefold body of the tathāgata. Then this would mean tathāgata's interpenetrated three-bodies will continue manifesting *through the continuous presence of the salvific activities undertaken by sentient beings*.¹⁷

The passage of the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* suggests the lives of all beings in all realms of the Buddhist universe resemble great rivers that flow into the single ocean of the tathāgata's life. The innumerable lives join together in this single life, from which all lives also flow out. This shows a visual image of "neither one nor different" relationship between the ocean and rivers, between the tathāgata and sentient beings. Each river is differently conditioned according to its location, altitude, and length. Its current, temperature, the amount of water it carries, the types of minerals in it, and the kinds of wildlife it nurtures are also different from river to river. Though all different rivers express different attributes and take different positionality nevertheless flow into the same ocean. But their arrival at the shared ocean is not an endpoint of their journey of streaming. As the sūtra states in the very next metaphor, the life of the Buddha is also like a lake from which all rivers flow—it is not only the end into which they flow, but also the source out of which they come. We may think of this in terms of the water of the ocean evaporating, moving with winds, forming clouds and returning to the ground as rain, snow or ice that seep into different rivers, continuing their unendable streaming motion. In this sense, rivers and

¹⁷ The dependence of the continuity of tathāgata's teachings on the salvific activities of sentient beings who receive the teachings that this passage seems to show is in accord with the major implication of the parable of skillful physician and his deranged children that appears in the latter half of the sixteenth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

ocean are in a *circular* relation. If the ocean were missing, there would be no rivers because the former is the content of the latter. Conversely, if rivers were missing, there would be no ocean. From this we know that ocean *is* river and river *is* ocean. This is so not only in terms of the “water” that constitutes both, or the lack of fixed boundary between them, but also in terms of their specific characteristics as river and ocean in their mutual dependence, even in the midst of their necessary difference. As soon as there is a river, there is an ocean, and vice versa. One ends up being found in the other because they are two different aspects of the same thing. In the same way, if the eternal life of the tathāgata were missing its relation with sentient beings and their practices, there would be no eternal life of the tathāgata.

This equally means that there is always the tathāgata’s eternal life that is wisdom qua the interpenetration of three-bodies every time a practice of sentient beings takes place (e.g., the duck cannot be removed from the duck-rabbit, and the same thing can be said about a rabbit.) Missing one or the other would only have to meet with a logical impossibility. Although we can make a distinction between “river” and “ocean,” wherever water travels, the universally shared nature of this traveling water, “wetness and its motion,” and indeed even “river, ocean, and the circulation between them,” always comes along. This universally shared omnipresent nature of the ocean-rivers is their oneness of Coherence. As rivers are the content of the ocean, activities that the tathāgata and sentient beings develop are the content of the tathāgata’s eternal life. But by virtue of this coextensive nature of Coherence, tathāgata’s life is identical to the life of sentient beings. Hence, all activities of sentient beings are those of the Buddha expressed as sentient beings’. And conversely, all of the Buddha’s activities are activities of sentient beings. In

this sense, as Zhiyi says, hearing Śākyamuni’s revelation of the tathāgata’s eternal life, his disciples enter a mental state of being free from all obstructions and “trust that all dharmas are precisely Buddha-dharma. (信一切法皆是佛法).”¹⁸ He continues:

Moreover, [those who hear the tathāgata’s long and distant life and give rise to having faith in and understanding this revelation of life] trust that Buddha-dharma is not separate from all dharmas. Although they do not attain Buddha-dharma or all dharmas, they nevertheless see all dharmas. They also see that Buddha-dharma is precisely one and yet three, three and yet is one. *By way of practicing a deluded way, they thoroughly penetrate the Buddha’s way.* Practice of the Buddha-way makes them pervasively penetrate all ways. Although they do not attain Buddha’s way or all ways, they thoroughly penetrate all of these ways. They exist in spite of having no [independent] existence, and in nevertheless existing, they yet have no existence. They neither exists nor do not exist. This resembles roads before a gate that have no obstructions and thoroughly penetrate in all directions of the east, west, south and north. Whatever all [six faculties of] eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind perceive are just like that.

又信佛法不隔一切法。不得佛法不得一切法。而見一切法。亦見佛法即一而三。即三而一。亦是行於非道通達佛道。行於佛道通達一切道。不得佛道一切道。而通達佛道一切道。無所有而有。而有無所有。非所有非無所有。如門前路通達一切東西南北無壅礙。眼耳鼻舌身意。凡有所對悉亦如是。¹⁹

Zhanran comments on this passage and says that Śākyamuni’s disciples “trust the tathāgata’s long and distant transformative effect and therefore can know the absolute Coherence of the root and the trace. This is what the Buddha originally realized. (又信如來化功長遠，是人能知本迹妙理是佛本證。)”²⁰ Full comprehension of Buddha-dharma as the Three Truths makes his disciples see the unobstructability between Buddha-dharma and all other dharmas. Their interpenetration attained through the Three Truths makes it the case that *practicing a deluded way is how such practice thoroughly penetrates the Buddha way.* According to Zhanran, this means “an ability to fully penetrate the non-Buddha ways

¹⁸ T34.137b22-b23.

¹⁹ T34.137b23-137c01.

²⁰ T34.342c01-c02.

of the nine realms as the function of the wondrous way of the realm of the pure Buddha-dharma. (謂能達九界非道，純佛法界妙道之用。)²¹ Buddha's way is not separate from non-Buddha ways. As Zhanran explains here, the Buddha way does not reside anywhere outside nine other realms because it rather means the “ability to fully penetrate” these nine realms. This means the Buddha realm is revealed as a result of fully penetrating and understanding the cognition and experience of all nine realms. The Buddha realm is the other aspect of all non-Buddha realms, and conversely the nine realms are how the Buddha realm is expressed as something other than itself on the surface. In this sense, just as great rivers all reside in the single ocean, all nine non-Buddha realms reside in the single Buddha realm.

Just as all rivers flow out of the single lake, the nine non-Buddha realms emerge out of the Buddha-realm, which is the other aspect of the nine. This then means that one thing expressed as nine different ways flows into itself. And from this oneness, the difference also belonging to itself is expressed in nine ways which also remain itself. This is a self-returning to itself and at the same time the self-diversification of itself. But since Buddha is now a name for each of nine realms, there is no Buddha that is put in contrast to non-Buddha subjects. A doer of this self-return and self-diversification is no one and yet is everyone. An ordinary conception that separates “self” and “other” is an abstraction that corresponds to nothing in reality. Self and other are now in a relation of three and yet one, that is emptiness, provisional posits, and the unendable process of ambiguity. There are no obstructions between them. All dharmas are Buddha dharmas in a sense of being omnipresent, absolute, middle-way Buddha-nature (*zhongdaofoxing* 中道佛性) that can,

²¹ T34.342c08-c09.

unobstructed, limit and delimit itself, freely showing its presence and absence in any positions at any time. The ocean thoroughly penetrates rivers, and vice versa. They are fully omnipresent in each other because where there is one is always where the other is. In the same way, the activities of Buddha and sentient beings interpenetrate one another, forming an unobstructed oneness between them. This insight of Tiantai is noteworthy in the academic study of the philosophy of religions.

When Tiantai text says that all sentient beings flow into the single life of the tathāgata and also flow out of it, this may evoke a monotheistic worldview, which posits that all creation comes from creator God and that they return to God when the world is brought to an end. However, this is not what is going on in Tiantai whose universe is not oriented by the exclusive centrality of God, which is akin to the “exclusive middle” (rather than Tiantai’s “*nonexclusive middle*”). Unlike the monotheistic worldview, a hierarchy between a single source and what derives from it does not constitute the Tiantai’s sense of circularity. This circularity is also greatly different from the Neoplatonists’ emanational account of metaphysics, which takes the One to be the solely perfect and absolute source of everything that stems from it, producing an imperfect multitude of offshoots. For instance, according to Proclus, the One is undergirded in a triadic emanation model that consists of the moments of “remaining (*monē*)” of the One, “procession (*prohodos*)” from it, and “reversion (*epistrophē*)” toward it. This *circular* movement produces derivative circuits of lower elements that also repeat the same tripartite circular structure.²² However, this is not how the idea of circularity is viewed in Tiantai. Proclus’ threefold circular model is anchored in a hierarchical ladder that separates different levels of circuit. While each level

²² Chlup, Radek. *Proclus: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2012. 64-65.

of circuit preserves a certain autonomy and creates a further level of circuit, it becomes weaker as each circuit becomes distant from the One, the only source of all other layers of circuits. Although this emanational model contains *circular* movement, it is rigidly undergirded in the exclusive centrality of the One, from which everything arises and toward which all of it returns. In contrast, in Tiantai, the eternal life of the tathāgata is not given such exclusive centrality. No rivers that flow out of the ocean or lake are in a hierarchical relation with anything, just as there is no hierarchical relation between the Buddha realm and other nine realms. As we discussed, upon close examination, what we find out is that ocean *is* river, and river *is* ocean. There is no exclusive center in this picture and hence *any position can be a center*, and such centrality can be freely shifted as skillful means that is determined according to the conditions of the shifting needs and desires of sentient beings.

In Tiantai, it is not just there is no Creator in its universe. More importantly, all dharmas including delusions, attachments, and suffering that are normally put in opposition of enlightenment, freedom and liberation are themselves, as we just saw above in Zhiyi, Buddha-dharmas. The thoroughgoing absence of the exclusive centrality in the Tiantai universe makes each moment of deluded activities of sentient beings becomes a center, the entire dharma-realm (*fajie* 法界), just as each moment of a river *is* how the ocean is expressed *as* river, and vice versa. All conditional dharmas are unconditional, omnipresent, eternally abiding Buddha-dharmas.²³

²³ Regarding the equation of all dharmas to be Buddha-dharmas, Ziporyn points out Tiantai's distinct thought that is relevant to a contemporary discussion in the field of philosophy of religion: "At first hearing this may seem like a familiar pantheistic idea, a claim of omnipresence of the highest being similar to that asserted in some forms of Hinduism (Brahman is everything), Daoism (Dao is everything), and even, in a sense, in monotheism (God's presence is everywhere). But it is important to see that what is being presented here is something quite different

The analogy of the ocean-river relation further informs topics we discussed in earlier chapters. If we metaphorically think of śrāvakas as if each path of their practice is a “river” that has an individual consciousness, we can say that they start with a voice-hearing practice in order to achieve their goal of becoming an arhat so that they would no longer need to return to the threefold world by ceasing the “flow” of their cycle of rebirth. This practice would mean to end a stream of river at one point so that it will no longer flow into an ocean. However, practically speaking, stopping the flow of a river is an impossible task. Such an attempt would only produce a ceaselessly expanding pond or divided paths of rivers because the abundant pouring from the ocean never ceases. Any attempts to stop the river merely alter the conditions of rivers and their forms of expression. Hence, desire for stopping the river is a wish for an abstract idea that does not correspond to reality. In this sense, we can make sense of the *Lotus Sūtra* claims that achieving the śrāvaka goal, stopping the river’s flow, was provisionally set up for them to ultimately surpass this temporal goal.

from the belief that ‘all things are in some sense divine,’ or ‘all things are God’s will,’ or even, say, a more thorough pantheist belief that ‘all things are themselves inalienable aspects of the divine Absolute.’ The main difference lies in the role of delusional human desire and will (in Tiantai they are also included in the Absolute), the role of illusion (it is also included in the Absolute), and the definition of what is highest (it is not a matter of teleology or substance). For in doctrines that claim, ‘All things are divine’, ‘divine’ generally means *arranged by the highest intelligence*, while ‘all things’ generally means merely *everything that is real rather than an illusion, and not including disobedient human will or inaccurate human cognitions*.

In contrast, ‘All dharmas are Buddha-dharmas’ means that all aspects of experience without exception—including all volitions, feelings, and cognitions, and without any escape clause via an appearance/reality dichotomy—are aspects of the experience of the full enlightenment of a Buddha. ‘Buddha,’ of course, does not mean ‘a perfect omnipotent being who creates and wills the world to achieve a consciously preconceived project.’ In Tiantai context, it means ‘someone who is liberated from the suffering intrinsic to any possibly encountered objects, from the conditionality of all conceivable determinate being, by realizing the interpenetrating Three Truths, thereby seeing all determinate things as both conditional and unconditional, and compassionately liberating all other beings, now seen to be non-dual with himself and each other, in the same way.’ To say that all things are an aspect of Buddhahood thus has nothing to do with asserting that they are created to fulfill some particular goal, to be subordinated to a project or a part of a deliberately wrought whole, or to be unilaterally reducible to a metaphysical substance that lies beyond and is deeply unlike the appearance of things. On the contrary, it means absolute sovereignty, in the sense we’ve discussed, for each and every individual moment of appearance, to any sentient being however deluded, as a result of the exceptionless interpenetration of the Three Truths. (*Emptiness and Omnipresence*. 276-277.)”

Hence, the real goal for them is to let the river ceaselessly flow so as to meet with an ocean, that is, to unendingly undergo the cycle of rebirth to acquire more skills so as to become an effective bodhisattva. But the result of this practice does not lead to a third place that is separate from the cycle of rebirth or liberation put in contrast to it. Rather, the final result of the practice reveals that the liberation (nirvāṇa) is not an escape from but rather the *mastery, or total inclusion*, of the cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra). There is no nirvāṇa anywhere outside saṃsāra. Liberation and suffering are not separate from each other because a true liberation means a thorough comprehension of suffering. In the same way, the point of unobstructedly traveling downstream of the river is to be ultimately aware that there are no rivers but only one ocean (and hence that all rivers are from the beginning the ocean itself), which is the real-attribute of what is initially conceived as a mere “river”—but also that there is no ocean apart from the rivers qua rivers. From the viewpoint of having already known that all rivers flow into the one ocean, each river will retrospectively realize that what appeared to be a life as a river had always been the ocean expressed *as* a river. The ultimate single Coherence of the river and ocean depends on this progression of the river’s cultivation of their self-awareness. But this progress that posits a contrast between river and ocean makes sense because there is oneness of Coherence that is omnipresent in all rivers and the ocean. With this in mind, we can say that it is in this sense that the Buddha depends on the practice of sentient beings for the ultimate realization of Coherence. But what this practice is *truly* doing from the beginning is just becoming the flowing motion of the *circular* nature of their original relationship. Therefore, the ultimate point for Tiantai is not to say that the progression of practice leads to a final goal of discovering the self as an ocean. Rather, the weight is put on the importance of unending

bodhisattva practice, that is, how the discovery of ultimate truth through their progression of practice enriches the *circularity*²⁴ of the relationship between the Coherence and practice.

Importantly, Tiantai's emphasis on circularity does not undermine the non-circular movement of progression toward Buddhahood.. This circularity does not eliminate a contrast between seemingly opposed items such as ocean and river, liberation and suffering, and dharma-nature and ignorance, and *thereby* preserves them and exhibits a dynamic power that advances toward bodhisattva practice. The true point of the circularity is that it is grounded in Tiantai Three Truths and hence does not eliminate a dialectical progression through contrast. For instance, as the ocean-river analogy suggests, the opposition of ocean and river is used for advancing the streaming movement of the river, and yet from the viewpoint of having already arrived at the ocean, the river will realize that its linear progression has always been expressing the *circular* nature of the infinity of the ocean appearing as non-circular.

In this sense, the circularity of the river-ocean relation functions to reveal the true meaning of non-circular movement of progression from river to ocean. The river first goes toward the otherness of the ocean (non-circular) and ends up returning to itself (circular) realizing that it is *omnipresent* as the ultimate oneness of the ocean and river, and equally *omniabsent* as a provisionally distinct river that posits its contrast to the ocean. The non-circular movement is, in fact, already how the circularity of itself is expressed as non-circular, and vice versa. Thus, Tiantai thought does not fall into the one-sidedness of

²⁴ In his "Referential Relation and Beyond" (2017), Kantor discusses a "circular" mutuality between the root and traces is good, but his translation of *ji* as "inseparability" shows that his take diverges from Ziporyn's Tiantai where he considers *ji* to mean "identity" rather than mere "inseparability."

circularity but establishes its philosophical apparatus based on the *dynamic progression of circularity* that posits non-circular movement of progression. Anchored in Tiantai's non-exclusive middle, this circularity does not sublimate the non-circular movement to subsume into itself but rather reveals the truth about the non-circular that is from the beginning identical to the circular. The same logic of circularity applies to the circular relation between Buddhahood and sentient-beinghood, Mahāyāna-śrāvakas and śrāvakas, Dharma-nature and ignorance, and purposelessness and purpose. As we will see in the final part of the present chapter, this is an essential point of our comparative thought experiment in relation to Hegelian materials.²⁵

5.2 Hegel and Tiantai—Introduction

As I discussed in the introduction of the present dissertation, this study concludes by facilitating a textual dialogue between different traditions (Tiantai and Hegel) in a broader context of the academic study of religions. Zhiyi's elaboration of root and traces grounded in the Tiantai concept of the non-exclusive middle (*budanzhong* 不但中) can offer a response to an issue embedded in the teleological conception of the relation between ends and means. The philosophical problem inherent to this relation is the relation of negation: the end involves some form of negation of means. In this relation of negation, something about means has to be given up to realize the end. What seems to be inherent to this teleological relation is that means is placed under the dominance of ends that alone give the means its value and meaning.

In this picture, end involves the negation of means; the latter is ultimately susceptible

²⁵ As the present chapter discusses in its final section, the river-ocean relation exhibits, *not* dialectical progression (Hegel), but rather dialectical *circulation*. (Tiantai.)

to and sacrificed for the former. A chief example of this in the Western thought is represented in Hegel's cunning of reason as elaborated in the introduction of his *Philosophy of History*, according to which one's pursuit of human passion (means) is how God's purpose (end) is covertly fulfilled. Hence, Hegel's solution for the potential conflict between finite and divine purpose seems to be by sublating the former and thereby only preserving the latter. In this picture, preserving itself in the cunning of reason, the divine purpose advances toward a single historical telos.²⁶ Hence, in the *Philosophy of History*, the cunning of reason seems to make finite purposes and activities a mere means and thereby sacrifice them for the greater purpose of advancing reason's own historical agenda. However, this picture of "the slaughterhouse of history"²⁷ seems to be significantly altered in the *Science of Logic*, where reason does *not* use finite purposes and activities to fulfill its own telos. As Todd McGowan points out, what it exhibits is rather a "dramatic reversal of the end and means relationship" by way of which means ceases to be under the dominance of ends. Being free from such dominance, means becomes a site for realization of an end and the self-determining activities of reason. Although the *Philosophy of History* determines finite purposes and activities as means that are used up and sacrificed for a greater purpose of reason, the *Science of Logic* shows that reason does not use means to

²⁶ There are different interpretations of "the cunning of reason" in Hegelian scholarship. One reason for this is that Hegel's presentation about the topic seems to differ even among his texts. *The Science of Logic* contains seemingly more nuanced discussions about the topic and leaves a room for different interpretations (e.g., McGowan [2019], Rosen [2014], Winfield [2012], Lampert [2011]). As I mentioned in the present dissertation's Introduction, this is where we can see a philosophical divergence between Tiantai and Hegelian thought. The most significant difference between two traditions is that the Tiantai version shows the *purposelessness* of Buddhahood in which all non-buddha beings and *their* purposes are preserved. In Tiantai, purposelessness thereby reveals both the expandability of finite purposes (means) and the necessity of preserving, rather than sacrificing, all these purposes for their Buddhahood. The result is that the finite purposes that are recontextualized through the purposelessness of Buddhahood ultimately revert to the immanent process of the paradoxical embodiment of purposelessness in the form of finite purposes.

²⁷ McGowan, Todd. *Emancipation After Hegel: Achieving a Contradictory Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2019. 145.

realize its own end. Rather, it celebrates means as something more honorable than the immediate enjoyment of the realization of the subjective end. Importantly, as I will discuss below, what advances this triumph of means is Hegel's concept of "determinate negation," which plays a central role in the teleological process of the dialectical progression. This raises a set of questions important to our present concern about the relation of negation between ends and means. What is the essential difference between Hegel's peculiar usage of "negation" and an ordinary sense of negation that eliminates what is negated and thereby produces no positive content as a result of the negation? What role does negation play in the cunning of reason according to the *Science of Logic*? How does the cunning of reason end up honoring means over ends through determinate negation? What kind of philosophical affinity can this possibly have, if there is any, in relation to Tiantai version of the cunning of reason, which could be perhaps coined as "the cunning of Buddhahood?"

In light of these concerns, the rest of this dissertation will take up the cunning of reason according to the *Science of Logic*. We will examine how this concept can illuminate philosophical implications of Tiantai materials that we discussed in earlier chapters. I will first give an overview of Hegel's concept of "determinate negation" as used in the dialectical process of "sublation" according to the *Science of Logic*, based on Terje Sparby's interpretation of the topic. Leveraging a specific nuance of the Hegelian concept of negation, I will next trace Hegel's thoughts about the relation between ends and means in the cunning of reason. There, I will consult Todd McGowan's interpretation of the concept that exhibits a stance that is closer to the Tiantai version of the "cunning." Setting up the Hegelian materials thus, I will conclude the chapter by discussing how the cunning of reason can be a useful conceptual framework for understanding Tiantai materials. In

particular, my goal is to show how Hegel's celebration of means resembles to the Tiantai's process of the infinite extension of the śrāvaka's means of voice hearing practice that becomes the content of the eternal life of the tathāgata.

In the case of Tiantai, the end-means relation entails an essential difference from Hegel: an ultimate end of Buddhahood is not an end but is the eternal unendability. As we saw earlier in the present chapter, this unendable Buddhahood is undergirded by the mutually entailing *circular* relation between ends (qua unendability) and means. I argue that this implication is informed by applying the Hegelian framework of the cunning of reason to Tiantai's *circular* intersubsumptive relation between Buddha and sentient beings that represents the tradition's distinct concept of non-exclusive middle. This results in claiming that while Hegelian thought of the cunning of reason exhibits dialectical *progression*, the Tiantai version of "the cunning of Buddhahood" exhibits dialectical *circulation*. The scope of the present investigation of the Hegelian materials has to be relatively narrow, as this dissertation cannot cover the abundance of primary and secondary materials about the topic that are available in the field. Such investigation has to be undertaken on another occasion in the future. However, by focusing on a specific aspect of the topic, I hope to contribute to initiating an interesting and meaningful conversation that enriches a philosophical study of the Hegelian and Tiantai materials bridging traditions.

5.2-1 Negation and Sublation in Hegel

In *Hegel's Conception of Determinate Negation*, Sparby says that "the idea that a negation can be determinate, and, furthermore, that a determinate negation can establish a speculative unity of opposites, is perhaps the singularly most distinctive—and least

understood—characteristics of Hegel’s thinking.”²⁸ A consensus among scholars is that “the determinate negation plays an important role when it comes to establishing the immanent and necessary progress in the development of the determinations of pure thought.”²⁹ However, there are different views on how to interpret the concept itself and “how the determinate negation relates positively to that which it is a negation of.”³⁰ According to Sparby, while Hegel’s concept of “negation” has been extensively studied, the term “determinate negation” started to draw attention only recently through the work of Robert Brandom.³¹ Brandom’s pragmatism identifies determinate negation with his idea of “material incompatibility” grounded in the law of contradiction that is chiefly concerned with the relation of exclusion. As Sparby shows, a common point of critique about Brandom’s determinate negation is that it “remains within the sphere of *Verstand* while disregarding *Vernunft*.”³² As a result, for him, determinate negation leaves nothing because it produces no content, while the focus of the contemporary scholarship is on distinguishing determinate negation from mere denial and how to understand the *positive* roles that it plays. Sparby argues that the problem of this interpretation is Brandom’s treatment of this concept “solely as a relation of exclusion, while consciously leaving out the positive aspect of the determinate negation.”³³ Sparby does not think this is a correct understanding of Hegel’s concept of determinate negation. It is not the case that any finite determinate entity or what is negated will vanish and thereby result in leaving nothing in

²⁸ Sparby, Terje. *Hegel’s Conception of the Determinate Negation*. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 2015. 1.

²⁹ Ibid. 9.

³⁰ Ibid. 9.

³¹ Ibid. 1.

³² Ibid. 5.

³³ Ibid. 3. Sparby says, “This puts him at odds with the main tendency within the scholarship, where the focus has been how to understand this positive aspect, trying to differentiate the determinate negation from a negation that is not simply a denial, but has a positive content of its own, and somehow includes that which is negated. (Ibid. 3)”

the dialectic. Rather, what determinate negation negates is an immediacy of a form of consciousness and *thereby further determines* it in a dialectical progression, and hence entails a *positive* aspect. Earlier in the study, Sparby shows that Hegel's earliest usage of the concept of determinate negation is traceable to his Jena-metaphysics that shows a proof that Brandom's interpretation made determinate negation Brandomian rather than Hegelian.³⁴ In the Jena-metaphysics, the dialectical thinking meant "to have something negate itself while not becoming nothing but rather turning into a new shape that includes the preceding development in it."³⁵ Sparby points out that Brandom's misconception comes from the fact that he is not aware of the much more nuanced idea of negation presented in the *Science of Logic* that considers determinate negation to be, in Sparby's words, "the unity of a preceding concept and the opposite that develops out of it, *and* it is the negation of negative reason; it is positive reason."³⁶

He seems to mean that determinate negation unites preceding and subsequent concepts that are opposed to each other in a dialectical progression. But a more important point of this passage is that Hegel's concept of determinate negation exhibits *positive* reason by virtue of it being "the negation of negative reason." I think this interpretation is tenable because, for instance, in "Preface to the first edition" of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel states that reason has *both* negative and positive aspects. He says, "[R]eason is negative and *dialectical*, because it resolves the determinations of the understanding into nothing; it

³⁴ Ibid. 8.

³⁵ Ibid. 14. Sparby says, "Hegel's conception of the determinate negation builds on Kant's thoughts on determination and opposition, and is a response to Kantian dualism on behalf of unity. The determinate negation results from oppositions that meet in the same subject, and unavoidably so, but the result is neither nothing, nor a neutral state, but rather a new determination. (Ibid. 19)"

³⁶ Ibid. 173. "Hegel identifies the determinate negation with 'die Einheit seiner und seines Entgegengesetzten.' (Ibid. 172)"

is positive because it generates the universal and comprehends the particular therein.”³⁷

Negation plays an essential role in the dialectical progression of reason. What it negates is a difference of particular determination of understanding. An insight important to our present concern is that reason both *negates* the particular determination and thereby plays a *positive* role that “comprehends” rather than eliminates or throws away the particular.

Hence, as Sparby points out, Hegel’s usage of negation exhibits a positive role. For Hegel, what is essential to the dialectical progression of reason is “the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content.”³⁸ This passage is immediately followed by another important sentence from Hegel: “[I]n other words, that such a negation is not all and every negation but the negation of a specific subject matter which resolves itself, and consequently is a specific negation.”³⁹

Here the “determinations of the understanding” to be resolved that we saw earlier is more precisely stated as “a *specific* subject matter.” This passage shows Hegel’s specific treatment of “negation” that itself is not *merely* negation (in a sense of a total elimination of what is negated) but “a specific negation” or, according to the Giovanni translation, “determinate negation.”⁴⁰ Although I cannot go into a close analysis of the original

³⁷ *The Science of Logic*. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. Translated by Miller, Arnold V. Amherst: Humanity Books. 1999. 28. As Hegel says in the *Logic*, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he dealt with “forms of consciousness each of which in realizing itself at the same time resolves itself, has for its result its own negation—and so passes into a higher form. (Ibid. 54.)” Each form of consciousness realizes and resolves itself *at the same time*. Hegel seems to be here claiming that reason’s positive (realizing) and negative (resolving) aspects operate *simultaneously*.

³⁸ Ibid. 54. Giovanni’s translation of this passage says, “...the recognition of the logical principle that negation is equally positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content [...] (*The Science of Logic*. Trans. by Giovanni, Geroge di. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. 33)”

³⁹ Ibid. 54.

⁴⁰ The Giovanni translation of the passage that contains these terms reads: “[S]uch a negation is not just negation,

German text of this passage due to a lack of my linguistic ability, translated texts by Miller and Giovanni show that Hegel's usages of "specific determination (Miller)" and "determinate negation (Giovanni)" both demonstrate a positive function that produces a *content*.⁴¹ Hegel even says that the determinate negation is a concept that is "higher and richer" *through the negation* of what precedes it and thereby exhibits "the unity of itself and its opposite."⁴² The determinate negation plays an essential role throughout the *Science of Logic* and is notably expressed in his famous usage of *Aufheben*, to which our discussion now turns.

Aufheben is an ambiguous German term that entails seemingly contradictory meanings. In the end of the chapter on "Being" in the *Science of Logic*, which is three pages prior to the beginning of the subsequent chapter on "Determinate Being," Hegel discusses a double meaning of *Aufheben*, which is often translated as "to sublatare." He says, "On the one hand it means to preserve, to maintain, and equally it also means to cause to cease, to put an end to."⁴³ In sublation, "something is removed from its immediacy and so from an existence which is open to external influences, in order to preserve it."⁴⁴ Sublation entails both removal and preservation at the same time in a sense that something is preserved as a result of the removal or negation of the immediacy of that thing, by way of which it is further determined. The way it works is that in the sublation process negation

but is *the negation of the determined fact* which is resolved, and is therefore determinate negation. (33)"

⁴¹ The Miller translation has: "Because the result, the negation, is a *specific* negation it has a *content*. (54)"

Giovanni translation has: "Because the result, the negation, is a *determinate* negation, it has a *content*. (33)"

⁴² *The Science of Logic*. 54. In *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel says, "The scepticism that ends up with the bare abstraction of nothingness or emptiness cannot get any further from there, but must wait to see whether something new comes along and what it is, in order to throw it too into the same empty abyss. But when, on the other hand, the result is conceived as it is in truth, namely, as a *determinate* negation, a new form has thereby immediately arisen, and in the negation the transition is made through which the progress through the complete series of forms comes about of itself. (87)"

⁴³ *Ibid.* 107.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 107.

means the negation of the *immediacy* of what undergoes this process rather than a total annihilation of it. Negation of the immediacy exhibits a positive function because it further *determines* what is sublated. In this sense, sublation must be “especially distinguished from *nothing*.”⁴⁵ This is because “[w]hat is sublated is not thereby reduced to nothing.”⁴⁶ Thus the underlying logic is shared between “sublation” and “determinate negation” that, as we saw, does not resolve things into abstract nothing. For Hegel, “[n]othing is *immediate*; what is sublated, on the other hand, is the result of *mediation*.”⁴⁷ As he discusses in an early part of the Doctrine of Essence, sublation that mediates its immediacy is a *self-reflection* or *self-development*. Sublation does not sublata and determine something that imposes its power from outside. Rather, “[i]t is a sublating self-relation.”⁴⁸ The result of sublating the negative is that “it posits and sublates itself at the same time.”⁴⁹ This means that “the sublating of this positedness is not again a positedness as the negative of an other, but is a uniting with itself, the positive unity with itself.”⁵⁰ Thus, this is “a unity returned into itself”⁵¹ through the negation of its own rather than of something exposed from outside.

Starting with a dialectical progression that exhibits the unity between “being” and “nothing” into “becoming,” the *Science of Logic* culminates in a discussion about “teleology,” “life,” and “the absolute idea.” A peculiar character of determinate negation that needs to be examined for the concern of the present dissertation is the sublation process in the “teleology” chapter that exhibits a relation between a subjective end and a

⁴⁵ Ibid. 107.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 107.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 107.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 434.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 434.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 434.

⁵¹ Ibid. 434.

means. Hegel shows that in the teleological process, the subjective *end* cannot realize itself on its own. Because of this, it takes recourse to means for its realization. Once this mediation process occurs, the end sublates itself through *means*, realizing itself in the latter. The realization of the subjective end in the means is a realization of itself through the negation of the immediacy of the end itself and hence is reason's return to itself. Reason expressed in a subjective end self-sublates and realizes itself not in a free pursuit of end but rather in an act of investing into means. A prominent insight of this is that *means* become more powerful than ends and thereby opens up a path for freedom. This is what Hegel shows in his discussion about "the cunning of reason." This insight will become a point of contact with Tiantai materials that exhibit how the subjective end of achieving a śrāvaka goal realized in their voice-hearing practice (means) extends to the Mahāyāna-śrāvaka's bodhisattva practice of "causing all hear the voice of the Buddha-way," which is the content of the eternal life of the tathāgata. With this in mind, let us take a look at Hegel's discussion about the cunning of reason according to the teleology chapter and then consider a possibility of making a creative adaptation of this concept to the Tiantai material.

5.2-2 The Cunning of Reason according to the *Science of Logic*

In the "Teleology" chapter of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel says, "[T]he end posits itself in a *mediate* relation with the object and *interposes* another object *between* itself and it, may be regarded as the *cunning* of reason. The finitude of rationality has, as remarked, this side, that the end enters into relationship with the presupposition, that is, with the externality of

the object.”⁵² According to Hegel, in the first moment of a teleological process, a subjective end is merely an urge. Since it cannot realize its end by itself, it posits an object for the realization. As Hegel says, “[t]he end, because it is finite, requires a means for its realization.”⁵³ In this sense, subjective end *depends on* the means for its realization because of its lack of self-sufficiency to bring itself into fruition. Because of this, in the next moment it posits an object and makes it means. This positing of the means is at the same time to sublimate the end. Importantly, this sublation does not eliminate the end and rather *makes the end subsist in the means*.⁵⁴ In other words, when the end mediates itself through means, this means contains the subjective end within itself and hence no longer stands against the end. Thus, subjective end is sublated and undergoes an alteration. It is in the means rather than ends where the realization of the subjective end occurs. Hence, reason, the rationality of the subjective end, manifests in the means. In the cunning of reason, the dominance of end over means is undermined, and as a result, the means plays a more important role than the end. Hegel says, “[I]n the means, therefore, the rationality in it manifests itself as such by maintaining itself in *this external other*, and precisely *through* this externality. To this extent the *means is superior* to the *finite ends of external purposiveness*.”⁵⁵

Reason manifests itself in and through the means, that is, the “external other.”⁵⁶

Therefore, in teleology, although the means starts with being under the dominance of finite

⁵² Ibid. 746.

⁵³ Ibid. 743.

⁵⁴ Hegel says, “As, therefore, the means is the object that stands on the side of the end and has within it the activity of the end, the mechanism that is found here is at the same time the return of objectivity into itself, into the Notion, which however is already presupposed as the end; the negative attitude of purposive activity towards the object is thus not an *external* attitude, but the alteration and transition of objectivity in its own self into the end. (Ibid. 746)”

⁵⁵ Ibid. 747.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 747.

ends, this relation no longer holds in the subsequent step. Becoming free from this relation of dominance, the means becomes more powerful and superior to the ends. But what is the significance of this ultimate superiority of means over ends? According to McGowan, the importance of the cunning of reason is the “dramatic reversal of the relationship between means and ends that it enacts.”⁵⁷ For him, the cunning of reason is the fact that individuals must use means to accomplish ends that they establish on their own.⁵⁸ As he points out, this process does not entail “the universal using individuals as tools for its own advancement.” What the conscious end of subjects tries to achieve rather “takes a back seat to how they accomplish it.”⁵⁹ In light of this, he argues that the reversal of the end-means relationship in the cunning of reason leads to a realization of freedom. He says, “To recognize the value of means at the expense of ends is to free oneself from one’s social or natural determinants. Means are the site of freedom.”⁶⁰ (I will discuss this particular usage of freedom below.) This displays a role of means that is greatly different from how the cunning of reason is presented in the *Philosophy of History* where means is a mere tool and is crushed and tossed away after serving a divine purpose that is more valuable. How do “tools” end up being in the cunning of reason according to the *Science of Logic*? Hegel introduces an example: “[T]he *plough* is more honourable than are immediately the enjoyments procured by it and which are ends. The *tool* lasts, while the immediate enjoyments pass away and are forgotten. In his tools man possesses power over external nature, even though in respect of his ends he is, on the contrary, subject to it.”⁶¹ When a

⁵⁷ *Emancipation After Hegel*. 148.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 148.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 148.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 148.

⁶¹ *The Science of Logic*. 747. Stanley Rosen says, “‘Man possesses power over external nature in his work tools, even though with respect to his ends he is subordinate to her.’ In this succinct passage, Hegel indicates why natural

subject establishes his conscious end of farming a land, since this end cannot be directly achieved, he uses the means, a plough, for the realization of his end. When this end is realized, the enjoyment of acquiring his personal end fades away, while the plough, means used for the realization of an end, remains and can be used further, freeing more humanity from the external impressions of natural environments. Surpassing the private end, this extension of means helps people feed the global population and learn farming skills to overcome their powerlessness over external nature. The personally enjoyed immediate end fades away, and yet the means used for this realization continues to expand, realizing the rationality of the end in the means that continues to increase and eventually establishes a powerful network of people that thereby realizes the end of more people. As Hegel says, “the *means* is *superior* to the *finite* ends of *external* purposeiveness: the *plough* is more honourable than are immediately the enjoyments procured by it.”

This is how the universal is cunningly fulfilled, which is the result of the expansion of means undertaken unbeknownst to the subject. Nevertheless, the subjects who use the means are not influenced by the universal, which does not use them to advance its own agenda. In the cunning of reason, does reason aim at its own advancement, or does it rather become *atelic*? McGowan says, “The cunning of reason is the product of subject’s own purposiveness but is not itself teleological.”⁶² In this process, instead of reason using subjects, “[s]ubjects use reason even—or especially—when they have no conscious intention of doing so.”⁶³ Does this suggest that this process makes reason means that

science is fated to be mastered by technology. But the logician is concerned with the intelligible structure of the *activity* of science, i.e., with purposive activity, and not with the mastery of finite external objects. The genuine mastery of nature, as one can say on Hegel’s behalf, is conceptual, not material or instrumental.” *The Idea of Hegel’s ‘Science of Logic.’* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2014. 461.

⁶² *Emancipation After Hegel*. 148.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 148.

subjects use, and hence that the self-determining activity of reason is realized in the subject's act of using reason, therefore *in the self-determining activity of the other* (the subject) *that is external to reason itself*? Does reason advance its own agenda *through thoroughly allowing the self-determining activity of subject's usage of reason*? Since answering these questions is beyond the scope of the present dissertation, let us instead further investigate how the cunning of reason works in the modern world according to McGowan's analogy of "the creation of public transportation."⁶⁴ A personal usage of transportation in one's life is a means to accomplish a private end of arriving at a certain destination. What is meant to achieve is a user's arrival at a desired place. But the means, to ride on a train to go from one place to another, turns out to be doing something more valuable than realizing one's private end. McGowan says, "[I]n the act of using public transportation, we form a public world with others and create a bond that connects us with strangers. This connection is more important than our private ends, but it emerges out of the means that we use to accomplish these ends."⁶⁵ In this sense, he continues: "Freedom does not reside in the subject's ability to consciously choose its own ends [...] but in its ability to invest itself in the means without regard for the ends. When this occurs, the subject loses its dependence on the particularities of its situation that determine its ends."⁶⁶

According to McGowan, the reversal of the end-means relation opens up a path for freedom that resides in the subject's ability to invest itself in the means. This investment is an activity that is free from impressions of external ends and hence itself is the self-determining activity of the subject. Reason manifests in this act of using the means. In

⁶⁴ Ibid. 149.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 149.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 149.

this sense, means is the site of freedom, and this site continues to expand as usages of means increase. Hence, in the cunning of reason, the focus is no longer on the subjective end of *what* they achieve but rather on means, that is, *how* they pursue it. This suggests that the importance of the realization of an end or achieving a result through means cannot surpass that of investing in the means that is no longer conditioned by the production of aimed results. This interpretation of the cunning of reason can suggest that freedom from an end undermines the teleological aspect of one's activity to achieve a particular result. Instead of pursuing a purpose-driven act and being concerned about its result, by fully immersing oneself in means without being concerned about achieving a goal, such activity becomes *ateleological*. The end-means relation that focuses on the realization of ends in the teleological process turns out to rather value the *atelic* process of investing in means. In this process, a subject is freed from having to achieve his own end conditioned by social or natural determinants and purely enjoys a pursuit of means. Hence, deteleologization of one's teleological act does not make it nothing but rather sublates it into a richer and higher form of atelic activity. Thus considered, we could perhaps venture to say that the cunning of reason has potential to free humanity from constant pressure of remaining productive through labor, which is among chief characteristics of capitalism. In the final section of the present chapter, I will discuss how McGowan's interpretation of the cunning of reason resembles the idea of Mahāyāna-śrāvakas and decisively differs from it. However, before we dive into a constructive thought experiment vis-à-vis an application of the cunning of reason to Tiantai materials, let us consider whether Hegel's concepts of determinate negation and sublation have any resonance with Buddhist materials.

5.3 Dialectic Progression (Hegel) vs. Omnitelic Circulation (Tiantai)

5.3-1 Negation and Sublation in Tiantai and Hegel

I started a discussion about Hegel with introducing Sparby's interpretation of determinate negation because his explanation contains useful implications in relation not only to Tiantai but also in a broader context of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought. While Sparby and Brandom have different readings about the concept of determinate negation, Sparby captures something important about what, for instance, Indian Madhyamakas argue for. According to Sparby, Brandom's "material incompatibility" reading suggests that determinate negation leaves nothing. But Sparby does not think this is the case in Hegel because determinate negation *does* leave something. This remaining presence of something positive through negation seems to have some affinity with the spirit of Madhyamaka's negation, which is meant *to leave* everything as it is. In Madhyamaka school, negation is expressed in their view of "emptiness."

As we discussed in earlier chapters, emptiness does not mean nonexistent or total annihilation that eliminates dharmas. Rather, emptiness means a thoroughgoing absence of unchanging essence of all dharmas. This means that emptiness itself is also empty, as the tradition speaks of "the emptiness of emptiness." The implication important to our present concern is that this double negation of emptiness plays a non-negative role. It suggests that all dharmas make sense *because* they are empty. When we speak of any dharma, such speech is based on a presupposition that all dharmas are empty. Dan Arnold points out that this exhibits the *transcendental* nature of emptiness, which is transcendent in a sense that it is "a condition of the possibility of anything's having any properties."⁶⁷ This is best

⁶⁷ Arnold, Dan. *Buddhists, Brahmins, and Belief: Epistemology in South Asian Philosophy of Religion*. New York:

exemplified in the twenty-fourth chapter of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, in which Nāgārjuna responds to his interlocutor by saying, “It is only *because* everything is empty that the Four Noble Truths obtain.”⁶⁸ Nāgārjuna is not saying that emptiness is compatible with Four Noble Truths, but rather that emptiness is in fact *the condition of the possibility of the Four Noble Truths*.⁶⁹ The Madhyamaka claim of emptiness leaves all dharmas as they are *through the double negation of emptiness*. In this sense, we can say that Madhyamaka’s view of emptiness is similar to Hegel’s concept of determinate negation in a sense that they both preserve what is negated and evade making things “nothing” (Hegel) or “nonexistent” (Madhyamaka). How does this discussion illuminate implications of Tiantai ideas such as “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas?”

What Hegel and Tiantai share is the idea of the middle: Hegel’s middle is “determinate negation” and that of Tiantai is “omnicentricity.” This presents an interesting way of showing a different implication, a different case of—as touched on earlier in the present chapter—the exclusive middle (Hegel) and non-exclusive middle (Tiantai). In both cases, “negation” plays a central role. However, the implication of this negation is different in Hegel and Tiantai. In Hegel, when the finite is mediated, the *immediacy* of the finite is negated in the mediation process. It is also not as in the cunning of reason as presented in the *Philosophy of History*, where the infinite end sublates the finite ends and means,

Columbia University Press. 2005. 188.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 189.

⁶⁹ This implication is also found in the following sentence in the twenty fourth chapter of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* where Nāgārjuna says, “All is possible when emptiness is possible./ Nothing is possible when emptiness is impossible.” Siderits and Katsura comment on this by saying, “By ‘all’ is here meant the central teachings of Buddhism, which the opponent claimed the Madhyamaka doctrine of emptiness jeopardized. Candrakīrti explains that when, for instance, it is acknowledged that everything is devoid of intrinsic nature, then dependent origination becomes possible, and this in turn makes it possible for the Buddha’s account of the origin and cessation of suffering to be correct. To deny that all things are empty, on the other hand, is tantamount to claiming that there exist things that are not dependently originated, and this undermines Buddhism’s core tenets. (Siderits, Mark. and Katsura, Shōryū. *Nāgārjuna’s Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications. 2013. 276.)”

turning them into mere illusions serving only as means by which the infinite telos is achieved. It is rather that the infinite lies with the means, which are not any particular infinite telos but merely infinite mediation as such, but it is this that does indeed sublimate the finite ends, and the finite means. The “superior” status of the means is never reversed to apply also to the finite ends, which remains to the end an unfulfilled fantasy. In this picture, the infinite, even if it is now the infinity of the means rather than the end, is the exclusive center of the entire sublation process that retains only itself by virtue of the sublated-to-be nature of finite beings’s *immediacy* that is endowed with a periphery role to advance the whole process of reason. An implication of this center-periphery hierarchy is a central philosophical concern for the present dissertation project and is precisely where it differs from Tiantai’s omniscient idea of the *non-exclusive* middle. This is where a strange Tiantai idea of “Mahāyāna-śrāvakas,” the unfamiliar idea to the history of European philosophy and yet crucial for Tiantai thought, comes into play.

According to Tiantai, when the finite practice of śrāvakas advances, through hearing and comprehending Śākyamuni’s teaching of one-vehicle, this practice ultimately ends up attaining a double-meaning of the practice of śrāvaka and bodhisattva. What it reveals is the eternally ongoing practice of the universal Buddhahood as appearing *as* a practice of either a śrāvaka, bodhisattva or any other beings of the ten realms and hence the omnipresence of Buddha’s unending bodhisattva practice through and through in all realms. This means that a non-buddha(-ly-appearing) practice is necessarily that of the Buddha, and conversely, wherever a deluded practice of non-enlightened(-ly-appearing) sentient beings takes place is how the enlightened buddha’s practice embodies *as* deluded practice. Hence, in Tiantai, the centrality of the infinity of Buddhahood attains its

pervasiveness revealing its omn centrality. This means that each finite determination is not merely subsumed into the infinite, remaining there without the sublated immediacy of each determination, but is rather revealed to be *the infinite itself* into which all finite determinations are subsumed. This requires that the grasp of the infinite as merely “indeterminate” is no more or less ultimate than the grasp of the infinite as “śrāvaka.” Hegel would grant the non-ultimacy of infinity as indeterminate (i.e., as simply infinite mediation), but he does not take the next step. A key Tiantai claim here is that it changes the nature of finitude *without removing or eliminating its characteristics*. The point is that when finite is extended to the infinite, *it does not undergo a sublation process that removes the immediacy of finite to thereby only preserve its sublated presence without the negated immediacy in the infinite*. It rather becomes something else. What is it transformed into? It is that—in new light of Tiantai omn centrism—the word “finite” becomes a name for the “infinite,” as “śrāvaka” becomes a name for “bodhisattva” whose practice advances toward the infinity of Buddhahood. Revealing the intersubsumptive identity between the infinite and finite, alternately, this ends up meaning that the “infinite” is now equally a name for the “finite.” In the Tiantai version, the original notion of the finite or śrāvaka is a provisional (*jia* 假) reference that turns out to be identical to the ultimate (*kong* 空) idea of the infinite or Buddhahood. The ultimate has always been available in the provisional and vice versa, and no determination, including the determination of “indeterminate,” is any more or less ultimate than any other: all are equally provisional and equally ultimate. This reversibility is what makes the Tiantai concept of “middle” non-exclusive and omn centric. In Hegel, the infinite is the only absolute that does not allow any finite beings to remain in the infinite in their original pre-sublated forms, and concomitantly they can

never take the positing of the sublating infinite rather than the sublated finite. Hence, the relationship between the infinite and finite ends up exhibiting the ultimate triumph of the infinite over finite.

In contrast, in Tiantai the infinity of Buddhahood rather reveals *the absolutization of the finite*, elevating their status to ultimacy. In this sense, unlike Hegel, in the Tiantai universe everything about the finite *does* undergo a passage into infinity of Buddhahood, into the absolute middle way qua Buddha-nature—emphatically including its role as the sublating center rather than the sublated periphery. In this sense, there is no ultimate triumph of one over the other because what it reveals is the omnitriumph of every single finite dharma that itself *is* the infinite. As we saw in the discussion of Mahāyāna-śrāvaka, śrāvaka’s practice “opens up” to “reveal” its true meaning, that is, being a bodhisattva who causes all to hear the Buddha-way, which is the content of the Buddha’s practice. Unlike Hegel, revealing Buddhahood does not sublimate the śrāvaka practice in the Hegelian sense of determinate negation (exclusive-middle), but rather discloses the omnipresence of the universal Buddhahood and the infinity of their bodhisattva practice (non-exclusive-middle) as each and every particular moment of the finite experience of all sentient beings—the infinity of śrāvakahood per se. How would Mahāyāna-śrāvaka look if it underwent the Hegelian sense of sublation and the cunning of reason?

5.3-2 A Final Discussion: Can Hegel Have Mahāyāna-Śrāvaka?

Now we will examine the different implications of dialectical progression (Hegel) and omnitelic circulation (Tiantai). If śrāvakas were sublated in Hegelian dialectical progression, they would be subsumed into a higher level of bodhisattvahood, which

removes some of the characteristics of śrāvakahood while retaining others, preserving it only as a post-sublated form. In terms of ends and means relation, the goal of śrāvakas—to be an arhat—would undergo revision, and this sublation process would produce the goal of Buddhahood, which in its final consummation would *not* entail arhathood. This account does not represent Tiantai’s view because the point of their argument is that Buddhahood *does* entail the reaching the goal envisioned by śrāvakas themselves, as well as *all* the other characteristics of śrāvakas (their ideas, their actions, their personal identities), and the same goes for all other beings. If Buddhahood excluded the śrāvaka goal, this would create an unalterable contrast between Buddhahood and non-Buddha beings such as śrāvakas. This mutual exclusion is hugely problematic for Tiantai because it would obstruct the mutual entailment between śrāvakahood and bodhisattvahood, thus conceptually inhibiting the Mahāyāna-śrāvaka. In other words, this would have to leave the *context* that determines the nature of śrāvaka untransformable. Ultimately, the supreme significance of the concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata is in its power to transform *contexts* that thereby alter and determine the value and meaning of *contents* within them. In order to make sense of this, let us be clear about a conceptual transition from atelic to omnitelic so as to understand how all contents including seemingly non-Buddha dharmas (e.g., delusions, suffering, śrāvakahood, hell beings) become “Buddha-dharmas (*fofa* 佛法)” in the new context of the tathāgata’s eternal life.

We saw that McGowan’s account of the cunning of reason comes closer to Tiantai in a sense that it exhibits an *ateleological* relation between ends and means, where the end is subsumed into means rather than vice versa. This is what I described as atelic. However, since the aspect of progression does not disappear in the atelic, this amounts to say that one

thing is still one-sidedly subsumed into the other: now the proliferation of means becomes a newly established end. Hence, McGowan's revisionist reading of Hegel still considers the idea of the atelic as a mere replacement of the teleological. Thus, when he mentions means as a site of freedom, he is still talking about a gradual overcoming of the idea of external teleology. In this sense, the nature of the teleological and the atelic is the same, while the relation between ends and means are reversed in these two accounts. This is where we can start to see an important difference between Hegelian teleology and Tiantai's omnitelic idea, which is undergirded in the idea of the tathāgata's eternal life. A primary job of *omnitelic* is to transform the context that determines the contents and thereby alters their value and meaning. In the present case, the context is the eternal life of the tathāgata that alters the nature of teleological (sentient beings' purposive practice) and atelic (Buddha's purposeless activity) and thereby shows that teleological and atelic, purpose and purposelessness are mutually entailed in each other, and that this mutual subsumption is pervasive in each moment of purposive practice and purposeless activity—omnitelic. Revealing this new context transforms the nature of contents seen in an old context. We can see the chief character of this transformation in the Tiantai doctrine of "opening the provisional to reveal the real (開權顯實)" that we discussed in the present dissertation's second chapter.

The tathāgata's eternal life shows that the contrast between Buddha and sentient beings is a *provisionally* set up skillful means that reveals their *real* relation of mutual entailment, just as the contrast between river and ocean is initially made as a provisional distinction so as to ultimately reveal their *real* relation of oneness. By being a river, it is already an ocean, and hence is an embodiment of the single suchness of the river and ocean.

The otherness of ocean from the beginning does not need to be “attained” by a river because it is already *inherent* to the river. Because of this, by going downstream, rivers eventually arrive at themselves, realizing that all rivers had been already ocean since the time unknown. Once the context that determines the content “river” expands, this same content ends up having the name “ocean.” Similarly, Buddhahood has been inherent to sentient beings since the remote past. When the context that determines the content “sentient beings” alters and expands in a certain way, this content is also seen as “Buddhahood.” This is how the value and meaning of all beings are transformed in the new context of the eternal life. Thus, the eternal life of the tathāgata transforms the condition of teleological practice pursued by non-buddha beings, revealing that the point of their practice is to be ultimately aware that the goal of the atelic Buddhahood is inherent to and already fulfilled in their present practice. Showing the omnitemic circular relation between purposelessness and purposes that is pervasive throughout the entire dharma-realm, the idea of eternal life transforms the context of the history of ignorance of sentient beings and demonstrates how the vast history of ignorance has been that of dharma-nature.

In Hegelian teleology, we can also observe how a new context transforms the meaning of contents within in. For instance, according to McGowan’s Hegel, the meaning and value of what it is to be a plough are transformed by the final story of Spirit’s working: in retrospect, the reversal of the ends and means was a *manifestation* of the cunning of Reason, which reveals that what was *really* happening was not just a means taking a place of the finite end (planting seeds) but the initial contrast and ultimate reversal between them are the works of the infinite end (revealing the Spirit, etc.). The real meaning of the reversal of finite contents, any moments of finite activities, is determined by this ultimate

context of Reason. Hence, both Hegel and Tiantai demonstrate the transformation of the nature of contents by revealing a more overarching context. Nevertheless, each of these approaches of recontextualization leads to different outcomes: dialectical progression (Hegel) on one hand and omnitemporal circulation (Tiantai) on the other hand. Why do they bring out these different results? What is the nature of difference between the Hegelian and Tiantai recontextualization? What kind of recontextualization—does that end the story, and hence there are no more recontextualization? Or is the recontextualization a way to enable further infinite recontextualizations?

What Hegel cannot say is that Reason or Spirit itself *is* also a means to the ultimate end of the plough. By Hegel, the plough is seen as the work of God—perhaps a manifestation of God—but not *as God per se*: “plough” does not end up being a reversible synonym for “God.” In contrast, by Tiantai, the plough is seen *as* Buddhahood itself. In the case of Hegel, all the phases whether it is the cunning of reason or any other prior categories in the *Science of Logic* are “false” when they are considered in isolation. It is through the context of the whole system, of the absolute spirit or the telos, they all are seen to be parts of the “moments” determined by this ultimate context. The interesting thing is, reaching this final context, this becomes *the only* context, which is the supremely important difference from how the nature of context is considered in Tiantai. In the case of Tiantai, if you reach this one special recontextualization, which is the eternal life of the tathāgata or Buddha’s realm, what it does is to put everything into every context and thereby transform everything in each context into absolute (*miao* 妙). In this sense, Zhanran says that Buddha’s way is—as we saw above, “an ability to fully penetrate the non-Buddha ways of the nine realms as the function of the wondrous way of the realm of the pure Buddha-dharma.” Without obstructions between all realms, as *what appears to be* the “final”

context of the Buddhahood reveals, all dharmas are seen as Buddha-dharma, reversible synonyms for Buddhahood that have precisely all the characteristics of Buddhahood per se: being omnipresent, absolute, middle-way buddha-nature that can freely limit and delimit itself, taking any position at any time, just as ocean thoroughly penetrates rivers and vice versa, all dharma are fully omnipresent in each other. Thus, this infinite recontextualization prevents the unobstructability of interpenetration between context and content, that is, the exclusive centrality of the authoritative context that blocks further recontextualization. The absence of obstruction leads to the nonexclusive centrality of *what appears to be the* “ultimate” context, Buddha-realm, eternal life of the tathāgata, thereby *making every content itself the context of every other content*. The thoroughgoing lack of the exclusive centrality in the Tiantai universe makes each dharma become a center, another context that is in turn absolute. All conditional dharmas are unconditional, omnipresent, eternally abiding Buddha-dharmas.

As we discussed throughout this dissertation, according to the Three Truths, what is inherent to both content and context are equally the illimitable openness to alterity, in which content and context are one in their inconceivability just as root and trace, punch line and setup exhibit their intersubsumptive identity. Therefore, Tiantai recontextualization does not show the end of story but rather the unendability of the process of infinite recontextualization. This is the nature of the entire dharma field of the Tiantai Buddhist universe where Buddhas continuously respond to the elicitation of sentient beings, producing and canceling infinite contents and contexts that are mutually entailing. In contrast, Hegel wants to end with one single authoritative context that will prevent any further recontextualization.

Therefore, the difference between their ways of recontextualization is in the

difference regarding how Hegel and Tiantai consider the relation between content and context. In Hegel, plough (content) is never God (the transformative context for all other things) but rather the work of God (the content transformed into an element of this context), while in Tiantai the plough (content) is Buddhahood (the transformative context for all other things). We are saying: In Hegel, content is never context, but the work of the context, while what happens in Tiantai is that *content becomes context*. Because of the difference between having or not having this final piece of identity between context and content results in showing a conceptual divergence between these two great traditions. Because of the non-identity between context and content, what takes place in the dialectical progression is sublation. In contrast, because of the intersubsumptive identity between the content and context, particularities of Conventionality and Emptiness, all finite dharmas contained in the interpenetration of the tathāgata's three-bodies and the eternal life of the tathāgata, instead of sublation, in Tiantai all dharmas become absolute.

CONCLUSION

According to Zhiyi, the *Lotus Sūtra* reveals the root of śrāvakas and that they have been continuing their bodhisattva practice for an inconceivably long period of time. This means that Śāriputra's entire lifecycle including the one in which he made a living as a poor weaver, stole the palace's treasure, and deceived people around him to escape being captured were the manifestation of his bodhisattva moments appearing *as* a bandit and romancer. Equally among his bodhisattva practice is Śāriputra's present life as narrated in the *Lotus Sūtra*, where he discloses his doubts about his śrāvaka path and hears and embraces a certainty of his Buddhahood that thereby dispels anxiety over his long-time śrāvaka practice and recognizes himself to be a bodhisattva qua śrāvaka, a Mahāyāna-śrāvaka.

This would mean that his past life as a weaver and the present as Śākyamuni's disciple are both traces of his bodhisattva practice. Both of these are "serious" moments of setup that reveal the "humorous" punch line of his Buddhahood. Anchored in this conception of root and trace, Tiantai considers the *Lotus Sūtra's* concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata to reveal the interpenetration of the tathāgata's three-bodies, and to extend into the implication of the identity between ignorance and dharma-nature, delusion and enlightenment, and Buddhas and sentient beings, revealing that all dharmas including deluded activities of sentient beings are, from time immemorial, the content of the life of wisdom of the eternal tathāgata. The beginningless history of delusions based on the ignorance of unenlightened sentient beings is itself the history of how the dharma-nature expresses itself *as* ignorance. As we saw in the third chapter, ignorant activity is an expression of one's desire for the end of suffering. The content of the tathāgata's eternal life is the history of the activities of ignorance and dharma-nature, the elicitation of sentient beings

and Buddhas' response to them. The Tiantai conception of the tathāgata's life thus recontextualizes the history of dharma-nature expressed as ignorance (and vice versa) and considers such history from the viewpoint of the relation between root and trace, ocean and river, transforming what it means to suffer or to be liberated, to be deluded or enlightened.

Throughout this dissertation, I showed that Tiantai thought shares neither the commitment to an ateleological universe and the ultimate soteriological goal of reaching an atelic state of desirelessness, typical of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist traditions, nor to the teleological structure typical of European religious traditions, where an overriding telos governs both creation and soteriology. As we saw, what we can find in Tiantai is a rarely conceived third option that I called the omniteletic conception of reality and value. The choice of this philosophical theme was based on my concern over the human mind's tendency to disambiguate what it encounters, as an attempt to avoid suffering. As we discussed in the introductory and third chapters of this dissertation, nature of this attempt is to *control* suffering, which is rooted in the ultimate purpose of realizing the end of suffering. However, this attempt can only bring out unsatisfactory results because no single agent such as desire of one's mind can control conditional experience (i.e., suffering). Hence, instead of fulfilling its own purpose, mind's purposive attempts of disambiguating rather end up undermining conditions for realizing it. Disambiguation means deliberately carving out sense-data that one's mind perceives and thereby eliminating its ambiguity. Hence, the nature of disambiguation is *exclusion* that negates the ambiguity of the perceived content. Thus, we can say that the mind's act of disambiguating is by nature teleological, and what is embedded in this teleological act of mind is negation. In light of these concerns, this dissertation chose teleology and its reconception as a primary topic and critically examined the implications of such a concept, seeing an alternative worldview according to

Tiantai thought.

As I reviewed the contextual choice of the theme of this study above, what is at the heart of this embedded nature of teleology is its characteristic of exclusion. Anchored in this line of thought, I used Hegel and Tiantai to investigate what is at stake in the exclusive nature of teleology and examined the difference of implications in both Hegel's exclusive middle and Tiantai's non-exclusive middle. This project started with a framing of this issue by reviewing the academic landscape of both traditions with comparative references across traditions, but most of the pages of this project were not dedicated to the comparative philosophical analysis of the two traditions but rather to examining Tiantai's philosophical materials in depth. In Chapter 1, we saw an overview of the intellectual history of Chinese Buddhist thought from its beginning through the rise of Tiantai in the sixth century. Chapters 2 through 4 approached Tiantai's distinct conception of "causation" in terms of Śāriputra's narrative in the *Lotus Sūtra* (Chapter 2) that Zhiyi reads through the doctrine of opening the provisional to reveal the real; the mutually entailing relation between subject and object, ignorance and dharma-nature and ten suchnesses and twelvefold causes and conditions (Chapter 3); and the sixfold discussions about the category of root and trace, and elicitation and response (Chapter 4). The result of the investigation of the fourth chapter directed our attention to the special feature of the *Lotus Sūtra's* concept of the eternal life of the tathāgata, which we examined in detail starting at the end of Chapter 4 and extended to the first half of Chapter 5, where we looked at the analogy of the ocean and river and its implication of the *circular* character of intersubsumptive relation between Buddhas and sentient beings, purposelessness and purpose.

By adopting the analogy of a *circular* relation between the single ocean and different rivers, together with all other Tiantai premises discussed in earlier chapters in mind, we returned to the

theme that the introductory chapter set forth—that is, a comparison of the implications in Hegel’s cunning of reason and the Tiantai version of “the cunning of Buddhahood,” where I showed that while Tiantai’s omnitelesic position presents the mutually entailing circularity between teleology and ateleology, there is no such circular relation between them in Hegelian dialectical progression. In an attempt to prove this argument, we traced Hegel’s cunning of reason as it appears in the *Science of Logic* based on McGowan’s ateleological reading of this concept. In the final discussion of the same chapter, we saw how Hegel’s dialectical progression and Tiantai’s omnitelesic circulation differently approach the topic of recontextualization, and investigated why their implications diverge. Based on these concerns, I argued that this difference is observed because there is a crucial difference in how each of these traditions considers the alterability of context and its relation to content.

Throughout this project, however, I must admit that I had to limit the scope of comparative references between Western thoughts and Tiantai. What had to be left out of this dissertation can thus be topics of future research projects that potentially entail a more thoroughgoing comparative analysis between Western thought and Tiantai. The relevant topics might include a comparison between Schelling’s conception of Reason and Tiantai thought, Heidegger’s beings-toward-death and the Tiantai version of “being-toward-buddhahood,” and Freudian unconscious and Tiantai omniteleology. Perhaps another interesting and meaningful future research topic that this dissertation could not include is to consider Tiantai thought’s practical implications as relevant to pressing issues in our contemporary society. It is hoped that the theoretical work done in this dissertation will contribute to these further applications in the future.

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