



# 摩訶止觀

**Mohe Zhiguan • Maka Shikan**

[Study Materials]

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## Study Aim

The intended aim of these materials, is to provide a solid basis from which sense can be made of the *Mohe Zhiguan*, and the Tiantai system itself. The text and system are both known for their ‘catholicity’, and thereby the extensive breadth of assumed knowledge, required to interpret and retain the sometimes dizzying array of interworking concepts employed. At times the learning curve is steep, and it is hoped that these materials will bring together sufficient resources for those willing to invest the time necessary, to navigate and understand the purport of Zhiyi’s thought. The study notes contained herein are a work in progress, and as such, will be modified as deemed appropriate.

Before beginning, it seems appropriate to outline a number of conventions, and general rules which will be employed throughout.

## Conventions & General Rules

- These notes are designed to aid English-speaking practitioners, and as such will follow the translation of the text entitled *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight: T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's Mo-ho chih-kuan*, SWANSON, 2017.
- However, the older and incomplete translation in *The Great Calming and Contemplation: A Study and Annotated Translation of the First Chapter of Chih-I's Mo-Ho Chih-Kuan*, DONNER and STEVENSON, 1993., will also be consulted where and when it is beneficial.
- An attempt will be made to provide the Sanskrit, Chinese, and where applicable Japanese and English equivalents for terms.
- Unlike the translations utilised herein, these notes will use the Pinyin system of rendering Chinese terms into Roman letters. Although this might at first be confusing to some, it is helpful to for those wishing to cross-reference, or navigate the sources of mainland educated scholars. It should also be noted that while Dr Swanson’s translation employs the older Wade-Giles system, the glossary provides the pinyin equivalents for said terms.
- Dr Swanson very bravely attempts to “wrestle[s] with the text nakedly before glancing over at traditional commentaries” in his translation. And it is indeed useful for the translation of the text to remain as true as possible, to the letter, and where gleam-able the intent, of Zhiyi’s words. Nevertheless, it is inevitable given the nature of these study notes, that the traditional commentaries be consulted first and foremost, among the relevant resources at hand.
- With this in mind, I will make no excuse for deferring to the interpretation of the authoritative commentaries, in the understanding of obtuse or laden passages.
- The commentaries considered most authoritative then in the traditional narrative, are in descending order: 1) **Zhanran’s** (湛然) 「7 1 1 – 7 8 2」 *Zhiguan fuxing zhuan hongjue 止觀輔行傳弘決*, 2) **Hōchibō Shōshin’s** (寶地坊證真) 「c 1 1 3 6 – 1 2 2 0」 *Shiki 私記*, 3) **Echō Chikū’s** (慧澄癡空) 「1 7 8 0 – 1 8 6 2」 *Kōgi* (講義), and 4) **Daihō Shūdatsu’s** (大寶守脫) 「1 8 0 4 – 1 8 8 4」 講述 *Kōjutsu*. The first being a Chinese commentary by the sixth patriarch of the Tiantai tradition, and the latter three of Japanese provenance. Hōchibō Shōshin was famous for championing and reviving Tiantai doctrines in Japan, at a time when the popularity of esoteric doctrine threatened to eclipse it. His commentary is also significant because he utilised the current text of the *Mohe Zhiguan*, as well as at least one earlier form of the manuscript. Zhanran too makes use of two earlier manuscripts, but it is significant that at least one of these earlier versions made it to Japan.
- Zhanran’s commentary will be consulted most consistently. However, The other three commentaries will be consulted if and when Zhanran’s notes prove inconclusive. (note: Sekiguchi Shindai suggests that there are about forty-eight surviving commentaries).
- Modern sources will also be consulted, in particular the works of Sekiguchi Shindai, Ikeda Rosan, and Fukuda Gyōei.
- As an aside, it cannot be stressed enough how useful it is to have a copy of the *Dazhidulun* to consult throughout. Please see the incomplete translations by Bhikṣu Dharmamitra or Chodron.
- The first chapter of the *Mohe Zhiguan* acts as a ‘synopsis’ and touches on the material

explained in later sections. While reference will be made to these later sections in the notes on the synopsis or Great Intent/ Purport, attempt will be made to limit textual self-referencing in the interest of continuity.

### Primary Scriptural Sources and Treatises

Dr Swanson's translation, as well as the earlier work by Donner and Stevenson, contain ample introductory material. Therefore, it is not necessary to repeat it all here. With this in mind, we shall introduce the work and the system for which it stands, by laying out the primary sources for doctrine and practice elucidated therein.

In the classic presentation it is not uncommon to find reference to the Tiantai tradition as the 'Four Sutras One Treatise School' (四經一論). Although like all glosses, this is not entirely the truth of the matter, it is helpful for understanding some of the key sources of Tiantai doctrine and practice. The four sutra in question are namely:

- 1) **The Threefold Lotus Sutra or Saddharma Pūdarīka Sūtra** (法華三部經 pinyin: Fahua sanbu jing, Jp: Hokke-sanbu-kyō)
  - i. The Sutra of Innumerable Meanings (無量義經 Ch: Wuliang Yi Jing, Jp: Muryōgi Kyō)<sup>1</sup>
  - ii. The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Sublime Dharma ((妙法蓮華經 Ch: Miaofa Lianhua Jing, Jp: Myōhō Renge Kyō)<sup>2</sup>
  - iii. The Sutra of Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue (觀普賢菩薩行法經 Ch: Guan Puxian Pusa Xingfa Jing, Jp: Kan Fugen Bosatsu Gyōhō Kyō)<sup>3</sup>
- 2) **Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra, or Nirvana Sutra** (大般涅槃經 Ch: Daban Niepan Jing, Jp: Daihan Nehan Kyō)<sup>4</sup>
- 3) **Pañcavimsati-sāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā** (大品般若經 Ch: Dapin Bore Jing, Jp: Daihon Hannya Kyō)<sup>5</sup>
- 4) **Pusa Yingluo Benye Jing** (菩薩瓔珞本業經 Ch: Pusa Yingluo Benye Jing, Jp: Bosatsu Yōraku Hongyō Kyō)<sup>6</sup>

The Treatise in question is none other than the Māhaprajñāparamitopadeśa or the *Dazhidulun*:

- 1) **Māhaprajñāparamitopadeśa** (大智度論 Ch: Dazhidulun, Jp: Daichidoron)<sup>7</sup>

It is no coincidence that the Tiantai school came to be referred to in this way. Zhiyi makes frequent use of these sources, as do later Tiantai prelates. However, it must be remembered that the early Tiantai tradition found itself in competition with the Sanlun (三論/ East Asian Madhyamaka) tradition, as well as the Huayan (Avatamsaka 華嚴) School. Both of these schools make special claim to specific texts such as the Three Treatises<sup>8</sup>, and the Avatamsaka Sutra

<sup>1</sup> 1 fascicle, translated by Dharmajātayaśas.

<sup>2</sup> 8 fascicles, translated by Kumārajīva

<sup>3</sup> 1 fascicle, translated by Dharmamitra

<sup>4</sup> Two versions. 'Northern Text' of 40 fascicles, translated by Dharmakṣema - this version was used for the Tibetan translation. 'Southern Text' of 36 fascicles, edited by Huiguan and Huiyan. Both versions are referenced in Tiantai works. The 'northern text' is currently being translated by Mark Blum, BDK. The 'southern text' was translated by Kosho Yamamoto.

<sup>5</sup> 27 fascicles, translated by Kumārajīva

<sup>6</sup> 2 fascicles, attributed to Zhu Fonian, but believed by many to have been authored in China. An English translation of this text has been done by RULU.

<sup>7</sup> 100 fascicles. A commentary on the Pancavimsati attributed to Nagarjuna, translated by Kumārajīva. Partial English translations have been made by Bhikṣu Dharmamitra, and Chodron (via Lamotte).

<sup>8</sup> The three Madhyamaka treatises: 1) *Zhonglun* 中論, Madhyamaka Sastra of Nagarjuna with commentary by Pingala. 2) *Shier Men Lun* 十二門論, *Dvādaśanikāya Sāstra* of Nagarjuna. 3) *Bailun* 百論 Sata Sastra of Aryadeva. \*Each has been translated into English by Bocking, Hsueh-li Cheng, and Tucci respectively. \*These texts are also considered required reading for Tiantai Monks.

respectively. In the same way, the Tiantai tradition came to be associated with the four sutra and one treatise. This 'gloss' is useful provided we do not forget the broad nature of the tradition in question, understanding it to be a 'half-truth' (半字) requiring further elucidation. Zhanran's *Zhiguan yili* (止觀義例) attests to this characterisation:

“...the fundamental principles of the Three Contemplations (三觀) are [derived from] the *Yingluo [Jing]*. The Mahāsattva who succeeds the Buddha (i.e Maitreya) [receives] this intimate transmission of the golden words (Dharma). Therefore [one] knows that the doctrines of this school (Tiantai) have long been drawn from the Buddha's sutra. And so [the Buddha] and the [next] Mahāsattva conform like the halves of a tally<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the principles employed [by this school] from the Lotus [sutra] constitute its 'bones'<sup>10</sup>. The *Dazhidulun* is its guide. The *Nirvana Sutra* is its supporting commentary. And the *Pañcavimsati* [informs] its contemplative methods.”

Similar comments occur in Zhanran's commentary to the *Fahua Xuanyi*, which are referenced again in the *jingangpi* (Diamond Scalpel/ Adamantine Scalpel). Therefore it is possible to trace this sort of self-identification back to eighth century revival efforts.

### Tiantai Specific Sources

Whether or not Zhiyi himself identified his efforts with the Four Sutra One Treatise in the manner of Zhanran, he does at least subconsciously draw extensively from them. And so, it has traditionally been held that those wishing to grasp the 'gist' of Zhiyi's thought, begin with these texts. For the Tiantai and Tendai postulant, Zhiyi's primary writings are the next essential step in developing one's understanding of the doctrines. These primary writings consist of the Three Great Tiantai Treatises, and the Five Lesser Tiantai Treatises. These eight works are always studied alongside their authoritative commentaries; the former three being commented on by Zhanran, with the latter five by Zhili (960-1028).

#### The Three Great Tiantai Treatises:

- 1) **The *Mohe Zhiguan*** (摩訶止觀 • The Great Calming and Contemplation) 10 fascicles.
  - a) Read with Zhanran's commentary: *Zhiguan faxing zhuan hongjue* 止觀輔行傳弘決, 10 fascicles.
- 2) **The *Fahua Xuanyi*** (法華玄義 • The Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sutra) 10 fascicles
  - a) Read with Zhanran's commentary: *Fahua Xuanyi Shiqian* 法華玄義釋籤 20 fascicles.
- 3) **The *Fahua Wenju*** (法華文句 • The Words and Phrases of The Lotus Sutra) 10 fascicles.
  - a) Read with Zhanran's commentary: *Fahua Wenju Ji* 法華文句記 10 fascicles.

#### The Five Lesser Tiantai Treatises:

- 1) **The *Guanyin Pusa Pumenpin Xuanyi*** (觀音菩薩普門品玄義 • The Profound Meaning of the Universal Gate of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Chapter) 2 fascicles.
  - a) Read with the Zhili's commentary: *Guanyin Xuanyi Ji* 觀音玄義記 4 fascicles.
- 2) **The *Guanyin Pusa Pumenpin Yishu*** (觀音菩薩普門品義疏 • The Commentary on the Universal Gate of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Chapter) 2 fascicles.
  - a) Read with Zhili's commentary: *Guanyin Yishu Ji* 觀音義疏記 4 fascicles.
- 3) **The *Jingguangming Jing Xuanyi*** (金光明經玄義 • The Profound Meaning of the Golden Light Sutra) 1 fascicle.
  - a) Read with Zhili's Commentary: *Jingguangming Jing Xuanyi Shiyi Ji* 金光明經玄義拾遺記 6 fascicles.

<sup>9</sup> I.e are transmitted without alteration, one and the same; from one to the other.

<sup>10</sup> Its essential tenets and principles.

4) **The *Jinguangming Jing Wenju*** (金光明經文句 · The Words and Phrases of the Golden Light Sutra) 3 fascicles.

a) Read with Zhili's commentary: *Jinguangming Jing Wenju Ji* 金光明經文句記 6 fascicles.

5) **The *Guan Wuliangshoufo Jingshu*** (觀無量壽佛經疏 · The Commentary on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life Sutra) 1 fascicle.

a) Read with Zhili's commentary: *Miaozongchao* 妙宗鈔 5 fascicles.

- It becomes clear that in order to make sense of these eight works, a great deal more than the 'Five sutra one treatise' are required knowledge. It is expected that the serious Tiantai practitioner be familiar with Pure Land literature and doctrine, as well as Prajna class of sutra to which the Golden Light belongs. Indeed, a great deal of prior learning is essential to appreciation of five sutra one treatise alone. The *Dazhidulun* for example, presupposes familiarity with the Three Treatises of the East Asian Madhyamaka canon, and the Abhidharma that it reacts to. And thus the 'Tiantai learning curve' grows quickly and broadly from the very beginning. This is by and large intentional, and Zhiyi and his disciples very clearly intended to require of their descendants, working knowledge of much of the received tradition. It is little wonder then perhaps, that in the Japanese context, Tendai dominated much of traditional scholarship, acted as the cradle from which other movements arose, and until modern times was regularly consulted on doctrinal matters by scholar monks of other schools.
- On top of these works, and the many required by implication, come the many other works of Zhiyi, Guanding, Zhanran, Zhili and so forth. These works are beyond the scope of our purposes here, but they are rigorously studied and employed within the tradition nonetheless. Due to the great scale of this literature, the *Mohe Zhiguan* has come to act as the textbook from which the study of the other texts revolve. Once again, it is no mistake that a work of decidedly practice orientation, should come to serve as the linch-pin for a tradition often characterised by its detractors as 'excessively doctrinal'.

### **The Japanese Tradition**

Although the fundamental textual basis for the Chinese Tiantai tradition has been outlined above, the Japanese Tendai tradition also requires this same base of study for all serious postulants. Naturally however, the canon of required study grew and came to include a number of texts, which although familiar to their Chinese counterparts (with the exception of those works authored in Japan), were not included in the fundamental works of the tradition. There are many reasons for these additions, such as the inclusion of esoteric practice, new doctrinal challenges, and the replacement of the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya with the Bodhisattva Precepts of the Brahma Net Sutra to name a few. With these amendments came the inclusion of another fourteen works into the original canon discussed above, bringing the primary texts to twenty seven works. This may explain why subsequent traditions arising during the Kamakura period, jettisoned much in favour of greater focus on epistle-collections often authored by their respective patriarchs. The great extent of the Tiantai/ Tendai programme has long been the 'double-edged sword' of the tradition. At its best, its purpose has always been to ensure quality knowledge and transmission of the Dharma. At its worst, it greets the naive traveller with a wall of impenetrability.

The fourteen additional primary works can be divided in a number of ways; the most common being the following:

#### **The Esoteric Canon:**

1) **The *Vairocanābhisambodhi Sutra*** (*Da Biluzhena Chengfo Shenbian Jiachi Jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經) by Subhakarasiṃha, 7 fascicles.

2) ***Vajrasekhara Sūtra*** (*Jinggangding Yiqie Rulai Zhenshi She Dasheng Xianzheng Dajiaowang*

*Jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經) by Amoghavajra, 3 fascicles.

3) **The Susiddhikara Sutra** (*Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地羯囉經) by Subhakarasiṃha, 3 fascicles.

4) **The Bodhicitta Sāstra** (*Jingangding Yuqie Zhongfa Anouduoluo Sanmiao Sanputi Xin Lun* 金剛頂瑜伽中發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心論) by Amoghavajra, 1 fascicle.

5) **The Pavilion on the Vajra Peak and all Yogas and Yogins Sutra** (*Jingangfeng Louge Yiqie Yujia Yuqi Jing* 金剛峯樓閣一切瑜伽瑜祇經) by Vajrabodhi, 2 fascicles.

6) **The Explanation of the Principles of the Varocanābhisambodhi Sutra Sastra** (*Darijing Yishi* 大日經義釋), by Yixing, 14 fascicles.

7) **The Commentary on the Vajrasekhara Sutra** (*Kongochō kyō sho* 金剛頂經疏) by Jikaku Daishi Ennin, 7 fascicles.

8) **The Commentary and Summary of the Susiddhikara Sutra** (*Soshitsuji kyō ryakusho* 蘇悉地經略疏) by Jikaku Daishi Ennin, 7 fascicles.

### **The Bodhisattva Precepts:**

9) **The Brahma Net Sutra** (*Fanwang Jing* 梵網經) by Kumarajiva, 2 fascicles.

10) **Notes on the Meaning of the Bodhisattva Precepts Sutra** (*Pusa Jie Jing Yi Ji* 菩薩戒經義記) by Tiantai Dashi Zhiyi, 2 fascicles.

11) **Treatise on Revealing the Precepts** (*Kenkairon* 顯戒論) by Dengyō Daishi Saichō, 3 fascicles.

12) **Regulations for Disciples of the Mountain School (Tendai)** (*Sange Gakushō Shiki* 山家學生式) by Dengyō Daishi Saichō, 1 fascicle.

13) **Extolling the Mahayana Precepts** (*Kenyō Daikai Ron* 顯揚大戒論) by Jikaku Daishi Ennin, 8 fascicles.

14) **Extensive Explanations on the Appropriate Manner to receive the Bodhisattva Precepts** (*Futsū Ju Bosatsukai Gi Kōshaku* 普通授菩薩戒儀廣釋) by Godai'in Annen, 3 fascicles.

- Once again it is a much more complex matter than the above list suggests, and in addition to the aforementioned works, Tendai Monks and Nuns study the rest of Dengyō Daishi Saichō's works, the works of Chishō Daishi Enchin, Jikaku Daishi Ennin, Ganzan Daishi Ryōgen, Eshin Sōzu Genshin, etc. However, the above lists do introduce the literature pertinent to the tradition, and places the *Mohe Zhiguan* into its appropriate context.