Article

Tiantai's Reception and Critique of the Laozi and Zhuangzi

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Abstract: The article addresses the ambivalent relationship of Tiantai Buddhist thought to Daoist ideas from the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi*. On the one hand, Tiantai incorporates Daoist rhetoric and some concepts of the Daoist-influenced Xuanxue 玄學 into its Buddhist doctrine of mind contemplation (*guanxin* 觀心); on the other, drawing on the Buddhist notion of the tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*, *siju* 四句), Tiantai criticizes the Daoist ineffable as a misconception that does not really transcend linguistic representation. Thus, Tiantai attempts to develop the view that Buddhist inconceivable liberation (*bukesiyi jietuo* 不可思議解脫) is neither separate from nor identical with linguistic meaning, implying the recognition of the non-duality of the real and the unreal. In this way, according to the Tiantai teaching, the doctrinal exegesis of the sūtra and śāstra texts can serve as an exercise in spiritual contemplation that frees the practitioners' minds from the shackles of their self-induced delusions, but this liberation does not mean eradicating unreality. To illustrate that view, Tiantai draws on Daoist parables and combines them with Buddhist imagery. Hence, the article attempts to clarify the intricate relationship between Tiantai's reception and critique of Daoist ideas.

Keywords: Tiantai; Laozi; Zhuangzi

1. Introduction

One of the most important classics of Tiantai 天台 and Chinese Buddhism in general is the extensive work *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (*The Great Calming and Contemplation*), compiled by Guanding 灌頂 (561–632) on the basis of his notes of the lectures, given by his master Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597), the principal founder of Tiantai, during his summer retreat in 594 at the Temple of the Jade Spring (Yuquan si 玉泉寺) in Jingzhou Prefecture 荊州 (*Mohe zhiguan* T46, no. 1911, p. 1, a7).

The *Mohe zhiguan* appeared at the beginning of the seventh century—at a time when Buddhism in China had already gone through a 400-year history of reception in the form of translations and exegesis of the doctrinal literature from India. This early Tiantai work is the first text in the Chinese tradition to present a complex hermeneutic that ascribes an inner and hidden unity to the doctrinal diversity in the translated sūtras and śāstras, and links the understanding of this with introspection, i.e., spiritual self-examination of mental activity. In this connection, the text not only defines the nature of Buddhist practice but also develops a theory of it aligned with exegesis. It describes this theory, which is also a practice, as "calming and contemplation" (*śamatha-vipaśyanā*, *zhiguan* 止觀), the core of which is the "contemplation of mental activity" (*guanxin* 觀心).

The doctrinal focus of this Tiantai work consists of the discussion of the 10 modes of contemplating mental activity (*shicheng guanfa* 十乘觀法). In the sections dealing with the first mode, *The Inconceivable Realm* (*busiyi jing* 不思議境), and the fourth, *Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas* (*pofa bian* 破法遍), Zhiyi reveals his views on Daoist thoughts from the *Laozi* 老子 (*Daode jing* 道德經) and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. The first of these two sections adopts a crucial parable from the *Zhuangzi* to exemplify Tiantai's understanding of the non-duality of the real and the unreal, while, in the second section, Zhiyi criticizes the view of the ineffable Dao, as he believes the *Daode jing* sets it out.[1]

In the same vein, the Tiantai master Zhanran's 湛然 (711–782) commentary on Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*, the *Zhiguan fuxing hongchuan jue* 止觀輔行弘傳決 (*A Resolution to Assist and Promote the Practice of Calming and Contemplation*), dismisses the Daoist conception of silence as presented, in Zhanran's opinion, in the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi*. Nevertheless, Zhanran's text adopts the imagery of the *Zhuangzi* to illustrate the Tiantai understanding of "subtle names" (miaoming 妙名) as a form of textual pragmatics capable of deconstructing the commonly perceived duality of speech and silence.

Thus, the following two sections of this article deal with Zhiyi's and Zhanran's critique of the notions of the ineffable and silence as proposed, in their view, by Laozi and Zhuangzi; the fourth section deals with Tiantai's non-duality of the real and the unreal, based on the same sources of Zhiyi and Zhanran, and the fifth analyzes the way Zhiyi takes up the parable of the butterfly dream from the *Zhuangzi* to present in his *Mohe zhiguan* the Buddhist understanding of awakening—liberation from self-induced delusions—as the realization of non-duality in the practice of mind contemplation.

The core thesis of the article on the interpretation of Tiantai is that this Buddhist teaching regards "inconceivable liberation" (*bukesiyi jietuo* 不可思議解脫)—a soteriological term drawn from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*—as neither separate from nor identical with linguistic meaning, which implies the recognition of the non-duality of the real and the unreal (see the quote in footnote 32 of Section 3). Section 3, *Tiantai's practice of contemplating subtle names*, explains what "neither separate from nor identical with linguistic meaning" means. Based on Nāgārjuna's (c. 150–250) Madhyamaka concept of the two truths (*satyadvaya*, *erdi* 二諦) and the related view that "conditioned arising" (*pratītyasamutpāda*, *quanqi* 緣起) is equivalent with "emptiness" (*śunyatā*, *kong* 空), Tiantai argues that linguistic representations are empty constructs in which nothing real is to be found, and that there are nevertheless linguistic strategies that are part of Buddhist practice and can free the practitioner's mind from delusions rooted in a misguided use of language.[2]

What is referred to as "real" and "unreal" in this article follows the respective views of the mentioned Buddhist sources. "Unreal" is a synonym for "empty of inherent existence" or "empty of an intrinsic nature" (*wu zixing* 無自性), as Madhyamaka and Tiantai regard the true nature of "conditioned arising". That is, in contrast to something unreal, a mere "illusory being" (*huanyou* 幻有), a "real being" (*shiyou* 實有) would have to be something that exists inherently, i.e., does not depend on something else, i.e., is indivisible and demonstrably has an intrinsic nature (*zixing* 自性). But from the point of view according to which Madhyamaka and Tiantai see "conditioned arising", referents of designations always consist of infinitely divisible composite phenomena. That is, any linguistic term meant to unambiguously represent a real being would be misleading. Consequently, since there is no "real being" in what is linguistically represented, the expression "non-being" does not contain anything real either. Tiantai's use of the term "dharma-nature" (*faxing* 法性) reveals the true emptiness (*zhenkong* 真空) of all reference points of our concepts, perceptions, and linguistic expressions by showing that even this term cannot unambiguously represent the nature of reality. But to see the unreal as something separate from the real is to treat the unreal as something real. Therefore, Tiantai suggests the non-duality of the real and the unreal by saying that dharma-nature is ignorance (*wuming* 無明) and vice versa. In other words, the true nature of the Dharma defies linguistic representation, but it is not separate from linguistic strategies that liberate from misconceptions rooted in misguided language. This is the crucial standpoint from which Tiantai both appropriates and criticizes the Daoist sources.

The methodological decision to present and highlight all of this, primarily by analyzing and discussing the crucial Tiantai quotations that deal with those issues, is due to the question of how Tiantai engages with Daoist thought and thereby establishes its own complex view of Buddhist doctrine. From the author's point of view, this is at least one of several appropriate ways of approaching the given topic of the special issue: *The interaction of Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian thinkers in the Sui and early Tang dynasties*. The methodological approach can be characterized as inductive, i.e., it focuses on developing

an understanding by citing the most important sources on the stated topic and examining them in terms of their textual background, doctrinal structure, and philosophical content.

In this context, the author would like to point out the significance of Section 5, which deals with Tiantai's appropriation of Zhuangzi's parable of the butterfly dream. Not only is this parable one of the best known from the *Zhuangzi*, but the way it is taken up in the *Mohe zhiguan*, a work from the Sui and early Tang dynasties, reveals much about the doctrinal relationship of Tiantai Buddhism to earlier Daoist texts and therefore fits entirely within the given thematic framework of the special edition.

The narrative elements in Zhuangzi's parable of the butterfly dream deal with wakefulness, dreaming, and sleep, which Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* links with the relationship between the real and the unreal—a perennial theme in the doctrinal literature of Buddhism. The title of Section 4 refers to this. Section 4 begins by discussing how this theme relates to the previous two Sections 2 and 3, and then explains the concepts and terms that Tiantai uses to develop its view of the non-duality of the real and unreal, "dharma-nature is ignorance, ignorance is dharma-nature" (*faxing ji wuming*, *wuming jifaxing* 法性即無明，無明即 法性). Zhuangzi's parable is used in the *Mohe zhiguan* as an illustration of this core formula of the Tiantai doctrine. This is clear from the relevant quotation from the *Mohe zhiguan* in the crucial Section 5.

To adequately describe how Zhiyi's work integrates this parable from the *Zhuangzi* into his Tiantai doctrine and thereby substantially changes it, the preceding discussions in Section 4 of the article are necessary, i.e., the discussions on the core of Tiantai doctrine constituted by such central concepts as the inconceivable realm (*busiyi jing* 不思議境), the round-perfect integration of the three truths (*yuanrong sandi* 圓融三諦), and the related topics of the three kinds of delusions (*sanhuo* 三惑), triple illusory construct (*sanjia* 三假), three contemplations (*sanguan* 三觀), deconstruction (*po* 破), and construction (*li* 立).

The interpretative framework used in this article to analyze the quotes in question and uncover their meanings employs a semantics that attempts to remain as close as possible to Tiantai's own doctrinal terminology, as the article aims to highlight Tiantai's own philosophical problematic rather than locate it within a comparative or intercultural framework of philosophical discourse. To facilitate the reader's access to the highly complex ideas that the rest of the article deals with, the semantic contiguity between the interpretive frameworks of the article and the terminology of Tiantai doctrine to be interpreted is briefly discussed in the following paragraphs of this introduction.

For example, "empty of an irreducible core" is just another way of saying "empty of an intrinsic nature" (*wu zixing*) or "empty of inherent existence" (*zixing kong* 自性空)—terms often used by those in the Buddhist tradition who subscribe to the teachings of Prajñāpāramitā, Madhyamaka, Chinese Tiantai, Sanlun, Huayan, and others. For, as already mentioned, they believe that what a certain thing is, it is not by itself, but always in dependence on something else to which the same applies. According to this doctrinal tradition, what gives rise to all things is their dependent emergence (conditioned arising, *pratītyasamutpāda*, *yuanqi*), which is not based on an ultimate, irreducible entity. This emptiness of an ultimate ground in things is paradoxically what grounds their interdependence on each other in conditioned arising.[3] For those who follow the Madhyamaka tradition, the terms "conditioned arising" and "emptiness" are extensionally identical, but intensionally different (Deguchi et al. 2021, p. 77). This means that the respective referents of the two terms can be subsumed equally under both, while the conceptual components that respectively constitute these two are not the same.

A related and very common term in the Chinese doctrinal literature of this tradition is "devoid of a fixed or determinate nature" (*wuding xing* 無定性), which means that the ontological status of any kind of dependent arising cannot be defined in an unambiguous way, because emptiness of inherent existence does not allow for real being, nor can dependent arising be referred to as non-being.[4] With regard to the Chinese expression, it can be said that dependent arising is not determinable, definable, or fixable in terms of its onto-

logical status; it is ontologically indeterminable and yet its existential significance cannot be denied.

This leads to the crucial and paradoxical idea that, due to its emptiness of inherent existence, any kind of dependent arising is an empty construct in which nothing real can be found, even though it has existential relevance. That is, in the Buddhist sense, unreality is the realm of unreal things (*xu* 虛, *jia* 假, *huan* 幻), which could mean, for example, that when sentient beings try to act as if a self within them is in control of their existence while such a self does not really exist, when they mistake causes of suffering for sources of joy, or when they treat that which has no duration as something permanent, etc., then the world in which they live is not reality, but the opposite; it is unreality.

Again, from the Buddhist perspective, this unreality does not remain without consequences for them, because it can be deceptive (*xuwang* 虛妄, *huo* 惑) and is then existentially relevant insofar as it causes suffering. But the opposite is also true, as explained in the *Lotus Sutra* (see footnote 51 in Section 4), i.e., the unreal can be instructive (*yinru* 引入), and it has a heuristic value when applied in an appropriate way (*quanyi* 權宜). Tiantai adopts all this in its concepts of ignorance, three delusions, triple construct, three contemplations, and dharma-nature. As will be shown, in Sections 3–5, Tiantai even goes so far as to say that the unreal, which is seen as something separate from the real, conversely leads to confusion with the real, because it is seen as an independent realm that is then treated like the real. Paradoxically, the two must be distinguished, while their non-duality must also be recognized.

As will be shown in Sections 2 and 3, the same observation also applies to Tiantai's paradoxical relationship between the effable and the ineffable. Although, according to Tiantai, there is nothing real to be found in linguistic representation, any attempt to separate one's understanding from any linguistic form, i.e., to treat the unreal as the real, is to reinforce the attachment to misguided forms of language. In the sections *Inconceivable Realm* and *Thorough Deconstruction of Dharmas*, Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* makes it clear that viewing the sayable (*keshuo* 可說) and the unsayable (*bukeshuo* 不可說) as separate issues to be discussed misses the correct understanding of both.[5] His critique of the Daoist ineffable is based on this viewpoint, which is explained in detail in Sections 2 and 3. The Tiantai term "inconceivable realm" points to the paradoxical relationship between these two opposites, which are neither separate from nor identical with one another.

Therefore, this relationship can only be dealt with in the form of paradoxical discourse. But paradox is not synonymous with contradiction, nor does paradox in this context mean that some contradictions are true and real, as the dialetheistic interpretation claims (Deguchi et al. 2021, pp. 72–80). It is a paradox that belongs as a purely rhetorical function to the Tiantai view of doctrinal exegesis, without which Zhiyi believes that his practice of introspection towards mental activity (*guanxin*) does not achieve liberation from the shackles of the mind's self-induced delusions, but rather binds itself even more tightly to them.[6]

In other words, the term "paradox" forms the interpretative framework that the article uses to describe the linguistic pragmatics that Tiantai's doctrinal exegesis develops as a particular practice of mind-contemplation (*guanxin*) for its soteriological goal of "inconceivable liberation". The Tiantai term for the practice of mind-contemplation qua doctrinal exegesis is "mutual complementation of doctrine and contemplation" (*jiaoguan xiangzi* 教觀相資). This view was very influential for Buddhist thinkers of different denominations in later dynasties, as they repeatedly discussed over different periods how the transmission of the Buddha-word (*buddhavacana*, *foyan* 佛言) is related to the spiritual event of true awakening, which eludes linguistic representation.

2. Misguided Views of Speech and the Ineffable

The interaction between Xuanxue, strongly influenced by Daoism, and Buddhism in China is characterized on the one hand by mutual polemics; on the other hand, the two textual traditions, which originally arose independently of one another, inspired each other.

Traces of the Xuanxue of Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249), the well-known *Laozi* commentator at the beginning of the Three Kingdoms Era (220–280), and Guo Xiang 郭象 (252–312), the *Zhuangzi* commentator of the Western Jin (266–316), informed the Buddhist work of Sengzhao 僧肇 (374–414), the well-known Kumārajīva (344–413) disciple and first indigenous advocate of Nāgārjuna's (c. 150–c. 250, disputed) Madhyamaka in the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420). Later Chinese Buddhism of the emerging Sanlun 三論 and Tiantai schools in the Sui dynasty (581–618) borrowed many of its technical terms from Sengzhao's interpretations. Conversely, Cheng Xuanying's 成玄英 (601/604–ca. 690) Tang (618–907) commentary on the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi* adopted several views, concepts, and thoughts from Tiantai and Sanlun, especially those related to the Buddhist *catuṣkoṭi* (*siju* 四句, tetralemma, four positions, four alternatives).[7]

In his own discussion of the tetralemma, however, the Tiantai master Zhiyi criticizes the doctrine of the ineffable Dao 道 (path, way) as he sees it presented in the first chapter of the *Daode jing*. In the section *Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas*, discussing the contemplation of emptiness (*kongguan* 空觀), Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* explains the deconstruction of all the delusional views (*po jianhuo* 破見惑) that our mind arouses in relation to the question of being (*you* 有) and non-being (*wu* 無), and in this context, he lists the 10 kinds of tetralemma (*shizhong siju* 十種四句), some of which form the Tiantai taxonomy of metaphysical confusion (*xilun* 戲論)—a taxonomy or classification of misguided ideas in the discourse on being and non-being.[8] These are the specific forms of misguided speech, each divided into the conceptual alternatives of the tetralemma, but there are also those consisting of illusory conceptions of the ineffable (*wuyan* 無言, *jueyan* 絕言), since, according to Zhiyi's investigation, they do not ultimately go beyond the four positions. For him, the misconceptions about the ineffable are in fact misguided forms of linguistic meaning.[9]

In this discussion, Zhiyi points to what he considers the mistaken view of the Daoist ineffable, which for him differs from the way the true principle of the Buddhadharma is meant to be understood. For him, the Buddhist ineffable is not separate from language, but not identical to it either. Zhiyi explains his critique:

> In the present time, there are many evil and demonic Bhikṣus who discard the rules of discipline and return (to worldly life). They … support the followers of the Dao …, proclaiming the teachings of the Zhuangzi and Laozi.[10] They steal the teachings of the Buddhadharma to establish their misguiding works. … (They quote the first verse of the *Laozi*): "A path that can be specified as a path is not the permanent path; a name that can be defined as a name is not the enduring name."[11] They equate this with the meaning of the Buddhadharma, which eludes what can be said and represented. … Your (Daoist misconception of the ineffable) does not even include the meaning of the unspeakable beyond the simple, double, and multifarious forms of the four positions, (the various mistaken forms of the tetralemma in different degrees of complexity).[12] … If (Laozi's) "enduring name" and "permanent path" are examined from the perspective of (Buddha's insight into) the principle and root of all dharmas, how can equivalence (between the two) be expected? … If there is no equivalence in terms of the roots, then there is none in terms of the traces either. The Buddha's traces appear age after age in the form of the rightful ruler of the golden wheel in India. Zhuangzi and Laozi, on the other hand, come from the (poor) border regions which is China. 今世多有惡魔比丘，退戒還家…濟道士。…誇談莊老。以佛法義偷安邪典。…以道可道非常道，名可名非常名，均齊佛法不可說示。…汝尚非單四句外不可說，何況複外，何況具足外。…諸法理本往望常名常道，云何得齊！…本既不齊，迹亦不齊。佛迹世世是正天竺金輪刹利，莊老是真丹邊地。 (T46, no. 1911, p. 68, b19–c4)

In this quotation, Zhiyi criticizes those who equate the Buddhadharma, which defies linguistic representation, with the nameless Dao (*wuming* 無名) mentioned in the first chapter of the *Daode jing*. According to Zhiyi, the meaning of permanence (*chang* 常) in the teaching of the Dao also cannot be considered equivalent to that of the Dharma. The

Tiantai master quotes the first sentence from the first chapter of the *Daode jing*, in which the ceaseless cycle of the coming and going of all things is attributed to the power of the Dao (literally, Way)—the cycle of the reproduction of all things. Although the Dao and its inexhaustible power (according to Laozi) cannot be defined in the same way as a particular thing or finite entity in this world, "Dao" does not explain another realm beyond these things.

The immanence of the Dao means that its inexhaustible potency is constant but indeterminable. According to the *Daode jing*, in the world of the identifiable, determinable, and finite things, there are again nameable paths that are all impermanent. Names, then, denote only impermanent things and, like things, names do not last forever. It would therefore have to be a "permanent name" (*changing* 常名), which could correspond to the permanent potency of the Dao. Therefore, an identifiable or determinable path is not the "permanent path" (*changdao* 常道), nor does a particular name really signify the permanence of its potency and efficiency. "Permanent name" means that the Dao is "nameless" (*wuming*)—it is indefinable, indeterminable, or ineffable compared to all the things it produces.

According to Zhiyi, however, the nameless Dao cannot be considered as the Buddhist "principle and root of all dharmas" (*zhufa liben* 諸法理本). This is an expression Zhiyi uses in the context of a much-quoted passage from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* (T14, no. 475, p. 547, c22), which can be read in two opposing yet mutually complementary ways: (1) "All dharmas (things) are established because of the root (principle) that does not dwell in anything (*cong wuzhu ben li yiqie fa* 從無住本，立一切法)", or: (2) "All dharmas (things) are established from rootlessness".[13] In a paradoxical way, the phrase expresses the meaning of emptiness, namely that the "rootlessness" of all dharmas is the very root of them.[14] The Chinese "*wuzhu* 無住", translated as "having no solid ground (or nothing to dwell in)", also means "having no root" (*wuben* 無本, as the same sūtra explains in T14, no. 475, p. 547, c21), and corresponds to the Sanskrit compound "*apratiṣṭhāna*". This is to say, there is no irreducible, real core or entity in which the dependently arising dharmas are grounded, but it is this groundlessness that grounds each of them as arising dependently on something else, for which the same is also true. Zhiyi calls this the "principle and root of all dharmas". However, according to him, the Daoist terms "enduring name" and "permanent path" cannot convey such a Buddhist sense of "principle and root".

By contrasting the "Dao" and the Buddhist "principle", Zhiyi's criticism intends to highlight the following point: Although the *Laozi's* "permanent path" attempts to hint at the root of all impermanent things, the term fails to imply the sense of emptiness and unreality by which alone (from a Buddhist point of view) change and transformation can be explained. This draws on the following key Madhyamaka insight by Nāgārjuna, which had a particular influence on Zhiyi's Tiantai ideas: To explain the principle or the root of change and transformation in the world of impermanent sentient beings, one cannot resort to the concept of being or to its opposite, non-being.[15]

The paradoxical Buddhist term "root that does not abide in anything" (*wuzhu ben*)—the rootless root—implies that all dependently arising things embody a certain sense of unreality, which is not synonymous with non-existence. The rootless root, which is also referred to as the "principle (*li* 理) of all things", stands for the constitutive meaning of emptiness, since there is no intrinsic nature in things that supports them, so that they can arise in mutual dependence and, despite their unreality, have a certain existential meaning that can be either deceptive or instructive.[16] Inspired by Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka in the *Kārikā* (chapter 15), Zhiyi considers the ontological status of dependently arising things as indeterminable: They cannot be called being (*you*) because there is nothing in them to really appropriate (*bukede* 不可得), nor can anything, therefore, be discarded, nor can one speak of non-being (*wu*), for their unreality could be misleading or, on the contrary, reveal what they actually are, namely true emptiness.[17]

Following Nāgārjuna's conclusion on the emptiness of dependently arising things, Zhiyi holds that regarding "the principle and root of all dharmas", there is no real being that can change, nor is there any real thing that never changes, nor is it the case that all

is nonbeing. For this reason, a certain soteriological sense of unreal change (as is the case with all dependently arising things) should not and cannot be denied. From this Buddhist perspective, the two opposing cases, (1) holding on to real things that really change and (2) the position that there are real things that never change, and the view of nonbeing are all fallacious views that hinder true transformation or change from an unawakened state of mind to awakening.[18]

Without their insight into the true meaning of change, the transformation of unenlightened practitioners into awakened beings cannot take place. According to Zhiyi, "enduring name" and "permanent path" (or "eternal way") in the *Laozi* are not compatible with the Buddhist "principle and root of all dharmas" because the two Daoist expressions imply the false view that there actually is a world of changing things.[19] From Zhiyi's point of view—as mentioned in the quote above—the difference between the two teachings (Daoism and Buddhism) lies in the root (*ben* 本), i.e., in the way of addressing the ineffable, but this also implies the correct understanding of linguistic expression. Paradoxically, the linguistic approach that allows practitioners to access the roots of their own transformations becomes a major concern of Zhiyi's project. He seems to think that the Daoist ineffable, the "enduring name" and the "permanent path", misleads into assuming the true existence of a world of changing things, and, therefore, fails to grasp the "principle and root of all dharmas", by insight into which alone the true change into awakening would be possible. Consequently, as the *Mohe zhiguan* points out, failure to understand the root brings with it deceptive practices at the level of the traces (*ji* 跡).

"Root and traces" (benji 本跡) is originally a term from Sengzhao's commentary on the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, and Sengzhao coined the binary expression drawing on Daoist and Xuanxue texts.[20] Ironically, "root and traces"—the phrase derived from the teaching Zhiyi rejects and criticizes in this quote—became one of the key terms in his doctrinal exposition of the Dharma.[21] "Root and traces" is an allegorical expression of what I call the hidden and the visible, and represents a paradoxical mode of non-duality that takes the form of polarity: The hidden root of non-duality gives rise to the visible traces in the form of polarities. As a linguistic form, "root and traces" embodies or exemplifies what it means in terms of content. The dichotomy itself illustrates the non-duality qua polarity, as will be explained below.

The semantics of the "root" denotes the hidden part of the plant from which all the fruits that can be harvested grow, while the fruit is the "trace" in the sense that, like the visible sign, it points back to the hidden source without which its growth would not have been possible. Without the root, there would be nothing to harvest; without the fruit, there would be no indication that there is something hidden that causes growth and requires cultivation. "Root and traces" mean cohesion in the reciprocity between the hidden and the visible. Above all, the exclusive desire for the fruit leads to the neglect of the root (i.e., lack of cultivation), which is paradoxical in that this undermines the conditions that produce the object of such desire (Kantor 2020, pp. 886–92).

Similarly, it is the liberation of the mind from the fetters of its self-induced delusions, i.e., the awakening of the Buddha, that gives rise to the textual transmission of the Dharma (the Buddhist doctrines in the translated sūtras and śāstras) through which unenlightened beings can be transformed into enlightened ones. But this awakening itself, the hidden root, eludes linguistic representation, while the visible, i.e., the textual manifestation of the Dharma in the form of the sūtras and śāstras, is like the "traces" one must follow in order to finally leave them behind and thus realize their hidden source.

Again, without the root of awakening, the Buddha's accounts of the Dharma guiding the unenlightened in their transformation to liberation would be baseless; conversely, without the manifold and different teachings in all sūtras and śāstras, the minds of sentient beings would not be able to break the vicious circles of their self-induced delusions, free themselves from these fetters and thus transform themselves into an awakening beyond delusive conceptualization. Thus, a one-sided adherence to a particular doctrine (trace) to the exclusion of others can be counterproductive, as it narrows the mind's per-

spective and imposes ties that undermine liberation from conceptual delusions. Zhiyi's Tiantai term "root and traces" has a pragmatic function: in contemplating the Buddhist teachings, this concept is intended to help the practitioners become aware of the paradoxes that will inevitably arise in the practice of liberating their minds from the fetters of their own delusions.

In the Tiantai practice of the Buddhist path, "root and traces" signify the inseparability and reciprocity of speech and silence—the reciprocal and paradoxical relationship between the ineffable (awakening) and doctrinal discourse. This is polarity yet non-duality (i.e., non-duality that takes the form of polarity) and seems to come close to imagining the hermeneutic circle that practitioners must enter to achieve the soteriological goal of liberation, culminating in the deconstruction of the perceived duality of the conceivable and inconceivable (i.e., doctrine and liberation).

In other words, for Tiantai, the soteriological goal of ineffable liberation coincides with the hermeneutical concern to understand the internal coherence hidden in the doctrinal diversity and intertextual relationships between the translated sūtras and śāstras. Zhiyi's doxographic appropriation of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma shows such a connection of the soteriological with the hermeneutical aspects (Kantor 2021, pp. 13–16). From the perspective of his hermeneutical concern, the classification of all conceptual possibilities for a given doctrinal topic according to the tetralemma—a kind of conceptual sorting developed since the early Buddhist era—appears as an adequate blueprint or prototype, not only for the doxographic scheme on the basis of which all the various sūtra and śāstra doctrines could be integrated into a coherent whole, but also for the pattern that captures and evaluates the various kinds of metaphysical confusion. His "ten kinds of tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*)" denote the continuum connecting the misguided forms of linguistic expression as well as the misconceptions of the ineffable with the correct contemplation of all doctrinal discourses and inconceivable liberation (*bukesiyi jietuo*), all of which are inseparable.

The account that precedes the quoted passage from the *Mohe zhiguan* states that trying to get one's mind to distance itself from linguistic and conceptual constructions by going beyond the alternatives of the tetralemma has the opposite effect, because in this way one's mind becomes even more entangled in metaphysical confusion consisting of much more complex forms of the tetralemma.[22] Instead of becoming aware of this paradox and thus realizing the inconceivable realm (*bukesiyi jing*) of liberation beyond the duality of speech and silence, the deluded mind, seeking to escape all alternatives of the tetralemma, constructs a kind of duality in which each side excludes the other. The attachment of the mind either to silence, which excludes speech, or to the opposite, presupposes the same kind of duality in both opposite cases, each leading to a different form of unilateral and misguided application of the tetralemma.

Zhiyi believes that the Daoist view of the "enduring name" or the "permanent path" ("eternal way") falls victim to a blind spot when it attempts to separate the ineffable from language (i.e., from all positions of the tetralemma). For him, the Daoist error consists in adopting a position from which it is impossible to recognize that one's concept of the ineffable is itself nothing but a linguistic construct. In examining Laozi's position, Zhiyi emphasizes his point that the classificatory divisions of the tetralemma encompass all the various possibilities of conceptual forms in linguistic expression. He tries to demonstrate that the attempt to overcome the various conceptual constructions represented by the pattern of the tetralemma (*chu siju* 出四句) has the opposite effect of becoming even more entangled in this construction.

He concludes that the confusion of linguistic construction with what goes beyond language paradoxically results from the intention to separate the two. If one does not recognize this paradox, such a blind spot concerning linguistic–conceptual constructions arises again and again. Zhiyi's critical remarks about the Laozi's "enduring name" and "eternal way" (the Daoist ineffable) in his discussion of the tetralemma seem to highlight that blind spot as the lack of awareness of this paradox. In other words, the Daoist ineffable

fails to realize Tiantai's "inconceivable realm", which shall be addressed in sections four and five of this article.

3. Tiantai's Practice of Contemplating Subtle Names

Zhanran, the Tang commentator on Zhiyi's major works, seems to have observed the same problematic. In his commentary on Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*, the *Zhiguan fuxing hongchuan jue*, he follows the Tiantai master's view that what constitutes the term "*zhiguan* 止觀" (*śamatha-vipaśyanā*—calming and contemplation) in this title, (translated as *The Great Calming and Contemplation*), ultimately eludes speech and language. "*Zhiguan*"—the linguistic core of this title—embodies exactly this paradox.

According to both Zhiyi and Zhanran, it is the ineffable that gives rise to such an expression, which in turn, like a trace, points back to its hidden root. To bring one's own understanding into this circular dynamic of mutual reference, in which language is seen as necessary to cancel itself out, is to truly understand the words "calming and contemplation" without holding on to them or to anything beyond them.

In other words, Tiantai's calming and contemplation is a spiritual practice that, according to Zhiyi and Zhanran, both comes from and leads back to the enlightened insight that defies linguistic representation but does not aim to erase the realm of language, instead using paradoxical speech in a pragmatic way to deconstruct the delusions rooted in verbal and conceptual construction. For them, this is the path by which the practitioner's mind must attain the three virtues (*sande* 三德) of (1) liberation (*jietuo* 解脱)—liberation from the bonds of the mind's self-induced delusions, (2) wisdom qua insight (*prajñā*, *bore* 般若), and (3) that which actually constitutes these two—which is the indestructible dharma-body (*fashen* 法身) as they believe it is taught in the *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra*.[23]

Tiantai's linguistic practice of employing paradoxes is particularly obvious in its doctrinal exegesis and is intended to bring about the understanding of the Dharma—an understanding that is neither tied to nor separable from the doctrinal speech handed down in the Buddhist textual tradition.[24] The paradoxical feature of Tiantai's textual pragmatics should not be confused with a commitment to metaphysical dialetheism, for then a particular form of speech (contradictory statements) would be hypostatized as the only linguistically valid form of ultimate truth. Like a metaphysical realist who asserts the correspondence between proposition and reality, the dialetheistic reading takes a similar position with respect to language: in contradictory propositions it sees the semantic structure, which it considers isomorphic with the structure of reality.

But any concept of truth that presupposes such a correspondence is precisely what needs to be deconstructed according to Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka distinction between conventional truth (*samvrti-satya*, *shisu di* 世俗諦) and ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*, *shengyi di* 勝義諦). If there is nothing that does not arise in dependence, and therefore nothing has an irreducible core (or everything is empty of inherent existence), then no referent of a linguistic expression can be regarded as ultimately true and real. Therefore, ultimate truth must be distinguished from that which is true only at the provisional level of conventional linguistic expression.

However, since the two truths are distinguished in the linguistic realm, they embody a self-contained and therefore paradoxical kind of distinction that serves to reveal the true emptiness of what is distinguished by them. Their distinction involves self-referential observation and is therefore paradoxical, which conversely reveals non-duality but does not mean that ultimate reality consists of true contradictions. The conventional realm, which is unreality (emptiness of inherent existence) but not non-existence, is neither separate from nor identical to ultimate reality. To claim separation of the conventional realm is to confuse the unreal with the real; considering the two to be identical would mean the same thing. In this sense, Nāgārjuna's paradoxical differentiation of the two truths means non-duality qua polarity.[25]

Both Zhiyi and Zhanran are committed to this paradoxical Madhyamaka doctrine of the two truths. According to the two Tiantai masters, it is also at this level of self-referential

observation that the notions of the ineffable in the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* fail. Hence, in his commentary on the *Mohe zhiguan*, Zhanran, like Zhiyi himself, explains "calming and contemplation" based on such Madhyamaka understanding of the two truths. This is evident from the following quotations from Zhanran's work:

> The second of the (ten) main chapters (in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*) deals with the explanation of the title ("Calming and Contemplation"). What constitutes names is not always the same, as stated, for example, in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*: "In some cases, there are causes and conditions (that give rise to a specific name) like "Maudgalyāyana", (which is the name of one of the Buddha's ten principal disciples and followers who embodies the virtue of filial piety). In other cases, there are no causes and conditions (and yet there are specific names), such as "peaches and plums" (expressing the meanings of disciples and followers in a metaphorical way)".[26]

> "Nirvāṇa" is also an example of the forced naming of something devoid of causes and conditions; the same applies to "calming and contemplation", where there is just the forced naming "calming and contemplation". Causes are ascribed where there are none; only for the sake of living beings are names established that correspond to their cognitive abilities. 大章第二釋名者：夫立名不同，如大經云：或有因緣如目連等；或無因緣如桃李等。涅槃亦爾，無有因緣彊為立名；止觀亦爾，彊名止觀。即此無因名為有因，為眾生故隨機立稱。(see the last quote in this section)

This passage is part of Zhanran's commentary on the second chapter *Explaining the Names* (*shiming* 釋名) in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*. What Zhiyi explains and Zhanran comments on are the names "calming and contemplation" (*zhiguan* 止觀) in the title of this influential Tiantai classic. Zhanran commences with a distinction between names arising from conditions and causes (*yinyuan* 因緣) and names devoid of conditions and causes (*wu yinyuan* 無因緣) to highlight the ambiguity that Zhiyi attributes to the expression "calming and contemplation". Zhanran first illustrates his point by discussing the use of the two names "Maudgalyāyana" and "peaches and plums".

In his interpretation of the quotation from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, "Maudgalyāyana", the name of the famous disciple of the Buddha, seems to be taken as a metonym for the cardinal virtue of filial piety that characterizes the nature of a disciple, which in turn for Zhanran seems to mean that exactly this virtue is the cause and condition from which that name arises, while "peaches and plums" appears to be a metaphor that, in a more analogous and accidental way, conveys the same meaning but does not imply a semantic contiguity to "disciple". Therefore, Zhanran holds that there are no actual causes and conditions that lead to the name "peaches and plums". For Zhanran, the two names seem to represent the same referent "disciple" but differ in that one results from causes and conditions and the other does not. Therefore, he explains at the beginning of the quote: "What constitutes names is not always the same".

As in the case of "disciple and follower", the term "calming and contemplation" also may or may not be based on causes and conditions. Zhiyi himself explains "*zhiguan*" in the second chapter of the *Mohe zhiguan* in a twofold or ambiguous way, distinguishing "calming and contemplation as correlative dependents" (*xiangdai zhiguan* 相待止觀) from the opposite "calming and contemplation that suspend correlative dependencies" (*juedai zhiguan* 絕待止觀).[27] The first meaning in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* seems to correspond to what Zhanran addresses as the causes and conditions that give rise to names, while the second, the opposite of the first, corresponds to what constitutes the same name without causes and conditions.

In the next paragraph, Zhanran then introduces another pair of opposites—the distinction between "worldly names" (*shiming* 世名) and "names that lead beyond the world" (*chushi ming* 出世名)—to emphasize the paradoxical relationship between the linguistic meaning as a cause and condition for a certain name and the ineffable, devoid of cause and condition. The following paragraphs show that the two constitute a relationship that

corresponds to the circular dynamic between the root and the traces and is meant to be manifested through the accomplished practice of calming and contemplation—the subtle principle (*miaoli* 妙理) of the three virtues.

> Again, relying on worldly names, we constitute names that lead beyond the world; therefore, all the noble ones set up the worldly names first, which serve as a skillful means of (understanding) the names that lead beyond the world. However, in terms of their root, the worldly names are that which leads beyond the world; hence, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* says: "All worldly names and scripts derive from the sūtras of the Buddha".[28] 又依於世名立出世名，是故眾聖先立世名，為出世名而作方便。而是世名本是出世，故金光明云：世間名字皆出佛經。

In accordance with the non-duality of root and traces, the two opposite meanings of "calming and contemplation" mentioned by Zhiyi in the *Mohe zhiguan* are neither contradictory nor mutually exclusive. The same applies to the worldly names and those leading beyond the world in Zhanran's commentary. Zhanran parametrically explains that the former serves as a skillful means of realizing the latter, like the traces leading back to the root. Zhiyi's "calming and contemplation as correlative dependents" contains meanings that fall under the category of assumed causes and conditions that give rise to the worldly concept of "calming and contemplation", while the ineffable "calming and contemplation that suspend correlative dependencies" embodies that which is beyond the world—the three virtues (of liberation, wisdom, and dharma-body).

In the same sense that dependent arising (*yuanqi* 緣起), or causes and conditions (*yinyuan* 因緣), embody emptiness (*kong*), worldly names based on causes and conditions are like the traces which can "serve as a skillful means of understanding the names that lead beyond the world". The latter is in turn the ineffable emptiness (devoid of causes and conditions), the rootless root, from which the worldly names (traces) arise. Such a circular dynamic also characterizes the way Zhanran interprets the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*, saying that worldly names (traces) arise from and lead back to the sūtras of the awakened one, who has realized the dharma-body consisting of wisdom and liberation, which again is the "root" based on which Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* expounds all the names related to the Tiantai practice of calming and contemplation.

Hence, the Tiantai practice that Zhiyi and Zhanran describe is self-inclusive: it begins with the contemplation of its own name, and its completion is "calming and contemplation that suspend correlative dependencies", which is synonymous with the root or the "subtle principle *miaoli* 妙理" (of the three virtues). According to Zhanran, the ambiguous "calming and contemplation" is the "subtle name" (*miaoming* 妙名) that Zhiyi merely borrows as a heuristic device to reveal the "subtle principle (which eludes linguistic meaning)".

> Therefore, one should note: All established names are modeled after the principle (of liberating the mind from the bonds of its self-induced delusions—the three virtues). Since the names are modeled after the principle, (realizing) the principle is also caused by names. Therefore, (Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*—*The Great Calming and Contemplation*) borrowed the subtle name to reveal the subtle principle (beyond any name).

> (In contrast) Zhuangzi spoke: "The world values words and spreads scriptures, and yet none of it is valuable".[29] Zhuangzi used words and spread his writings, so his work itself is not valuable. (Similarly) Laozi said: "The wise do not speak and those who do speak are not wise".[30] But Laozi spoke, so he could not have been wise either. (The two) wanted to get the whole world to refrain from speech just to spread their own speeches. But they were not aware of the reverse (effect): Believing themselves to be refuting the worldly people by their request to refrain from speaking, they (Laozi and Zhuangzi) refuted their own refuting speech without realizing it themselves. On the contrary, they even mistook this for their achievement; how deeply confused they were!

All this does not apply to this case (that is, to Zhiyi's *Great Calming and Contemplation*). Because of the snare, we get the rabbit; after we get it, we throw away the snare.[31] But what kind of snare is there to throw away? We are not (really) talking about a (real) rabbit, either. This means "(inconceivable) liberation in words and script". 故知：諸名法理而立。名既法理，理亦因名。故假妙名以詮妙理。莊子云：而世貴言傳書不足貴也。莊既以言傳書，則莊自不足可貴。老子曰：知則不言，言則不知。而老有言則同不知。意欲使於天下無言，獨揚己言；不意反以無言自斥世人，被此自斥之言而潛斥之；反以為得，謬之甚矣！今則不爾。因罤得兔，得已亡罤。罤何所亡，弗謂為兔。文字解脫，斯之謂歟。 (*Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* T46, no. 1912, p. 216, c13–28)

In Tiantai's practice of calming and contemplation, name and principle are considered equally subtle (*miao* 妙) because they are inseparably bound up with one another in the circular dynamics of root and traces, equivalent to the relationship between ultimate truth and conventional truth, or emptiness and dependent arising (causes and conditions). As a worldly name (or a conventional truth) based on supposed causes and conditions, "calming and contemplation" functions as the traces leading back to that which suspends correlative dependencies and is beyond the world (ultimate truth), which in turn is the truly empty root and principle sustaining those traces inversely pointing at it.

For Zhanran as well as Zhiyi, the name "calming and contemplation" is subtle because, when one contemplates its ambiguity, one realizes that worldly names are originally something that leads beyond the world, just as causes and conditions indicate nothing but emptiness. Conversely, emptiness is what causes and conditions really are, that is, their unreality cannot be separated from true emptiness, otherwise the unreal would be mistaken for the real. In the same sense that true emptiness is inseparable from the unreality of causes and conditions, true liberation—the ineffable or subtle principle (of the three virtues)—does not separate from linguistic constructions (subtle names). Therefore, at the end of the quote, Zhanran refers to the subtle name "calming and contemplation" as "liberation in words and script" (*wenzi jietuo* 文字解脫).[32]

Following Nāgārjuna's distinction of two truths, Zhiyi and Zhanran hold that, just as causes and conditions mean emptiness, words or names are emptiness—albeit in a double sense: Nothing in linguistic representation can be taken as what truly exists and, again, the same applies to names or words themselves. In the same sense that there are no real entities that could be represented by names or words, there are no real words or names that could be referred to or dismissed. This observation brings with it a paradoxical awareness—the awareness that the world we speak of does not really exist, and yet in our (supposed) speaking in such a world we simply cannot help but make further existential assumptions that we know in the ultimate sense are not true.

Although we see that truth is not possible as a correspondence between proposition and reality, we recognize that our constructions at the level of conventional truth are not possible without assuming such a correspondence. Hence, true awareness itself is not an object for language to refer to, although it does not separate from the speech of the awakened one either. Emerging from the exercise of deconstructing the representational function of language, such awareness itself is dynamic. The final passage of the quote attempts to address that issue through the rhetorical figure of the parable (of the snare and the rabbit), which Zhanran borrows from the same Daoist sources that he criticizes.

Zhanran presents the parable in the same way that Zhiyi follows to explain Nāgārjuna's distinction between the two truths in his *Mohe zhiguan*. In the section dealing with the contemplation of emptiness, Zhiyi resorts to the tetralemma as an analytical tool for his conclusion that the referents of our conventional language in fact have no intrinsic nature at all—this is the emptiness of the conventional truth, and Zhanran explains it through the parable as follows: "Because of the snare, we get the rabbit; after we get it, we throw away the snare". We cannot help but use conventional language (snare) to be able to understand the ultimate truth (rabbit), and yet we must detach our understanding from the referents of each word or name we use (i.e., throw away the snare).[33]

The same is true of any word or name—there are no words or names to hold on to: neither in our sense perceptions, nor in its external objects, nor in the connection of the two, nor beyond them, that is the emptiness of ultimate truth, as Zhiyi explains, again taking resort to the tetralemma as an analytic device.[34] At the point wherein both conventional truth and ultimate truth are found to be equally empty, wherein the distinction between the two reveals true non-duality, Zhanran modifies the simile in ways we do not find in the original Daoist context of the *Zhuangzi*: "But what kind of snare is there to throw away? We are not (really) talking about a (real) rabbit, either".

Since there is no real word or name to hold on to, there is none to discard either. According to Zhanran's critique, with their call to abstain from speech, Laozi and Zhuangzi, without realizing it themselves, reinforce their adherence to (a supposed) speech and thus confuse the unreal with the real. Zhanran's critique implies that, in the Daoist sense, the snare and the rabbit are mistaken for real and therefore the parable fails to convey what can only be seen in Madhyamaka's insight into the two truths. Based on this observation, Zhanran accuses Laozi and Zhuangzi of inconsistently attempting to represent the ineffable through linguistic expressions that they believe consist of real entities.

According to Zhanran, what protects against falling prey to such self-contradictory conceptual and mental attitudes is the introspective awareness of the calming and contemplation of Mahāyāna practice, i.e., observing the paradox that to reject any speech is to cling to it—conversely, one does not cling to words and names by not rejecting them. This practice of contemplating subtle names agrees exactly with what Zhiyi is trying to explore in the discussion of the "ten kinds of tetralemma" at the end of the passage in his contemplation of emptiness (*kongguan*) in the *Mohe zhiguan*.

4. Tiantai's Non-Duality of the Real and the Unreal

Zhiyi employs the tetralemma or four positions (*catuṣkoṭi*, *siju*) to structure the lengthy chapter *Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas* in his *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p.62, a14–p.75, b27). He uses the tetralemma to develop two opposing types of classification: (1) one type that covers all kinds of conceptual confusions in metaphysical speculation (*xilun* 戲論) and (2) another type, in the form of Tiantai's doxography (*panjiao* 判教), which both subdivides and synthesizes various levels of doctrinal discourse in the translated sūtra and śāstra literature. Probably inspired by the *Da zhi du lun* 大智度論, he respectively construes a "tetralemma of tetralemmas" for each of the two opposing cases and introduces the concept of the "ten kinds of tetralemma" (*shizhong siju*) that highlights all turning points in the continuum between conceptual confusion and proper doctrinal discourse (Kantor 2021, pp. 1–23).[35]

The ambivalence that Zhiyi attributes to the tetralemma characterizes all paradoxical formulations in his works. For him, this serves the Mahāyāna practice of deconstructing the notion of univocal truth in terms of linguistic representations that are assumed to be consistent with the nature of real entities. Tiantai's deconstruction is the exercise of an understanding that aims to liberate itself from the deceptive effects of its own conceptual constructions and linguistic distinctions. This entails the awareness of the following paradox: even an understanding of truth that distances all its cognitive constructions from an independent world of real entities does not get beyond its tendency to conceptual construction—the distinction between construct and reality is itself a construct. Such a deconstructive understanding, aware of the paradoxes it creates, recognizes itself as part of the soteriological practice for Buddhist liberation and not as the epistemological equivalent of a metaphysical worldview. For example, it is crucial to see in the discussion of the *Mohe zhiguan* that the term "calming and contemplation" is the "subtle name" that is meant to embody such a practice of self-referential understanding because its subtlety reveals non-duality of the real and unreal—the "subtle principle" of dependent arising.

This could be extended as follows: all metaphysical confusions, that is, all false views about being and non-being, are misguided accounts of dependent arising in that they fail to capture the constitutive meaning of emptiness; but for Zhiyi, these views themselves are

nothing more than certain instances of dependent arising, all of which are emptiness.[36] In other words, without true emptiness, which Zhiyi considers as the nature of dependent arising, none of the obscured views of emptiness (metaphysical confusion) would be possible. In the section "contemplation of emptiness" (*kongguan*) at the beginning of the section *Thorough Deconstruction of Dharmas*, he explains:

> The delusions of (mistaken) views arise associated with the essence (of reality as empty), and yet in turn are able to obstruct (realization of) the essence (of reality). It is like a flame that depends on empty space yet agitates that empty space; like a dream that is caused by sleep, and yet that dream can befuddle your sleep. 見惑附體而生還能障體。如炎依空而動亂於空。似夢因眠夢昏於眠. (Swanson 2018, vol. II 897, *Mohe zhiguan* T46, no. 1911, p. 62, b4–6)

In a footnote to his English translation of the *Mohe zhiguan*, Paul Swanson (2018, vol. II 897) explains the character "*ti* 體", which Zhiyi uses in the quoted passage, as the "essence of reality, that is, emptiness". Literally, "*ti*" means "body, form, style, system, substance, to experience etc.". The English translation "essence (of reality as empty)" for "*ti*" is correct, but not necessarily complete, as the same character could also mean "essence of unreality" in this context. As mentioned earlier, for Buddhists there is nothing that does not arise in dependence, which in turn implies no real entities, although that does not equal non-existence either.

From the preceding discussions in the *Mohe zhiguan*, it appears that "*ti*" is used as another term for "non-arising" (*bushing* 不生) or "principle" (*li*), which is the nature of all dependent arising and is also called "dharma-nature" (*faxing* 法性), implying the emptiness of any essence, and thus including unreality. Again, although dependent arising is empty of inherent existence, the unreal phenomena and entities that arise are not completely nonexistent, which means that by their nature, there is nothing that really arises. To put it paradoxically, the nature of dependent arising (dharma-nature) is non-arising. This is not to be misunderstood as a contradiction but rather means that viewing dependent arising as the real undermines the access to the real nature of dependent arising (dharma-nature), or distorts the true understanding, even though it is this true nature ("*ti*") that enables the arising of such a misleading view.[37]

The character "*ti*" stands for the constitutive meaning of emptiness for all dependent arising, which the first sentence of the quotation expresses. Hence, "*ti*" could perhaps be best understood as the nature of dependent arising. Instead of associating emptiness with "essence of reality", the meaning of the first sentence could be restated as follows: "The delusive views arise associated with the nature (of dependent arising) (*ti* 體), and yet in turn are able to obstruct (the realization of) that nature (*ti*)".

To expand on the complex functional structure of dharma-nature, the nature of dependent arising, Zhiyi resorts to the pattern of the tetralemma in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and addresses the paradoxical relationship between arising and non-arising (in the paragraph preceding the quote).[38] (1) "Non-arising that arises" (*busheng sheng* 不生生) is the arising of wisdom that involves the non-arising of delusions due to practitioners' growing insight into emptiness (non-arising), which is *prajñā*—the cause (*yin* 因) that leads to liberation, (2) "non-arising that does not arise" (*busheng busheng* 不生不生) is nirvāṇa in which there is neither the arising of delusions nor that of non-arising in terms of wisdom—the ultimate fruit of extinction (*guo* 果) that the practitioners attain, (3) "arising that does not arise" (*sheng bushing* 生不生) is the arising of fictitious means from the bodhisattva's capacity for wholesome activity (*neng* 能) aimed at the liberation of other beings, (4) "arising of arising" (*sheng sheng* 生生) is the ceaseless arising in the realms of saṃsāra—the vicious circle of endlessly reproductive and unwholesome illusions to which sentient beings are fettered in that they mistake them for the real; these are the deceptive objects (*suo* 所) toward which the Bodhisattva's wholesome activity is directed.[39]

The character "*ti*" represents the cohesive force holding these four aspects together as an indivisible whole, (like the whole body that holds all the limbs together), which Tiantai sees embodied in its soteriological ideal of the round-perfect teaching (*yuanjiao* 圓教): one's

own practice of liberation culminates in transforming and liberating others, and the same applies in reverse (*zixing huata* 自行化他). Without truly understanding the Buddhist teachings transmitted in sūtra and śāstra, that is, without liberating one's mind from the bonds of its self-induced delusions, there can be no perfection in action. But only when dealing with others in a way that brings salvation does the true understanding of Buddhist doctrine prove to be awakening and liberating. Recognizing one's own deceptions is the prerequisite for inspiring others. Conversely, the salutary effect on others is the measure of the perfection of one's own insight. "*Ti*" accounts for such a circular dynamic which constitutes non-duality of understanding and acting (*jiexing* 解行) in Tiantai's round-perfect teaching.

All this is also expressed by "principle" (*li*) synonymous with "non-arising" or "dharma-nature," which includes all causal relationships, both deceptive and instructive, which sentient beings perceive as either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa, depending on their degree of awakening. Although dharma-nature is that which indivisibly encompasses wisdom, nirvāṇa, all acts of compassion, as well as all arising and cessation of saṃsāra, it is obscured by delusions which it itself maintains once a conceptual representation of reality is associated with it, instead of recognizing its true emptiness.

Following the first sentence in the quote, the second and third are metaphorical descriptions that highlight the paradoxical implication of dharma-nature. It is the empty space on which the flame depends, yet agitation within the empty space results from the flame. Similarly, it is sleep due to which dreams arise, but mistaking sleep for being awake comes from dreaming. "Sleep" and "empty space" are metaphors for the nature of dependent arising "*ti*" or "dharma-nature", while "flame" and "dreams" account for "the delusions or the mistaken views". Hence, the quote attempts to point out the paradox that "dharma-nature" ultimately defies conceptualization, and yet without this true nature there could be no conceptual representation obstructing the proper understanding of it. Since dharma-nature is what all conceptual inversions (*viparyāsa*, *diandao* 顛倒) are based on, only the one who grasps the emptiness in them can truly recognize that nature—that defies linguistic and conceptual representation. Conversely, however, this means that all unreality points back to what it really is, for deceptive inversions that generate undesirable forms of existence have the potential to become instructive. To realize true emptiness in dharma-nature, practitioners must become aware of the paradox addressed in this quote.

A few paragraphs later, the text further explains that not only all mistaken views or possible ways of misconceiving dharma-nature, i.e., the ramified delusions (*zhimo huo* 枝末惑), but also the root of them, called fundamental ignorance (*genben wuming* 根本無明), are themselves dharma-nature (T46, no. 1911, p. 60, c8–10). The unreality associated with the various misconceptions and the fundamental ignorance do not exist outside the domain of dharma-nature; conversely, there is no dharma-nature apart from such ignorance (*faxing ji wuming* 法性即無明), which is the Tiantai way of saying that emptiness is dependent arising and vice versa. In all his major works, Zhiyi stresses non-duality of dharma-nature and ignorance, expressing both ambiguity and inseparability of falsehood and truth. The *Mohe zhiguan* states:

> When a moment of mental activity arises, it certainly is one of the four (false) views that make up the simple form (of the tetralemma).[40] As such a false view, it is the the illusory triple construct of (causality, continuity, and correlation), which are all deceptive and unreal.[41] … We should contemplate this as follows: The rising whirl of air depends on the flame, which in turn resides in space, and yet there is nothing to support space. If there is even no space in emptiness, then where should be the flame or the rising whirl of air? Again, this is comparable to sleeping while dreaming of all kinds of suffering and joy. When the root (of sleep—fundamental ignorance) and the ramifications (of its dream events—the ramified delusions) mutually come to rest so that ultimately clarity and purity prevail, we call that calming. Again, if one contemplates without duality and without separation that ignorance is dharma-nature, and that dharma-nature originally is clarity and purity without arising and cessation, then

the mind plagued by delusions of ignorance becomes clarity and purity again.
若一念心起，於單四見中，必是一見。見即三假，虛妄無實。…。應當體達：颷
依炎、炎依空、空無所依。空尚無空，何處復有若炎、若颷！又、如眠夢百千憂
喜，本末雙寂畢竟清淨，是名為止。又、觀無明即法性不二不異，法性本來清淨
不起不滅，無明惑心亦復清淨。 (T46, no. 1911, p. 63, c3–8)[42]

Since Zhiyi emphasizes non-duality (or indivisibility) of dharma-nature and ignorance, his understanding of ignorance and delusion is as complex as his notion of dharma-nature.[43] There are three types of delusions (*sanhuo* 三惑) in Tiantai: (1) the delusions of false views and mental attitudes (*jiansi huo* 見思惑), (2) the delusions as numerous as dust and sand (*chensha huo* 塵沙或), (3) the delusions of ignorance (*wuming huo* 無明惑).[44] Tiantai's division of delusions into three types is somewhat complicated in its conceptual presentation because the second type can be understood only if the first and third are understood; the following explanation takes this peculiarity into account.

The first type of delusion is a lack of insight into true emptiness as that which all dependent arising consists of; this leads to confusions which cause sentient beings to experience their lives as countless rebirths in the six sorrowful realms of saṃsāra. What prevents them from gaining insight into true emptiness is their clinging to one of the four positions of the tetralemma (being, non-being, both and, neither nor). There is the cognitive level where the false views of being or non-being arise and turn into concepts of supposed entities with substances or selves—these are the delusions of the false views (*jianhuo* 見惑), and due to the mind's attachment to its self-construed self, there is also a deeper level of its habitual tendencies constantly arousing affections, aversions, and confusions in relation to the world of incessantly changing objects—these are the delusions of the mental attitudes (*sihuo* 思惑). The delusions of false views and attitudes that bind the minds of sentient beings to the samsaric realms correspond to the aspect of dharma-nature that Zhiyi describes as "arising that arises" (*sheng sheng* 生生)—the rising whirl of air, the dreams of all kinds of suffering and joy, or the ramified delusions according to the images used in the quote.

Moreover, sentient beings whose existence is determined by this first type of delusions are bound to the three spheres of sensual desire, physical form, and formlessness (*sanjie* 三界). There are those of the six realms of saṃsāra, such as humans and animals, whose minds are attached to the lowest of the three spheres—the sphere of sensual desires (*yujie* 欲界). Others might have detached themselves from all sensual desires but are still attached to physical forms (*sejie* 色界) and thus regarded as certain types of gods (*tian* 天). There are also those who are neither bound to the sphere of sensual desires nor to that of physical forms but delve into the sphere of formlessness (*wuse jie* 無色界). Leading a purely spiritual form of existence, they are nevertheless determined by the first type of delusions. Therefore, this first type, the delusions of the false views and mental attitudes (the ramified delusions), is also referred to as delusions within the three spheres (*jienei huo* 界內惑) and is typical for all samsaric beings referred to as the ordinary ones (*fanfu* 凡夫).

In contrast to the first, the third type, comprising the delusions of ignorance (*wuming huo* 無明惑), is called delusions beyond the three spheres (*jiewai huo* 界外惑) and characterizes those who have attained a limited degree of wisdom on the basis of Buddhist doctrine and practice; those are called the noble persons (*shengren* 聖人), divided into four groups: (1) Śrāvakas, (2) Pratyekabuddhas, (3) Bodhisattvas, and (4) Buddhas. According to Tiantai, the dharma-realm as a whole (*fajie* 法界) includes both the six samsaric realms of the ordinary within the three spheres and the four of the noble beyond the three spheres (*liufan sisheng* 六凡四聖). Therefore, the dharma-realm, the continuum of all kinds of delusions and awakening which shape the ways living beings respectively exist, is divided into 10 realms. The practice of the Buddhist teachings allows one's mental activity to rise from the lower to the higher realms to improve one's rank on the path to liberation or descend from the higher to the lower realms to benefit and save other sentient beings. Therefore, Tiantai holds that "dharma-realm" means mutual inclusion of all 10 (*shijie huju* 十界互具), and that this potential is in the embrace of each moment of mental activity that arises.[45]

The Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha pursue the Hīnayāna path of liberation and exclusively practice the contemplation of emptiness (*kongguan*) to tackle the delusions of false views and mental attitudes (delusions within the three spheres). After detaching from the three spheres, they nevertheless grow a strong inclination to emptiness, which precludes their further ascension in the tenfold dharma-realm. Clinging to emptiness prevents these two noble ones from developing true Buddha wisdom of the Mahāyāna (*fozhi* 佛智). Their deconstruction of the illusory triple construct of (causality, continuity, and correlation, *sanjia* 三假), which frees them from the false views of being (non-being, both, neither) and from all associated mental attitudes, leads to their adherence to emptiness, creating new obstacles—the delusions beyond the three spheres (*jiewai huo* 界外或), impeding Buddha wisdom.

This limited level of liberation of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha agrees with the aspect of dharma-nature that Zhiyi refers to as "non-arising that arises" (*busheng sheng* 不生生). For their level continues to contain a trace of arising, indicating that liberation from the shackles of all self-induced delusions is not yet complete. Although the delusions of the ordinary within the three spheres are an arising in the sense of ceaseless arising in the samsaric realms, to which the expression "arising that arises" (*sheng sheng* 生生) refers, the delusions of the noble beyond the three spheres are equally, or still, a type of arising, namely one of non-arising (non-arising that arises). These two are two different kinds of arising, and yet they go back to the same source of basic or fundamental ignorance which, as we will see below, is dharma-nature.

Considering the false constructs (*jia* 假) merely as a delusion (*huo* 惑), the two noble ones only recognize the deceptive effects of those constructs but overlook their instructive and wholesome potential to serve as a convenient and appropriate means (*quan* 權) not only for their own liberation but also for that of other sentient beings. This is comparable to seeing in all poison only its toxic nature without recognizing its therapeutic potential. The Mahāyāna-bodhisattva, whose practice Zhiyi illustrates through the healing activity of the physician, learns to diagnose all diseases, recognize any poison, transform it into a therapeutic means, and distribute it as a remedy for the benefit of other beings.[46]

He detects the limitations of the Hīnayāna liberation and therefore dedicates himself to deconstructing the attachments that impede the progress of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha in the dharma-realm. His practice of deconstruction, the opposite of contemplating emptiness, is called contemplation [of the world] of salutary illusory constructs (*jiaguan* 假觀) and tackles the second type of delusions, which are as numerous as dust and sand (*chensha huo* 塵沙或). He vows to understand the countless deceptions of all sentient beings in the entire spectrum of the dharma-realm (delusions within and beyond the three spheres) and to master the corresponding and appropriate means that help others attain salvation. The Bodhisattva's practice of contemplating the salutary illusory constructs is consistent with the meaning of dharma-nature as "arising that does not arise" (*sheng bushing* 生不生) since, in contrast to the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha, he re-enters the samsaric realm of falsehood and develops salutary activity after having realized true emptiness in all. Such activity, rooted in compassion for other beings, is indeed an arising, but one that is aware of its own emptiness.[47]

According to Tiantai, the contemplation of emptiness (*kongguan* 空觀) and the contemplation of wholesome illusory constructs (*jiaguan* 假觀) are opposed to one another. Contemplation of emptiness recognizes the ordinary mind's adherence to deceptive constructs (*jia* 假) by deconstructing the delusions of its views and attitudes (*po jiansi huo* 破見思惑)—the first type of delusions, while contemplation of wholesome illusory constructs exposes the inclinations of the Śrāvaka and the Pratyekabuddha toward emptiness (*kong* 空) by deconstructing the second type of delusions, which are as numerous as sand and dust (*po chensha huo* 破塵沙或). Following the *Sūtra of the Original Acts that Adorn the Bodhisattva* (*Pusa yingluo benye jing* 菩薩瓔珞本業經, T24, no. 1485, p. 1014, b19–23), Zhiyi says that practitioners enter emptiness through the first contemplation from the realm of illusory and unwholesome constructs (*congjia rukong* 從假入空), while they enter the realm

of illusory but wholesome constructs through the second contemplation from emptiness (*congkong rujia* 從空入假, *Mohe zhiguan* T46, no. 1911, p. 62, a22–25).

In other words, the two contemplations are correlative opposites—one side detaches from what the other is attached to, or one affirms what the other denies. Thus, neither represents full liberation of Buddha wisdom encompassing the tenfold dharma-realm. Hence, wisdom generated by the two opposing contemplations is limited and ambiguous. In fact, it entails subtle forms of delusions, which is the third type that Zhiyi calls "delusions of ignorance" (delusions beyond the three spheres). This is also fundamental ignorance (*genben wuming* 根本無明), the root of the preceding two types of delusions. The first type of the ordinary grows from attachments to deceptive constructs, (confusing the delusive with the real), and the second of the noble arises from inclinations to emptiness, (mistaking the instructive for the deceptive). In contrast to the fundamental ignorance (delusions of ignorance), the first and the second types are delusions that ramify into the ordinary and the noble. Furthermore, in reference to the images in the previous quote, fundamental ignorance or delusions of ignorance correspond to the flame (or sleep), while the ramified delusions are illustrated by the rising whirl of air (or the multiple dream events).

Only the Buddha's contemplation of the middle path (*zhongdao guan* 中道觀) can reveal this subtle layer of all delusions (fundamental ignorance) in the tenfold dharma-realm because the contemplation of the middle path, devoid of any inclination and exclusion, itself embodies non-duality of emptiness and the illusory constructs, seeing both inseparability and difference of the deceptive and the instructive simultaneously. Its full meaning is that the two, (contemplation of emptiness and contemplation of the wholesome illusory constructs), become possible as correlative opposites, presupposing each other in mutual negation. Revealing this, the middle highlights the inevitable blind spots that elude the types of wisdom each of the previous two contemplations produces.

Thus, the truth of the middle path mirrors itself by revealing that, like any distinct item, it cannot truly transcend the relations of correlative opposites and therefore cannot separate itself from the associated falsehood. If the truth of the middle way and the falsehood of the previous two contemplations were to be mutually exclusive, the unreal would once again be veiled, or mistaken for the real, and misunderstood as true duality. In other words, the middle is both emptiness and illusory construct, so each of the three embodies all three (*jikong jijia jizhong* 即空即假即中). The middle path reveals the ambiguity of truth and falsehood. But, again, the two predecessors that have not reached the third contemplation of the middle path are not aware of their own blind spots. Since one includes what the other excludes, the two must be conducted sequentially. Unable to adopt the simultaneous and paradoxical perspective characteristic of middle path contemplation, each of them leads to a certain sense of duality in their search for wisdom, liberation, and truth, which means that none of them embraces the non-duality of dharma-nature and ignorance (truth and falsehood)—the whole dharma-realm.

Therefore, only Buddha-wisdom that simultaneously performs "the threefold contemplation (of emptiness, illusory construction, and the middle path) in one moment of mental activity" (*yixin sanguan* 一心三觀) can simultaneously consider the tenfold dharma-realm as a whole and realize that there is no wisdom that can truly separate itself from delusion. Liberation from deception means gaining full insight into all deception—deception retains the potential to become didactic. The formula "ignorance is dharma-nature, just as dharma-nature is ignorance" expresses this ambiguity in a paradoxical way. All of this is consistent with the meaning of dharma-nature as "non-arising that does not arise" (*busheng bushing* 不生不生) from the perspective of the round-perfect teaching or, to stay with the image that the quote describes, dharma-nature is like the empty space on which both the flame and the rising whirl of air depend, and yet there is nothing on which the space depends—dharma-nature is entirely the unreality of ignorance.

At the end of the same section, Zhiyi explicitly states that dharma-nature is what ignorance is made of, just as ignorance is what dharma-nature is made of. The circular dynamic inherent in the performance of the round-perfect contemplation (*yuanguan* 圓觀) is remi-

niscent of the hermeneutic circle, and neither of the opposing sides can be comprehended separately or apart from the other:

> Question: Ignorance consists of what dharma-nature is, just as dharma-nature consists of what ignorance is. If ignorance is deconstructed, will dharma-nature be deconstructed as well? When dharma-nature manifests itself, does ignorance also manifest itself? Answer: That is correct. In fact, the principle (of the middle path) has no name.[48] Regarding the opposite of ignorance, we speak of dharma-nature. When dharma-nature manifests itself, ignorance has turned into enlightenment. In deconstructing ignorance, there is no (real) ignorance. Whose opposite should be meant in the discourse on dharma-nature? Question: Ignorance is dharma-nature, but again ignorance does not (really) exist, what else is it then that (dharma-nature) consists of? Answer: It is like showing a person, who has no knowledge of ice, that water is ice, and ice is water. There are only the names, but where are the two things that should be the same in terms of opposites? It is like the pearl that creates water when turned towards the moon and creates fire when turned towards the sun. If you turn it in neither direction, there is neither water nor fire. Despite the one thing that was never twofold, there is a difference like that between fire and water. 問：無明即法性，法性即無明。無明破時，法性破不？法性顯時，無明顯不？答：然！理實無名，對無明稱法性。法性顯則無明轉變為明。無明破則無無明。對誰復論法性耶？問：無明即法性，無復無明，與誰相即？答：如為不識水人，指水是冰，指冰是水。但有名字，寧復有二物相即耶！如一珠向月生水、向日生火，不向則無水火。一物未曾二，而有水火之殊耳。 (*Mohe zhiguan*, T46, no. 1911, p. 82, c27–p. 83, a6)

Considering this quote, both (1) the emergence of all delusions, that is, the entanglement of the mind in metaphysical confusion, and (2) its opposite, the deconstructive practice of calming and contemplation that purifies the mind, fully embrace each other. Mutual inclusion of correlative opposites—affirming each other in mutual negation—is the nature of dependent arising called dharma-nature. Like the same water either in its liquid or in its solid state, the same principle of dependent arising is manifested in opposite ways: either as (2) the deconstructive practice evoking the understanding of the dharma-nature as that in which all mistaken views and attitudes are rooted (liquid state), or as (1) the emergence of mental factors full of attachments that obscure the dharma-nature, by conceptually separating falsehood from truth (solid state). Nevertheless, dependent arising, which can only take shape in such contradictory ways, is non-duality by nature.

Hence, dependent arising cannot be unambiguously defined in terms of being, non-being, both, neither. As none of the positions of the tetralemma applies, the nature of dependent arising, dharma-nature, remains ontologically indeterminate. But seen from the soteriological perspective, the emergence of delusions and the deconstructive practice oppose each other like fire (saṃsāra) and water (nirvāṇa); again, such mutual negation means the reverse—mutual affirmation. To see the dynamic of both sides, that is, mutual affirmation in mutual negation and vice versa, is to understand the nature of dependent arising.

Consequently, the awakened understanding of dependent arising, i.e., the Buddhist meaning of this doctrine (according to Tiantai), must be realized by entering the hermeneutic circle. Accomplishing the practice of calming and contemplation requires insight into all delusions, and the same applies in reverse, as is the case with the nature of water, which is not fully understood unless its solid and its liquid states are taken in consideration together. The deconstructive practice of calming and contemplation thus takes place within such a circular understanding, leading to the paradoxical insight that a "true being" or "true non-being" distanced from conceptual representation is a construct that obscures what it actually is.

Unveiling such paradox, deconstruction (*jipo* 即破) shows that it itself does not go beyond construction (*jili* 即立). In the chapter *Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas* of the *Mohe zhiguan*, Zhiyi explicitly states that deconstructing misconceptions and misguided mental attitudes brings about the awareness that this contemplation of the mind (*guanxin*

觀心) culminates in construction—the construction of all the various Buddhist teachings transmitted in the sūtra and śāstra texts.[49] Conversely, the practice of deconstruction in the contemplation of the mind must follow such constructions of doctrinal discourse (*yanjiao* 言教). The awareness of the circular paradox that deconstruction and construction are dependent on each other does not emerge unless one's practice of calming and contemplation becomes self-referential, i.e., becomes a practice of examination that examines itself.[50]

In other words, simultaneously contemplating one's mind as emptiness, illusory construct, and middle way undermines the hypostasis of the mind as an independently existing entity but acknowledges the existential relevance and heuristic value associated with such unreality. This is referred to as wisdom understanding the mind as the inconceivable realm (*busiyi jing* 不思議境) pervading and encompassing the entire spectrum of dharma-realm.[51]

For Zhiyi, the completion of the deconstructive practice of introspection is equivalent to the comprehensive understanding of all doctrinal constructs in the textual transmission of sūtra and śāstra; the same is true for the reverse—the practice qua doctrinal exegesis. The hermeneutic concern of revealing the inner coherence between all sūtra and śāstra texts coincides with the soteriological goal of liberating the mind from its self-induced deceptions. In other words, "inconceivable realm" means that the revelation of the real itself shows that it does not extend beyond the unreal, otherwise the unreal would be mistaken for the real. What ties dharma-nature (the real) and ignorance (the unreal) inseparably together in the threefold contemplation of the inconceivable realm is the same non-duality that informs the relationship between ultimate truth and conventional truth, which Zhiyi also calls "the round-perfect integration of the three truths (of the ultimate, conventional, and middle path)" (*yuanrong sandi* 圓融三諦).

5. Tiantai's Appropriation of Zhuangzi's Parable of the Butterfly Dream

According to Zhiyi's Tiantai view, the non-duality of dharma-nature and ignorance can only be accessed through the "threefold contemplation in one moment of mental activity" (*yixin sanguan*). A sequential understanding that divides itself into two stages or moments of mental consciousness (*ernian* 二念, T46, no. 1911, p. 60, a6) misses the non-duality of the correlative opposites. The approach that aims to first eliminate all delusions of ignorance and then realize the awakening of dharma-nature does not reveal but, on the contrary, conceals fundamental ignorance that is dharma-nature. Therefore, the intent of clarifying and settling the ontological status of dependent arising (dharma-nature) entails the reverse. In other words, since the intent of erasing all delusions paradoxically intensifies the involvement in them, awakening (the mind's liberation from the fetters of its self-induced delusions) cannot be seen in something that really separates from delusion.

To highlight this, Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* and Zhanran's commentary use the image of sleep in a somewhat ambiguous and paradoxical way. In the previous quotes, "sleep" means dharma-nature on the one hand and fundamental ignorance on the other, whereas the metaphor of dream clearly represents cognitive delusions and mistaken mental attitudes. The ambiguity of the image of sleep agrees with Tiantai's paradoxical formula that dharma-nature is ignorance, and vice versa—non-duality of the real and the unreal. To maintain such ambiguity in the use of that image, the awakened mind cannot unequivocally be specified as something that completely excludes sleep, separates from it, or arises after the cessation of it.

One way to incorporate the meaning of awakening into the ambiguous Tiantai image of sleep would be to represent awakening as the awareness of dreaming while asleep; such awareness would prevent the mind in the state of sleep from confusing the unreal with the real. Another way to illustrate the inseparability of sleep and awakening in the Tiantai sense is to point to the subtle moment when the transition from wakefulness to sleep takes place. In this moment of transition neither of the two excludes the other side. Zhiyi seems to resort to these two possible applications of the image when, in the *Mohe zhiguan*, he connects the famous parable of the butterfly dream from the *Zhuangzi* with the metaphor of sleep from chapter fourteen of the *Lotus Sutra*, *Practices for the Dwelling at Ease*

(*anle xing pin* 安樂行品), to illustrate the paradoxical relationship between dharma-nature and ignorance.

For the heuristic expediency of his argument, Zhiyi also resorts to Sarvāstivāda and Madhyamaka terminological resources to expand on the non-duality of dharma-nature and ignorance. Following Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka, he explores all the conceptual possibilities of dependent arising by discussing this crucial issue through the various positions of the tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*). Regarding Sarvāstivāda, he adopts two of its four notions of causality (*catvāraḥ pratyayāḥ, siyuan* 四緣): (1) arising due to the main cause (*hetu, yin* 因) and (2) arising because of the condition of the objective support (*ālambana, yuan* 緣), equating them with the first two positions of the tetralemma.[52] What is meant by these two is explained in the following paragraphs.

(1) According to Sarvāstivāda's analysis of the conditioned dharmas (*saṃskṛta-dharma, youwei fa* 有為法), a particular moment of mental consciousness (*manovijñāna, yishi* 意識) that arises, for example, the actual moment of reading the present text, results from the preceding and extinguishing moment of consciousness as the main cause for such arising. This cause is called intentional or mental faculty (*manendriya, yigen* 意根).[53] Following Zhiyi's interpretation in the *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 63, c21–23), the preceding mental faculty as the main cause for the next arising mental consciousness corresponds to the first conceptual position of the self-arising mind (*zisheng xin* 自生心) in the tetralemma, although such a Tiantai reading of Abhidharma obviously differs from the Sarvāstivāda analysis.

(2) Sarvāstivāda also holds that the emergence of a particular moment of mental consciousness requires, as an additional condition, the associated thought-object (*dharma-viṣaya, fachen* 法塵) on which the focus of the thinking mind (mental consciousness) rests. The Chinese "*yuan* 緣", usually translated as condition but derived from the more literal meanings of "fringe, edge, along, climbing, abide by", corresponds to the Sanskrit "*ālamba*" (anything to hang on). This condition of arising is called "objective support" (*ālambana-pratyaya, suoyuan yuan* 所緣緣), without which the mental faculty would lack the factor of stimulation that causes it to bring forth the next moment of mental consciousness. This is like the moment of visual perception, which would not arise if the eye organ as its faculty had not been stimulated by the optical object it perceives. However, following Zhiyi's reasoning, this condition of arising is the opposite of the first, the second position of the tetralemma, because the perceived object is not intrinsic but extrinsic to the perceiving consciousness itself. Therefore, for him, the thought-object (the objective support) is the cause in relation to something else that gives rise to the mental consciousness (*taxing sheng* 他性生) that is aware of it.

Moreover, Zhiyi tentatively attributes the first position of self-arising to the dharma-nature, since this is the constitutive principle without which dependent arising would not be possible, as in the case of mental consciousness, which cannot arise if there were no intrinsic cause in the form of the mental faculty. Analogously, he tentatively associates the second position of arising based on something else with the term "ignorance" because this is (for him) the source of all reifications of conceptual distinctions and constructions into separable objects. In that sense, the extrinsic condition of arising can be subsumed under ignorance. The third position of the tetralemma according to Zhiyi's presentation in the *Mohe zhiguan* is the arising of the one moment of mind based on the interactive combination of the intrinsic and extrinsic conditions—arising based both on itself and something else (*gongsheng* 共生). The fourth position, the neither-nor-alternative, excludes both the first and the second positions, which is arising devoid of any causes (*wuyin sheng* 無因生).[54]

Citing Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka, Zhiyi claims that these four positions encompass all alternatives according to which dependent arising could possibly be conceptualized. However, in his Tiantai contemplation of emptiness (*kongguan*), inspired by Nāgārjuna's arguments, each of the four is shown to be untenable and ultimately untrue, while the Tiantai contemplation of provisional constructs (*jiaguan*) allows for the temporary application of each of the four due to the ever-changing soteriological circumstances in the Dharma transmission. Thus each of the four can serve heuristically as an expedient or appropriate means

in certain limited contexts of doctrinal discourse.[55] Of course, Zhiyi's interpretations do not really agree with the sources from which he derives all his conclusions, but in line with the Madhyamaka teaching, the discussion in the *Mohe zhiguan* aims to show that all dependent arising—dependent arising both in terms of the perceiving mind and in terms of the perceived world—is always unreal arising but not nothingness, and that this can only be understood through insight into the paradoxical relationship between dharma-nature and ignorance or their non-duality.

Again, "dharma-nature" plays a role as "cause" or "mind" in the interdependent emergence of the factor that perceives and the object that is perceived by it. For, without the mind no distinct object of the world could come to the fore. "Ignorance" then corresponds to the condition that is the "objective support", the distinct object upon which the focus of the mind rests. For without this condition, mental activity cannot arise or would be something separate from and unrelated to the world that sentient beings inhabit. This Tiantai method of assigning specific epistemological functions to the terms "dharma-nature" and "ignorance" further implies that "ignorance" embodies the manifold that results from reified constructions and distinctions, while "dharma-nature" is the empty one root in which all the manifold and interdependent reifications rest.

Zhiyi's reflections on the non-duality of dharma-nature and ignorance deal with the crucial Buddhist question of dependent arising which could be articulated as follows: what is the ultimate root of all arising, both in the world that shapes the minds of sentient beings and in their minds that shape the world through the various ways they experience and relate to it? In this context, Zhiyi also mentions the two parables about the sleep and dream events from the *Zhuangzi* and the *Lotus Sutra*. In the crucial section *Contemplating the Mind as the Inconceivable Realm* (*guanxin shi bukesiyi jing* 觀心是不可思議境, T46, no. 1911, p. 52, b18–19), the *Mohe zhiguan* addresses the question as follows:

> For the sake of convenience, we should say that ignorance gives rise to all things by emulating dharma-nature, (that is, reifications produced by ignorance are deceptive in that they evoke the semblance of the real). This is like the dharma of sleep, which imitates the mind (in its richness and intensity of sensations) so that the manifold dream events arise (while asleep).

> When the mind and its object, (which is the focus of perception), interactively combine, then all the three thousand marks and natures of the three worlds (of (1) the five aggregations constituting the empirical person, (2) the sentient beings, and (3) the lands they inhabit) arise from that mind. Although the (empty) one (dharma)-nature (in all this) is small (in number), it is not nothingness. Although ignorance diversifies into the manifold (of all dependent arising), nothing of it really exists. Why is it so? When we point to the (empty) one (dharma-nature), it becomes the manifold of (constructs reified by ignorance), so this manifold is not a (real) manifold. (Conversely), if we point to the manifold (of all dependent arising), it turns out to be the (empty) one (dharma-nature), so the one does not mean that something has (really) become less. Therefore, we call this (moment of) mind as the inconceivable realm.[56]

> If we realize: (in contemplating the illusory constructs), the one moment of mind is what all (manifold) moments of mind are, and (in contemplating emptiness) all (manifold) moments of mind are what the one moment of mind is, which is neither the one nor the manifold all (when contemplating the middle path), … the sensory entrance of the one is what the (manifold) sensory entrances of all are, and the (manifold) sensory entrances of all are what the sensory entrance of the one is, which is neither one nor all, … and go through everything (in such a way of the threefold contemplation), it is always the inconceivable realm.

> In the inseparable union between dharma-nature and ignorance, all things, aggregations (of the empirical persons), sensory fields, and sensory entrances arise, which is all that conventional truth consists of. All the sensory fields, sensory

entrances etc. also are the (empty) one dharma-realm that is what the ultimate truth consists of. Neither one nor all is what the supreme meaning of the truth of the middle path consists of. If we go through all things in this way, then there is none that is not inconceivable threefold truth, (the inconceivable realm). …

Again, it is like sleep, in whose dreams we see all the various things; but as soon as we awake, not one of them is there, let alone all the manifold. Just before we sink into sleep, neither dreaming nor waking, there is neither the manifold nor the one. Because of the power of sleep, we speak of the manifold; due to the power of waking we speak of becoming less. Zhuang Zhou (for example) had dreamed of being a butterfly; as such he had fluttered around for a hundred years; but when he woke up, he knew that he was not a butterfly and there was no accumulation of all the years. When ignorance (reifying all distinct constructs) emulates dharma-nature, one moment of mind becomes all (manifold) moments of mind, as happens in confusing sleep. When one realizes that ignorance is nothing other than dharma-nature, all (manifold) moments of mind become what the one moment of mind (really) is, as in that awakening.

Again, it is like the practitioners who perform the practice for the dwelling at ease (according to the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*) and sink into the one sleep full of dreams. From the first moment of developing the sense (for awakening) until the moment they become Buddhas, settle in the place of awakening, turn the wheel of the dharma to save all sentient beings, and enter nirvāṇa, their clear awakening realizes that all this was/is only a single dream event (in which the beginning and the end coincide). 若隨便宜者，應言無明法法性，生一切法。如眠法法心，則有一切夢事。心與緣合，則三種世間三千相性皆從心起。一性雖少而不無，無明雖多而不有，何者？指一為多多非多，指多為一一非少。故名此心為不思議境也。若解一心一切心，一切心一心，非一非一切。…一入一切入，一切入一入，非一非一切，…遍歷一切，皆是不可思議境。若法性無明合，有一切法陰界入等，即是俗諦。一切界入是一法界，即是真諦。非一非一切，即是中道第一義諦。如是遍歷一切法，無非不思議三諦(云云)。…又、如眠夢見百千萬事，豁寤無一，況復百千。未眠不夢不覺，不多不一。眠力故謂多，覺力故謂少。莊周夢為蝴蝶翩翩翔百年，寤知非蝶亦非積歲。無明法法性，一心一切心，如彼昏眠。達無明即法性，一切心一心，如彼醒寤(云云)。又、行安樂行人一眠夢。初發心乃至作佛、坐道場、轉法輪、度眾生、入涅槃，豁寤祇是一夢事。(*Mohe zhiguan* T46, no. 1911, p. 55, a24–c21)

Zhiyi recounts the parable of the butterfly dream in terms of Tiantai's three contemplations (*sanguan* 三觀) and three truths (*sandi* 三諦). As we will see below, this differs significantly from the context in the *Zhuangzi* and from the way the earliest known commentator, Guo Xiang 郭象 (252–312), interpreted it. In Zhiyi's presentation, (1) the awakened mind exemplifies dharma-nature, ultimate truth, and contemplation of emptiness—the one; (2) the sleep in which Zhuang Zhou dreams of being a butterfly for 100 years illustrates ignorance, conventional truth, as well as contemplation of the illusory constructs—the manifold; and (3) the moment of transition from wakefulness to sleep represents the supreme meaning of the middle path and its contemplation, according to which dharma-nature and ignorance are inseparable or non-dual—called "neither the manifold nor the one". Dharma-nature as the one awakened mind and ignorance as the manifold dreams of the mind in sleep are correlative opposites, just like ultimate truth and conventional truth. The middle path seems to be that which reveals the one-sidedness of each opposite and itself manifests indeterminacy (non-duality), which is described as "neither dreaming nor waking, neither manifold nor one".

However, this account of Zhuang Zhou's parable of dreaming in sleep seems to differ in one essential respect from the narrative of sleep in the chapter *Practices for the Dwelling at Ease* of the *Lotus Sutra*. For Zhiyi, Zhuangzi's parable represents the three states of waking, dreaming while sleeping, and neither dreaming nor waking in three different stages.

Such depiction lacks the mutual and simultaneous embrace of all three in one moment of mental activity, whereas the image of dreaming in sleep, according to the chapter *Practices for the Dwelling at Ease*, precisely embodies this simultaneity and mutual embrace of all three. Therefore, according to Tiantai's account of the *Lotus Sutra's* image, awakening figures as the awareness of dreaming while asleep, which is different from neither dreaming nor waking.

In this picture, waking, dreaming, and sleeping are inextricably linked. The three stages are merged into one, just as the one must be seen in all three, and awareness of this mutual and simultaneous embrace must be performed and realized in one moment of thought but cannot be divided into three. Thus, it is neither one nor three (multiple), which is non-duality qua polarity that encompasses the paradoxical relationship of dharma-nature and ignorance—the inconceivable realm that can only be accessed through the "threefold contemplation in one moment of mental activity" (*yixin sanguan*). This equals the "round-perfect as well as sudden calming and contemplation" (*yuandun zhiguan* 圓頓止觀), in which the beginning and the end coincide. Guanding, Zhiyi's famous disciple, who edited the *Mohe zhiguan*, explains in his introduction: "In the round-perfect and sudden there is no duality of the first and the last", (*yuandun chuhou buer* 圓頓初後不二, T46, no. 1911, p. 1, c5).

But how does the composite text *Zhuangzi* and its earliest known commentator and editor, Guo Xiang 郭象, represent this well-known parable compared to its use in Tiantai's *Mohe zhiguan*? Zhiyi's account modifies Zhuangzi's text in a crucial respect. According to Zhiyi, the awakened Zhuang Zhou knew that he had never really been the butterfly he had dreamed to be. This means that he knew everything about the unreal he had experienced in his dreams. Regarding this important detail, the text of the *Zhuangzi* sounds different: "Suddenly he (Zhuang Zhou) awoke, and there he was, the startled Zhuang Zhou, not knowing if Zhou had been dreaming he was a butterfly, or if a butterfly was now dreaming it was Zhou. 俄然覺，則蘧蘧然周也。不知周之夢為胡蝶與，胡蝶之夢為周與", (*Zhuangzi*, (edit. Guo Qingfan) 1991, p. 112; Ziporyn 2016, p. 21; translation modified).[57]

Apparently, Zhiyi turns the awakened Zhuang Zhou into a person who truly knows what he dreamt in his sleep by saying that the awakened Zhuang Zhou knows that he was not really a butterfly and there was no real accumulation of all the years. The parable in the Zhuangzi, however, seems to imply the opposite—the awakened Zhuang Zhou knows nothing about having been a butterfly in his dreams, just as the butterfly in the dream knows nothing about having been the person Zhuang Zhou in the state of wakefulness.

This at least corresponds to Guo Xiang's reading of the parable, who explains: "[Zhuang Zhou's] non-knowing of the butterfly at the actual moment [of awakening] is nothing other than [the butterfly's] non-knowing [of Zhuang Zhou] in the dream [before]. 今之不知胡蝶，無異於夢之不知周也", (Guo Xiang [ed. Guo Qingfan] 1991, p. 113). Guo Xiang, the editor of the composite text of the *Zhuangzi*, places the emphasis of the parable on the "non-knowing" (*buzhi* 不知) that the person Zhuang Zhou and the butterfly have in common, whereas Zhiyi's Tiantai reading turns this into a "knowing" (*zhi* 知) of what is real and unreal. According to Guo Xiang, without such "non-knowing", there would be neither the person of Zhuang Zhou who becomes aware of himself upon awakening nor the form of existence that experiences itself in the dream as a butterfly.

For Guo Xiang, the emphasis of such "non-knowing" is crucial to understand Zhuangzi's view of what it is that makes up the "transformation of one thing into another" (*wuhua* 物化). It is this "non-knowing" of which the change from one thing to the other consists. The ruptures and the turning points that lie in every change elude our awareness; conversely, this hiddenness is the source from which all changes emerge while becoming a particular thing (*chengwu* 成物). As the becoming of things is, so is the knowledge about them. The reason for its inspiration eludes any actual moment of cognition or understanding.

Guo Xiang, explaining Zhuangzi's "non-knowing", believes that both all particular things and our knowledge about them, in the actual moment in which each of them comes into being, are a becoming that takes place without any knowledge of what makes them

the way they are; they are "self-so being that does not know why it is the way it is" (*buzhi suoyi ran er ziran* 不知所以然而自然, Guo Xiang [ed. Guo Qingfan] 1991, p. 10). Nothing in the irreversible course of time is repeatable, imitable, or can be anticipated. Of course, this applies not only to the opposite states of dreaming and awakening, but also to life and death, reality and unreality, and everything that always changes over the irreversible course of time.

Surprisingly, although the *Mohe zhiguan* reverses the "non-knowing" in the parable into "knowing", there is an intersection between Zhiyi and Guo Xiang's views on the indeterminacy of the real and unreal. In Tiantai's threefold contemplation, the nature of dependent arising must be seen in the simultaneous and mutual embrace of emptiness, illusory construction, and the middle path, which undermines a clear and unambiguous definition of what is real and unreal—the non-duality of dharma-nature and ignorance. Similarly, Guo Xiang suggests, that even Zhuang Zhou's awakening might not be the real awakening because he says: "Only from Zhuang Zhou's perspective is it called awakening; it is not necessarily the case that this is not dreaming, 自周而言，故稱覺耳，未必非夢也", (Guo Xiang [ed. Guo Qingfan] 1991, p. 113). In other words, the reverse could also be true: Zhuang Zhou's awakening might be the real dreaming, while the dream of being a butterfly might be the true awakening. Ironically, this reading of the parable is closer to the way Zhiyi understands the parable of dreaming in the *Lotus Sutra*.

6. Final Remarks

This article is not about whether Tiantai correctly interprets or misinterprets the composite texts of the *Zhuangzi* and the *Daode jing*, but about how and why Tiantai, on the one hand, adopts some of the images from this literature and, on the other hand, distances itself from some of the ideas it sees represented by these images and considers incompatible with Buddhism.

The outcome of this discussion is that images and thoughts in Daoist literature are resources that Tiantai uses for its own Buddhist argumentation strategy. Sometimes, Daoist thoughts, such as those of the ineffable and silence, are treated as objects of criticism—regardless of whether the way Tiantai presents them is consistent with the original context or not—because this serves the purpose of defining the Buddhist standpoint as it corresponds to the Tiantai understanding. At other times, Daoist images are integrated into the presentation of Tiantai's own ideas, in which case they serve as evidence for Tiantai's interpretation of Buddhist doctrine in the translated sūtra and śāstra texts from India.

Through this ambivalence between adoption and critique, Tiantai connects to indigenous and non-Buddhist textual traditions, but also develops a profile of its own to set itself apart from these sources and to organize the transmission of the Dharma in the way Tiantai considers most efficient in its specific cultural and linguistic environment.

The discussion also shows that, while the Buddhist and Daoist textual traditions originally developed independently of each other, there is indeed an intersection between the two in terms of their philosophical concerns and their topical content. Both Madhyamaka and Daoist authors tend to use paradoxical language in their deconstructive approach to metaphysical questions and develop a stance of ontological indeterminacy. The extent to which Chinese thinkers inspired by both traditions observed this affinity themselves and articulated it, and whether this might have contributed to the further development of philosophical thought in China, is an intriguing topic to be discussed in another article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

[1] On the subject of Tiantai's relationship to Daoism, I have so far only been able to find one Japanese source by Ikeda (1990, pp. 73–84). The short article consists primarily of a list of quotations from the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* in the *Mohe zhiguan*. Ikeda also explains that Zhiyi considers the Daoist self-so (ziran 自然) to be incompatible with the Buddhist principle of dependent

or conditioned arising (*yuanqi* 緣起), and that Zhiyi criticizes the *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi* in particular for not knowing the Buddhist principle of compassion and benefitting others (*lita* 利他).

2 That the relationship between the two truths, the conventional and the ultimate truth, corresponds to that between conditioned arising and emptiness is a view frequently held in the modern interpretation of Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka (Deguchi et al. 2021, pp. 1–13, 57–60). Scholars usually refer to a well-known passage from Nāgārjuna's major work, the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* (*Root Verses on the Middle Way*, MMK 24:18), which was translated into Chinese as the *Zhong lun* 中論 (Treatise on the Middle Way, T30, no. 1564, p. 33, a2–b14) by Kumārajīva (344–413) in 409. For an English translation from the Sanskrit and a philosophical discussion of this passage, see Siderits and Katsura (2013, pp. 272–78); for an English translation from the Chinese and a discussion of its significance for Tiantai, see Paul Swanson (1989, pp. 1–17).

3 See the discussion in Section 2, which summarizes Zhiyi's interpretation of chapter 15 and 24 of Nāgārjuna's *Zhong lun*, and explains Zhiyi's use of the term "rootless root" or "root that does not dwell in anything" (*wuzhu ben* 無住本) drawn from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, also translated by Kumārajīva.

4 In chapter 15 of the *Zhong lun* [T30, no. 1564, p. 19, c22–p. 20, b2, see also Siderits and Katsura (2013, pp. 154–62)], the initial passage explicitly states that no kind of conditioned arising can be called either being (*you* 有) or non-being (*wu* 無). At this point, it should be noted that in the tradition of Chinese doctrinal literature, a distinction is made between "real being" (*shiyou* 實有) and "illusory being" (*huanyou* 幻有) and "false being" (*jiayou* 假有). In the discussion of the seven doxographic distinctions of the two truths in his treatise on the text and title of the *Lotus Sutra* (*Miaofa lianhua jing xuan yi* 妙法蓮華經玄義T33, no. 1716, p. 702, c20–29), Zhiyi distinguishes between "real being" and "illusory being". But he categorizes the concept of "real being" at a lower doxographic level than that of "illusory being", because for him "real being" is synonymous with "inherent existence", which contradicts the Mahāyāna sense of *pratītyasamutpāda*—the doctrine to which he is committed.

5 Swanson (2018, vol. 2, p. 830) translates the corresponding passage from the section *Inconceivable Realm* (T46, no. 1911, p. 55, a19–21), which originally goes back to a statement from the *Zhuangzi* in Chapter 27, as follows: "Thus it should be known that 'expounding throughout the day is [the same as] not expounding throughout the day, and not expounding throughout the day is [the same as] expounding throughout the day.' At all times both extremes are covered, and at all times both extremes are illumined, establishing while deconstructing, and deconstructing while establishing. The teachings of the sūtras and treatises are all like this 當知：終日說終日不說，終日不說終日說。終日雙遮，終日雙照，即破即立，即立即破，經論皆爾." A detailed extension of the same, which presents the sayable and unsayable based on a comment to a passage from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, can be found in section *Thorough Deconstruction of Dharmas* (T46, no. 1911, p. 60, c2-p. 61, c7), for an English translation of this, see Swanson (2018, vol. 2, pp. 882–90). The conclusion of this longer passage is the same, the two opposing aspects cannot be treated separately.

6 The Chinese expression "*guanxin* 觀心" includes both the active participle, "the contemplating [mental activity]" (*nengguan* 能觀), as well as the passive participle, "the contemplated [mental activity]" (*suoguan* 所觀, Mohe zhiguan T46, no. 1911, p. 52, b23–c5). Mental activity is both what observes and what is observed, this implies that "contemplation of mental activity" is introspection of mental activity or self-referential observation. In the longer section *Thorough Deconstruction of Dharmas*, such introspection of mental activity is carried out through the deconstruction of all concepts of mind, which turns out to be an observing that observes itself—self-referential observation.

7 "The tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi, siju*) is a heuristic device for conceptual analysis and a method of assorting linguistic forms in Buddhist doctrinal literature. It consists of a formal scheme of four mutually related yet distinct ways of referencing a specific doctrinal topic; it often (but not always) was considered to provide an exhaustive set of four mutually exclusive conceptual possibilities. As for the origin, use, and philosophical meaning of the *catuṣkoṭi*, Ruegg's (1977, pp. 1–71) detailed article mentions that this scheme of classifying conceptual forms is already attested in the early philosophical literature of Indian Buddhism", (Kantor 2021, p. 3). The tetralemma is structured according to the following four positions: (1) affirmation of a particular doctrinal theme, (2) its negation, (3) both, (4) neither. In traditional Chinese Tiantai, Sanlun, and Huayan doctrinal exegesis, the first two positions are usually regarded as correlative opposites that presuppose each other through mutual negation; the third position reflects this interdependence of the two, while the fourth excludes them. Thus, the third and fourth positions also form a pair of correlative opposites, revealing mutually dependency of all the four distinct positions. In this sense, the four encompass all conceptual alternatives to a given doctrinal topic. For deeper discussions, see Kantor (2021, pp. 1–23), Priest (2018, p. 23), Westerhoff (2005, pp. 367–95), Ruegg (1977, pp. 1–71). For the life data of Cheng Xuanying cf. Qiang (2002, p. 323).

8 In his commentaries on the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, the *Jingming xuanlun* 淨名玄論 (T38, no. 1780, p. 853, a3–p. 859, a27, and T38, no. 1780, p. 857, b20–p. 859, a14) and the *Weimo jing yishu* 維摩經義疏 (T38, no. 1781, p. 912, b9–p. 913, b10), the Sanlun master Jizang 吉藏 (549–623) also explains his version of the ten types of tetralemma parts of which overlap conceptually with Zhiyi's Tiantai presentation in the *Mohe zhiguan* and *Weimo jing wenshu* 維摩經文疏, (X18, no. 338, p. 672, a3–c5). However, Jizang's remarks explicitly explain what Zhiyi's portrayal addresses more implicitly. In the following, therefore, some of Jizang's arguments are used to explain Zhiyi's line of thought.

9 Zhiyi criticizes the view that the apophatic application of the tetralemma, the rejection of all four conceptual alternatives or positions, could be a way to realize liberation beyond linguistic expression. In the section *Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas*, he shows that the separation from speech (*jueyan* 絕言) due to the attempt to transcend all positions of the tetralemma (*chu siju* 出四句) reinforces the entanglement in self-contradictory thinking and speech. However, the same is true in reverse—the

application of the cataphatic form of the tetralemma could also lead to conceptual confusion, tempting the mind to confuse the illusory with the real. The focus of Zhiyi's discussion is on the appropriate use of both the apophatic and cataphatic forms of the tetralemma to expose all possible conceptual delusions during contemplation of the mind, which should be consistent with the "speech of the awakened one" (*buddhavacana*, *foyan* 佛言), i.e., all the doctrinal discourses (*yanjiao* 言教) transmitted in the translated sūtra and śāstra texts. For a thorough discussion of the application of the apophatic and cataphatic forms of the tetralemma in Chinese Buddhism of the Sanlun and Tiantai teachings, see Kantor (2021).

[10] "Bhikṣu" (biqiu 比丘) is the term for ordained persons or monks, see Zhanran's commentary (T46, no. 1912, p. 324, b15–25) which lists names of monks from the northern Zhou period (557–581) who allegedly made pacts with the political rulers during the restrictive policies against the Buddhist communities. Zhiyi considers those who proclaim the teachings of the Zhuangzi and Laozi as followers of the Dao. In this sense, the article refers to the composite texts of the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi* as Daoist works.

[11] Based on Wang Bi's (Wang Bi (edit. Lou Yulie) 1992, pp. 1–10) transmission, James Legge translates the first chapter of the *Daode jing* as follows: "The Dao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Dao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name. (Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things. Always without desire we must be found, If its deep mystery we would sound; But if desire always within us be, Its outer fringe is all that we shall see. Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful. 道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。故常無欲，以觀其妙；常有欲，以觀其徼。此兩者，同出而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門"; (Chinese Text Project n.d., https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing, quoted 1 September 2023). Perhaps the last two sentences in Legge's translation seem less successful than the first three; an alternative for this part could be the translation by Hans-Georg Moeller (2007, p. 3): "The two (having no name, having a name) together they come to the fore, differently they are named. Together they are called: Darker even than darkness—Gate of multiple subtleties".

[12] The simple (*dan siju* 單四句), double (*fu siju* 複四句), and multifarious forms (*juzu siju* 具足四句) of the tetralemma or the four positions represent Zhiyi's taxonomy of all possible metaphysical confusion which is unrestrained proliferation of non-awakened speech (*prapañca*, *xilun* 戲論). The simple tetralemma comprises the four illusive views of being (*you* 有), non-being (*wu* 無), both (*yiyou yiwu* 亦有亦無), neither (*feiyou feiwu* 非有非無). "The double tetralemma (*fu siju*) might emerge, when the four alternatives of the simple tetralemma are rejected without realizing true emptiness. More complex forms of metaphysical confusion arise from this, embracing the following four alternatives: (1) being of being, being of non-being (有有, 有無); (2) non-being of being, non-being of non-being (無有, 無無); (3) both being of being/non-being and non-being of being/non-being (亦有有無, 亦無有無); (4) neither being of being/non-being, nor nonbeing of being/non-being (非有有無, 非無有無, T46, no. 1911, p. 62, c12–13). Seeing that the first and second position in the simple tetralemma are correlative opposites mutually constituting each other, the deluded mind construes the double tetralemma and holds that "being" must represent being of both being and non-being, while the opposite "non-being" means non-being of both being and non-being; the same applies to the third (including the preceding two) and to the fourth (excluding them). … When holding the first position "being" in the multifarious tetralemma, the deluded mind observes that all four alternatives are mutually constitutive to one another, therefore "being" includes four aspects: being of being (*you you* 有有), being of non-being (*you wu* 有無), being of both (*you yiyou yiwu* 有亦有亦無), and being of neither (*you feiyou feiwu* 有非有非無); the same applies to the opposite "non-being", to the third, and to the fourth; each of the four includes four", (Kantor 2021, p. 16; *Mohe zhiguan* T46, no. 1911, p. 62, c16–23). In addition to the single, the double, and the multiple tetralemma, all of which are misguided forms of metaphysical speech, there are also three conceptions of the ineffable (*wuyan* 無言), which arise from the intent that each seeks to detach itself from one of the three tetralemmas in order to adopt a position of silence that excludes all speech (*jueyan* 絕言).

[13] Zhiyi's quote is drawn from Kumārajīva's Chinese translation, see the English translation by Gomez and Harrison (2022, p. 73) of the Sanskrit version, which is as follows: "So it is that all things are founded on the basis of the absence of a foundation".

[14] This is at least the interpretation of Mou (2020, vol. 4, p. 681), who compares several Chinese commentaries that elaborate on this passage in the sūtra.

[15] See the discussion in chapter 15 of Kumārajīva's translation of Nāgārjuna's *Kārikā*, the *Zhong lun* 中論 (T30, no. 1564, p. 19, c19–p. 20, b27). According to this discussion, dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*, *yuanqi* 緣起, *yinyuan* 因緣) cannot be defined ontologically in terms of being or nonbeing.

[16] This resonates with a crucial passage from chapter 24 in the *Zhong lun*: "As there is the meaning of emptiness, all dharmas can be completed. 以有空義故一切法得成", (T30, no. 1564, p. 33, a22). This phrase has often been quoted by Chinese Sanlun, Tiantai, and Huayan masters along with the previously mentioned quotation from the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* to emphasize the constitutive meaning of emptiness in all instances of dependent arising.

[17] See, for example, Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 55, c11–16), which states that dependent arising cannot be defined by either being or non-being; for an English translation of this passage see Paul Swanson (2018, vol. 2, p. 835).

[18] This paragraph is a summary of the longer discussion *Contemplation of Emptiness* in the section *Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas*, *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 62, b1–p.75, b27); for an English translation of this, see Swanson (2018, vol. 2, pp. 896–1026). In this section, Zhiyi explores the question of what gives rise to mental activity. After analyzing all possible conceptions of mind

in a very comprehensive manner and by means of the tetralemma, he comes to the conclusion that there is no real being that could correspond to any of the possible conceptions of mind. But the concept of the non-being of mental activity is just as inconclusive. A much shortened version of the same thought can be found in the section "Inconceivable Realm" (T46, no. 1911, p. 54, b7–28), where he says that what applies to mental activity applies to all things, i.e., "the three thousand dharmas". Swanson (2018, vol. 2, p. 820) translates the crucial passage as follows: "You should know that the mental functions are unobtainable through the four options (of the tetralemma); by examining the three thousand dharmas (with the tetralemma, we see that they) also are unobtainable. 當知：四句求心不可得。求三千法，亦不可得." "Unobtainable" means that there is no real being to be found in these terms, there is nothing in them to really appropriate—all possible concepts prove to be incoherent due to the examination by the tetralemma. In both sections, Zhiyi refers to Nāgārjuna several times.

19   Whether Zhiyi's interpretation of the Dao is consistent with the *Laozi* text itself is another question. In fact, the *Laozi* text does not address the question of whether there actually is a real world of changing things.

20   See Kantor (2020, pp. 886–92) and the passage from Sengzhao's commentary to the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* (*Zhu Weimojie Jing* 注維摩詰經), which is frequently quoted throughout the works of Zhiyi and Jizang: "Without the root (*ben* 本) there is nothing that hands down all the traces (*ji* 迹、跡), and without the traces there is nothing that reveals the root. Although root and traces must be differentiated, they are one regarding the inconceivable. 非本無以垂跡，非跡無以顯本。本跡雖殊而不思議一也", (T38, no. 1775, p. 327, a27–b5).

21   In his treatise on the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義 (herafter: *Fahua xuanyi*), Zhiyi uses the binary "root and traces" to structure the largest section of the text, divided into "the ten subtleties of the gate of traces" (*jimen shimiao* 跡門十妙) and "the ten subtleties of the gate of the root" (*benmen shimiao* 本門十妙).

22   See footnote 9.

23   The *Mohe Zhiguan* explains that "calming and contemplation" ultimately deconstructs (*po* 破) any concept of an entity that is claimed to be real (not empty) and arise in the context of correlative dependencies. Deconstruction based on such "calming and contemplation" is called "suspending (or sublating) correlative dependencies" (*juedai* 絕待). This practice is believed to ultimately lead to awakening that realizes liberation (*jietuo*), wisdom (*bore*), and the dharma-body (*fashen*) which all defy linguistic representation. The *Mohe zhiguan* explains: "The three virtues [liberation, wisdom, and the dharma-body] are that which [the practice of] calming and contemplation consists of. … If we use the two characters [calming and contemplation] together to fully understand the three virtues, then we see that calming consists in dissolving [delusions], and that such dissolution is what pervades liberation; contemplation is wisdom qua insight pervading *prajñā*. Calming and contemplation [in conjunction] are called detachment from any sign, and detachment from any sign is what permeates the dharma-body. 三德即是止觀。 … 若用兩字共通三德者，止即是斷，斷通解脫；觀即是智，智通般若；止觀等者，名為捨相，捨相即是通於法身", (T46, no. 1911, p. 22, c11–14). Elsewhere, Zhiyi refers to the "dharma-body" (*fashen*) as the realized principle of all the awakened ones, fully manifested in their wisdom and liberation. In Tiantai, wisdom is the accomplished practice of contemplative insight, and liberation from all delusive and distractive influences is the completion of exercising calming as concentration. Therefore, the dharma-body is the root from which the traces emerge in the form of the doctrine and practice of calming and contemplation (concentration and insight), the fulfillment of which in turn culminates in liberation and wisdom—the manifestation of the dharma-body. Tiantai's three virtues, realized through calming and contemplation, involve the circular dynamics of root and traces, meaning neither separating from nor clinging to language. Hence, realizing the three virtues in fulfilling the Tiantai practice of calming and contemplation means not holding on to either of these concepts or anything beyond them.

24   Such an ambivalent stance to the transmission of the canonical word in Tiantai agrees with the view expressed in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (T12, no. 375, p. 642, a21–24 and the *Da zhi du lun* 大智度論), which reads as follows: "Rely on the meaning, but do not rely on the words. 依義不依語". Moreover, the way the article refers to "paradox" concerns a rhetorical figure playing a significant role in the textual pragmatics and spiritual approach of the Tiantai teaching rather than a topic of logic. In this sense, "paradox" is not equivalent to contradiction.

25   If the conventional realm were separate from ultimate reality, it would be another form of reality instead of being unreality (emptiness of inherent existence). To say that the two truths are identical is to confuse the real with the unreal. Non-separation of the two truths does not imply their identity, and their differentiation does not imply separation. Nāgārjuna's concept of the two truths could be considered a dialetheia if the two truths were separate from and yet identical to each other (see Deguchi et al. 2021, pp. 5–10). In fact, the opposite is the case—the two truths are neither separate nor identical. Again, if the relationship between the two truths could be established in terms of a contradictory predication, then, in the sense of metaphysical dialetheism, the semantic structure would be isomorphic with the structure of reality. But there is no definitive statement of what ultimate reality is; all that can be said is that conventional truth is neither separate from nor identical with ultimate truth. The relationship between the two truths—non-duality qua polarity—can be qualified as paradoxical, but not as contradictory, (for a similar argument, see Kantor 2021, p. 12; for the discussion of the two truths in Kumārajīva's Chinese translation of Nāgārjuna's Kārikā, the Zhong lun, see T30, no. 1564, p. 32, c16–p. 33, a3). In the *Fahua xuanyi*, Zhiyi explains the paradoxical relationship between the two truths in terms of "root and traces"—ultimate truth is the root which gives rise to the traces of conventional truth that point back to their source. In this circular dynamic, the two are inseparable (*inconceivable one*, *busiyi yi* 不思議一) and must yet be distinguished (*shu* 殊); Zhiyi explains: "As for elucidating 'root and traces' in reference to 'principle and things', this is as stated [in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*]: 'All dharmas are established because of the root that does

not abide in anything'. Non-abiding principle is the real mark and ultimate truth of the root-period, [the period in which the awakened one sets forth the *Lotus Sutra*, that is, the source and goal of all teachings—the all-encompassing principle]. All dharmas are the densely intertwined conventional truths of such root-period. As the root of the real mark and ultimate truth passes down the traces of the conventional, the root of ultimate truth becomes manifest by pursuing the traces of the conventional. [We quote from Sengzhao's sūtra-commentary:] 'Although root and traces must be differentiated, they are inconceivably one'. 約理事明本迹者，從無住本立一切法，無住之理，即是本時實相真諦也；一切法，即是本時森羅，俗諦也。由實相真本垂於俗迹，尋於俗迹即顯真本，本迹雖殊，不思議一也", (T33, no. 1716, p. 764, b19–c1).

26   See the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (*Dabo niepan jing* 大般涅槃經T12, no. 375, p. 747, a25–c9); "Maudgalyāyana" is known for his supernatural powers and filial piety; his Chinese name "Mulian 目連" is the personification of that cardinal virtue. It seems that for Zhanran this disciple's virtue represents the causes and conditions that lead to his name. In some ancient but also modern Chinese idioms, "peaches and plums" (*taoli* 桃李) appears to be a metaphor for "disciples and followers", expressing that the students become what they are taught, much like the fruits that are harvested come from what is grown. Due to the lack of semantic contiguity, Zhanran seems to conclude that "peaches and plums", expressing the meaning of "disciple", is not a name based on causes and conditions. According to Congyi's 從義 *Supplementary Annotations to the Three Grand Works on the Lotus sutra* (*Fahua jing sanda buzhu* 法華經三大部補注 (X28, no. 586, p. 367, a13–b5), composed in the Song dynasty, Zhanran's quotation from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* is incorrect as the sūtra text in fact does not speak of "peaches and plums" but instead enumerates "lotus flower, earth, and water" (*lianhua di shui* 蓮花地水) as examples of names without causes and conditions (*wu yinyuan ming* 無因緣名). Also, regarding names based on causes and conditions (*yinyuan ming* 因緣名), according to the sūtra, the example "Maudgalyāyana" simply means that the cause that led to that disciple's name is just his family name, which is "Maudgalyāyana" (T12, No. 375, p. 747, b5–6). However, Zhanran's "mistaken" quote may have been intentional since "Maudgalyāyana" and "peaches and plums" could both mean "disciple and follower". In the discussion that follows, Zhanran emphasizes that equal meanings can be indicated by differing names either based on causes and conditions or not based on them. Furthermore, the sūtra text lists many examples of the two different types of names; however, in his modified citation, Zhanran chooses only these two which yet seem to express the same meaning. Further explanations regarding Zhanran's way of drawing on the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* can be found in the paragraph following this quote.

27   Zhiyi explains: "The second chapter of the [*Mohe zhiguan*] deals with the explanation of the name 'calming and contemplation' [which is the title of this work]. … Furthermore, based on what meaning do we establish the name 'calming and contemplation'? In short, there are four [meanings]: first, [calming and contemplation] as correlative dependents; second, [calming and contemplation] that suspend correlative dependencies; third, the merging of such differences; fourth, the way in which [calming and contemplation] permeates the three virtues [of liberation, wisdom, and the dharma-body]. … First, in terms of correlative dependents, there are three meanings that can be attributed to calming and contemplation respectively. [The three meanings of calming as a correlative dependent] are the meaning of being terminated, the meaning of resting, and the meaning of calming in contradistinction to non-calming. … Contemplation [as a correlative dependent] also includes three meanings: the meaning of being penetrated, the meaning of accomplishing insight, and the meaning of contemplation in contradistinction to non-contemplation. 第二、釋止觀名者，… 復以何義立止觀名？略有四：一、相待，二、絕待，三、會異，四、通三德。 … 一、相待者，止觀各三義：息義、停義、對不止止義。 … 觀亦三義：貫穿義、觀達義、對不觀觀義", (T46, no. 1911, p. 21, b16–c6). This means that agent and object are correlatively dependent on each other in the practice of calming and contemplation, neither remains separate from the other; the meaning of the resting mind gaining insight embodies the agent (wisdom), while the meanings of "being terminated" and "being penetrated" specify the object (delusion). Calming and contemplation (wisdom) in contradistinction to non-calming and non-contemplation (delusion) are correlatively dependent and inseparable from each other—they are correlative opposites (T46, no. 1911, p. 21, b19–c21). However, this is not the ultimate sense of calming and contemplation. The ultimate sense is the realization of the insight that reveals the unreality of correlatively dependent things, that is, their emptiness of inherent existence. True emptiness, excluding reality of those things, implies acknowledgment of their unreality. The practice of calming and contemplation, which reflects on this, suspends (sublates) correlative dependencies in multiple senses: It preserves them, while erasing them, because both erasing and preserving entails focusing on them. To point out the paradoxical ambiguity of which this contemplative practice must become aware, Zhiyi calls it "calming and contemplation that suspend correlative dependencies", (T46, no. 1911, p. 21, c21–p. 22, c5).

28   Zhanran's quote is his own interpretation of the sūtra text, see the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* (*Jinguangming jing* 金光明經 T16, no. 663, p. 344, a8–12).

29   See the *Zhuangzi*, chapter 13 ([edit. Guo Qingfan] 1991, p. 488); according to James Legge's translation, the passage reads as follows: "What the world thinks the most valuable exhibition of the Dao is to be found in books. But books are only a collection of words. Words have what is valuable in them—what is valuable in words is the ideas they convey. But those ideas are a sequence of something else—and what that something else is cannot be conveyed by words. When the world, because of the value which it attaches to words, commits them to books, that for which it so values them may not deserve to be valued—because that which it values is not what is really valuable. Thus it is that what we look at and can see is (only) the outward form and colour, and what we listen to and can hear is (only) names and sounds. Alas! that men of the world should think that form and colour, name and sound, should be sufficient to give them the real nature of the Dao. The form and colour, the name and sound, are certainly not sufficient to convey its real nature; and so it is that 'the wise do not speak and those who do speak are not wise'. How should the

world know that real nature? 世之所貴道者，書也，書不過語，語有貴也。語之所貴者，意也，意有所隨。意之所隨者，不可以言傳也，而世因貴言傳書。世雖貴之，我猶不足貴也，為其貴非其貴也。故視而可見者，形與色也；聽而可聞者，名與聲也。悲夫！世人以形色名聲為足以得彼之情！夫形色名聲果不足以得彼之情，則知者不言，言者不知，而世豈識之哉！" ([Chinese Text Project n.d.](https://ctext.org/zhuangzi/tian-dao), quoted 2 September 2023). However, according to the commentary by Cheng Xuanying ([ed. Guo Qingfan] 1991, p. 489), the term "*dao* 道" in the first sentence means "*yanshuo* 言說" (speech) and not, as Legge translates, the Dao. In this case, the sentence should be translated as follows: "Speeches valued by the world are what the scriptures are made of". Moreover, Legge's translation of "*yi* 意" as "ideas" might be better understood as intent, which, according to Cheng Xuanying, emerges from the Dao, which in turn cannot be transmitted through writing and words, since it consists of neither form nor sound.

30   See the *Dode jing*, chapter 56 (Wang Bi [edit. Lou Yulie] 1992, pp. 147–49); according to Hans-Georg Moeller's (2007, p. 131) translation, the passage reads as follows: "One who knows does not speak. One who speaks does not know. Blocking the holes, closing the gates; softening the radiance, leveling the dust; grinding the sharp, untying tangles; this is called 'dark unity'. Thus, one cannot get him and make him one's kin, and one cannot get him and keep him distant; one cannot get him and let him profit, and one cannot get him and do him harm; one cannot get him and hold him high, and one cannot get him and hold him low. Thus he is held high by the world. 知者不言，言者不知。塞其兌，閉其門，挫其銳，解其分，和其光，同其塵，是謂玄同。故不可得而親，不可得而疎；不可得而利，不可得而害；不可得而貴，不可得而賤。故為天下貴。" Moeller (2007, p. 30) further explains that chapter: "The topic of speechlessness occurs quite frequently in the Laozi (see Chapters 2, 23, 43, and 73) and is connected with nonaction. The sage ruler does not act and thereby allows all actions to be performed without interference. Similarly, the sage ruler does not speak, he does not personally give any orders. This gives rise to a state in which all speech, that is, orders, assignments, and so on, happens 'self-so' (*ziran* 自然), as chapter 23 puts it. The speechlessness of the sage ruler also corresponds to the namelessness of the Dao".

31   See Chapter 26 "External Things" in the *Zhuangzi*: "A fish trap is there for the fish. When you have got hold of the fish, you forget the trap. A snare is there for the rabbits. When you have got hold of the rabbit, you forget the snare. Words are there for the intent. When you have got hold of the intent, you forget the words. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words, so I can have a few words with him. 荃者所以在魚，得魚而忘荃；蹄者所以在兔，得兔而忘蹄；言者所以在意，得意而忘言。吾安得夫忘言之人而與之言哉", (*Zhuangzi*, [edit. Guo Qingfan] 1991, p. 944; Brook Ziporyn 2009, p. 114).

32   Zhanran's compound "[inconceivable] liberation in words and script" (*wenzi jietuo* 文字解脫), which he also uses in his other works, seems to come from Sengzhao's commentary on the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, but the four characters do not originally form a compound as they do in Zhanran's works. The meanings however are consistent; Sengzhao explains: "Finally, to find out where the dharmas are located, one reaches the three abodes [in which the sense objects, perceptions and faculties] dwell. However, to seek for script and liberation in these three sensory abodes, the two cannot be attained. Then what sense does it make to talk about liberation as something separate from script? 法之所在極於三處。三處求文字解脫俱不可得。如之何欲離文字而別說解脫乎?", (T38, no. 1775, p. 388, a24–26). This also agrees with what Zhiyi's commentary says about "inconceivable liberation" (*bukesiyi jietuo*) from the same sūtra: "As for explaining the name 'inconceivable liberation' right in accordance with its particular sense, this actually is liberation which does not separate from words and script. … Therefore, separating from [the assumption that there really is] a nature wherein script and words abide actually is liberation. Liberation thus means: To never separate from all the dharmas, [as there is no real dharma to separate from]. 正別釋不思議解脫名者，即是不離文字之解脫也。…是故文字性離，即是解脫。解脫者即諸法也", (T38, no. 1777, p. 550, a8–b7). Sengzhao, Zhiyi and Zhanran agree on the same point: "What is referred to as an actual name or word is not a really existent entity—as no reference point of our speech contains a real or irreducible core [due to the nature of dependent arising]. Hence, there are also no real words or names which we could cling to or dispense with", (Kantor 2020, p. 886). In the paradoxical sense that reading the Buddhist scriptures leads to the realization that both the scriptures and the reading are empty of an intrinsic nature, the practice qua doctrinal exegesis is a way to realize liberation beyond linguistic expression—and yet it is liberation in words and script. This is the paradoxical ambiguity that, according to Zhiyi and Zhanran, "calming and contemplation" embodies.

33   Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* explains the emptiness of the conventional truth regarding mental activity: "When one examines the nature [of mental activity] by means of the four positions [of being, non-being, both, neither], and sees no [real] nature [in that which is designated as mental activity], this is deconstruction of a nature in terms of conventional truths, which is also called the emptiness of nature. 若四句推性不見性，是世諦破性，亦名性空", (T46, no. 1911, p. 64, b5–6).

34   The next sentence from the same passage explains the emptiness of ultimate truth: "If one [then] examines the designations by means of the four positions and does not even perceive [real] designations, this is the deconstruction of the illusory constructs at the level of ultimate truth, which is also called the emptiness of properties. The emptiness of both nature and properties is the general characteristic of that contemplation in which we enter emptiness from the [unwholesome] illusory constructs. 若四句推名不見名，是真諦破假，亦名相空。性相俱空者，是為總相從假入空觀也", (T46, no. 1911, p. 64, b6–8).

35   In the list and explanation of the ten kinds of tetralemma, Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* ascribes an ambiguous potential to this heuristic device for conceptual analysis and method of assorting linguistic forms: "[The tetralemma] could conceptually clarify Buddhist doctrine [see the paragraph: 'Clarification through the Four Gates' 四門料簡, T46, no. 1911, p. 73, b25–p. 75, b27], but also produce deceptive speech [see the paragraph: 'Forty-eight-fold Investigation of the Arising of Mental Activity' 四十八番, T46, no. 1911, p. 63, a7–p. 69, c27]", (Kantor 2021, p. 1). The *Mohe zhiguan* explains: "Now we would like to explain the ten kinds of

tetralemma: … 'Four positions [or tetralemma] of one direction' means: On the path that the ordinary ones [of the six samsaric realms] and the noble ones, [Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha, Bodhisattva, and Buddha], tread together, both equally use the four positions in their debates. … 'Four positions of the inexhaustible' means that the four positions respectively extend fourfold into infinity, as [previously] exemplified by the section on the forty-eight-fold [investigation of the arising of mental activity]. 'Four positions tied to rank and stage' means that we divide the four positions by establishing affirmation and negation, [resulting in], for example, the [four positions] of the simple, double, and multifarious. He who persists [in such determinations of affirmation and negation] without finding an end falls into the four positions of the ordinary. Those who understand that it is not a [fixed] meaning of each position that makes up the meaning of that position understand the four positions of the noble ones. … 今明十種四句。… 一往四句者，凡聖通途皆論四句，…。無窮四句者，四四瀾漫無賮，如四十八番中示其相。結位四句者，分齊四句剋定是非，如單、複、具足等。住著不亡，即凡夫四句。若無句義為句義，是聖人四句。…", (T46, no. 1911, p. 68, a25–b16). The section on the forty-eight-fold [investigation of the arising of mental activity] forms the first part of the discussion on the contemplation of emptiness in the section "Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas" (T46, no. 1911, p. 63, a7–p. 69, c27). Following Nāgārjuna's application of the tetralemma, Zhiyi considers the four alternatives for the arising of mental activity: (1) arising by itself, (2) by something else, (3) by both, (4) without causes; each of these four refers respectively to each of the three aspects in the triple illusory construct (of causality, continuity, correlativity—*sanjia* 三假—see the next section), each of which in turn includes respectively the four views of (1) being, (2) non-being, (3) both, (4) neither; therefore, 4 × 3 × 4 yields a total of 48 possible positions in the discussion of the arising of mental activity; but none of the 48 proves to be true. In this discussion, it is shown that the cataphatic tetralemma leads to conceptual confusion. The 48-fold investigation precedes the listing of the ten types of tetralemma; for the whole list, see Swanson (2018, vol. 2, p. 944).

36   Based on the interdependence of all positions of the tetralemma, Zhiyi constructs a tetralemma of tetralemmas, dividing and classifying all false views or misconceptions (all metaphysical confusions) into four groups: (1) simple tetralemma, (2) double tetralemma, (3) multifarious tetralemma, (4) the false views separating from speech (that is, from the preceding three tetralemmas), see footnote 6 and *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 62, b8–11). According to the *Mohe zhiguan*, all these wrong views are different cases of dependent arising, even though each of them misunderstands the true nature of dependent arising.

37   This is also consistent with what Nāgārjuna expresses in the first verse of his major work, the *Kārikā* or the *Zhong lun*, which basically says that dependent arising is non-arising (emptiness), see T30, no. 1564, p. 1, c8–p. 2, b7.

38   See the *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 60, a10–c2) and for the quotation from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (T12, no. 375, p. 733, b12–23) on which Zhiyi's explanation is based.

39   See footnote 32.

40   "The four [false] views that constitute the simple form [of the tetralemma]" (*dan sijian* 單四見) are as follows: (1) being (*you* 有), (2) non-being (*wu* 無), (3) both being and non-being (*yiyou yiwu* 亦有亦無), (4) neither being nor non-being (*feiyou feiwu* 非有非無). This type of the tetralemma is Zhiyi's basic scheme for classifying various types of metaphysical confusion caused by treating language exclusively as a representational system of concepts meant to reveal the nature of reality.

41   According to the *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 63, a7–12), every moment of mental activity that perceives itself as a "being" (*you* 有) or as a "non-being" (*wu* 無) etc. ascribes to itself (1) the cause from which it arises (*yincheng* 因成), (2) the continuity of a next moment brought about by itself (*xiangxu* 相續), and (3) its own actual identity in contrast to that which is not a mental activity, which is its correlative opposite (*xiangdai* 相待). This is called "the illusory triple construct of (causality, continuity, and correlation, *sanjia* 三假)". Zhiyi's contemplation of emptiness (*kongguan*), detailed in the chapter "Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas" (*pofa bian*), shows that each of these three aspects that make up such a deluded moment of mental consciousness is nothing more than an unreal construct and contains no real core. Because when one confuses this triple construct (*sanjia*) with a true being (*you*) or non-being (*wu*) etc., the delusions of the false views and mental attitudes (*jiansi huo* 見思惑) grow. For a detailed explanation of this Tiantai technical term, see the passage following the quote in the body of the text.

42   The translation of this quote follows Zhanran's commentary to the *Mohe zhiguan* and differs from Swanson's (2018, vol. 2, p. 908) understanding in terms of semantic and syntactic interpretations. Zhanran explains this passage: "The flame and the rising whirl of air are dharmas of motion and circulation, which are like the false views and ignorance, both of which are dharmas of motion. Thus, the motion rests on the flame; the flame relies on empty space and there is nothing to support empty space. Likewise, the [false] views are based on ignorance; ignorance resides in dharma-nature and there is nothing in which dharma-nature resides. For dharma-nature is devoid of an intrinsic nature, what it is entirely consists of ignorance. Therefore, it is said that there is nothing to support empty space. The image of sleep is like that of the flame, for the mental activity in sleep is like dharma-nature, and sleep in the confusion of its dreams is like ignorance. The dream events are like all the [false] views. Ignorance is the root and all the [false] views are its ramifications. If there is nothing on which ignorance is based, then there is nothing wherein all the [false] views reside. Hence, it is said that [the root and ramifications] mutually come to rest. 焰颺俱是動轉之法，如見及無明俱是動法。如動依焰，焰依於空，空無所依。如見依無明，無明依法性，法性無所依，何者？法性無體，全是無明，故云：空無所依。眠喻同焰，何者？眠心如法性，昏眠如無明。夢事如諸見，無明為本，諸見為末。無明無依，諸見無住，故云：雙寂。" (*Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*, T46, no. 1912, p. 318, b1–9).

43   Paul Swanson (2018, vol. 1, p. 43) describes non-duality of dharma-nature and ignorance in terms of indivisibility, while Brook Ziporyn (2016, p. 28) prefers identity. In fact, according to Zhiyi and Zhanran, the two terms (dharma-nature and ignorance) do not stand for different things, even if their meanings are not the same. I believe that both interpretations can be used depending

on the context. Perhaps "non-duality" is more general and considers both aspects. To understand either concept, one must see the paradoxical relationship in its entirety, as explained below.

44 See the introduction by Donner and Stevenson (1993, p. 28) to their translation of the first chapter of the *Mohe zhiguan*, which contains a detailed explanation on this subject.

45 Zhiyi's concept of the "dharma-realm" is rooted in the *Buddhāvataṁsaka-sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經), and Zhiyi develops it in the *Mohe zhiguan* and his other works, see the *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 54, a5–18).

46 This refers to the contemplation of the provisional constructs (*jiaguan* 假觀) that follows the discussion of contemplation of emptiness (*kongguan* 空觀) in the section "Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas".

47 See footnote 40.

48 "Having no name" or "nameless" (*wuming* 無名) for the middle way is reminiscent of the first chapter in the *Daode jing* that uses this term to refer to the Dao. However, this does not mean that Zhiyi views the middle way and the Dao as equivalent. Rather, from the Tiantai perspective, the *Laozi* uses the term "nameless" or "having no name" in a misleading way.

49 In the *Mohe zhiguan*, Zhiyi explicitly states: "Thorough deconstruction is what thorough construction [of all dharmas] is; deconstruction and construction must not be realized in two separate moments of mental consciousness. 即破遍，即立遍，破立不須二念", (T46, no. 1911, p. 60, a6).

50 According to the *Mohe zhiguan*, the construction of all the various Buddhist teachings transmitted in the sūtra and śāstra texts consists of the sixteen gates of the four doxographical levels (based on the tetralemma, see the paragraph *Clarification through the Four Gates* 四門料簡, T46, no. 1911, p. 73, b25–p. 75, b27). The practice of deconstruction in contemplating the mind detects the deceptive concepts of being and non-being arranged according to the tetralemma. With his conclusion that there is no coherent concept of mind, just as there can be no concept of the non-being of mind, Zhiyi's deconstructive practice of introspection proves to be an act of pure observation that observes itself and thereby becomes the construction of the Buddha's teachings. In this sense, we can say that Tiantai's Buddhist practice of calming and contemplation is self-referential.

51 Zhiyi and later Tiantai masters see the soteriological effectiveness of the Buddhadharma in the existential relevance and heuristic value of the unreal, referred to as the "appropriate" (*quan* 權). Tiantai's statement of "revealing the real by disclosing the appropriate" (*kaiquan xianshi* 開權顯實) expresses this and refers to Kumārajīva's Chinese translation of the *Lotus Sutra* which in all of its 28 chapters reminds the practitioners of the Buddhist path that none of the manifold forms the Buddha appears to them are to be taken as real, just as none of the Buddha's words are to be taken literally. Yet its text also emphasizes that all that is said in it is to be regarded as indispensable for the practitioners' accomplishment of their paths to awakening. According to Tiantai's interpretation of this sūtra, its content deals with the entire course of becoming an awakened being (Buddha, *chengfo* 成佛) from two perspectives: (1) the perspective of the awakened one and (2) the perspectives of all the unawakened beings. The unreal that is "appropriate" for all practitioners of the Buddhist path encompasses the manifold practices and doctrines embodied through the three vehicles (*sancheng* 三乘) of the Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha, and the Bodhisattva. The three vehicles take all practitioners to the source from which those three came and where they, due to their unreality, dissolve again. This is the one vehicle (*yicheng* 一乘) of the Buddha—the only "real" (*shi* 實). Hence, for Tiantai, among all the diverse sūtras, only the *Lotus Sutra* embodies the crucial sense of "revealing the real by disclosing the appropriate" and embracing all types of unawakened practitioners in the mirror of complete awakening.

52 See the second verse of the first chapter of Kumārajīva's translation of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, the *Zhonglun* (T30, no. 1564, p. 2, b6–7), which states that there are only four possible ways of conceptualizing the sense of arising (*utpāda, sheng* 生): (1) arising by itself (*svatah, zisheng* 自生), (2) arising based on something else (*paratah, tasheng* 他生), (3) arising both by itself and something else (*dvābhyām, gongsheng* 共生), (4) arising neither by itself nor something else, or arising without causes (*ahetutah, wuyin sheng* 無因生). Sarvāstivāda's four notions of causality are called: (1) primary cause (*hetu-pratyaya, yinyuan* 因緣), (2) proximate condition (*samanantara-pratyaya, cidi yuan* 次第緣), (3) objective support (*ālambana-pratyaya, suoyuan yuan* 所緣緣), (4) dominant condition (*adhipati-pratyaya, zengshang yuan* 增上緣). The four are introduced right after the rejection of the tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi, siju* 四句), the four conceptual alternatives of arising, but Nāgārjuna also deconstructs the concept of causality (T30, no. 1564, p. 2, b29–c1). Sarvāstivāda's fourfold causality appears in the Chinese Abhidharma literature, *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, *Mahāyanaprajñāpāramitopadeśa etc. In the *Mohe zhiguan*, Zhiyi modifies the two concepts by combining them, he equates (1) arising by itself with primary cause (*yinsheng* 因生), (2) arising based on something else with objective support (*yuansheng* 緣生), (3) the combination of these two with arising both by itself and something else (*gongsheng*), (4) arising without causes with neither primary cause nor objective support (*wuyin sheng*).

53 Buswell and Lopez (2014, p. 123): "Each of the six consciousnesses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mental—requires a sense faculty or *indriya* in order to function. For the five sense consciousnesses, this organ is the physical sense organ associated with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body. The mind or *mental consciousness* (*manovijñāna*) does not have a physical support in this sense. Thus, the *mental faculty* (*manendriya*) is identified as a previous moment of consciousness".

54 All this is explicated in the *Inconceivable Realm* section of the *Mohe zhiguan* (T46, no. 1911, p. 54, a18–b19).

55 In the section *Inconceivable Realm*, this is discussed in relation to the four *Siddhāntas* (established doctrine); see the passages in T46, no. 1911, pp. 54, c7–p. 55, a21. The same meaning is extended in the discussion of contemplation of provisional constructs (*jiaguan*) in the section "Thorough Deconstruction of the Dharmas".

[56] Unlike Paul Swanson (2018, vol. 2, p. 831), I choose to follow the commentary tradition in translating this passage. Zhanran's commentary makes it very clear that Zhiyi's text is indeed speaking of the paradoxical relationship between dharma-nature and ignorance in the context of the tetralemma. Zhanran points out that any object studied in light of the tetralemma already has "a composite nature" (*yi hehexing* 已和合性). This is how he reveals the paradoxical meaning of Zhiyi's "one nature" (*yixing* 一性), also called "one ultimate principle" (*yizhi li* 一至理) or "dharma-nature" (*faxing*). His explanation of the passage from the *Mohe zhiguan* is as follows: "Only bound to these causes and conditions, the [four positions] of arising by itself, by something else, by both, by neither, are to be explored; in terms of their principle, none of them [really] represents anything different from the others. Hence, one should note: Any method that follows the investigation through the four positions only exposes the already composite nature of all dharmas. Therefore, once you get to the one ultimate principle, regardless of whether it is in the mode of the defiled or undefiled conditioned arising, neither the side of the cause (itself) nor the side of the condition (something else) can [really] make something arise. Since these two do not make anything arise, their combination is the principle of non-arising. Nothing arises from their combination, let alone anything without the two. What is there is not [really] existent, it takes on the appearance of the three truths. From the passage 'the [empty] one [dharma]-nature', [the text] explains this composite nature. The sentence 'Although the [empty] one [dharma]-nature [in all this] is small [in number], it is not nothingness' means that the arising of everything is due to dharmas being formed by conditions. The sentence 'Although ignorance diversifies into the manifold [of all dependent arising], nothing of it really exists' means that once one explores this [empty one] nature, there is not even a single dharma. To become neither less nor more, therein lies the subtle principle. What follows the passage 'why is it so' explains the previous sentences once again: When we point to the [empty one] dharma-nature, it becomes [the manifold constructs of] ignorance, but the manifold is not a [true] manifold. If we point to ignorance, it turns out to be dharma-nature, but "one" does not mean something [really] has become less. 祇約此因緣而推多種自他共等，其理不殊。故知：凡推四句之法，皆推諸法已和合性。所以推一至理，染淨緣起，因邊緣邊各不能生。二不生合故無生理。和合尚無，離二焉有；不有而有，三諦宛然。一性下釋和合性。一性雖少而不無者，為緣成法生一切故。無明雖多而不有者，推此性故一法亦無。不少不多，妙理斯在。何者下重釋上句。指法性為無明則多非多，指無明為法性則一非少", (T46, no. 1912, p. 298, c7–17).

[57] Brook Ziporyn's (2009, p. 21) translation of the whole parable is as follows: "Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt, he was a butterfly, fluttering about joyfully just as a butterfly would. He followed his whims exactly as he liked and knew nothing about Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he awoke, and there he was, the startled Zhuang Zhou in flesh. He did not know if Zhou had been dreaming he was a butterfly, or if a butterfly was now dreaming it was Zhou. Surely Zhou and a butterfly count as two distinct identities! Such is what we call the transformation of one thing into another. 昔者莊周夢為胡蝶，栩栩然胡蝶也，自喻適志與！不知周也。俄然覺，則遽遽然周也。不知周之夢為胡蝶與，胡蝶之夢為周與？周與胡蝶，則必有分矣。此之謂物化", (*Zhuangzi*, [edit. Guo Qingfan] 1991, p. 113).

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