THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Explain, Interpret, and Convince

Zhanran and His Commentary *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*

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Abstract

This study is organised around the overarching question of why Jingxi Zhanran (711–782) is called the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'. Focusing on one of Zhanran's key works, the *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhongjue* (hereafter *ZFCJ*), a commentary on one of the Tiantai School's foundational texts, the *Mohe zhiguan* (hereafter *MHZG*). The study examines his commentarial enterprise and how exactly it contributed to the Tiantai school.

The central inquiry of this study is: What does it mean to be the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'? The inquiry rests on two key premises: Zhanran's mastery of Buddhist exegesis and his interpretations contributed to the continuity and development of the Tiantai tradition. To examine this, the study explores four sub-questions:

1. What made Zhanran a commentator, and why does the *ZFCJ* matter within his corpus?
2. What are Zhanran's commentarial approach and methods?
3. How can Zhanran's exegesis support the Tiantai tradition?
4. What does Zhanran's case tell us about the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition?

The four chapters of this study address the questions outlined above. Chapter One contextualises the creation of the *ZFCJ*, situating it among Zhanran's other works and establishing its aim to preserve the correct understanding of the *MHZG*. It argues that while the *ZFCJ* may not be entirely original, it reflects a deep engagement with and transmission of Tiantai teachings. Chapters Two and Three analyse Zhanran's commentarial techniques, showing his thorough explication of the *MHZG* and his systematic approach to interpreting Zhiyi's exegesis. These chapters highlight Zhanran's ability to reinforce Tiantai authority by skilfully integrating external sources and demonstrating his deep doctrinal knowledge. Chapter Four examines how Zhanran builds upon and extends Zhiyi's commentarial methods by looking at his

systematisation of Zhiyi's exegetical principles in the *MHZG*, revealing his understanding of the hermeneutical process that bridges 'text' and 'meaning'. Building on this analysis, the chapter explores the nature of commentarial methods and considers how the creative dimensions embedded within them should be understood.

This study not only contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Zhanran and the *ZFCJ*, and the intellectual history of Tiantai tradition in Chinese Buddhism, but also, through this case of a successful commentator who addressed complex issues with skilful exegesis, enriches our appreciation of how an individual could actively participate in and influence broader intellectual communities through commentarial creation. Furthermore, it offers a paradigm and raises noteworthy issues for future studies of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature, which are meaningful to commentarial studies but also to cultural studies and religious studies more broadly.

Lay Summary

Commentaries are texts that explain other texts. This study looks at one important case to explore how commentary functioned in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, showing that while explanation is central but not exhaustive of what commentary does. My study uses a Chinese Buddhist commentary, *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*, written in 8th-century China, as an example to tell how its author used it to carry forward the Buddhist tradition he followed.

The author of this commentary is Jingxi Zhanran, a well-known figure in Chinese Buddhism and one of the leading figures in the establishment of the Tiantai tradition, which was named after Mt. Tiantai, where its headquarters has been located. Historically, Zhanran was honoured as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai' for his contribution in reviving the school amid the rise of rival schools, and as the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary' for his extensive commentarial work. Previous research has focused on the former title and has made huge progress. The latter, however, has so far received far less attention than it deserves, even though understanding this title is crucial for revealing the full complexity of Zhanran's engagement with the intellectual community.

The title 'Tiantai Master of Commentary' carries two main points. First, Zhanran was highly skilled at creating commentaries. Second, his commentarial creation played an important role in supporting the Tiantai school. This study explores these two aspects by answering these four questions:

1. What made Zhanran a commentator, and why does the *ZFCJ* matter within his corpus?
2. How exactly does Zhanran explain the *MHZG*? What are his commentarial methods?
3. How can Zhanran's commentarial work support the Tiantai tradition?

4. What does Zhanran's case tell us about the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition?

The four chapters of this study answer these questions. Firstly, the *ZFCJ* is a commentary aimed at preserving and transmitting the correct understanding of the *MHZG*. It may not be entirely Zhanran's original work but contains the understanding of earlier Tiantai monks on the *MHZG*. Secondly, Zhanran's explanation of the *MHZG* is thorough, covering its structure, terminology, reasoning, and other dimensions. It also includes his deep understanding and systemisation of Zhiyi's ideas on methods of explanation. Both show he is an expert in commentary. Thirdly, Zhanran's success as a Tiantai commentator lay in his deep knowledge of Tiantai doctrines and his effective use of other textual sources. He employed these sources both to support his explanation of the *MHZG* and to prove that the *MHZG* reveals the Buddhist truth. Chapter Four looks at how Zhanran developed and extended Zhiyi's approach of writing commentaries, especially how he organised Zhiyi's interpretative principles in the *MHZG*. This shows his understanding of how to guide readers from the words of a text to its underlying meaning. Building on this, the chapter also explores what commentarial methods are and considers how commentary, beyond simply explaining a text, also involves choices and creativity in how the explanation is shaped.

This study helps readers understand Zhanran and the *ZFCJ*. Beyond this, the case of a successful commentator who uses his commentarial skills to deal with complex issues shows us how an individual could actively participate in and influence wider intellectual communities through the act of writing commentaries. Furthermore, the study can serve as a model for future research on Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature. It is, therefore, not only meaningful to commentarial studies but also to broader fields in cultural studies and religious studies.

Table of Contents

Conventions

- When citing works that employ other transcription systems for Mandarin Chinese, I retain the original system. Japanese terms are given in the Revised Hepburn system. For Sanskrit terms, if the word is a scholarly reconstruction, it will be noted with an asterisk.
- The choice between presenting the English translation followed by the *pinyin* in parentheses, or the reverse, is determined by context. The former is typically used to facilitate the explanation of translated passages and to avoid overburdening the reader. The latter is preferred when discussing the meaning of a specific term, especially when no accurate English equivalent exists, since the use of pinyin helps to preserve its connotations.
- Simplified Chinese characters are retained only in bibliographical references; all other citations of Chinese texts and terms are given in traditional characters.
- References to texts in the Taishō Canon and *Shinsan Dainihon zokuzōkyō* Canon are cited as T and X, respectively. T or X is followed by the volume and text number. When citing a specific line or passage, I also indicate the page, column (a, b, or c) and line number, following the numbering system used in the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts Association (CBETA) (https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/).
- Unless otherwise indicated, all the translations of the quotations are my own. Explanatory notes clarifying the original text but not part of the translation appear in parentheses. Square brackets enclose content added to expand on omissions or ambiguities in the source text, and this added content is treated as part of the translation.
- Unless otherwise indicated, punctuation in quotations from primary sources has been supplied by me.
- Abbreviations:

  MHZG: *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀

  ZFCJ: *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* 止觀輔行傳弘決

  DDZ: *Dengyō daishi zenshū* 伝教大師全集

T: *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大蔵経

X: *Shinsan Dainihon zokuzōkyō* 卍新纂大日本続蔵経

B: *Dazang jing bu bian* 大藏經補編

GA: *Zhongguo fosi shizhi huikan* 中國佛寺史志彙刊

List of Figures

Introduction

Research Context

Jingxi Zhanran 荆溪湛然 (711–782) is an important figure in the field of Chinese Buddhism, though the meaning of his significance is still subject to interpretation.

By the 8th century, Buddhism in China was no longer foreign. It had deeply penetrated Chinese culture, shaping philosophical thought, flourishing in art and literature, and appealing to individuals from diverse walks of life. Politically, Buddhism enjoyed imperial patronage under the Tang dynasty, though the growing power of the monastic community also led to increased state regulation. The translation of texts had established a rich scriptural tradition, supported by ongoing commentary and study. Chinese Buddhists developed complex metaphysical systems and practical approaches, forming distinct traditions with their own emphasis and characteristics. Temples and monasteries were built; there were artistic achievements in cave temples, sculpture, and painting, particularly in places like Dunhuang. Amid its growth, Buddhism interacted with indigenous intellectual traditions including Confucianism and Daoism, creating a syncretic landscape while also facing occasional criticism.[1]

[1] The scholarship on the history of Chinese Buddhism is vast, and only a brief selection can be mentioned here. For general surveys, one may consult Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, Buddhism in China : A Historical Survey, Princeton Studies in the History of Religions (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1973) and a more recent survey in English, Chün-fang Yü, *Chinese Buddhism a Thematic History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2020), together with Jiyu Ren 任继愈, *Zhongguo fojiao shi* 中国佛教史 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1981) and Shigeo Kamata 鎌田茂雄, *Chūgoku Bukkyōshi* 中国仏教史 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982–1999). See especially Palumbo, who has reflected on the periodisation of Buddhism in premodern China and highlighted the important distinction between 'Chinese Buddhism' and 'Buddhism in China'. Palumbo Antonello, 'Buddhism in Premodern China and Its Periodization: In Search of a New Narrative', in Chinese Buddhism and the Scholarship of Erik Zürcher (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2022). For intellectual history, Litian Fang 方立天, *Zhongguo fojiao zhexue yaoyi* 中国佛教哲学要义(Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue

Chinese Buddhism developed under conditions rather different from those of Buddhism in South Asia, and these differences shaped both its institutional life and its exegetical strategies.

While South Asian Buddhism was organised around a monastic community that could exist apart from secular and familial structures, Chinese Buddhism had to negotiate its place within a society that was deeply shaped by Confucian ethical norms. In this context, monastic renunciation was challenged in relation to Confucian values, especially familial piety and the proper relation between subjects and rulers. Buddhist authors responded to concerns respectively in texts such as the *Fo shuo fumu enzhong nanbao jing* 佛說父母恩重難報經 (Sūtra on the Difficulty of Repaying the Deep Kindness of Parents; T416, no. 684), an apocryphal text composed in China, and the *Shamen bu jing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論 (Śramaṇas Do Not Pay Homage to Kings; T52, no. 2102). At the doctrinal level, moreover, Chinese Buddhism developed largely as a Mahāyāna tradition, even though traditions associated with early Buddhist schools also formed part of its intellectual history, including the Chengshi School 成實宗, which took the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* as its foundational text, and the Jushe School 俱捨宗, which was based on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*.

A further contrast may be seen in the treatment of scriptures. In China, the large-scale translation of Buddhist texts from different periods and doctrinal backgrounds encouraged the development of *panjiao* 判教 (doctrinal classification) that sought to arrange the full range of Buddhist teachings into a coherent hierarchy. Tiantai's doctrinal scheme, which is known as the *Wushi bajiao* 五時八教 (Five Periods and Eight Teachings), is perhaps the best-known example of this effort to

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chubanshe, 2012) offers a comprehensive study of doctrinal developments. Yongtong Tang 汤用彤, *Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi* 汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2015) remains a classic for the pre-Tang period. For Tang-dynasty focused studies, see Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang, Cambridge Studies in Chinese History, Literature and Institutions* (Cambridge: University Press, 1987). See also Bukkyōshigakkai 佛教史学会, ed., *Bukkyōshi Kenkyū Handobukku* 仏教史研究ハンドブック (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 2017), which includes a comprehensive reference list of modern Japanese scholarship on Chinese Buddhism.

reconcile diversity by organising the Buddha's teachings according to their chronological sequence, doctrinal content, and pedagogical mode. In this respect, Chinese Buddhism showed a particularly strong tendency toward synthesis and systematisation.

Differences also emerge in conceptions of practice and awakening. During the Tang, Chan brought increasing prominence to the sudden awakening 頓悟 (dunwu). Likewise, major Chinese traditions such as Tiantai 天台 (heavenly platform), Huayan 華嚴 (Avataṃsaka), and Chan 禪 (dhyāna) often placed greater emphasis on buddhahood as an inherent potential, especially through notions such as buddha-nature, as reflected in the attention given to texts such as the *Dacheng qi xinlun* 大乘起信論 (Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana; T32, no. 1666).

By Zhanran's time, many of the major Chinese Buddhist traditions later recognised as distinct schools had taken shape, including the aforementioned Chengshi and the Jushe schools, and eight Mahayana schools, including Tiantai, Huayan, Chan, Sanlun 三論 (three treatises), Lü 律 (Vinaya), Faxiang 法相 (Dharma Characteristics), Jingtu 淨土 (Pureland), and Mi 密 (Esoteric).

Amid such a flourishing environment of Chinese Buddhism, how was Zhanran positioned, and what achievements have ensured that he is still remembered today?

Zhanran was deeply associated with Tiantai, which is one of the most influential Buddhist schools in China since the 6th century and a tradition that remains active to this day. The school takes its name from Mt. Tiantai, which is in present-day Zhejiang Province. The region around Mt. Tiantai was an important Buddhist centre, alongside Chang'an, the capital city of the Tang. Tiantai drew heavily on Indian Madhyamaka and associated itself closely with Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250), who was included in the Tiantai lineage as one of its Indian patriarchs. Its actual doctrinal foundation in the Chinese context is, however, based on Zhiyi's 智顗 (ca. 538–598) theoretical framework.

Zhiyi's theoretical framework laid the foundation for Tiantai as a distinct intellectual tradition, yet the shape and boundaries of 'Tiantai' were continually

negotiated, not only doctrinally but also in practice and institutional life. This raises the question of how 'Tiantai' should be defined on different levels.

The terms 'Tiantai School', 'Tiantai tradition', and 'Tiantai lineage' are all valid translations of *Tiantai zong* 天台宗, as the character *zong* 宗 carries nuanced meanings depending on context. To preserve this nuance, some scholars even avoid translating *zong* and refer to the tradition simply as 'Tiantai'. Some scholars have also rendered *zong* as 'sect', but this is less appropriate. As Chün-fang Yü pointed out, Chinese Buddhist schools are not 'sect' in the Western sense: they do not differ from one another parimarily in insititutional structure, ritual repertoire, or liturgical calendar, but rather in their distinctive teachings, exegetical orientations, and emphases in practice; nor are they mutually exclusive, since many monastics studied with teachers associated with more than one school.[2] These English equivalents are used with distinct emphases. 'Tiantai School' foregrounds Tiantai as a more defined doctrinal formation, one grounded in authoritative scriptures, exegetical literature, and a community sharing a common understanding and religious aspiration. Here *zong* may also refer to the underlying doctrinal orientation that gives the tradition its distinctive identity. 'Tiantai lineage' refers to its patriarchal transmission, whereas 'Tiantai tradition' serves as the broadest term, encompassing the Tiantai community, lineage, doctrinal orientation, and theoretical system.

This issue is not merely a matter of terminology in the present study but relates directly to the question of Zhanran's engagement with the *Tiantai zong*: through commentarial writing, he worked across these different layers of *zong*, both doctrinally and institutionally.

Both the doctrinal and institutional formation of Tiantai were deeply indebted to the efforts of Zhanran and his followers. Zhanran was born in a Confucian family in Jinling 晉陵 of Jingxi 荊溪 (in present-day Jiangsu Province), which gave him easy access to the Buddhist centre in the southeastern area. He began his pursuit of Buddhist learning at the age of seventeen, and like many of his

[2] Chün-fang Yü, *Chinese Buddhism: A Thematic History* (University of Hawaii Press, 2020), 144.

contemporaries, travelled around his native region studying under Buddhist teachers of different specialisations. He eventually found his way to the Tiantai tradition and became committed to its support. He pursued this vocation by composing commentarial works on Tiantai-related scriptures and lecturing for Tiantai followers, until he passed away on Mt. Tiantai at the age of seventy-two. His tomb remains on Mt. Tiantai, beside the stupa that enshrines Zhiyi's flesh-body.

Indeed, posthumously recognised as a patriarch of the Tiantai tradition, Zhanran's importance has long been discussed in both premodern times and by modern scholars through the lens of his affiliation with the Tiantai school.[3] And as the Tiantai tradition is fundamentally based on Zhiyi's theoretical framework, a large part of the research on it essentially focuses on the connection between Zhiyi and Zhanran, especially on how Zhanran carried on the heritage of Zhiyi.[4]

Historically, there are two titles that contextualise Zhanran's engagement with Zhiyi's heritage. One is the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai' 天台中興之祖 amid the rise of rival schools such as Faxiang, Huayan, and Chan. The other is the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'. While scholars have focused on the former title, the latter is underexplored. However, as this study argues, the latter title is more fundamental to an understanding of the full complexity of Zhanran's engagement with the intellectual community.

Zhanran's title as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai', which was first given to him by Liang Su 梁肅 (ca. 751–793) and later recognised by followers of the Tiantai tradition,[5] greatly influenced and shaped the way Zhanran has been understood in East Asia and subsequently in Western academia. However, since the 1990s, scholars

[3] The recognition of Zhanran's patriarchate went through a complicated process among people from different intellectual communities – not only the later Tiantai monks but also lay followers. This will be elaborated on later.

[4] The widely accepted dates for Zhiyi's life (538–598) were re-examined by Fenglei Zhang 张风雷, 'Zhizhe dashi de shishou yü shengnian' 智者大师的世寿与生年, *Zhengfa yanjiu*, vol. 1 (1999): 152–54.

[5] Xueming Yu 俞學明. *Zhanran Yanjiu: Yi tangdai Tiantai zong zhongxing wenti wei xiansuo* 湛然研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006), 27–28.

have highlighted the anachronic formation of the Tiantai patriarchal lineage, and re-examined Zhanran's claim to be the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai' to see how far that title truly reflects the historical truth of his time. Their work has altered our understanding of Zhanran and of his conformity with the Tiantai tradition. Studies of Zhanran's role in the Tiantai tradition have approached the subject largely from a doctrinal perspective, debating whether his writings should be read as a faithful continuation of Zhiyi's teaching or as a departure from it.

However, it is still necessary to grasp the full complexity of how he, as an individual, engaged with the intellectual community. This study broadens the discussion of Zhanran and his engagement with the Tiantai through an investigation of his other title, *Tiantai jizhu* 天台記主, the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'.

The title 'Tiantai Master of Commentary' acknowledges Zhanran's contribution to the tradition through his extensive commentarial work. This recognition continued to be affirmed by later generations, as evidenced in records composed after his death.[6] Yet the basis for this title has remained relatively underexplored.

This study argues that Zhanran's commentarial activity is, in fact, essential to understanding both his engagement with the Tiantai tradition and his designation as the 'Patriarch who Revived Tiantai.' It was precisely his commentarial enterprise that won him that reputation. An investigation of his commentarial enterprise will reveal a more fundamental connection between Zhanran and the Tiantai School.

At the same time, Zhanran's commentarial enterprise was not merely an internal development within Chinese Buddhism, but also part of the broader Chinese commentarial tradition that had developed over more than a millennium before him.

[6] In the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (Complete Chronicle of the Buddha and Patriarchs; T49, no. 2035), for example, Zhanran is described as the 'Ninth Patriarch (in the Tiantai lineage), Tiantai Master of Commentary, Jingxi, the Honourable One, the Great Chan Master of Perfect Comprehension' 九祖天台記主荊溪尊者圓通大禪師 (T49, no. 2035, p. 177c16). The title *Yuantong Zunzhe* 圓通尊者 (the Honourable One of Perfect Comprehension) was assigned by Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852–932), the King of Wuyue 吳越王.

This indigenous tradition provided the intellectual 'soil' in which Zhanran's work took root and raised issues that remained central in Zhanran's case.

The emergence of the indigenous commentarial tradition can be traced back to the Warring States period (ca. 475–221 BCE), when attempts were made to explicate texts attributed to sages. The process was more than a neutral linguistic exercise; it involved reconstructing the circumstances of the base text's composition, analysing authorial intention, and identifying the leading principles of the text so that it could be reapplied in new contexts. Such processes gave rise to different modes of reading and different forms of response to the same work. For instance, the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 (Gongyang tradition) treats its base text, the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals), as a vehicle through which Confucius revealed enduring principles of proper governance, whereas the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo tradition) supplements the terse base text with material on the state of Lu 魯 to clarify its meaning.[7]

Commentary did not merely serve to elucidate sages; it also participated in the construction and reinforcement of textual authority. This was not confined to the Confucian sphere. The *Laozi xiang'er zhu* 老子想爾注 (Xiang'er commentary to the *Laozi*), for example, transformed the *Laozi* from a philosophical treatise into a divinely revealed scripture. This issue of constructing textual authority through commentary is likewise central to understanding Zhanran's work. Yet in Zhanran's case, this issue takes on a distinctive form, raising questions about the precise extent to which he sought to elevate Zhiyi's authority and whether he aimed to place Zhiyi on a level comparable to the Buddha.

Beyond the textual level, commentary in the indigenous tradition also functioned as a medium of pedagogy and the transmission of learning. This is reflected clearly in the material presentation of such texts. In the transmission of premodern Chinese classics, base text and commentary were rarely kept strictly

[7] Puett, Michael, 'Text and Commentary: The Early Tradition', in Wiebke Denecke et al., eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 115.

apart; instead, the comments were embedded within the base text itself.[8]

Commentary was also an indispensable aid in classical education and, in the Confucian context, became closely tied to the civil service examinations. One of the higher-level doctoral examinations, *mingjing* 明經 (understanding the classics), as its name suggests, tested the candidates' memory and understanding of the classical texts. Certain commentaries were included in this range of 'classical texts' and became the official 'textbooks', including the *Zuozhuan*, *Gongyang zhuan* and *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁传 (Guliang tradition).[9]

Seen against this larger background, Zhanran's concern with explicating the base text, establishing authority, and shaping the conditions of reading was not exclusively Buddhist, even if it was articulated through Buddhist materials and aims. His case, therefore, helps illuminate not only Buddhist exegesis but also the larger place of commentary as a distinct literary and intellectual practice in premodern China.

Research Questions

This study uses Zhanran's significant commentary on Zhiyi's *MHZG*, titled the *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*, 止觀輔行傳弘決 (T46, no. 1912; hereafter *ZFCJ*), meaning 'A Determination on the *MHZG* to Support Practice and for Propagation', to explore the recognition of Zhanran as the 'Master of Commentary of Tiantai'.

To understand this title, we first need to know: what does it mean to be the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'? The title is arguably based on two related but slightly distinct foundations. First, Zhanran is a faithful commentator. His commentarial work is both skilful and effective in fulfilling the essential functions of exegesis, namely, providing philological explanations and doctrinal interpretation. Second, he is an authoritative Tiantai commentator. His commentaries, with their

[8] As suggested by Zürn, the *Laozi Xiang'er zhu* presents itself as a text fully integrated into the *Laozi*. Tobias Benedikt Zürn, 'Reception History and Early Chinese Classics', *Religions* 13, no. 12 (2022), 4–5.

[9] Linfu Li 李林甫, et al. *Tang liudian* 唐六典 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 45.

clear explanations and reasonable interpretations, were sufficiently compelling to earn recognition from other Tiantai Buddhists. These two aspects together form the rationale behind the title of this study: *Explain, Interpret, and Convince*. More specifically, this study will explore four sub-questions.

1. What made Zhanran a commentator, and why does the *ZFCJ* matter within his corpus?
2. What are Zhanran's commentarial approach and methods?
3. How can Zhanran's exegesis support the Tiantai tradition?
4. What does Zhanran's case tell us about the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition?

By answering these questions, this study demonstrates how Zhanran strategically adapted the genre of commentary to bridge gaps across time, culture, and audience, thereby earning him a reputation as an authoritative commentator within the Tiantai tradition. It enriches the story of Zhanran's contribution to the Tiantai School by examining how he uses commentary to help the school. Every aspect of his commentarial creation, including his purpose in writing commentaries, his reverence for the base texts written by the school's founder Zhiyi, and Zhiyi's influence on the commentarial methods he employed, reflects his connection to the Tiantai tradition and his deep commitment to it.

This study establishes a more comprehensive understanding of Zhanran and the *ZFCJ*, and the intellectual history of the Tiantai tradition in Chinese Buddhism. And through this case of a successful commentator who addressed complex issues with skilful exegesis, it enriches our appreciation of how an individual could actively participate in and influence broader intellectual communities by commentarial creation. Furthermore, it offers a paradigm and raises noteworthy issues for future studies of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature, which are not only meaningful for commentarial studies but also for cultural and religious studies more broadly.

Literature Review

By bringing together close textual analysis of Zhanran's writings with insights drawn from the broader field of commentarial studies, this study situates the *ZFCJ* not only within the Tiantai tradition but also within the larger context of the Buddhist commentarial tradition. This combined approach requires engagement with two main bodies of secondary literature: studies of Zhanran and the *ZFCJ*; and studies of commentarial literature that provide me with methodological insights.

I will organise the review of secondary literature thematically, which will allow for a clearer introduction to the existing scholarship with its many details and complexities. More importantly, I will point out the importance of Zhanran's engagement with the Tiantai tradition as a commentator, an aspect of his work which has received insufficient attention. While some scholars have noticed that his creation of commentaries is a crucial factor, they have not conducted a further investigation from this perspective.

Key Scholarship for Interpreting Zhanran's Composition of the *ZFCJ*

The studies of Zhanran and the *ZFCJ* have largely centred on his relationship to the Tiantai School, with much attention given to Zhanran's role as the inheritor of Zhiyi's heritage in either a historical or philosophical perspective, and comparatively less to his influence on later Tiantai followers.

As will be discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Zhanran made his alignment with the school abundantly clear in his writings, so he would probably not take issue with being associated with it in this way rather than being regarded as an independent figure. Nevertheless, just as commentaries are often treated as a subsidiary to their base texts, Zhanran has likewise often been seen as a derivative or subordinate figure to Zhiyi. This is reflected in the amount of scholarship, where there is much less research on Zhanran than on Zhiyi.[10] Although Zhanran's

[10] To avoid redundancy, I will only list here some of the important scholars who have studied Zhiyi:

association with Zhiyi is undeniably a significant aspect of his identity, it should not define him entirely, as that would risk obscuring alternative perspectives and limiting our understanding of his intellectual contribution. This study proposes that Zhanran's role as a commentator deserves greater attention. As a commentator, he was not merely a transmitter of Zhiyi's ideas and thus in a subordinate position to Zhiyi; he also actively shaped the Tiantai tradition through his interpretive work.

I will reflect on the secondary scholarship on Zhanran and his *ZFCJ* by themes, including studies of Zhanran's title as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai', studies of his relationship with the broader Buddhist community, studies of his interaction with non-Buddhist intellectual traditions, studies of his life and works, and studies that compare Zhiyi and Zhanran. These studies, while improving our understanding of Zhanran's commentarial enterprise and the nature of the *ZFCJ*, also give rise to further questions.

The 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai'

Central to recent studies of Zhanran has been the re-examination of his historical reputation as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai'. Carefully conducted historical research by Linda Penkower, Xueming Yu, and Limei Chi has very much settled this topic.

The discussion of this topic was initiated by Penkower's reflection on the establishment of the Tiantai patriarchal lineage. As Penkower highlights, this lineage had long been taken for granted in Western scholarship under the influence of Japanese academic traditions, where its authority had become so entrenched that its retrospective construction was rarely suggested.[11] In response, Penkower undertook a detailed study that deconstructed the formation of the Tiantai lineage. Her study

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Leon Hurvitz, Paul Swanson, Neal Donner, David W. Chappell, Michael R. Saso, Brook Ziporyn, Yōei Fukuda, Tamura Yoshirō, Toshio Andō, Daitō Shimaji, Tetsuei Satō, Rosan Ikeda, Masaaki Nitta, Kōshō Tada, Hiroshi Kanno, Shindai Sekiguchi, Rujun Wu, and Fenglei Zhang, and Li Silong, etc.

[11] Linda Penkower, 'T'ien-t'ai during the T'ang Dynasty: Chan-Jan and the Sinification of Buddhism' (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1993), 1.

identifies eight stages in its historical development, and places Zhanran in the 4th and 5th phases for his contribution to promoting the Tiantai *panjiao* and his development of the term *zong* 宗, meaning 'lineage' in this context.[12]

One of the major contributions of Penkower's study lies in its comprehensive engagement with secondary sources on Zhanran and related topics, across both Western and East Asian scholarship. Her work established a solid scholarly foundation and offered detailed guidance for further research. In the following decades, however, no comparable effort has been made. In some cases, even when scholars acknowledge research published in other languages, they tend to give priority to sources written in their own language. As a result, their integration of research across linguistic boundaries is less thorough than Penkower's endeavour.

It would therefore be valuable to reintroduce existing scholarship across languages in order to update the research on this topic since Penkower's contribution, which is a task that this study aims to undertake, though not in as much detail as Penkower's did.

Following Penkower's study, scholars working in this field have not attempted the same level of integrative review as she did. They have nonetheless shared a common interest in Zhanran's title as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai' 天台中興之祖, and have contributed insightful research from various perspectives. An issue that the previous studies have noted but not fully explored is Zhanran's commentarial enterprise, which this study argues to be equally – if not more – foundational than the other aspects emphasised in the existing scholarship.

Like Penkower, Yu and Chi have also studied Zhanran's construction of the orthodoxy of Tiantai Buddhism.[13] Both scholars suggest that the Tiantai school was relatively prosperous during Zhanran's time. Accordingly, the primary challenge he addressed was not rescuing the tradition from decline, but rather reaffirming the

[12] Penkower, 'T'ien-t'ai during the T'ang Dynasty', 360–556.

[13] Limei Chi 池麗梅, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō kenkyū josetsu: Keikei Tannen to sono 'shikan bugyōden guketsu'* 唐代天台仏教復興運動研究序説 – 荊渓湛然とその「止觀輔行伝弘決」– (Tōkyō: Daizō Shuppan, 2008), 79–123.

importance of practising cessation-and-contemplation 止觀 (*zhiguan*; Skt. *śamatha-vipaśyanā*) amidst internal divergences.[14] For example, the Mt. Yuquan Sect 玉泉系 focused on the recitation of the Buddha's name and emphasised the observance of *vinaya* (monastic disciplinary rules).[15] In other words, Zhanran's aim was to reunify the school by reaffirming the core doctrine of the tradition. This perspective is crucial for understanding the motivation behind the composition of the *ZFCJ*.

Yu's study begins with a definition of *zhongxing* 中興 (reviving) in the context of the Tang dynasty, and comes to the conclusion that the use of the word implies a preceding period of decline, otherwise the notion of revival would not be tenable.[16] Yu then investigates whether the Tiantai tradition had indeed experienced such a downturn, as alleged in the writings of Liang Su and another of Zhanran's disciples, Pumenzi 普門子 (ca. 8th century).[17] The claim was accepted by modern scholars, who

[14] *Zhi* 止 (cessation) and *guan* 觀 (guan) correspond respectively to the Sanskrit *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*. In Indian Buddhist usage, these are the two principal modes of meditative cultivation: *śamatha* refers to the calming and stabilising of the mind through concentration, while *vipaśyanā* denotes insight into reality, especially the understanding that enables the practitioner to overcome afflictions and move toward liberation. See Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, eds., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 747, 979.

In Chinese Buddhism, *zhiguan* received its most systematic treatment in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan*, where Zhiyi interprets *zhi* and *guan* on three levels. *Zhi* as 'stopping' can mean calming the mind so that it is no longer disturbed by wandering thoughts, fixing the mind on the present object, and ultimately realising the nondual reality in which distraction and concentration are not opposed. *Guan* as 'observation' means to expose the illusory nature of thought, to have insight into the suchness 真如 (zhenru) as the ultimate nature of all dharmas, and finally to recognise the nonduality of insight and non-insight. Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 546.

Thus, although *zhiguan* derives from the Indian pairing of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, in Zhiyi's hands it becomes a far more expansive and philosophically charged account of Buddhist cultivation. It was understood not merely as a pair of meditation techniques but as a comprehensive category of Buddhist practices and methods used to attain the goal of Buddhahood. Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight: Chih-i's Mo-Ho Chih-Kuan*, trans. Paul L. Swanson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 1918.

[15] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 279.

[16] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 5.

[17] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 26–50.

argued that there was a 'Dark Age' between Zhiyi and Zhanran when the Tiantai School was in a downturn, whereas other Buddhist schools like the Huayan and Chan Schools were flourishing, and that it was Zhanran's efforts to clarify Zhiyi's doctrine and refute competing Buddhist schools that elevated Tiantai's status.[18]

Yu challenges Liang Su's narrative, arguing that it narrowly focuses on Zhanran and the Mt. Tiantai lineage while ignoring the parallel flourishing of the Tiantai tradition in other areas.[19] Yu also points out that the absence of textual works does not mean there were no influential Tiantai figures between Zhiyi and Zhanran, as many such figures likely contributed through oral teachings.[20] While Zhanran did play a major role in doctrinal interpretation, the narratives of Zhanran's revival of the school and the 'Dark Age' misrepresent the historical reality, and we need to be aware that the acknowledgement of Zhanran as a revivalist was formed in later times.[21]

Yu then contributed to a historical reflection on how Zhanran's title as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai' 天台中興之祖 was established by Liang Su and Pumenzi. The subsequent transmission of this narrative was partly circumstantial as it was spread by the Japanese monk Saichō, who happened to stay at a temple affiliated with Zhanran's disciples and took this version of the Tiantai lineage back to Japan.[22] Over time, the narrative became dominant in Japanese Buddhist historiography and, due to the influence of Japanese scholarship and institutional prominence, came to shape the interpretation of Zhanran in emerging Buddhist Studies in the West and even retrospectively affected the scholarly perspectives of

[18] For example, Ando Toshio 安藤俊雄, *Tendai shōgu shisōron* 天台性具思想論 (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1973), 106.For Zhiyi's biography and thought, cf. Leon Hurvitz, *Chih-i (538–597): An Introduction to the Life and Ideas of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*. (Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques XII, Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1962).

[19] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 27–29.

[20] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 30–46; 50–67.

[21] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 305–306.

[22] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 116–120.

Chinese academics.[23]

Another noteworthy observation made by Yu, though not further developed in his study, is the possibility that the *ZFCJ* may have derived from the work of Zhanran's teacher, Zuoyi Xuanlang 左溪玄朗 (673–754).[24] This draws attention to the question of how the *ZFCJ* was formed, which is essentially a question about its very nature. From this starting point, the study detects passages in Zhanran's writings where he reflects on his writing process. Such self-referential statements provide further evidence for the point raised by Yu and, more broadly, contribute to our understanding of both the *ZFCJ* and Zhanran's commentarial practice. While the sources of the *ZFCJ* may be traced to Xuanlang and to the wider intellectual community, this, however, should not be taken as grounds for doubting its authorship or originality. The modern notion of originality did not apply in the same way in premodern contexts, and such concerns are particularly problematic when dealing with commentarial literature, a genre that is, by its very nature, intertextual and cumulative. This raises important questions about the sources which the *ZFCJ* draws on and also elicits a broader reflection on the nature of commentarial authorship.

The studies reviewed above trace the development and reception of Zhanran's title as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai' in both China and Japan. These works help clarify certain misconceptions surrounding this title and, more significantly, draw attention to Zhanran's role and contributions within the Tiantai intellectual community. In particular, they suggest that his influence lies in his rearticulation of the correct understanding of Tiantai doctrine, especially the theory and practice of cessation-and-contemplation. This highlights his role as a commentator, yet the specific question of how his commentary functioned effectively within the tradition has not been explored in depth.

This question is closely tied to the issue of how Zhanran preserved the content of oral transmission he received from Xuanlang in textual form, which

[23] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 120–22.

[24] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 38.

deserves further examination to understand the nature of the *ZFCJ*. It raises a series of questions: Is the *ZFCJ* primarily a compilation of inherited interpretations? If so, what are the implications for understanding Zhanran's agency as a commentator? Moreover, while the use of titles such as 'reviver' or 'commentator' reflects historical opinions on Zhanran's role, there is little discussion of how Zhanran himself may have conceived of his commentarial enterprise. These questions point to the need for a deeper engagement with both Zhanran's commentarial craft and the nature of the *ZFCJ*.

Zhanran's Interaction with the Broader Buddhist Community

Regarding the historical and intellectual context of the *ZFCJ*, the Tiantai school's interactions with other traditions, particularly Chan and Huayan, are especially noteworthy. These interactions are methodologically significant, as they shape how we understand the dynamics of Buddhist communities and institutions. Given that the *ZFCJ* may be a compilation of inherited interpretations from Xuanlang and other Tiantai thinkers, it raises the question of whether it should be understood, at least partially, as the result of accumulated dialogue and transmission within the Tiantai tradition.

The Tiantai and Chan schools are connected theoretically in an intrinsic way. The practice of meditation, *Chan* 禪 (short for *Channa* 禪那, from the Sanskrit *dhyāna*), is so central to the Chan school that it was adopted as its name. Yet meditative practice is equally emphasised in the Tiantai tradition, where it forms a core component of the cessation-and-contemplation framework.

The connection between the two schools is also reflected extrinsically and institutionally. As Hibi Senshō suggests, the geographical proximity of the Tiantai and Chan schools on Mt. Tiantai may indicate that the Tiantai tradition did not, in fact, experience a 'Dark Age' but might have continued to flourish in the form of *Chan*.[25]

Apart from this, biographical records show that the first teacher involved in

[25] Senshō Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku kenkyū: Tannen no kyōgaku ni kansuru kōsatsu* (Tōkyō: Sankibō Busshorin, 1975), 28.

Zhanran's Buddhist training was not a Tiantai monk, but a Chan monk named Fangyan 方巖 (dates unknown). Chi's study of Zhanran's identity indicates that Fangyan was affiliated with the southern sect of the Chan School.[26] Chi further argues that Zhanran's attempt to preserve the Tiantai School was in imitation of the Chan sects' practice of asserting orthodoxy and thus should be seen less as his original creation than as a response to prevailing sectarian strategies.[27]

As for Zhanran's connection to the Huayan school, one topic that has drawn considerable scholarly attention is his critique of Guanding, a figure who initially studied under Zhanran but later 'betrayed' the Tiantai tradition and became an advocate of its rival, the Huayan School.[28] Since premodern times, there has also been a recurring claim that Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839) was among the opponents targeted in Zhanran's writings.[29] Conversely, some have argued that Zhanran, under Chengguan's influence, adopted elements of Huayan doctrine. [30]

Both assumptions, however, have been challenged by recent scholarship. For example, in his study on the *Zhiguan dayi* 止觀大意 (General Meanings of the *Zhiguan*; T46, no. 1914), Hibi concludes, on the basis of chronological considerations, that Zhanran was more likely critiquing Fazang 法藏(643–712), the 3rd patriarch of the Huayan School, rather than Chengguan.[31] Similarly, in an analysis of the *Jin'gang*

[26] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 57–66.

[27] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 66.

[28] See *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (The Song Dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks; T50, no. 2061), p. 737a15–16; *Fozu Tongji*, T49, no. 2035, p. 293 b27–29. For the relationship between Zhanran and Chenguan, see Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 334–336. For Zhanran's interaction with another Huayan monk, Fazang 法藏(643–712), see Bunshū Uesugi 上杉文秀, *Nihon Tendai shi* 日本天台史. (Tōkyō: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1972), 239–50.

[29] Congyi 從義 (1042–1091) believes that Zhanran intended to argue against Chengguan in the *Jin'gang pi*. See *Mohe zhiguan yili zuanyao* 摩訶止觀義例纂要 (Essential Compilation of *Interpretations and Principles of the Zhiguan*), X56, no. 921, 44a11–12.

[30] Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku kenkyū*, 109.

[31] Senshō Hibi, 'Tannen no kyogaku ni okeru Chokan no eikyo- Shikan dai-i no seisaku nendai wo chushin toshite', *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 14 (1): 109.

pi, Yu argues that Zhanran did not regard Chengguan as an adversary.[32] Chi also questions the reliability of the narrative presented in the *Fozu Tongji* 佛祖統紀, which claims that Chengguan greeted Zhanran with great respect during the latter's visit to Mt. Wutai 五臺山, because this text was written by Zhipan 志磐 (1220–1275), a Tiantai monk, and may have exaggerated the situation in order to elevate Zhanran's status.[33]

While it is true that some of Zhanran's writings express clear disagreement with Chengguan's works, this textual antagonism should not be too hastily equated with personal or institutional opposition. It is important to consider how Chengguan's experience of studying with Zhanran ought to be understood. Just as Zhanran himself studied with Chan and Vinaya masters, it was common during the Tang period for Buddhist scholars to travel widely and study across multiple traditions.[34]

This observation aligns with a concern raised by Fedde M. de Vries, who argues that it is anachronistic to view premodern Buddhists as rigid members of rival sectarian institutions.[35] De Vries proposes that a more accurate model would be 'Scholasticism'. He introduces the term 'scholiast' to describe figures such as Chengguan, suggesting that Chengguan, like many of his contemporaries, engaged with a shared scholastic community across sectarian boundaries.[36] Chengguan, therefore, should not be reduced to a mere 'Huayan advocate'; seeing Chengguan in this way oversimplifies the complexities of his intellectual background.

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[32] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 182.

[33] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 31.

[34] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 25. While *vinaya* is indeed fundamental to all Buddhist traditions, the emergence of a distinct Vinaya school in China focused on the specialised hermeneutics of monastic law and the ontological nature of the 'precept essence' (*jieti* 戒體).

[35] Fedde M. de Vries, 'On the Nature of Chinese Buddhist Scriptural Exegesis: Observations on the Commentaries of Chengguan, Woncheuk, and Other Sui-Tang Exegetes', *The Medieval Globe* 8, no. 2 (2022): 107–108.

[36] Fedde M. de Vries, 'Thinking Through Texts: The Pedagogy and Practice of Sui-Tang Buddhist Scholasticism' (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 2024), 3.

I agree that the term 'scholasticism' does a more effective job of explaining the nature of Buddhist communities, as it not only describes their conflicts and doctrinal divergences, suggested by terms such as 'schools' or 'sects', but even more, takes into consideration the commonalities shared by these different schools and sects. When applied to Zhanran's case, the term illuminates not only his interaction with other Buddhist traditions but also, as will be discussed in the following section, his interaction with the indigenous intellectual traditions.

That said, Zhanran's case is not entirely identical to that of Chengguan. The key difference lies in Zhanran's strong sectarian commitment, which is expressed not only in his explicit claims about preserving and transmitting the Tiantai tradition but also in his interpretation of the *MHZG*. How, then, is his engagement with the other Buddhist traditions or other intellectual communities reflected in the content of *ZFCJ*? And through what strategies did he incorporate these influences while maintaining the doctrinal centrality of the Tiantai tradition?

Zhanran's Interaction with Non-Buddhist Intellectual Traditions

Another important context for understanding Zhanran is his engagement with indigenous intellectual traditions, such as Confucianism and Daoism. Noting the connection between Confucianism and Zhanran's thought, Bunshū Uesugi argued that Buddhism shared the tendency of Confucianism to stress theory at the expense of practice, which is why Zhanran felt the need to stress the importance of meditative principles.[37]

Regarding the connections between Zhanran and Daoism, most recently, Hans-Rudolf Kantor has explored Tiantai Buddhism's interaction with Daoism, including Zhanran's critique of the Daoists' thought, particularly their paradoxical dependence on language thus showing how Tiantai tradition employs linguistic forms to transcend the speech-silence dichotomy.[38]

[37] Uesugi, *Nihon Tendai shi*, 89.

[38] Hans-Rudolf Kantor, 'Tiantai's Reception and Critique of the Laozi and Zhuangzi', *Religions* 15, no. 1 (2024): 2, 9–13.

Both studies mentioned above take an intellectual-historical perspective. This raises the question of whether the *ZFCJ* engages with the content of Confucianism and Daoism, and whether those indigenous traditions undermine the aim of the *ZFCJ* to uphold the Tiantai tradition. What is Zhanran's view of Confucianism and Daoism, and are there any specific skills that he used to integrate them into his commentary? Furthermore, apart from the content itself, is it possible to detect a Confucian influence in the *ZFCJ*'s commentarial methodology, as Zhanran grew up with a Confucian educational background? Although these influences are subtle and easily overlooked, they are as meaningful as the more commonly discussed philosophical connections.

Zhanran's Biography and Works

Studies of Zhanran's life and oeuvre reconstruct the historical context that shaped his writings and clarify the significance that the creation of the *ZFCJ* held for him.

Zhanran's life was recorded in primary sources such as *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, *Fozu tongji*, *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan* 天台九祖傳 (Biographies of the Nine Tiantai Patriarchs; T51, no. 2069) and *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 (T49, no.2036; Comprehensive Chronicle of the Successive Ages of the Buddha and the Buddhist Patriarchs). Modern studies are based on this literature and other research materials such as chorographies and epigraphs. Chi's work is the most valuable reference, as she revises many of the previous studies.[39] The most recent English-language scholarship is Bowring's introduction to Zhanran's life, which is based on a solid foundation of previous research.[40]

Regarding Zhanran's works, the *Bussho Kaisetsu Daijiten* is a useful reference to find details of their dates of composition, style, structure, content, and editorial history.[41] Hibi Senshō also offers a comprehensive overview of Zhanran's writings. He

[39] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 7–84.

[40] Richard Bowring, 'Zhanran', in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 814–17.

[41] Genmyo Ono 小野玄妙, and Maruyama Takao 丸山孝雄, ed., *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* 佛書解說大辭典 (Tōkyō: Daitō Shuppansha, 1974), 164–65.

corrects or narrows the dates of completion for each of them and provides full summaries of their contents. He also examines the cross-referencing in the texts in order to speculate on their chronological sequence.[42] Chi's study is also helpful as it corrects the traditionally accepted number of Zhanran's extant works and proposes a thematic classification that offers a more structured understanding of his literary corpus.[43]

Both Chi's and Hibi's studies contribute to a clearer understanding of Zhanran's life trajectory and help identify key events that accompanied the creation of the *ZFCJ*, addressing important questions concerning Zhanran's commentarial enterprise: What motivated Zhanran to produce this commentary? What circumstances was he facing at the time that may have shaped his writing? How central was his commentarial work in his life, and how significant a part of his textual corpus was the *ZFCJ*? These questions are crucial for understanding both the nature of the *ZFCJ* and Zhanran's role as a commentator, and they can be pursued further. In particular, I examine the format of Zhanran's commentarial literature and the thematic emphases that reveal his response to the central Tiantai doctrinal theme of the mutuality between 'doctrine' and 'practice'. Moreover, by analysing passages in which Zhanran reflects on his commentarial creation, I shed new light on his purpose in composing the *ZFCJ*, especially with regard to the significance of the character *jue* 決 (decisive interpretation or clarification) in its title.

Comparing Zhiyi and Zhanran

Hibi, Penkower, Chi and Yu, while having different research focuses, share a similar methodological rationale: they begin with historical and/or philological investigations into Zhanran's relationship with the Tiantai tradition, and proceed to an intellectual-historical analysis comparing Zhiyi's and Zhanran's doctrinal interpretations. This seems to suggest an implicit consensus that the question of doctrinal continuity or divergence is fundamental to an understanding of how an individual engages with a

[42] Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku josetsu*.

[43] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 31.

Buddhist tradition.

Scholars have varied opinions on whether Zhanran's interpretation of doctrine is a faithful continuation of Zhiyi's original intention or a deviation from it. Hibi, for instance, indicates that the key distinction between Zhiyi's and Zhanran's doctrinal constructions lies in their respective emphases – while Zhiyi treats metaphysical ideas as instruments to support meditative practice, Zhanran focuses more on metaphysical inquiry – but the discrepancy is not a fundamental one.[44]

Penkower's study, instead, looks for theoretical innovation based on Tiantai doctrines in Zhanran's treatise, the *Jin'gang pi* 金剛錍 (The Adamantine Scalpel; T46, no. 1932), in which he develops the theory that 'insentient beings possess Buddha-nature'.[45] In the second half of her study, Yu undertakes a comparative analysis of Zhiyi's and Zhanran's interpretations of key Tiantai doctrines and argues that Zhanran did not deviate from Zhiyi's original interpretations.[46] This doctrinal continuity, Yu suggests, is a key reason why Zhanran's title as the 'Patriarch that Revived Tiantai' – though not entirely reflecting the historical realities – nonetheless gained credibility and acceptance among later generations.[47] Chi's study, with a particular focus on the *ZFCJ*, highlights Zhanran's theoretical development of the concept of *chanhui* 懺悔 (repentance) as a means to support the practice of *zhiguan*, which Chi regards as Zhanran's important theoretical contribution to the Tiantai tradition.[48]

Scholars have examined Zhanran's philosophical interpretations from various perspectives. However, a question that remains untouched is how Zhanran managed to balance loyalty to Zhiyi's teachings with his explanations of them, which, at times, were innovative. Rather than focusing further on how the two figures varied in their doctrinal inquiries, this study focuses on the methodological connections between

[44] Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku kenkyū*, 113–311; 411–34.

[45] Penkower, T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty, 363–74. Penkower provides an annotated English translation of the *Jin'gang pi*, found in the same work from 382–556.

[46] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 127–293.

[47] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 126.

[48] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 348–91.

them, that is, the traces within Zhanran's commentarial methods that reveal the influence of Zhiyi. A comparison of Zhanran's and Zhiyi's commentarial approaches will also reveal where and how Zhanran's method differs from that of Zhiyi.

Existing studies of Zhanran's biography and writings, as well as comparative research on the philosophical inquiries of Zhiyi and Zhanran, have laid a solid foundation for this study. However, they have paid insufficient attention to Zhanran's commentarial enterprise, which is a key dimension not only for understanding the intellectual relationship between Zhanran and Zhiyi but also for comprehending the broader significance of commentary in the context of Chinese Buddhism.

Studies on Commentarial Literature

The previous section has shown that discussions of Zhanran's inheritance and development of Zhiyi's thought have concentrated almost exclusively on doctrinal issues, leaving his exegetical methods largely unexamined. Yet this is not a limitation confined to the study of Zhanran alone. It reflects a broader disciplinary tendency in which the importance of commentarial literature has often been unintentionally overlooked or even dismissed as merely derivative or secondary to the 'original' works it explains. Such neglect raises an important methodological question: why have studies of commentaries been overlooked, and why should they not be? Earlier scholarship has demonstrated the importance of examining commentarial texts in their own right. Some works offer explicit disciplinary reflections on why commentary should not be marginalised, while others present compelling case studies that illustrate the value of such analysis. The present study also intends to contribute to the broader reflection on the importance of studying commentarial literature, with Zhanran's case.

Henderson's comparative studies of commentaries across cultures are probably the earliest to demonstrate the significance of commentarial literature. He emphasised that premodern intellectual traditions in Europe, China, India, and many other regions were deeply dependent on commentaries and commentarial modes of

thought.[49] In particular, he summarised the 'commentarial assumptions' shared by commentators, including the comprehensiveness, coherence, self-consistency, profundity and absence of redundancy of canonical texts, which were also their intention to substantiate with their commentaries.[50] Henderson's study shows that commentaries are not passive glosses but active sites of interpretation and intellectual creativity. It also highlights how much remains to be understood about commentarial literature. It offers an example of how this literature can be approached, showing the kinds of questions we might ask and the different levels on which they may be systematically examined.

Gardner, in his study of Confucian commentary, also engages with general enquiries on the nature of commentary and the reason for its creation. He demonstrates that commentary functions as a kind of 'broker', mediating between 'the sages of the past' and the contemporary interpretive community.[51] Gardner's study shows that commentary as a genre is characterised by its capacity to adapt proactively to shifting contexts, and the diversity of interpretive choices it contains constitutes an important field for further research. These interpretive choices are likewise reflected in the materials examined here: Zhanran's multiple commentaries on the *MHZG*, as well as the specific commentarial methods he adopted, all illustrate this point.

The neglect of commentarial texts in scholarly research may stem from a broader suspicion of commentary as a literary genre. As Wagner suggests, this attitude can be traced back to the European Reformation and Renaissance, which emphasised the recovery of the *Urtext* and, in doing so, rejected the authoritative role of Church-sanctioned commentaries.[52] The outcome of this extended to

[49] John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3.

[50] Ibid., for Henderson's discussion on the commentarial assumptions, see 89–138; for commentarial strategies, see 139–99.

[51] Daniel K. Gardner, 'Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History', *The Journal of Asian Studies* (New York, USA) 57, no. 2 (1998): 401–2.

[52] Wagner, Rudolf G., *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany, N.Y.: State

academia, with, for example, Arthur Waley indicating that commentaries were useless as they were merely reinterpretations shaped by the commentators' own tenets, without concern for the original intent of the base text.[53]

What Wagner suggests may indeed be one reason why modern scholars, consciously or not, tend to treat commentaries only as occasional references for understanding tricky passages, rather than seeing or understanding the commentarial literature in its entirety. However, as Henderson's and Gardner's studies emphasise, and as the following review of other literature will further demonstrate, the premodern commentarial endeavour reveals that commentators were constantly confronted with the challenge of establishing credibility and gaining recognition. In other words, the authority and legitimacy of commentary have never been uncontested, and this persistent ambivalence and the continuing need to prove its importance may also have contributed to the neglect of commentarial literature.

Although Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature has historically received relatively limited scholarly attention, recent years have seen a growing interest in the field, accompanied by notable methodological developments. In recent years, there has been a growing scholarly interest in Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature, and a number of studies have underscored that commentarial literature is not a marginal but an essential source for understanding textual cultures. This study is one such endeavour that seeks to contribute to the topic of the significance of studying commentarial literature. Like those case studies, this study is another example of how commentary brings a text back to life, and in this case, how Zhanran employed different methods to explicate the meaning of the *MHZG*, which enriches our understanding of what commentarial literature actually does to actively shape the meaning and vitality of texts by revealing distinctive, context-sensitive ways of reading. This highlights the side of the *ZFCJ* which is overlooked when it is treated merely as a subordinate aid to interpret passages of the *MHZG*.

Current research in the area of the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition

University of New York Press, 2000), 60.

[53] Ibid.

broadly falls into two categories: general studies on the various forms of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature and case studies focusing on specific commentators or texts, examining their structural formats, explanatory techniques, and underlying hermeneutical theories aimed at producing more coherent and persuasive interpretations. Scholarship in both categories has contributed valuable context for understanding the commonalities as well as particularities *of ZFCJ* in format, methods and hermeneutics, thus contextualising it within the broader landscape of Buddhist commentarial tradition.

A general overview of the development of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature can be found in the works of David W. Chappell, Hiroshi Kanno, Luis O. Gomez, Alexander L. Mayer, and Li Silong.[54] Existing scholarship has shed much light on the transformations of the commentarial tradition prior to Zhanran's time and on its distinctive features during his era. However, most of these studies concentrate on sūtra commentary. This raises an important question: does the choice of base text, whether a sutra or less authoritative writings, make a difference to the nature of commentarial creation? And to what extent can insights drawn from the study of sutra commentaries be applied to commentaries on other genres of base texts? This is ultimately a question of textual authority. Li Silong has observed two notable developments in the Tang period, the age of Zhanran: first, independently structured commentarial works such as treatises became less prominent, and second, commentaries based on sectarian writings rather than sutras became more prevalent.

[54] David W. Chappell, 'Hermeneutical Phases in Chinese Buddhism', in *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 175–206. Hiroshi Kanno, 'Chinese Buddhist Sutra Commentaries of the Early Period', *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University [Academic Year 2002]* 6 (2003): 301–20. Alexander L. Mayer, 'Commentarial Literature', in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr., vol. 1 (New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 166–69. Luis O. Gomez, 'Buddhist Books and Texts: Exegesis and Hermeneutics', in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1268–78. Silong Li, 'Genres of Buddhist Commentarial Literature in Medieval China', *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* 31, no. 2 (2021): 59–77.

[55] The *ZFCJ* exemplifies both tendencies: it is a sub-commentary, and it is based on the work of Zhiyi, Tiantai's actual founder. This suggests that the *ZFCJ* can be regarded as a representative commentary of its time. A closer study of it, particularly with attention to how it engages with textual authority, will deepen our understanding of commentarial practice in this transitional stage.

As for case studies, no existing research has yet focused specifically on Zhanran's commentarial work, which underscores the significance of undertaking it. Nonetheless, studies of other commentators or commentarial texts offer valuable methodological insights for our analysis of Zhanran's case.

The case studies that focus on specific commentators or texts have helped me to recognise the distinction between exegetical and hermeneutical approaches. In this study, exegesis refers to the clarification of specific textual units, staying on the level of philological explanations or theoretical interpretations; hermeneutics, by contrast, refers to the theoretical frameworks that address broader questions such as how and why interpretations should be carried out in particular ways. [56] For instance, Fedde M. de Vries's work on Chengguan's exegesis and Xiaoming Hou's analysis of exegetical frameworks in relation to meditative practice place greater weight on the exegesis.[57] Meanwhile, Peter N. Gregory's investigation of the Huayan hermeneutical tradition and Robert F. Rhodes's study of Zhiyi both focus on the hermeneutical dimension, particularly strategies for uncovering the meaning of base texts, while reconciling the apparent contradictions within the Buddhist scriptures, to construct a coherent and internally consistent doctrinal system.[58]

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[55] Ibid., 72.

[56] The differences between exegesis and hermeneutics are summarised by Gomez, 'Buddhist Books and Texts: Exegesis and Hermeneutics', 1268–78.

[57] De Vries, 'On the Nature of Chinese Buddhist Scriptural Exegesis', 107–37. Xiaoming Hou, 'From Meditation Teachings to Exegetical Grid', *Journal Asiatique*, no. 2 (2021): 249–73.

[58] Peter N. Gregory, 'Chinese Buddhist Hermeneutics: The Case of Hua-Yen', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 51, no. 2 (1983): 231–49. Robert F. Rhodes, 'Tiantai Hermeneutics: Zhiyi's Interpretation of the Lotus Sutra Presented in the Miaofa Lianhua Jing Xuanyi', in *The Buddha's Words and Their Interpretations*, ed. Takami Inoue and Imre Hamar, 2016, 139–53.

This study considers both the exegetical and hermeneutical dimensions of the *ZFCJ*, as the text demonstrates an integration of the two, showcasing Zhanran's expertise as a commentator. Regarding the exegetical dimension, it examines whether Zhanran adopts methods from Zhiyi's exegetical schemata, Five Categories of Profound Meaning 五重玄義 (*Wuchong xuanyi*) and Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps 七番共解 (*Qifan gongjie*),[59] which are analysed in detail in two studies by Guo.[60] Zhanran's adoption of Zhiyi's exegetical schemata offers a new perspective on his adherence to the Tiantai tradition, highlighting his significance as the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'. As for hermeneutics, this study explores the potential influence of Tiantai doctrinal principles on Zhanran's interpretive framework. This further illustrates Zhanran's engagement with the Tiantai tradition through the lens of his commentarial creation, showing that his understanding of the Tiantai doctrine was not merely theoretical, but even methodologically embedded in his commentarial practice. This, again, explains why he deserves the title of 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'.

Sources and Methodology

This study focuses on what is arguably Zhanran's most important commentarial work, the *ZFCJ*. This text is an annotation of the *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (Great Cessation and Contemplation; hereafter *MHZG*; T46, no. 1911), a foundational treatise by Zhiyi that defines the practical dimension of the Tiantai tradition. The *MHZG*, *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義 (Profound Meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*; hereafter *Fahua xuanyi*; T34, no. 1718) and *Miaofa lianhua jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文

[59] The translations of these two terms are borrowed from Swanson's translation of the *MHZG*. See Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight,* 2051.

[60] Chaoshun Guo 郭朝順, 'Zhiyi siyi xiaowen de jiejing fangfalun', *Huafan wenwen xuebao*, no. 1 (2003): 243–69. And 'Zhiyi "Wuchong xuanyi" de fojiao quanshi xue' 智顗「四意消文」的解經方法論, in *Huafan daxue di si ci ru-fo huitong xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* (paper presented at the Fourth Academic Conference on the Integration of Confucianism and Buddhism, Huafan University, Taibei, May 2000), 267–83.

句 (*Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra*; hereafter *Fahua wenju*; T33, no. 1716) are usually grouped together as the 'Three Major Works of the Tiantai' 天台三大部 (*Tiantai san da bu*; or *Fahua san da bu* 法華三大部, 'Three Major Works of the *Lotus Sūtra*') that laid the theoretical foundation for both the meditative practice and doctrine, whose interdependence is a hallmark of the tradition. The *MHZG* focuses on meditative practice, whereas the *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* and the *Miaofa lianhua jing wenju* place greater emphasis on doctrinal aspects. The two are Zhiyi's commentaries on the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* (hereafter *Lotus Sūtra*),[61] a seminal Mahāyāna sūtra and a scriptural basis of the Tiantai doctrine.

Unsurprisingly, given the passage of time, none of Zhanran's original manuscripts (including the *ZFCJ*) has survived. As Zhanran himself noted, his works were being transcribed by people in his community during his lifetime.[62] Under the pressure of political turbulence and the feeling that his end was near, he sent the *ZFCJ* and his two other commentaries to the Kaiyuan Monastery in Gusu 姑蘇開元寺 (today called Suzhou, in Zhejiang Province), which had a collection of Buddhist texts.[63] After Zhanran's death, the transmission and preservation of the *ZFCJ* and his other works were significantly affected by the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism (*Huichang huifo* 會昌毀佛 or *Huichang fa* 會昌法難; 841–845), initiated by Emperor Wuzong of Tang 唐武宗 (814–846), during which many Buddhist texts, including those by Zhanran, were destroyed.[64] A major turning point following this devastation

[61] There are several Chinese translations of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*; the one Zhiyi and Zhanran relied on is Kumārajīva's 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE) translation, titled *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (T9, no. 262).

[62] X27, no. 584, p. 835a4. 'Even before the collation was complete, the crowd had already begun secretly copying [my draft].' 勘校未周，眾已潛寫。

[63] T51, no. 2069, p. 103a18–19. 'When the writing of the three commentaries was completed, the master (=Zhanran) wrote to the great scriptural collection of the Gusu (=Suzhou) Kaiyuan Monastery and sent [the three commentaries] there.' 述三部記成，師親書寄姑蘇開元寺大藏。

[64] See Limei Chi, 'Tiantai jiaodian de haiwai huiliu ji ru zang shimo', *Shijie zongjiao wenhua*, no. 6 (2022): 174.

occurred during the Wuyue period 吳越 (907–978),[65] when, at the request of King Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852–932), lost Tiantai texts were re-imported from Korea and/or Japan.[66] The copying of his works continued throughout the centuries, ensuring their survival to the present day – presumably first through handwritten transcription and later through woodblock printing as the technology became available, although it is uncertain when this transition of copying forms occurred.

The version of *ZFCJ* used in this study is taken from the *Taishō Revised Tripiṭaka* 大正新脩大藏經 (Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō; hereafter the *Taishō Tripiṭaka*). This edition of the *ZFCJ* was primarily based on the *Hōon Tripiṭaka collected in Zōjō-ji* 增上寺報恩藏本 (*Zōjōji Hōon-zōhon)* (printed in 1639), with two other editions consulted for the editorial collation.[67]

Regarding the format of the *ZFCJ*, due to the complex development of commentarial literature, even texts that fall into the same category often exhibit different structures and areas of focus. Therefore, we will need to understand the formal features of the *ZFCJ* through its structure and content. The existing version of the *ZFCJ* in the Taishō canon is in five main parts.

1. A foreword (T46, no. 1912, p. 141a5-b7) by Pumenzi 普門子, a disciple of Zhanran.
2. Introductory Part 1 (p. 141b11–17), which defines the meaning of *fuxing* 輔行

[65] Wuyue was one of the Ten Kingdoms during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, located in the eastern coastal region that includes present-day Zhejiang 浙江 and parts of Jiangsu 江蘇 and Fujian 福建. This area overlapped with Zhanran's sphere of activity, and his influence may have persisted during Wuyue's rule.

[66] The question of whether the texts were brought back from Korea or Japan remains a subject of scholarly debate. For a comprehensive overview of earlier opinions and the canonisation of the Tiantai texts, see Chi, 'Tiantai jiaodian de haiwai huiliu', 173–79. For the return of Tiantai texts, see also Ben Brose, 'Crossing Thousands of Li of Waves: The Return of China's Lost Tiantai Texts', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29 (2006): 21–62.

[67] The two are: the Old Song Edition (1104–1148) belonging to the Library of the Imperial Household 宮內省圖書寮本 (*Kunai-shō Tosho-ryōhon*) and the edition printed during the Tokugawa period (1600–1867) belonging to Mr. Shimaji Daito 德川時代刊島地大等氏藏本 (Tokugawa jidai kan Shimaji Daitō shi zōhon).

(assist the practice), *chuanhong* 傳弘 (propagate), and 決 *jue* (determine; clarify) in its title.

3. Introductory Part 2 (p. 141b18–142b4), which includes (1) the aims of this commentary; (2) the information on the versions of the *MHZG*; (3) the outline of the *MHZG*, where Zhanran adopts *kepan* 科判, 'segmental analysis,' an exegetical method to analyse the internal structure of a text by identifying its major thematic or functional divisions; (4) an explanation of the *MHZG*'s title.
4. The main body (p. 142b5–446c1), which follows the structure of the *MHZG*, including Guanding's introduction to it and its body text. Annotations are provided in great detail, involving also segmental analysis, definition of terms, philosophical discussion, and editorial corrections.
5. The summary (p. 446c1–446c22), which emphasises that the incompleteness of the last three sections of the *MHZG* does not lessen its significance and encourages future generations to spread its teachings and engage in meditative practice accordingly.

From its content and structure, it is clear that the main body of the *ZFCJ* adopts a verbatim style when commenting on the *MHZG*, directly quoting the base text, but more broadly, it follows its content and structural flow. In this sense, its format is best understood as annotation. However, although both works consist of ten scrolls, the divisions of the chapters in the *ZFCJ* do not correspond directly to those in the *MHZG*.

In addition to the *ZFCJ*, Zhanran's other auxiliary commentarial works on the *MHZG* are also referenced to support the discussion and bring out the distinctive characteristics of the *ZFCJ*, including the *Zhiguan yili* 止觀義例 (T46, no. 1913; Interpretations and Principles of the *Zhiguan*), the *Zhiguan dayi* 止觀大意, and the *Zhiguan fuxing souyao ji* 止觀輔行搜要記 (Record Collecting the Essentials of the *Zhiguan to Support Practice*; hereafter *Souyao ji*; X55, no. 919;). Although these three works also take the *MHZG* as their base text, they emphasise different themes from the *ZFCJ* and are aimed at different readerships. The *Zhiguan yili* elucidates Zhanran's

understanding of Zhiyi's exegetical principles, thereby allowing for a closer examination of whether Zhanran himself adhered to these principles in his own commentarial practice. The *Souyao ji* is a re-edited and condensed version of the *ZFCJ*, intended as a more accessible summary. The *Zhiguan dayi* is the shortest of the three and was written for a lay follower, Li Hua 李華 (717–774), a government official. The work thus adopts a concise, introductory approach designed for non-specialist readers.

What is particularly distinctive about studying the *ZFCJ* is that it is in the form of an annotation, which follows the structure of the *MHZG*. As such, this study inevitably depends on prior scholarship on the *MHZG*. In particular, modern translations of the *MHZG* serve as a crucial foundation for understanding both the *MHZG* itself and the *ZFCJ*, since the latter incorporates and responds to the content of the former. Although philosophical inquiry is not the primary focus of this study, it is still necessary to clarify the key philosophical concepts embedded in Zhanran's commentaries in order to explain their underlying interpretive mechanisms. Given the absence of modern translations of the *ZFCJ*, existing translations of the *MHZG* thus play an important compensatory role, providing essential context for the analysis undertaken here. There are four existing translations of the *MHZG* in English, among which Paul Swanson's is the only complete version and is accompanied by detailed annotations.[68] This study draws primarily on Swanson's translation in the interpretation and explanation of relevant passages.[69]

This study situates itself within the fields of exegetical and hermeneutical studies, combining close textual analysis and commentarial studies to investigate the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition through the case of the *ZFCJ*. This study argues that commentary, as a literary genre, functions as a dynamic bridge between an individual thinker and a broader intellectual tradition. Through a close

[68] Please refer to Marcus Bingenheimer's Bibliography of Translations from the Chinese Buddhist Canon into Western Languages: https://mbingenheimer.net/tools/bibls/transbibl.html

[69] Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*.

examination of the *ZFCJ*, it explores how Zhanran engages with, rearticulates, and affirms the Tiantai tradition. This connection operates on multiple levels:

- At the level of intent, the *ZFCJ* seeks to promote the tradition and shape its authorised understanding.
- At the level of its content, the *ZFCJ* preserves and transmits the teachings Zhanran inherited from the Tiantai community.
- At the level of exegetical methods, it draws upon hermeneutical tools established within the tradition.
- At the level of intertextuality, it engages with sources both internal and external to the tradition to support and enrich the interpretation of the *MHZG*.

To develop a comprehensive understanding of these issues, the study adopts an approach that integrates both emic and etic perspectives. The emic (or insider's) perspective draws from Zhanran's own explanations, reflecting how ideas were understood and expressed within the tradition itself. In contrast, the etic (or outsider's) perspective involves my critical analysis and conceptual framing, allowing for broader scholarly contextualisation. By combining these two approaches, the study not only respects the internal coherence of Zhanran's thought about his commentarial creation but also reveals its significance within the wider landscape of Chinese Buddhist intellectual history.

Additionally, this study adopts a comparative approach in three respects. First, it compares Zhanran's exegetical methods with those of Zhiyi to assess whether his adherence to the Tiantai tradition is reflected not only in doctrinal content but also in exegesis and hermeneutics. Second, it examines the *ZFCJ* alongside Zhanran's three other commentaries on the *MHZG*, in order to highlight what distinguishes the *ZFCJ* in terms of purpose, structure, and readership. Third, it situates the *ZFCJ* within the broader landscape of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature, thereby presenting its characteristics and contributions to the tradition.

Although philosophical inquiry is not the primary focus of this research, it is impossible to entirely set it aside in our analysis. Zhanran's hermeneutical approach is firmly rooted in the Tiantai philosophical system. Therefore, this study will engage

with philosophical ideas when they are relevant to our understanding of Zhanran's commentarial creation. Meanwhile, the study deliberately avoids examples that require too much doctrinal exposition, given the systematic and interdependent nature of the school's philosophical structure, where one concept often cannot be explained without referencing another, or even several others, making the discussion overly complicated and puzzling our readers.

In sum, this study aims to balance close textual analysis and commentarial studies to investigate how Zhanran made the *ZFCJ* both a successful hermeneutical project and a means of sectarian adherence.

Structure Overview

Chapter 1 sets the historical background of the creation of the *ZFCJ*. It first locates the commentary among Zhanran's other works to understand its particularity and to what extent it is representative of Zhanran's commentarial skill. It then moves on to capture Zhanran's life experiences, focusing on those experiences and broader historical factors that influenced or might have influenced the creation of *ZFCJ*. It then examines the preface and introduction of the *ZFCJ*, where Zhanran indicates the reasons for its creation, reconstructing Zhanran's understanding of this project from the emic perspective. From the etic perspective, the chapter combines the circumstances of his life with his own testimony to reach a conclusion about his commentarial principles and how those principles represent a thoughtful response to the realities of his time, which is one of the reasons why he earned his reputation.

Building on the background chapter, Chapters 2 and 3 move on to analyse how the commentarial approach in the *ZFCJ* addresses Zhanran's commentarial aims, not only by providing a clear explanation at surface-level and through doctrinal interpretation, but also by establishing a decisive and convincing commentary. Chapter 2 demonstrates that Zhanran's approach is enriched by a wide range of methods and rooted in Zhiyi's hermeneutics, which enables him to offer a comprehensive and compelling explanation of the *MHZG*. Chapter 3 focuses on his

distinctive commentarial method of using external sources. It reveals that the use of external sources not only helps to provide detailed explanations but also involves a skilful interplay of textual authority.

Chapter 4 considers Zhanran's adherence to the Tiantai tradition from two angles. First, it examines the relationship between his and Zhiyi's exegetical schemata. The second part turns to Zhanran's methodological reflection on Zhiyi's exegetical principles in his *Zhiguan yili*, which demonstrates both his deep grasp of Zhiyi's exegesis and his rare attempt to theorise the practice of exegesis itself. Zhanran's systematisation likewise reveals his profound consideration of the relationship between *wen* 文 (text) and *yi* 義(meaning). In addressing this relationship, his work directs attention to the larger issue of how commentarial literature functions to mediate them and thus invites reflection on the broader history of Chinese commentarial practice. In this way, Zhanran emerges not only as a faithful Tiantai commentator but also as a significant figure in the broader history of Chinese commentarial practice. Thus, the chapter builds on the discussions of the preceding chapters, while extending the scope to broader, yet still closely related, issues, thereby serving as the culminating synthesis of this study.

The conclusion reflects on the previous chapters, emphasising the connection between Zhanran's commentarial approach and his titles as a Tiantai patriarch and the school's 'Master of Commentary'. It also briefly reflects on the influence of the *ZFCJ* on subsequent generations. While this commentary has faced criticism, it remains the most important commentary on the *MHZG*, indicating its significance and Zhanran's success as a commentator. The conclusion also revisits the sub-commentary character of the *ZFCJ* from a different angle: the transformation of textual authority within Buddhist traditions and the crucial role of commentarial literature in this evolving landscape. This broader perspective is addressed only briefly here and requires further case studies for fuller understanding.

The Appendix presents a detailed list of the quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other kinds of references contained in the *ZFCJ*, thereby retrieving titles and content from Zhanran's scholarly library and serving as a source for further studies.

Chapter 1 The Creation of the *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*[1]

Known to history as the 6th or the 9th patriarch of the Tiantai School, Jingxi Zhanran was also given the title of the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary' 天台記主 (*Tiantai jizhu*). For example, in the *Fozu tongji*, Zhanran is referred to as 'The Ninth Patriarch, the Tiantai Master of Commentary, Jingxi, the Honourable One, the Great Chan Master of Perfect Comprehension' 九祖天台記主荊溪尊者圓通大禪師 (*Jiuzu Tiantai jizhu jingxi zunzhe yuantong da chanshi*).[2] The title 'Master of Commentary' is also found in the *Tiantai zhizhe dashi zhaiji lizan wen* 天台智者大師齋忌禮讚文 (A Ritual Eulogy for Master Zhiyi on His Memorial Day; T46, no. 1948).[3]

To understand why *jizhu* 記主 is translated as 'Master of Commentary' here, we first need to examine the meanings of *ji* 記 and *zhu* 主. The term *ji* 記 literally means 'note' or 'record' and can refer to various literary genres. In this context, however, *ji* is most likely to denote 'commentary'. This understanding is evidenced by Zhanran's explanation, in which he equates *ji* with *shu* 疏, a recognised term for the commentary genre, and more specifically, for sub-commentaries.

[1] Some of the research in this chapter, particularly in sections 'The *ZFCJ* in Zhanran's Oeuvre' and 'Output: The Aims of the *ZFCJ*' appear in a revised form as 'Why "Determine": The *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* in the Landscape of the Buddhist Commentarial' (in press). I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers and the editor for their valuable suggestions, which greatly improved the article and have also been helpful in revising this chapter. An earlier version of this chapter was presented as a conference paper at The Sixth Annual International Forum on Wutai Faith and Culture 'Canonical, Non-Canonical and Extra-Canonical: Interdisciplinary and Multi-media Studies of the Formation, Translation and Transmission of Buddhist Texts' (August 11–15, Mt. Wutai, PRC). I also appreciate the feedback from Dr Jannie Nicol and the insightful discussions with other participants.

[2] T49, no. 2035, p. 177c16. See footnote 6 in the Introduction.

[3] T46, no. 1948, p. 966b15. 'The Commentary Master of Tiantai, the Ninth Patriarch, Jingxi, the Honourable One.' 天台記主第九祖師荊谿尊者。

Shu (= commentary) means discourse that communicates meaning, which is also called *Ji* (lit. notes). It has the same pronunciation as *shu* 疎, meaning dredging, clarifying each point, or engraving.

疏者，通意之辭，亦記也。又疎音即疏通、疏條、疎鏤也。[4]

As for the meaning of *zhu* 主, only two figures in the Tiantai lineage listed in the *Fozu tongji* are given the title *zhu*: one of them is, as mentioned, Zhanran, the 'Master of Commentary'; the other is Nāgārjuna, who is given the title *lunzhu* 論主, which can be translated as the 'Master of Discourse'.[5] Nāgārjuna's discursive works, such as the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom, Skt. **Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*; T25, no. 1509) and the *Zhong lun* 中論 (Middle-treatise, Skt. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; T30, no. 1564),[6] to a large extent formed the doctrinal basis of the Tiantai tradition.[7] Considering Nāgārjuna's importance to the

[4] T34, no. 1719, p. 151a13–14.

[5] T49, no. 2035, p. 177c8. The full entry reads: 'The First Patriarch, the Fearless, the Master of Discourse, the Venerable Nāgārjuna, the Chan Master Who Realised Suchness' 高祖無畏論主龍樹尊者一相大禪師。

[6] The Sanskrit original of the *Da zhidu lun* is lost, along with its original title. It was translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413), and only its Chinese title remains. Its original title has been reconstructed by scholars as the **Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra* or Mahāprajñāpāramitōpadeśa. The *Da zhidu lun* was traditionally ascribed to Nāgārjuna, as his commentary on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, but some modern scholars, such as Étienne Lamotte, disagree with this attribution. For the most recent introduction to this debate, see Stefania Travagnin, 'Reception History and Limits of Interpretation: The Belgian Étienne Lamotte, Japanese Buddhologists, the Chinese Monk Yinshun 印順 and the Formation of a Global "Da Zhidu Lun 大智度論 Scholarship"', *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 1, no. 1 (1 June 2019): 255–58. While the question of attribution is worth bearing in mind, it is peripheral to this study. And since the central figures in this research, Zhiyi and Zhanran, believed the text was authored by Nāgārjuna, the attribution issue does not significantly affect the analysis presented here.

[7] The part called the *Sandi ji* 三谛偈 (Threefold Truths Verse) in the *Zhong lun* had a great influence on Zhiyi's thought. From this verse, Zhiyi developed the Threefold Truths theory 三諦 (*sandi*), which is one of the most fundamental theories in the Tiantai tradition. The Threefold Truths Verse is a part of a gāthā (verse) in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (T30, no. 1564, 33b11–13), which is translated by Paul. L.

Tiantai tradition, the fact that both Nāgārjuna and Zhanran were recognised as 'Masters' of a particular literary form can be read as a high evaluation of Zhanran's expertise in commentary, which is even comparable to Nāgārjuna's expertise in discursive works.

This study uses the *ZFCJ* as an example to explore what makes Zhanran the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'. Zhanran's principles for composing the *ZFCJ* represent a thoughtful response to the realities of his time, which is one of the reasons that he earned his reputation. In this chapter, we will first explore what kind of work the *ZFCJ* is and how Zhanran understood his commentary on the *MHZG*. We will answer these three questions: How does the *ZFCJ* fit with the rest of Zhanran's corpus? What was the historical background to its creation? What are Zhanran's assumptions about the role of his commentaries, and more specifically, the role of his *ZFCJ*?

The three questions will guide us as we seek a fuller understanding of the nature of the *ZFCJ*. The first part of this chapter addresses the first two questions from an etic perspective. It combines a critical examination of Zhanran's oeuvre, which helps situate the *ZFCJ* within it, with a discussion of Zhanran's life story and the circumstances under which the *ZFCJ* emerged. An analysis of the historical factors surrounding the creation of the *ZFCJ* also highlights the underlying 'inputs' that shaped its formation. This leads us to a question that has been identified by scholars but remains relatively underexplored – the content of the *ZFCJ* may not be solely Zhanran's endeavour but an accumulation of previous generations' understanding of

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Swanson in his *Foundations of T' ien-T' ai Philosophy: The Flowering of The Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 4. Swanson's translation is as follows:

> All things which arise through conditioned co-arising. I explain as emptiness. Again, it is a conventional designation. Again, it is the meaning of the Middle Path.
> 眾因緣生法，我說即是無，亦為是假名，亦是中道義。

Paul Swanson integrated various versions of the English translation for this verse and analysed Zhiyi's interpretation of the Threefold Truths. See *Foundations of T' ien-T' ai Philosophy*, 3–8.

the *MHZG*. I will provide more evidence in this chapter to support this argument. However, not being 'original' does not lessen Zhanran's significance. On the contrary, it highlights the importance of his skills as a commentator in curating the existing materials.

The second part of this chapter will be a discussion on the third question raised above, focusing on Zhanran's perception of his commentarial creation as well as the purpose of creating the *ZFCJ*. It supplements my observation with Zhanran's perspective on his commentarial career and the aims of the *ZFCJ*. More specifically, it discusses the opening of the *ZFCJ*, where Zhanran declares the importance of the *ZFCJ* as a decisive guide to understanding the *MHZG* and other purposes of creating the *ZFCJ*. In other words, the opening of the *ZFCJ* also reflects Zhanran's response to the aforementioned underlying 'inputs', which can be understood as the 'outputs' generated through his engagement with those historical factors. Some aspects of Zhanran's account in the opening of the *ZFCJ* corroborate our previous observations and further enrich our understanding of his underlying assumptions.

The *ZFCJ* in Zhanran's Oeuvre

This section will draw on research by Hibi Senshō and Chi Limei, who reconstructed Zhanran's oeuvre relying on premodern sources, including biographies and other text catalogues. This study does not seek to correct or challenge the historical reconstructions of earlier research. Instead, its contribution lies in a reorganisation of Zhanran's literary corpus. We will sort Zhanran's oeuvre in two ways to situate the *ZFCJ* within it. The first is to sort it by the genre of each work to show that most of Zhanran's writing is commentary; the second is to categorise it by the theme of each work, which highlights the importance of the *ZFCJ* in Zhanran's theoretical framework.

Hibi was the first to undertake a study of Zhanran's complete oeuvre, providing a valuable reference for the present research. He established the dates of the works and grouped them into four chronological phases and also identified those

that cannot be dated due to the limited availability of sources, along with those that are traditionally attributed to Zhanran but whose authorship remains open to question.[8] His approach offers a clearer chronological framework that can inform and support future studies. However, due to his unawareness of the Yuan Chao Rebellion 袁晁之亂 (762–763), some of Hibi's estimates for the works' completion dates were problematic, including the completion date of the *ZFCJ*, which was later corrected in Chi Limei's study.

According to Chi Limei's research, Zhanran created 32 works during his lifetime, 21 of which are extant.[9] We will first categorise them based on their genres as commentary or treatise, including those lost works, whose genre can be inferred from their titles. We will then sort Zhanran's oeuvre thematically, which was inspired by Chi's categorisation of Zhanran's works by themes of cessation-and-contemplation, the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the *Nirvāna Sūtra*, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and ritual manuals. The present study, however, does not fully adopt Chi's categorisation. Instead, it proceeds from two broader divisions, 'doctrinal' and 'practice'. The 'doctrinal' category is then subdivided by five themes: the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the *Nirvāna Sūtra*, and the Buddha-nature. The delineation and the interrelation between the 'doctrine' and the 'practice' will be discussed in greater detail later. By drawing attention to a distinction between works that focus on practice and those that focus on doctrine, this categorisation better serves the discussion of the nature of *ZFCJ*.

Categorise Zhanran's Oeuvre by Formats

As shown in the following three tables, Zhanran's works can be divided by genre: (1) commentaries, (2) treatises, and (3) other genres, including a polemical essay and ritual manuals.[10] Entries shaded in grey indicate that works are no longer extant.

[8] Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku josetsu*.

[9] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 31.

[10] In this study, treatises and commentaries are collectively categorised as 'commentarial literature',

Table 1 Commentaries

No.	English Translation of the Title	Chinese Title (*Pinyin*)	Base Text
1.	*A Determination on the 'Great Cessation and Contemplation' to Support Practice and for Propagation*	止觀輔行傳弘決 *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*	*Great Cessation and Contemplation* *Mohe zhiguan* by Zhiyi 摩訶止觀
2.	*Interpretations and Precedents of the 'Great Cessation and Contemplation'*	止觀義例 *Zhiguan yili*	
3.	*General Meanings of the 'Great Cessation and Contemplation'*	止觀大意 *Zhiguan dayi*	
4.	*Collective Notes on the Essentials of 'A Determination on the Mohe zhiguan to Support Practice and for Propagation'*	止觀輔行搜要記 *Zhiguan fuxing souyaoji*	
5.	*Words and Phrases of the 'Great Cessation and Contemplation'*	摩訶止觀文句 *Mohe zhiguan wenju*	
6.	*Segmental Analysis of the 'Great Cessation and Contemplation'*	摩訶止觀科文 *Mohe zhiguan kewen*	
7.	*Major Segmental Analysis of the 'Great*	摩訶止觀大科文 *Mohe zhiguan da kewen*	

because they are commentarial in nature, centring on either a base text or a theme.

	Cessation and Contemplation'		
8.	*Explanatory Notes on the 'Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra'*	法華玄義釋籤 *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*	*Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra* by Zhiyi *Fahua xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義
9.	*The Ten Gates of Non-duality*	十不二門 *Shi bu'er men* (a section of the *Shiqian*)	
10.	*Segmental Analysis of Tiantai's 'Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra'*	天台法華玄義科文 *Tiantai Fahua xuanyi kewen*	
11.	*Notes on the 'Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra'*	法華文句記 *Fahua wenju ji*	*Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra* *Fahua wenju* by Zhiyi 妙法蓮華經文句
12.	*Segmental Analysis of the 'Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra'*	妙法蓮華經文句科文 *Miaofa lianhua jing wenju kewen*	
13.	*Supplementary Ritual for the Visualisation Practices of the Lotus Samādhi*	法華三昧行事運想補助儀 *Fahua sanmei xingshi yunxiang buzhuyi*	*Fahua sanmei chanyi* by Zhiyi 法華三昧懺儀
14.	*Abridged Redaction of Zhiyi's Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*	維摩經略疏 *Weimo jing lüe shu*	*Commentary on the Text of the Vimalakīrti Sūtra* by Zhiyi *Weimo jing wenshu* 維摩經文疏
15.	*Notes on Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*	維摩經疏記 *Weimo jing shu ji*	
16.	*Notes on the Extended Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*	淨名廣疏記 *Jingming guang shu ji*	
17.	*Words and Prashes of*	覺意三昧文句	*Explanation on*

	the 'Explanation on Consciously Enlightening Samādhi in the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra'	*Jueyi sanmei wenju*	*Consciously Enlightening Samādhi in the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* by Zhiyi *Shi mohe bore boluomiduo jing jueyi sanmei* 釋摩訶般若波羅蜜經覺意三昧
18.	*General Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra* [11]	法華經大意 *Fahuajing dayi*	The *Lotus Sūtra* 法華經
19.	*Script of Clarifying the Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra*	顯法華義抄 *Xian fahua yi chao*	
20.	*Segmental Analysis of the 'Chapter on Avalokiteśvara' of the Lotus Sūtra*	法華觀音品科文 *Fahua guanyin pin kewen*	
21.	*Outline of the Contemplative Gate of Vows and Practices in the Avataṃsaka Sūtra*	大方廣佛華嚴經願行觀門骨目 *Da fangguangfo Huayan jing yuanxing guanmen gumu*	The Avatamsaka Sūtra (80 volumes edition) 華嚴經
22.	*Commentary on the Later Section of the Nirvāṇa Sūtra*	涅槃後分疏 *Niepan houfen shu*	The *Nirvāna Sūtra* 涅槃經
23.	*Segmental Analysis of the Later Section of the*	涅槃後分科文 *Niepan houfen kewe*	

[11] There is scholarly debate over whether this work was authored by Zhanran.

	Nirvāṇa Sūtra		
24.	*Collected Commentary on the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*	大般涅槃經會疏 *Da bo niepan jing hui shu*	Guangding's commentary on the *Nirvana Sūtra* 灌頂《涅槃經》注

From the table above, we can tell that twenty-four of Zhanran's writings are commentaries in various formats. I will use the term 'commentarial format' to signify a concept distinct from 'genre'. There is a reason why I deliberately use the term 'format' rather than relying on the existing term 'genre' to refer to the general features of a commentarial literature. While commentarial literature can indeed be classified under recognisable genre labels such as commentary, annotation, and treatise, works of commentarial literature that fall under one genre label, such as commentary, can nonetheless differ significantly in aim, structure and method. Thus, 'format' allows for a more flexible and precise approach to describing these internal variations.

Given the relatively complex development of commentarial literature (including both commentaries and treatises) in Chinese Buddhism and the inconsistency in the terminology signifying their format in their titles, I have applied the criteria that I summarise below to indicate the general distinctions, and I will discuss in detail the differences in format among these twenty-four works.

The recognisable features of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature can be sorted by four criteria:

1. By Doctrinal Divergence: Mahayana or (C2) 'Hinayana' (=Early Buddhism).[12]
2. By Subject: Whether its explanation is text-based or concept-focused.

[12] The use of the term 'Hinayana' here is to indicate that this is how the Mahayana Buddhists labelled the early Buddhist groups. It is not an endorsement of the term, with its potential pejorative implications. In the academic context, it is more accurate and respectful to refer to these early Buddhist traditions by their individual names or collectively as 'Early Buddhism'.

Concept-focused commentarial literature refers to 'treatises'.[13]

3. By Structure: Whether it follows the structure of the base text, namely interprets the base text in a word-by-word/sentence-by-sentence form or has an independent outline.

4. By Approach: (D1) Philological or (D2) philosophical.

As regards the first criterion, doctrinal divergence, the twenty-four commentaries in Zhanran's oeuvre all belong to the Mahayana tradition.

As for the second criterion, their explanation is text-based on various works by Zhiyi, along with sūtras and Guanding's commentary. The treatises are listed below in Table 2. There are also commentaries that rely on multiple base texts, but this is not the case for the commentaries written by Zhanran – all of them are based solely on one text.

The third criterion of structure is where the main differences emerge; it is the area with the greatest number of variations and, consequently, the most difficult to explain clearly. Depending on their different approaches to the base texts, Zhanran's commentaries can be further divided into four categories:

(1) The *ZFCJ*, *the Fahua xuanyi shiqian* (and the *Shi bu'er men*, originally constituting a chapter of the *Shiqian*), those commentaries in *ji* 記 (note; record) format (the *Souyao ji,* the *Fahua wenju ji*, *Weimojing shu ji*, *Jingming guang shu ji*),

[13] The treatises may focus on a single concept, as in the *Sijiao yi* 四教義 (The Meaning of the Four Teachings; T46, no.1929) by Zhiyi, and the *Erzhang yi* 二障義 (The Meaning of the Two Hindrances; B32, no. 187) by Wŏnhyo (617–686 CE). Treatises can also integrate a series of concepts and discuss them, a format known as *yizhang*, such as the *Dacheng yizhang* 大乘義章 (Compilation of the Meanings in Mahayana Buddhism; T44, no. 1851), which gives examples of the conceptual categories discussed in Mahayana Buddhism. The term *lun* 論 was used more specifically for treatises, such as the *Shamen bu jing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論 (Treatise on Monks not Paying Homage to the Ruler; collected in *Hong ming ji* 弘明集, T52, no. 2102) by Lushan Huiyuan 廬山慧遠 (334–416), a renowned treatise which argues that Buddhist norms should not be determined by the political authorities. There are also terms such as *Yi* 義 (meaning), *yiji* 義記 (commentarial notes), *xuanlun* 玄論 (profound treatise) and *yizhang* 義章 (compendium), but they were used interchangeably in the titles of treatises and commentaries.

those in *wenju* 文句 (words and phrases) format (*Mohe zhiguan wenju* and the *Jueyi sanmei wenju*), and those in *shu* 疏 format *(Niepan houfen shu* and *Da bo niepan jing hui shu*), are all line-by-line commentaries that weave glosses into the base text, namely annotations.

(2) The *Fahuajing dayi*, *Weimo jing lüe shu*, and the *Da fangguangfo Huayan jing yuanxing guanmen gumu* follow the structure of their base texts, but provide summaries of their content by sections, and thus are different from annotations. Among them, the *Weimo jing lüe shu* first outlines the aspects to be addressed when explicating each chapter, employing a method of 'segmental analysis' in its commentary. This method of segmental analysis is called *kepan* 科判 in Chinese Buddhist exegesis.

Kepan is also called *kefen* 科分, *kewen* 科文, *keduan* 科段, but in actual usage *kepan* and *kewen* have differences. While *kepan* can usually be applied not only to segmented texts but also indicates an exegetical tool for segmenting various kinds of works, *kewen*, or an abbreviation *ke*, is used in the title to refer to a particular textual format of a standalone text. As shown in Table 1, some of Zhanran's commentaries are written in the *kewen* format, which forms another category.

(3) There are six *kewen* commentaries: *Mohe zhiguan kewen*, *Mohe zhiguan da kewen*, *Tiantai Fahua xuanyi kewen*, *Miaofa lianhua jing wenju kewen*, *Fahua guanyin pin kewen* and *Niepan houfen kewen*.

(4) In contrast to the commentaries discussed above, which closely follow the structure of their base texts, the *Zhiguan yi*, the *Zhiguan dayi*, and the *Fahua sanmei xingshi yunxiang buzhuyi*, though drawing on the content of their base texts, are organised according to an independent structure rather than mirroring the layout of their base texts.

Twenty-three out of the twenty-four commentaries are in one or other of the above four formats. This includes texts that are no longer extant, such as the *Jingming guang shu ji*, the *Jueyi sanmei wenju,* the *Fahua guanyin pin kewen*, the *Niepan houfen shu*, and the *Niepan houfen kewen*, whose formats have been

inferred from their titles. The specific format of the remaining lost text, namely the *Xian fahua yi chao*, is difficult to deduce from its title, and is therefore not included in any of the four categories of format.

As regards the fourth criterion, whether a commentary's approach is philosophical or philological, the two approaches are not necessarily exclusive to each other. This is also related to the third criterion, structure. Commentaries that follow the structure of the base texts usually engage with philological explanations but can also involve philosophical explanations. A lot of Zhanran's commentaries, including the *ZFCJ*, the *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*, and the *Fahua wenju ji* are this kind of commentary. There are also commentaries that focus more on the theoretical and philosophical perspectives without engaging with many philological explanations, such as the *Zhiguan yili*.

Another important observation that can be made about this table is that seventeen of these twenty-four commentaries are based on Zhiyi's works. This pattern demonstrates Zhanran's clear devotion to Zhiyi and his adherence to the Tiantai School, whose foundation was laid by Zhiyi's writings. However, it becomes particularly intriguing when we recognise that Zhiyi's works are themselves commentaries. Thus, Zhanran's writings based on them take on the character of sub-commentaries.

This observation is significant for two reasons. First, the elevation of a Chinese author's commentary (such as Zhiyi's) to the status of a foundational text represents a development in the commentarial tradition that emerged during the Tang dynasty.[14] Secondly, both Zhanran's case and this broader Tang phenomenon point to a transformation in Chinese Buddhists' understanding of what constituted an authoritative text.

Chinese Buddhist commentarial practice initially developed alongside the translation of Indian scriptures, with commentaries serving primarily to elucidate foreign texts. From its first arrival in China until Zhanran's time, Buddhism had

[14] Li, 'Genres of Buddhist Commentarial Literature in Medieval China', 73.

undergone a period of extensive translations and localised interpretation. Rich translations of Indian Buddhist scriptures were accessible. The commentarial literature produced by Indian Buddhist scholars, however, was distinguished from texts attributed directly to the teaching of the Buddha and monastic regulations, although some of these commentaries, especially those by prominent Indian Buddhist authorities, were granted canonical status.[15] The Buddhists in premodern China even referred to Indian Buddhist commentarial literature as *jing* 經 (scripture or *sūtra*),[16] which indicated that they had a canonical status. Meanwhile, Chinese Buddhists also started to gain a reputation as new authorities.

The earliest Chinese Buddhist commentary took the form of what Kanno terms 'interlinear commentaries' 註 (*zhu*).[17] Interlinear commentaries reproduce the base text in its entirety and insert comments adjacent to corresponding passages.[18]

[15] Indian Buddhist commentarial literature received higher recognition than Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature, for example, see Silong Li 李四龙, '"Yi lun shu" yu zhonggu fojiao jiejing wenxian leixing' "义论疏"与中古佛教解经文献类型, *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 59, no. 3 (20 May 2022): 30. This article is the Chinese version of Li, 'Genres of Buddhist Commentarial Literature in Medieval China'. The two are basically the same in content, but also have some subtle differences. Unless there is a difference, I always cite from the English version.

[16] Li, 'Genres of Buddhist Commentarial Literature in Medieval China', 67. The term *jing* 經 was used to denote 'scripture' or 'classic' in the Chinese tradition before the introduction of Buddhism into China. When Buddhist texts were translated, this term was primarily adopted to render the Sanskrit *sūtra* (discourses), which forms one of the three collections of the Buddhist canon, *tripiṭaka* ('three basket', including *sūtra-piṭaka*, *vinaya-piṭaka*, 'the basket of monastic discipline' and *abhidharma-piṭaka*, 'the basket of higher teachings'). As noted in the main text, however, not all works labelled *jing* in Chinese translations correspond to *sūtras*; certain *abhidharma* and *upadeśa* texts were also designated as *jing*. Later, *abhidharma*, *upadeśa* and other Indian Buddhist commentarial texts came to be more consistently rendered as *lun* 論 (treatises). For research on this phenomenon, see also Shengkai 圣凯, 'Beichao fojiao dilun xuepai "bian shu wei lun" xianxiang tanxi' 北朝佛教地论学派"变疏为论"现象探析, *History of Chinese Philosophy* no. 3 (2015): 15–24+55.

[17] Hiroshi Kanno and Rafal Felbur, 'Sūtra Commentaries in Chinese until the Tang Period', in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism. Volume One*, ed. Jonathan Silk, Oskar von Hinüber, and Vincent Eltschinger, Volume One Literature and Languages (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 450.

[18] Kanno, 'Chinese Buddhist Sutra Commentaries of the Early Period', 302.

Dao'an's 道安 (312/314–385 CE) commentary on the *Renben yu sheng jing* 人本欲生經 (Commentary on the Sūtra on Human Origin and Rebirth through Desire; T33, no. 1693), which is one of the earliest Buddhist interlinear commentaries, incorporates the full text of the sūtra, dividing it into sections and providing an explanation for each.[19] The 'interlinear' format was suitable for shorter scriptures but became impractical for newly translated, lengthy scriptures, along with the growing body of accumulated comments on them. [20] This pragmatic concern was one reason for the transition from the 'interlinear' style to the 'expository' style 義疏 (*yishu*).[21] Expository commentaries incorporate their base texts selectively by excerpting and summarising key passages, which are then accompanied by explanation.

A more important reason for this transition, however, may lie in a broader philosophical transformation, which is the growing emphasis on the deeper, thematic meanings of texts that are discussed in expository commentaries, in contrast to the relatively superficial textual or philological concerns that dominated interlinear commentaries.[22]

In the Tang Dynasty, as Li argues, the holistic commentarial works, namely treatises and expository commentaries, yielded to the dependent form of annotations, and eventually the two commentarial forms combined together as a

[19] Dao'an is a monk-exegete and a pioneer of Buddhism during the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420), and a student of the famous Kuchean monk Fotu Cheng (ca. 232–348). He is particularly noted for his influential catalogue of scriptures and for pioneering the tripartite exegetical technique of *kepan*, which remains a standard in East Asian exegesis. Additionally, prior to the full translation of the Indian vinaya, Dao'an codified early monastic regulations and established the tradition of monastics adopting the surname *Shi* 釋 (a transcription of the Buddha's clan name *Śākya*) to signify their spiritual lineage.

[20] Kanno, 'Chinese Buddhist Sutra Commentaries of the Early Period', 302–3.

[21] Kanno, 'Chinese Buddhist Sutra Commentaries of the Early Period', 302–3. As suggested by Kanno, an example of the interlinear commentaries is the *Yin chi ru jing zhu* 陰持入經註 (Commentary on the *Sūtra on the Aggregates, Realms, and Fields*; T33, no. 1694); examples for expository commentaries include Jizang's 吉藏 (549–623) *Fahua yi shu* 法華義疏 (Annotation of the Meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra*; T34, no. 1721), Guanding's 灌頂 (561–632) *Da bo niepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏 (Annotations of the *Nirvana Sūtra*; T38, no. 1767), and Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju* 法華文句.

[22] Ibid., 303.

new category called *zhangshu* 章疏, signifying the decline of independent argumentation and a shift of a focus from Indian Buddhist scriptures to the works of Chinese Buddhist schools, including the Tiantai School.[23] The difference between the two types of commentarial literature was not only in form, but also in content: commentaries with base texts focus more on philological interpretations and the compilation of *jijie*, meaning 'collected explanations', while the treatises and expository commentaries tend to delve more into philosophical aspects. This shift of focus, Li suggests, meant that innovative creativity in Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature became less.[24]

Li's generalisation is reasonable. It is insightful to clarify this shift in Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition, which also applies to Zhanran's commentarial creation. But it is worth pointing out that the two shifts are interrelated, as the commentators focused more on interpreting the existing texts created by Chinese Buddhist masters. Philosophical exploration was still evident but was more dependent on those existing Chinese Buddhist texts.

The development of commentarial forms demonstrates the exegetes' ideas about what was worth interpreting and which types of interpretations were more important. At the same time, this commentarial practice made the commentarial tradition cumulative, with layers of interpretation continuously built upon one another.

This phenomenon is not unique to the Buddhist tradition; it resonates with broader patterns in classical Chinese exegetical culture. Traditional Chinese commentarial genres, which began to take shape during the Han dynasty, initially included forms such as *zhuan* 傳, meaning the 'transmission' of classics.[25] This was followed by the *zhangju* 章句 (chapter and sentence) form, which however, came to be criticised and eventually rejected by some Later Han scholars.[26] In its place, new

[23] Li, 'Genres of Buddhist Commentarial Literature in Medieval China', 72–3.

[24] Ibid., 72.

[25] Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, 32.

[26] Ibid., 34–5.

formats such as *yi* 義 (meaning) came into use.[27] Some of these forms were passed down and carried on in later generations, while new genres continued to emerge. By the time of the Tang dynasty, due to the time gap, the commentaries created before had became difficult to fathom. This was when *shu* 疏 (clarification) emerged to assist the understanding of *zhu* as well as their base texts in the classics. In other words, *shu* has a sub-commentary nature. At that time, a convention was obeyed that '*shu* must not refute *zhu*' (*shu bu po zhu* 疏不破註), although this was later adhered to less strictly. The *shu* format bears a close relationship to the structure and method of the *ZFCJ*. This connection will be further explored in the following discussion.

Crucially, this cumulative structure also signals a transformation in the notion of textual authority: over time, commentaries themselves—especially those by influential native figures like Zhiyi—came to be treated as authoritative base texts in their own right. This invites a further question concerning Zhanran's attitude toward the authority of the *MHZG*. Does his treatment of the text indicate his belief in the textual supremacy of the *MHZG*? The principle of not refuting its root text is also applicable to the *ZFCJ.* The *ZFCJ* treats the *MHZG* as an authoritative text and refrains from any criticism, except in cases of editorial corrections. This point will become even more evident in our examination of Zhanran's commentarial aims in the following section.

At this stage, however, one further question must be considered: what gave a text its authority in the Chinese Buddhist context? As we have seen, the layering of commentaries and the elevation of certain exegetical works to foundational status reflect not only the development of commentarial formats but also shifting conceptions of textual authority. One important mechanism lies in the perceived connection between a given text and the Buddha himself. In other words, a text gains its authority to the extent that it can be linked textually, doctrinally, or hermeneutically to the Buddha's teaching. This framework helps us understand why

[27] Ibid., 35–6.

certain commentaries, especially those embedded within established exegetical lineages like Tiantai, could gradually come to be treated as quasi-canonical or authoritative in their own right. Zhiyi's 'Three Major Works of the Tiantai', for instance, functioned not merely as dependent aids for understanding the *Lotus Sūtra*, but as autonomous foundations for the Tiantai doctrinal system. They were treated as self-validating benchmarks for Buddhist truth within the Tiantai tradition. Nevertheless, they maintained a calculated distance from the primary canonical scriptures. After all, no Tiantai monk would claim Zhiyi's words *are* the Buddha's words. These works do not displace the sūtras but rather complete them; they are, therefore, 'quasi-canonical'.

Recognising this mechanism is crucial for understanding Zhanran's commentarial expertise, because such a link to the Buddhist truth is not inherent. It must be actively constructed through exegetical labour. Zhanran constructs this link to the Buddha's own voice by interpreting the *MHZG* through Tiantai doctrinal logic and incorporating other authoritative texts into his exegetical framework. This intertextual approach not only expands the discursive reach of his commentary but also strengthens its claim to authoritative status within the broader Buddhist textual tradition. The next two chapters will show how Zhanran constructs interpretations that are both clear and convincing to his readers.

It is also worth noting that Zhanran produced multiple commentaries on the same base text. He created both *kewen* commentaries and annotations on the *MHZG*, *Fahua xuanyi* and *Fahua wenju* to illustrate the outline and the content of these base texts, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of them. It was not unusual for a commentator to create separate commentaries in different formats on the same base text. For example, Zhiyi created two commentaries based on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* and the *Miaofa lianhua jing wenju*. The former has an independent structure, and the latter follows the outline of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Zhanran's similar commentarial practice can thus be seen as a reflection of a convention of the time, but has a meaning more than that, as it is also a demonstration of Zhanran's mastery of multiple commentarial formats and his clear

awareness of how to engage different audiences through adjustments in form. Among these, his work on the *MHZG* is of particular importance because, for this base text, Zhanran produced more commentaries in different formats than for any of the other texts he worked on. Zhanran's four commentaries on the *MHZG* address different explanatory dimensions and/or were aimed at different readerships.

Of the four commentaries on the *MHZG*, the *ZFCJ* is the most central, the longest, and perhaps the most painstaking. It took Zhanran at least ten years to complete.[28] Here we will elaborate on the four different roles of Zhanran's commentaries on the *MHZG*. A comparison of the *ZFCJ* with his three other auxiliary commentarial works on the *MHZG* will bring out some of the distinctive characteristics of the *ZFCJ*.

First, the *Zhiguan fuxing souyao ji* 止觀輔行搜要記 (X55, no. 919), as indicated by its title 'souyao ji', meaning 'a commentary that gathers the key points' of the *ZFCJ*, is an abridged version of the *ZFCJ* with occasional re-editions. In the opening of the *Souyaoji*, Zharan gives ten reasons for creating it, indicating that it was intended as a more accessible summary to respond to requests from students of the *ZFCJ*, especially from those with an inferior learning capacity, known as *xia gen* 下根 (inferior root). He claimed this was imitating the Buddha's instruction mode of using the expedient way that accords with the learners' learning capacities.[29]

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[28] The duration of Zhanran's composition of the *ZFCJ* will be further addressed in the section below, 'A Sketch of Zhanran's Life and the Creation of the *ZFCJ*'. Basically, the drafting of the *ZFCJ* began in 755 (X27, no. 584, p. 835a4) and was completed no later than 765 (T46, no. 1912, p. 141b6–7).

[29] X55, no. 919, p. 742a20–23. 'The reasons [for creating this work] are ten: to benefit those of superior learning capacity; to benefit those of inferior learning capacity; to provide an abridged version for those who prefer conciseness; to support the practicing of the Dharma; to reach a wide audience from the superior to the inferior capacities of learning; to imitate the mode of the Buddha's sacred instruction; to facilitate convenient reference for learners; to attend to the needs of learners; and to extend [the Buddha's teaching even] to the group with inferior capacity.' 因緣有十。為上根故，為下根故，為好略故，為法行故，為方上逗下眾故，効聖化故，易尋討故，順求者故，遍下種故。

Second, the *Zhiguan dayi* 止觀大意 (T46, no. 1914) is not grounded in the *ZFCJ* , unlike the *Souyao ji*. The two are also different in format: while the *Souyao ji* is written in the format of annotation, the *Zhiguan dayi* is a treatise with an independent structure. It is the shortest of the three and was written for a lay follower, Li Hua 李華 (717–774), a government official. It adopts a concise, introductory approach designed for educated non-specialist readers.

Third, the *Zhiguan yili* 止觀義例 (T46, no. 1913) is also a treatise and does not depend on the *ZFCJ*. Compared with the *Zhiguan dayi*, the *Zhiguan yili* has a different focus, demonstrating a highly systematic side to Zhanran's reflection on Zhiyi's doctrinal and exegetical principles. In seven parts, it summarises the principles for understanding the doctrines discussed in the *MHZG* as well as how they were delivered by Zhiyi, emphasising the mutual importance of content and exegetical methods to establish a correct understanding. Its summary of Zhiyi's exegetical principles allows for a comparative examination of whether Zhanran himself adhered to these principles in his own commentarial practice.

What makes the *ZFCJ* distinct from these three commentaries on the *MHZG*? We can already tell that it is more comprehensive than the *Souyao ji*, which is an abridgement of it; and it is an annotation following the outline of the *MHZG*, unlike the *Zhiguan dayi and Zhiguan yili*, both of which have independently developed structures. Compared with Zhanran's other commentaries, the format of the *ZFCJ* is not immediately evident from the final word of its title, which typically signals a work's genre and format. In the 'Sources and Methodology' section of the introduction, it is clear that the *ZFCJ* is an annotation consisting of five basic parts, including a foreword written by Zhanran's disciple Pumenzi, two introductory parts, the body of the text, and a summary. These are features that we can readily observe. However, for the author Zhanran, the *ZFCJ* was not merely annotations. He intended to distinguish it from the other annotations by employing the term *jue* in its title. As will be discussed below, this final word *jue* in the title of the *ZFCJ* was deliberately chosen to highlight its decisive role among the other interpretations of the *MHZG*.

The four commentaries also have different target groups of readers: the

Souyao ji meets the needs of less competent students of the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ*; the *Zhiguan dayi* is more accessible for the educated non-specialist reader. And the *Zhiguan yili*, though this is not indicated, is presumably for advanced readers, as it is written in a way that requires a sophisticated background knowledge of Tiantai doctrines with highly theoretical features. In practice, the four commentaries seem to imply a certain pedagogical progression, even if not a fixed or formally prescribed one. A reader might begin with the *Souyao ji* and then move on to the *ZFCJ*, while later study could further be supplemented by the *Zhiguan yili*. Later commentators on the latter indeed noted that a full understanding of the *Mohe zhiguan* required engagement with both the *ZFCJ* and the *Zhiguan yili*. At the same time, these categories of readership were probably not rigidly separated: non-specialist readers, including lay readers, may also have consulted the more advanced commentaries. The differentiation among the four works thus appears to reflect not a strict division of audiences, but a flexible pedagogical design that enabled readers to pursue increasingly comprehensive understanding.

What then was Zhanran's target audience for the *ZFCJ*, and what role does this work play in relation to the other three commentaries? This requires further examination, which will be conducted in the next section.

Apart from commentaries, Zhanran also created works in other genres, but these constitute only a relatively small portion of his oeuvre. These include treatises, ritual manuals, and a polemical essay.

Table 2 Treatises

No.	English Translation of the Title	Chinese Title (*Pinyin*)
1.	*The Adamantine Scalpel*	金刚錍 *Jin'gang pi*
2.	*Essentials for the Mind from Initiation to Fulfilment of the Perfect Teaching*	始終心要 *Shizhong xinyao*

3.	*Notes on the Method of Contemplating the Mind for Sūtra Recitation*	觀心誦經法記 *Guanxin songjing fa ji*

Table 3 Other Genres

No.	English Translation of the Title	Chinese Title (*Pinyin*)	Genres
1.	*Ritual for Conferring the Bodhisattva Precept*	授菩薩戒儀 *Shou pusa jie yi*	Ritual manual
2.	*Ritual for Aiding the Fangdeng Repentance*	方等懺補助儀 *Fangdeng chan buzhu yi*	Ritual manual
3.	*Ritual for Aiding the Contemplation of the Mind*	觀心補助儀 *Guanxin buzhu yi*	Ritual manual
4.	*Ritual for Inviting the Forty-two Worthies and Sages from the West*	請四十二西賢聖儀 *Qing sishier xian sheng yi*	Ritual manual
5.	*Treatise on Five Hundred Questions on the 'Lotus Sūtra'*	法華五百問論 *Fahua jing wubai wen lun*	A polemical essay against Kuiji's 窺基 *Glorification of the Profound 'Lotus Sūtra'* 法華玄贊 (*Fahua xuanza*)

The above discussion represents the results of classification based on format. We now turn to a thematic classification, as this perspective makes it possible to trace how the themes articulated in the *ZFCJ* are deeply embedded within the theoretical scheme of the Tiantai tradition that Zhanran follows, and, more significantly, how his treatment of these themes reflects his own interpretation of the tradition's conceptual priorities and demonstrates the role he envisions for the

ZFCJ within the larger architecture of his oeuvre.

Categorising Zhanran's Oeuvre by Themes

The tables below classify Zhanran's works according to two major thematic categories: 'doctrine' and 'practice'. These two themes reflect one of the most important doctrinal propositions in Tiantai: the mutual interdependence of philosophical insight and actual meditation. This principle is variously expressed within the Tiantai tradition: more objectively, as 'doctrine' 教 (*jiao*) and 'contemplation' 觀 (*guan*), respectively referring to the Buddha's own teachings and to the 'threefold contemplation in a single thought' 一心三觀 (*yixin san'guan*), the meditative scheme of the Tiantai tradition; and, from the practitioner's perspective, as 'understanding' 解 (*jie*) and 'practice' 行 (*xing*), indicating the insight to be gained and the practices to be undertaken. In Tiantai, the two categories are not in total opposition, but instead, are complementary and should be balanced to achieve the ultimate goal of liberation. Their mutuality is not only established in theory, but also, as evidenced by the presence of the two themes in both Zhanran's and Zhiyi's works, embodied in the fact that even the works that emphasise 'practice' still incorporate the 'doctrine', suggesting that the two are not mutually exclusive. The difference only lies in which aspect is given greater emphasis in the work.

This thematic feature found in Zhanran's oeuvre is likely a continuation or reflection of Zhiyi's influence. The relevance and mutuality of the two themes are also addressed in Zhiyi's works. For example, Zhiyi's *MHZG* addresses more the practical side, while his *Fahua xuanyi* focuses more on the doctrinal side. As noted earlier, since Zhanran primarily focused on interpreting Zhiyi's works, his commentaries naturally shared thematic features with Zhiyi's works.

Apart from the 'doctrine' and 'practice' themes that are more expository, there are also ritual works with liturgical themes such as the ordination guidance of *Shou pusajie yi* 授菩薩戒儀 (Ritual for Conferring the Bodhisattva Precept; X59, no. 1086).

The works with a 'doctrinal' theme rely on different scriptures, such as the *Lotus Sūtra*, or theoretical themes, such as the theory of Buddha-nature.

Table 4 Zhanran's Works on the Doctrinal Dimension

No.	*Title in Pinyin*	Chinese Title	Theme
1.	*Fahua xuanyi shiqian*	法華玄義釋籤	On the *Lotus Sūtra*
2.	*Shi bu'er men*	十不二門	
3.	*Fahua wenju ji*	法華文句記	
4.	*Fahua jing wubai wen lun*	法華五百問論	
5.	*Fahua jing dayi*	法華經大意	
6.	*Xian fahua yi chao*	顯法華義抄	
7.	*Tiantai Fahua xuanyi kewen*	天台法華玄義科文	
8.	*Fahua guanyin pin kewen*	法華觀音品科文	
9.	*Miaofa lianhua jing wenju kewen*	妙法蓮華經文句科文	
10.	*Da fangguang fo huayanjing yuanxing guanmen gumu*	大方廣佛華嚴經願行觀門骨目	On the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra Sūtra*
11.	*Weimojing lüe shu*	維摩經略疏	On the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*
12.	*Weimojing shu ji*	維摩經疏記	
13.	*Jingming guang shu ji*	淨名廣疏記	
14.	*Da bo niepan jing huishu*	大般涅槃經會疏	On the *Nirvāna Sūtra*
15.	*Niepan houfen shu*	涅槃後分疏	
16.	*Niepan houfen kewen*	涅槃後分科文	
17.	*Jingang pi*	金剛錍	On the Buddha-nature

As reflected in the table, the *Lotus Sūtra* holds a significant thematic

importance, comprising a large part of Zhanran's works. This is not surprising considering its significance as the foundational scripture of the Tiantai tradition that underpins its doctrines, which is valued as the supreme *sūtra* among all the others, that tells the ultimate truth. This, again, demonstrates Zhanran's adherence to the tradition.

The following works fall under the theme of 'practice':

Table 5 Zhanran's Works on the Practical Dimension

No.	*Title in Pinyin*	Chinese Title	Theme
1.	*Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*	止觀輔行傳弘決	On Practice
2.	*Zhiguan yili*	止觀義例	
3.	*Zhiguan dayi*	止觀大意	
4.	*Zhiguan fuxing souyao ji*	止觀輔行搜要記	
5.	*Shizhong xinyao*	始終心要	
6.	*Guanxin songjing fa ji*	觀心誦經法記	
7.	*Fahua sanmei xingshi yunxiang buzhu yi*	法華三昧行事運想補助儀	
8.	*Guanxin buzhu yi*	觀心補助儀	
9.	*Mohe zhiguan wenju*	摩訶止觀文句	
10.	*Jueyi sanmei wenju*	覺意三昧文句	
11.	*Mohe zhiguan kewen*	摩訶止觀科文	
12.	*Mohe zhiguan da kewen*	摩訶止觀大科文	

The table shows that there are twelve works on the 'practice' theme, which balances well with the seventeen works on the 'doctrinal' theme. It is also noteworthy that the theme of cessation-and-contemplation occupies a central place within this category, as seven of the twelve works are commentaries based on the *MHZG*. This reflects the importance of the *MHZG* in Zhanran's perception of the 'practice' theme in the Tiantai tradition.

Based on our positioning of the *ZFCJ* within Zhanran's literary corpus from the two angles of genre and theme, three points about the natures of Zhanran's literary corpus and the *ZFCJ* become evident.

First, commentarial literature is a dominant genre in Zhanran's writings, which

suggests that exegetical work was a major focus of his intellectual agenda. The varied formats of these commentaries reflect different approaches to the base texts, highlighting distinct focuses on the aspects that should be explained. Therefore, within the genre of 'commentary', the works have different roles. Most of his commentaries are based on Zhiyi's works, showing his devotion to commenting on Zhiyi's works, and this focus explains his title as the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'. This also demonstrates his commentarial assumption about the significance of Zhiyi's works and should be taken into account in our discussion that follows on Zhanran's commentarial aims, which will further highlight the importance of Zhiyi's works in his mind.

Second, Zhanran's adherence to the Tiantai tradition is also reflected in the themes of his work. It is demonstrated by a balance between 'doctrine' and 'practice', following the Tiantai proposition of the mutuality between the two. His adherence to the Tiantai tradition is also reflected in the fact that the majority of his works are on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the school's foundational scripture.

Third, Zhanran's commentaries on the *MHZG* are a large part of his works that focus on practice. This highlights the importance of the *MHZG* in his ideological framework and also raises a question of what makes the *ZFCJ* distinct from the other three.

To sum up, the *ZFCJ* is one of Zhanran's writings that adheres to the theoretical principle of the Tiantai tradition, addressing the practical perspective. It is also a significant work of his commentarial enterprise, along with his three other commentaries on the *MHZG*. This partly answers the question of 'what is the nature of the *ZFCJ*' that was raised at the beginning of this chapter. Through this examination of Zhanran's oeuvre, we also recognise the large body of commentaries in various formats and their consistent focus on Zhiyi's works, which certainly make Zhanran the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'. Yet this title cannot be explained solely by the sheer volume of his output or his dedication to Zhiyi. Rather, it can only be fully understood when seen in light of the historical context that shaped and marked

his work and the unwavering commentarial aims he pursued. In the following section, we will explore some noteworthy incidents that laid the foundation of Zhanran's commentarial career and thus contextualise the creation of the *ZFCJ* to understand what kind of historical background it may have been a response to.

Input: The Historical Context of the *ZFCJ*

Zhanran, as we are trying to present, was a prolific and devoted Tiantai commentator. How, then, did he start his great commentarial career? What do we know of his life experiences that might explain his devotion to his commentarial creation? These are the questions that we will be answering by reconstructing his life trajectory and looking at some of the important incidents that motivated him to follow this career, and more specifically, to create the *ZFCJ*.

Sources: The Biographical Records of Zhanran

There are several sources we can rely on to reconstruct the life trajectory of Zhanran, including Zhanran's own account, Zhanran's words recorded in others' works, and other testimony about him.[30] Zhanran's own account can be found in his works, such as the *Mohe zhiguan kewen* 摩訶止觀科文 (Segmental Analysis of the *Great Cessation and Contemplation*) and the *Souyaoji*.[31] Zhanran's words are also found recorded in works written by other people. Zhanran's letter to the Kaiyuan

[30] Chi categorised the sources as 'Zhanran's own records' and the 'records of later generations'. See *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 8. However, I find there is still a nuanced distinction between the reliability of Zhanran's words found in his own work and his words as recorded by others, thus creating this differentiation here.

[31] The *Mohe zhiguan kewen* 摩訶止觀科文 is included in the *Fahua san da bu kewen* 法華三大部科文 (Segmental Analysis of Three Major Works of the *Lotus Sūtra*; X27, no. 584), which is a collection of Zhanran's segmental analysis of Zhiyi's three major works. The other two works are the *Fahua xuanyi* 法華玄義 and the *Fahua wenju* 法華文句. See X27, no. 584, p. 835a1–957a26. For Zhanran's account in the *Souyao ji*, see X55, no. 919, p. 742a6–24.

Monastery in Suzhou 蘇州開元寺 is one such source. It had been lost until it reappeared in the *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan*.[32] The records made by others about Zhanran's life include forewords added to Zhanran's works, such as Pumenzi's 普門子 forewords to the *ZFCJ*, and Zhanran's biographies written by others.

The records made by others about Zhanran's life contain most of the information and have a more complicated issue that requires a brief introduction here. The Japanese monk Saichō's 最澄 (767–822) *Naishō buppō sōjō kechimyaku fu* 内證佛法相承血脈譜 (Bloodline Register of How the Buddha Dharma of Internal Realisation Has Been Serially Transmitted; DDZ, vol. I, 199–248) is the earliest extant biographical record of Zhanran, written in the year 819. As for the sources of Chinese origin, Zhanran's life details can be found in sixteen biographies. As Chi's detailed introduction of these biographies can be found in her monograph *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō kenkyū josetsu*, we will not elaborate on this topic here. However, from Chi's diagram that categorises these biographies by their chronological order and the sectarian inclination of their authors, we should be aware that they were related and reproduced the others' content, and that the content might have been shaped by the author's standpoint.[33] This will not have a major effect on our discussion, but we still need to be cautious when utilising these sources.

Apart from the work's date and sectarian inclination, Chi's diagram shows four respective sources for developmental lineages of these biographical records: the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, a collection of biographies; the *Zongyuan lu* 宗元錄 (Record of the Origin of the Lineage), now lost but presumably a Tiantai sectarian history; the *Longxing fojiao biannian tonglun* 隆興佛教編年通論 (A Comprehensive Discussion and Chronology of Buddhism Compiled in the Longxing Era (1163–1164); X75, no. 1512), a Chinese Buddhist chronography; and the *Jiading Chicheng zhi* 嘉定赤城志 (The Jiading Gazetteer of Chicheng), a local gazetteer.

[32] T51, no. 2069, p. 103a18–b1.

[33] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 7–57.

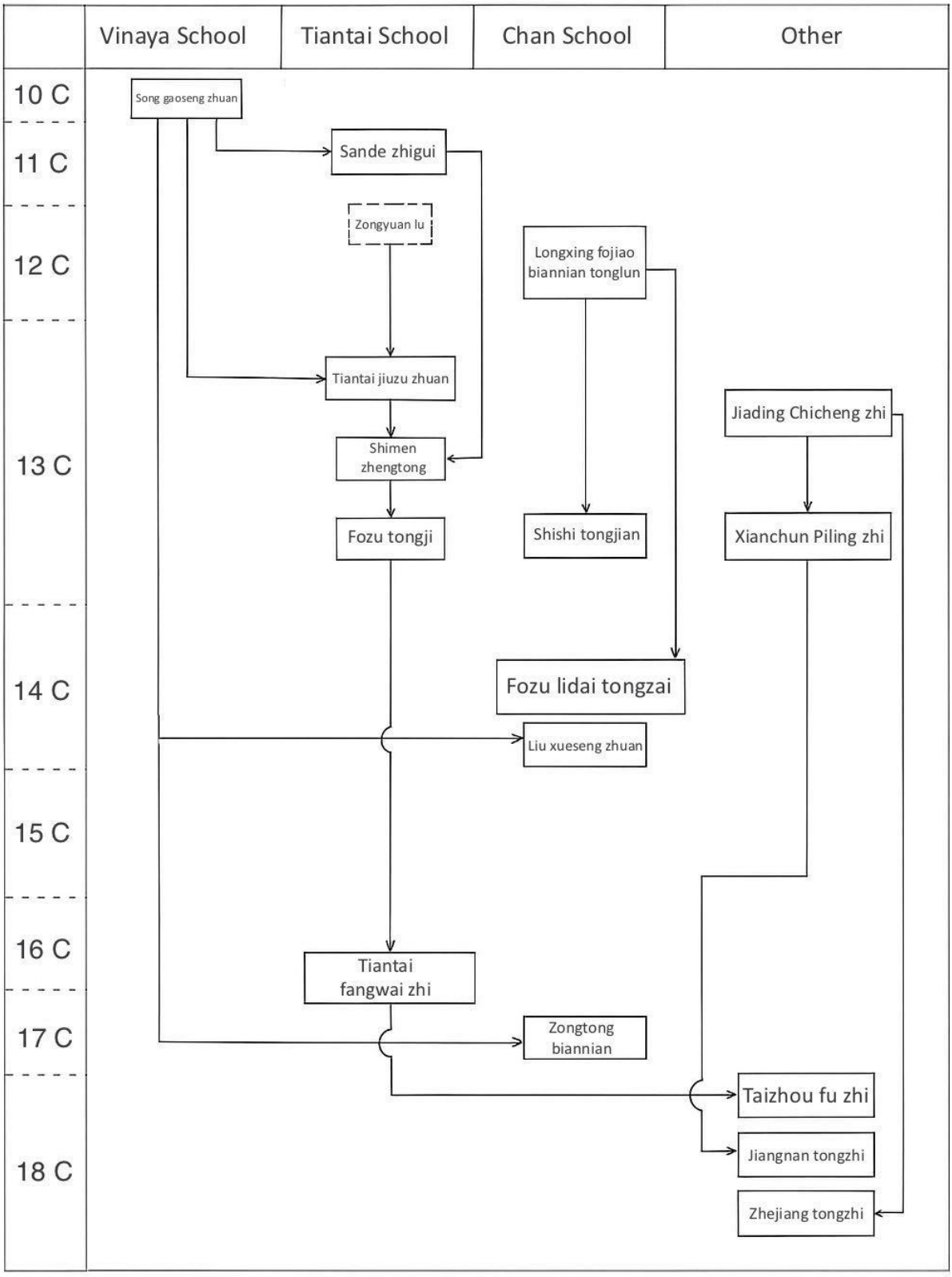

Diagram 1 A Systemisation of Zhanran's Biographical Records

(Created by Chi Limei;[34] translated by Rusha Jin)

[34] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 103–4.

As mentioned, there are, in general, sixteen extant texts that include content about Zhanran's life experiences. Not all of the sixteen texts have content that relates to the creation of the *ZFCJ*, and some of the later works largely repeat content in the earlier ones. The *Song gaoseng zhuan*, the *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan*, the *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統 (Orthodox Transmission of Buddhism; X75, no. 1513), and the *Fo zu tongji* are the most useful texts for a discussion of Zhanran's life and the trajectory of his creation of the *ZFCJ*, because they all satisfy two conditions: they are the earliest known works within their respective systems, and each contains some new information compared with others.

We have now critically reflected on the available materials concerning Zhanran's life, taking into consideration both their provenance and their features. This is not merely a necessary methodological step; it also compels an awareness of the nature and limitations of these sources, thus enabling a more reliable reconstruction of Zhanran's biographical records.

Before turning to the major aspects regarding the creation of the *ZFCJ*, the following section offers an overview of Zhanran's life. This not only provides the context for readers who are unfamiliar with Zhanran but also helps situate his creation of the *ZFCJ* in his intellectual and religious trajectory. Following this, we will turn to the two key factors that may have significantly prompted Zhanran's commentarial creation: external challenges to the Buddhist community and internal tensions within it.

A Sketch of Zhanran's Life and the Creation of the *ZFCJ*

As noted in the previous section, our reconstruction of Zhanran's life relies primarily on four texts: the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, the *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan*, the *Shimen zhengtong*, and the *Fo zu tongji*. We will also draw on Pumenzi's foreword to the *ZFCJ*, which provides information regarding the completion date of the *ZFCJ*. Where multiple sources contain identical records, I will only cite from the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, since it is the earliest Chinese source. In addition to these biographical

records authored by others, we will also refer to Zhanran's own accounts. This analysis will be structured around two key dimensions: external challenges and internal divergences within the Buddhist community, both of which shaped the creation of the *ZFCJ*.

The primary external challenge Zhanran faced was the political instability of the time. Zhanran lived in the 8th century, during the reigns of several Tang emperors, including Emperor Ruizong 睿宗, Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗, Emperor Suzong 肅宗, Emperor Daizong 代宗 and Emperor Dezong 德宗.[35]

Scholars have debated whether, and to what extent, Zhanran was affected by the political turbulence in his time. Hibi tried to correlate the geographical locations of those historical events with Zhanran's activities and reached the conclusion that the disturbances had hardly reached Zhanran and that he lived a relatively stable life.[36]

The prevailing interpretation, though, points to the An-Shi Rebellion 安史之亂 (755–763) to explain Zhanran's anxiety about the lack of correct understanding of the *MHZG* and his concern to preserve it, expressed in the opening lines of the *ZFCJ*.[37] The An-Shi Rebellion was a major political turbulence in Chinese premodern history that had a profound impact on both political and social spheres. However, as Chi pointed out, questioning previous studies, the direct impact of the An-Shi Rebellion hardly reached the south-eastern side of China, where Zhanran was mainly

[35] The *Fozu tongji* indicates that Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗, Emperor Suzong 肅宗 and Emperor Daizong 代宗 summoned Zhanran but he managed to avoid them with excuses of illness. However, given the absence of corresponding evidence in official documents or other sources and considering that such narrative patterns frequently appear in the bibliographical records of Chinese Buddhists, some of which may reflect factual accounts while others appear to follow a conventional literary trope, this record should not be taken as definitive evidence of Zhanran's reception of imperial patronage.

[36] Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku josetsu*, 16–19; 22–26.

[37] See, for example, Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 7–8; 323. The opening lines of the *ZFCJ*, along with an analysis of how they reflect Zhanran's commentarial aims, will shortly be quoted, translated and discussed in detail.

active, in the present-day Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.[38] Instead, Chi drew attention to the Yuan Chao Rebellion 袁晁之亂 (762–763), a previously overlooked uprising in the south-east led by Yuan Chao 袁晁 (?–763) that was concurrent with the last years of the An-Shi Rebellion.

The creation of the *ZFCJ* happened amid the turbulence of the Yuan Chao Rebellion, which forced Zhanran to flee from place to place. It disrupted his studies and teaching of the Tiantai doctrine and likely prompted a deeper sense of urgency regarding the preservation of the Tiantai doctrine. It is also mentioned in Zhanran's *Mohe zhiguan kewen* that as his disciples fled to different regions during the turmoil, they brought the uncollated version of the *ZFCJ* with them.[39] This created an unexpected opportunity for the wider dissemination of the work.

However, the political turmoil was not the sole reason for the creation of the *ZFCJ*, as Zhanran had already begun writing its draft in 755 before the Yuan Chao Rebellion erupted. The deeper motivation behind the creation of the *ZFCJ* lay in his intention to regulate the Tiantai community's understanding of the *MHZG*, thereby ensuring the transmission of the Tiantai tradition. At Mt. Tiantai, one of the primary sites of Zhanran's activity, many Tiantai adherents—including some who, like Zhanran, had studied under Xuanlang —placed considerable emphasis on Vinaya and Pure Land practices. Similarly, at Mt. Yuquan, another major centre of the Tiantai tradition, there was a strong focus on monastic discipline and the recitation of the

[38] Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 103–4.

[39] X27, no. 584, p. 835a4. 'Even before the collation was complete, the crowd had already begun secretly copying [my draft of the *ZFCJ*]. When the turmoil (= Yuan Chao Rebellion) broke out in the coastal area, [my] dharma-brothers (=disciples) scattered like stars. Some of them brought their copies [of my draft] to the Tan (Changsha 長沙) and Heng (Hengyang 衡陽) areas, and some of them took [these copies] to Wu (Suzhou 蘇州) and Chu (Huaian 淮安).' 勘校未周，眾已潛寫，屬海隅喪亂，法侶星移，或將入潭衡，或持往吳楚。

For an explanation of this part, see Jinhua Chen, 'One Name, Three Monks: Two Northern Chan Masters Emerge from the Shadow of Their Contemporary, the Tiantai Master Zhanran 湛然 (711–782)', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 22, no. 1 (June 1999): 26–27. Also, Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 105, 107–9.

Buddha's name. As the biographical sketch in the following section will show, Zhanran himself had also engaged in the study of Vinaya. However, he made a clear distinction between such practices and what he regarded as the core of the Tiantai tradition. Through his commentarial practice, he actively sought to reaffirm the central importance of the cessation-and-contemplation. This doctrinal emphasis is reflected even in the method he used to compose his textual corpus, and as will be demonstrated in the next section, is central to his aims in composing Zhanran's *ZFCJ*.

It is important to note that the coexistence of these diverse practices among Tiantai monks suggests that the boundaries between Buddhist schools were not always rigidly maintained. This observation is crucial for understanding Zhanran's theoretical responses to other traditions, such as the Vinaya school, as well as to the Chan and Huayan schools, which he addresses not in isolation, but within a context of overlapping doctrinal concerns and shared practices. This blurring of boundaries was not limited to commentarial debates but extended to the institutional and physical reality of monastic life, where shared living spaces created a fluid religious environment. This very blurring of sectarian boundaries in both texts and practice was one of the key reasons that prompted Zhanran to reassert the doctrinal core of Tiantai thought. At the same time, however, it is also important to recognise that the *ZFCJ* itself emerged from within this complex and fluid religious landscape; it is both a response to and a product of its time.

Having considered both the external challenges and the internal tensions within the Buddhist community, we can now to turn to a sketch of Zhanran's life, which will provide important context for understanding his commentarial project. Until the occurrence of the Yuan Chao Rebellion, the first fifty years of Zhanran's life were relatively stable. He started his quest for Buddhist wisdom at the age of 17 and studied with several Buddhist monks with different expertise, and finally settled in the Tiantai tradition.[40] His expertise in the Tiantai tradition earned the community's

[40] Zhanran's age is counted from 1 in pre-modern resources. However, as Yu suggested, in Zhanran's hometown, age was counted from 0 as it is nowadays. If counted in this way, Zhanran would have been 18 years old at this point. This point matters as it can lead to mistakes if one attempts to

recognition, which is reflected in the fact that he started teaching members of the monastic community even before he was officially ordained as a monk in 748, at the age of 37.[41]

When the Yuan Chao Rebellion occurred in Wengshan 翁山 in 762, and later the rebel army travelled to Taizhou 台州, which was close to Mt. Tiantai, where the Tiantai School was headquartered, Zhanran was in the Guoqing Monastery 國清寺 at Mt. Tiantai.[42] Zhanran was forced to travel to Puyang 濮陽, and later to Piling 毘陵 when Puyang was also affected.[43] In the year following the end of the turbulence, namely in 764, he returned to Folong 佛隴 on Mt. Tiantai and stayed there until

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reconstruct the dates from age. See Xueming Yu 俞学明, 'Zharan jianpu' 湛然简谱, *Foxue yanjiu* (2003): 214.

[41] T50, no. 2061, p. 739b25–26. 'In the beginning years of the Tianbao Era, [I] renounced my identity as a Confucian and officially registered as a member of the monastic community 天寶初年，解逢掖而登僧籍.'The *Song gaoseng zhuan* does not provide a specific date, noting only that the event occurred at some time during the early years of the Tianbao era. Primary sources differ in their accounts of this event, leading to scholarly disagreement. However, the claim that it took place when he was 37 years old appears to be relatively reliable. For a detailed discussion, see Chi's analysis in *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 66–70.

[42] X27, no. 584, p. 835. 'In the fourth month of the first year (= 762), in Guoqing Monastery [the draft of the *ZFCJ*] was rewritten 元年建巳，國清再書.'

See Chi's examination of the term *yuannian* 元年. *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 106–7. Generally, the term *yuan nian* refers to the first year of a specific era. In this case, however, as indicated by Chi, *yuan nian* appears on its own; it is not a shortened form of any era name, only because no era name was in use at the time. This unusual situation arose in the ninth month of the second year of the Shangyuan Era 上元 (762), when Emperor Suzong of Tang 唐肅宗 (711–762) decreed that, starting from the eleventh month of that year, era names would no longer be used. This situation lasted only six months, until the fourth month of the following year, and the passage we cited above falls within the very last month of that interval.

[43] X27, no. 584, p. 835. '[During the period of] Baoying (762–763), in Puyang [the draft of the *ZFCJ*] was re-edited 寶應於浦陽重勘.'

X55, no. 919, p. 742a12-13. When returned to Pitan (=Piling), [I] finally present the draft [of the *ZFCJ*] 却還毗壇，方露稾本.

Although the second record here does not specify an exact date, the stages of the completion of the *ZFCJ* mentioned in the two records suggest this chronological sequence.

769.[44] Now approaching his sixties, Zhanran did not give up travelling. He travelled north to Suzhou and even farther north to Mt. Wutai, a historic Buddhist sacred site associated with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.[45] He then spent his last years in Jinling and Mt. Tiantai, and passed away at Folong on Mt. Tiantai in 782, at the age of 71.[46]

Although it is not entirely certain whether Zhanran did further editing after 764, the *ZFCJ* must have been completed before 765, as his student Pumenzi 普門子 wrote a foreword for the work in Folong in 765, which was attached to the text of *ZFC*, and this is included in the version in the Taisho canon that we can now see.[47]

The *ZFCJ* was created in four stages to complete, including the first draft (755), the second draft (before 762), the third draft (762), and finally the final draft (before 765). The project in total took Zhanran about ten years to complete.

However, considering the necessary preparations for drafting a work, the creation of the *ZFCJ* had actually been initiated long before Zhanran's first draft in 755. That there was a preparatory stage is evidenced by his own accounts.

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[44] Zhanran's lay disciple Liang Su 梁肅 indicates that Zhanran was back in Folong at Mt. Tiantai in 764. See Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku josetsu*, 244. Zhanran's residence at Mt. Tiantai in 764 is also evidenced by his disciple Pumenzi's 普門子 foreword to the *Fahua xuanyi shiqian* 法華玄義釋籤 (Explanatory Notes on the *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra*; T33, no. 1717), which was written in 764. Pumenzi wrote as follows: 'From Piling to Guoqing [Monastery at Mt. Tiantai], his followers swarmed around him like clouds 洎毘壇以至於國清，其從如雲矣' (T33, no. 1717, p. 815a12), indicating that by this time Zhanran must already have returned to Mt. Tiantai.

[45] This is evidenced by Zhanran's own account found in the *Fahua wenju ji* 法華文句記 (Notes on the *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra*). See T34, no. 1719, p. 359c13–15.

[46] T50, no. 2061, p. 739c12–19. 'In the third year of the Jianzhong Era (782), on the fifth of the second month, [Zhanran] manifested his illness at Folong Temple … after he said his last words, he leaned against his desk and passed away peacefully 建中三年二月五日，示疾佛隴道場……言訖隱几，泊然而化.'

[47] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b6–7. 'Pumenzi, a bhikṣu from Junshan, presented this foreword with reverence. The time is the first year of the Yongtai Era, namely the fourth year of the reign of the eighth emperor of the Tang dynasty 君山除饉男普門子敬序。時永泰首元興唐八葉之四載.'

'Chujin nan' 除饉男 is a literal translation of *bhikṣu*, meaning the 'man who eradicates hunger'.

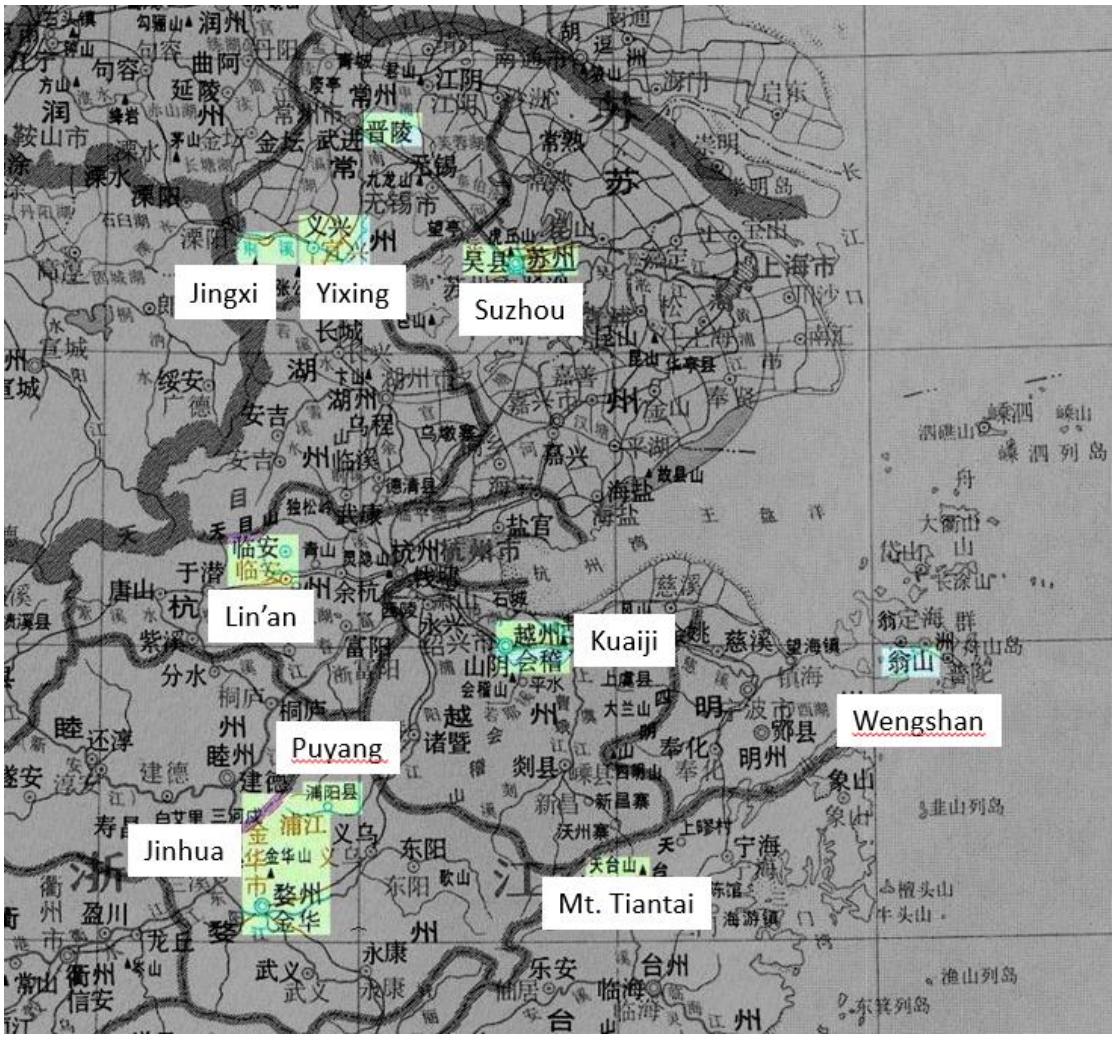

Image 1 Some of the Major Sites Where Zhanran Resided[48]

The Preparatory Stage: Zhanran's Educational Background

In 777, Zhanran consigned his three commentaries on Zhiyi's works, along with a letter describing his life experiences, to the Kaiyuan Monastery in Suzhou, which was situated just south of Piling. The monastery was one of the official monasteries that collected important Buddhist writings at that time. In the letter, Zhanran described his learning experience with Xuanlang, as well as his learning approach:

[48] The map is from Tan Qixiang 谭其骧, ed., *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中国历史地图集, Jing zhuang ben, di 1 ban., with Zhongguo she hui ke xue yuan., vol. 5 (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1982), 55–56.

…… I then studied with Master Zuoxi (=Xuanlang) and was granted the teaching of the great essence. I thought my mind was hazy [and thus unreliable], [so] all that was heard and seen was recorded [by me] with paper and ink.

遂求學於左谿大師，蒙誨以大旨。自惟識昧，凡所聞見，皆紀於紙墨。[49]

This letter and its content were presumably neglected or missing for a period of time, as the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, which is the earliest volume containing Zhanran's biography, does not mention it.[50] It was not until three hundred years later that its content was found again in an inscription on the Little Stone Monument of the Kaiyuan Monastery in Suzhou, 蘇州開元寺小石碑, and later recorded in the *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan*, which records the inscription of the Little Stone Monument. Although the letter was lost, there is no particular reason to doubt that the record of it in the *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan* is reliable as Zhanran's own account. Similar content can be found in Zhanran's *Souyao ji*, which includes the following passage.

[Here] I have only transmitted and stated what was transmitted from the teachers to the students. Since I was granted the merciful teachings, I have never missed what I saw and heard, and have attached them all to my mind

[49] T51, no. 2069, p. 103a23–24. Chi has translated the entire record into Japanese, see *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 15.

[50] With the extant evidence, we can hardly explain why the *Song gaoseng zhuan* did not include this letter in Zhanran's biography, but it is most likely because the author Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) was unaware of the existence of the letter or the monument. Chi considers this was the case, see Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 15.

The other possibility is that Zanning did know of them but chose not to include them for some reason. For example, since this letter also mentions that Zhanran studied with Fangyan of the Chan School, Zanning may have considered that learning from non-Tiantai traditions might harm his status as a Tiantai patriarch. However, this is not very likely because Zanning was associated with the Vinaya School and the work was assigned by the emperor, so he did not need to defend the Tiantai lineage at the expense of deleting this record.

and formed them into ink … [They] were only preserved privately. [I] dared not to transmit them to anyone.

師資所傳，宣述而已。自蒙慈誨，無遺見聞，[51]皆繫之於心，並形之於墨。……唯私備之，誰敢傳之。[52]

These two accounts convey several important pieces of information for us to understand how the *ZFCJ* was formed and how this affected its form and content.

First, they indicate Zhanran's reliance on his memory and on his personal notes. This may account for some of the commentarial features of the *ZFCJ*, including the huge number of external sources used and Zhanran's non-verbatim quotations from external sources. Given that recollections and personal notes are often imprecise, such differences from the original texts are to be expected. The learning from others may also have contributed to the extensive use of quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other forms of reference found in the *ZFCJ*, especially given the difficulty of accessing and preserving textual sources in Zhanran's time. This will be addressed further in Chapter Three.

No existing records mention Zhanran's memorisation of Buddhist texts, but it would not be surprising if he did this, as it was a common practice to memorise Buddhist scriptures.[53] For example, it is said that Chengguan 澄觀, who used to study with Zhanran, was able to recite the entire *Lotus Sūtra*.[54] There are many other records about Indian and Chinese monks who could recite a huge amount of Buddhist texts, such as Vajrabodhi 金剛智, Zhihui 智慧, and Yizhong 義忠.[55]

Zhanran accumulated the notes and reckoned that this was the first step in his own reflection on the creation of the *ZFCJ*. The way he took notes on his studies is still familiar to students today, as many of us engage in similar informal practices. His

[51] *Yi* 遺 is also written as *qian* 遣. *Yi* seems more reasonable in the context.

[52] X55, no. 919, p. 742a7–11.

[53] The *MHZG* suggests that the practice of 'reciting the literature and silently holding it' 背文闇持 is called *song* 誦. See T46, no. 1911, p. 37c10.

[54] T50, no. 2061, p. 737a6.

[55] These records can be found in T50, no. 2061 p. 711b9; p. 716a21–25, b1–3; and p. 729c8–9.

reluctance to share these notes, as indicated in the final sentence – they 'were only preserved privately' – is likewise understandable. Notes are, indeed, a more personal kind of writing, in both senses of format and context: they are written with personal writing habits such as nonstandard abbreviations, and the content of these notes reflects the writer's preferences. Before openly presenting them to other people, the author needs to consider the clarity of both the content and the format, as well as the audience's interests, educational backgrounds and capacities for understanding. From Zhanran's creation of the other three commentaries on the *MHZG*, we already see his awareness of readership. Chapters Two and Three will further demonstrate this aspect and his skills in building up clarity.

The two records cited above also bring two issues to our attention. First, they expose the sources of Zhanran's notes. The second record indicates that Zhanran began taking notes after being granted the 'merciful teaching', but it does not specify from whom he obtained the teaching. However, this becomes clear from the first record, which indicates that Zhanran was 'granted the teaching of the great essence' by Zuoxi Xuanlang 左溪玄朗. Xuanlang, as mentioned above, held a significant role as Zhanran's teacher in Tiantai and was also listed in the patriarchal lineage of the Tiantai tradition.

Secondly, what is intriguing about this is that, according to the *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan*, Xuanlang was not Zhanran's only or first teacher, and it was Fangyan Xuance 方嚴玄策 (dates unknown), rather than Xuanlang, who introduced him to the *MHZG*.[56] Fangyan, despite having expertise in the *MHZG*, was not institutionally a Tiantai monk, and he even had a close affiliation with one of Tiantai's rival schools, the Chan School, being a student of the Southern Chan School Master Huineng 慧

[56] T51, no. 2069, p. 103a21–22. 'At the 20th year [of Kaiyuan Era] (=732), in Jinhua of Dongyang (in nowadays Zhejiang Province), [I] met Monk Fangyan. [He] presented me the doctrinal gate of the Tiantai [School] and passed on the Zhiguan (*MHZG*) and other texts to me.' 至二十年。於東陽金華。遇方巖和尚。示以天台教門。授止觀等本。

能.[57] In his letter to the Kaiyuan Monastery in Suzhou 蘇州開元寺, Zhanran wrote that '[Fangyan] presented me the doctrinal gate of the Tiantai [School], passing on the *Zhiguan* (= *MHZG*) and other texts to me'.[58] This record not only suggests that the *MHZG* was shared with other Buddhist traditions but also offers an insight into how Zhanran gained access to the *MHZG* and other Buddhist texts, which may have subsequently informed, or been cited in, the *ZFCJ*. It is also intriguing that Zhanran started his study of Tiantai teachings with a monk of the Chan School, especially considering the complicated relationship between Chan and Tiantai. Although the two disagreed with each other in doctrinal debates, they might have cooperated since they were geographically close.[59] It depicts what de Vries termed as the 'Buddhist scholarism', to highlight an interconnectedness that has been neglected owing to the academic emphasis on individualism and sectarianism.[60]

Zhanran's mention of Xuanlang rather than Fangyan in the letter he left at Kaiyuan Monastery not only tells us that the source of his notes was Xuanlang's teachings but can also be regarded as a gesture of acknowledging and validating his intellectual lineage. This observation leads to another question: As Zhanran acknowledged that the *ZFCJ* originated from his notes of Xuanlang's teachings, to what extent did it draw upon these teachings as a passing down of the tradition? Or, in other words, how 'original' is the *ZFCJ*? In Zhanran's letter to the Kaiyuan Monastery that entrusted his commentaries on Zhiyi's works, we also find that he wrote as follows,

[57] Mentioned by Zhanran as 'Monk Fangyan' 方巖和尚 (T51, no. 2069, p. 103a21–22), this monk's identity has been discussed since premodern times. Chi Limei concluded that Monk Fangyan was Fangyan Xuance 方巖玄策, a pupil of Huineng 慧能 (638–713) of the Chan School. See Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 60–1.

[58] See footnote 55.

[59] Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku josetsu*, 64.

[60] De Vries, 'On the Nature of Chinese Buddhist Scriptural Exegesis', 107–37.

> Relying on the remaining writings of [my] deceased teacher, [I] complemented them slightly [to make these commentaries], thus [I] do not fail in [my] initial resolve. I hope the community will come together to keep them and transmit them to the later scholars.
> 儻於先師遺文，裨补萬一，則不負比來之誠。幸眾共守護，以貽後學。[61]

Yu infers from this note the possibility that the *ZFCJ* may have been derived from the work of Xuanlang but does not dwell on this point.[62] There is no evidence that Xuanlang ever wrote anything based on the *MHZG*, whereas his editing of Zhiyi's *Faha wenju* is documented. However, we know Xuanlang was an expert on the theory of cessation-and-contemplation and the *MHZG* that laid the foundation of this theory, and that he passed his knowledge on to Zhanran.[63] Therefore, it would not be surprising if what Zhanran mentioned as the 'remaining writings of [my] deceased teacher' also included Xuanlang's interpretations of the theory of cessation-and-contemplation or even his comments on the *MHZG.*[64]

As such, Xuanlang's ideas and writings may have been subsumed into Zhanran's writings.[65] This invites an even bolder speculation – that the *ZFCJ* is not Zhanran's 'original' work but may be an outcome of generations of interpretations of the *MHZG* and other Buddhist knowledge, which Zhanran received from Xuanlang and other Tiantai monks, or from an even broader intellectual community.

Our discussion of this matter, however, should not be considered as a concern about authorship or originality. The modern notion of 'originality' did not apply in

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[61] T51, no. 2069, p. 103a27–29.

[62] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 38.

[63] '[Xuanlang] then taught [Zhanran] the theory of cessation-and-contemplation transmitted from the founding teacher (=Zhiyi).' 乃授以本師所傳止觀。(T50, no. 2061, p. 739b22)

[64] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 35. A series of Buddhist practices conducted by monastic members living in the wild, begging for food, wearing only ragged clothes and so on, in order to detach themselves from the possession of food, clothes and accommodation.

[65] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 36–8.

the same way in premodern contexts, and such concerns are particularly problematic when dealing with commentarial literature, a genre that is, by its very nature, intertextual and cumulative.

Besides Zhanran's learning experiences, his teaching experiences may have also affected the way he wrote the *ZFCJ*. This is especially substantiated by the fact that he taught the *MHZG* at the Kaiyuan Monastery in Suzhou for several years from 747 to 754. His teaching experiences were probably embedded in the *ZFCJ*. They were not just reflected in its content: as will be discussed in Chapter Two, Zhanran uses the format of 'question and answer' to facilitate explanations, and it is possible that some of the questions were raised by audiences during his teaching. This may have also shaped his concerns about the readership and how to meet their needs.

The influences Zhanran received were not limited to the Tiantai community – this further draws us to a central debate surrounding the 'Dark Age' of the Tiantai tradition, and Zhanran's interactions with non-Buddhist communities.

The Negotiated Boundaries Between Different Intellectual Traditions

The term 'Dark Age', coined by Japanese scholars, is based on Liang Su's 梁肅 claim that Zhanran's great contribution was to revitalise Tiantai following Zhiyi's death. The view was that whereas other Buddhist traditions like Huayan 華嚴 and Chan 禪 flourished, Tiantai languished until it was rejuvenated by Zhanran's rigorous treatment of Zhiyi's doctrines and critique of other schools.[66]

This view has been challenged by Yu and Chi. Yu suggests that this argument exaggerates Zhanran's role in elevating Tiantai by overlooking the contributions of other Tiantai scholars, as there are records indicating that the Tiantai patriarchs between Zhiyi and Zhanran were not all uninfluential, but their teachings were only

[66] Ando, *Tendai shōgu shisōron*, 106.

transmitted orally and hence did not leave textual records.[67] Their thoughts and oral teachings, though leaving no textual traces directly attributed to them, may in fact have been preserved within the *ZFCJ.*

The possibility that the *ZFCJ* was a product of both oral and textual transmission should be reconsidered and may indeed offer further clues to Zhanran's extensive use of quotations from other texts. This possibility also invites us to consider the potential existence of further, undocumented sources behind its creation outside the Tiantai school, both from the wider Buddhist community and other contemporary intellectual traditions.

A point that we need to keep in mind when looking at Zhanran's education in Buddhism is that the boundaries between different Buddhist traditions, though they existed, may not have been that definite in Zhanran's time. The biographical records suggest that Zhanran started his Buddhist study tour at the age of 17 and never stopped it until his late years. Before Xuanlang, the one who led him into the Tiantai tradition, as mentioned, he studied with Fangyan Xuance. Even after he found himself settled in the Tiantai tradition, he sought teaching from Tanyi 曇一 (692–771), a Vinaya Master, presumably to learn the regulations for monastic life and thus improve the practice of Buddhism. Vinaya was not merely a set of external rules but an essential prerequisite for the internal realisation of Tiantai doctrinal principles. By mastering these regulations, he sought to ground Tiantai's meditative and theoretical practice within a rigorous monastic standard, thereby constructing a robust identity for the Tiantai practitioner.

It was quite a common practice for Chinese Buddhists at that time to go on study tours as Zhanran did, which is another indication that the boundaries between different schools and sects may not have been as rigid as the impression we receive from the formulation of later generations. Although not from the aspect of Buddhists' study tour in particular, de Vries's introduction of the term 'scholasticism', along with the accompanying discussion, serves as a valuable reminder of how we should

[67] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 26–50.

properly understand the interactions among Buddhist communities at the time.[68] This is also important to understand Zhanran's commentarial creation and the nature of the *ZFCJ*.

Zhanran's connection to non-Buddhist tradition is, for example, demonstrated in our citation above of his *Souyaoji*,

> [Here] I only transmitted and stated what had been transmitted from the teachers to the students.
> 師資所傳，宣述而已。[69]

This humble statement echoes the Confucian idea of *shu er bu zuo* 述而不作, which appears in the *Analects*: 'The Master (=Confucius) said, A transmitter and not a maker, trusting in and loving antiquity, I venture to compare myself to our Old Peng' 述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭.[70] This suggests Zhanran's knowledge of the indigenous intellectual tradition. More than that, however, it can also be read as conforming to a broader convention shaped by Confucianism, which is unsurprising given Zhanran's familiarity with Confucianism, as evidenced by records of his Confucian educational background in his biographies and by the number of Confucian works in his scholarly library.[71] Yet it is difficult to affirm how much his conformity was deliberate or unconscious, and this very ambiguity speaks to the subtlety of the convention itself. It was so deeply embedded in the intellectual world of the time that it could shape the claim Zhanran made here, while at the same time feeling familiar to, and thus resonating with, his readers.

The source of Zhanran's knowledge was indeed not limited to the Buddhist

[68] See, de Vries, 'On the Nature of Chinese Buddhist Scriptural Exegesis', 107–37. For a more detailed examination of the framework of scholasticism, see de Vries' doctoral thesis, 'Thinking Through Texts'.

[69] X55, no. 919, p. 742a7.

[70] The translation is taken from Burton Watson, *The Analects of Confucius* (Columbia University Press, 2007), 48. I added the content in the parentheses.

[71] Zhanran's integration of Confucian works into the *ZFCJ* will be discussed in Chapter Three. See also the Appendix for the list of texts he quoted that reflect his scholarly library.

community, as non-Buddhist communities, such as the Confucianists, had also influenced him in his early education. Compared to the resources that illustrate his education in Buddhism, however, our sources for his knowledge of Confucianism are very limited. Zhanran's birth and early experiences, including his education and aspirations, are introduced in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* as follows:

> Venerable Zhanran,[72] whose non-Buddhist family name is Qi and whose family lived in Jinling of Jingxi for generations, was therefore from Changzhou … His family was originally Ru-Mo, [but] he was distinguished by his aspiration to exceed the worldly. From childhood, he was detached [from the worldly realm] and different from ordinary and common people.
> 釋湛然，俗姓戚氏，世居晉陵之荊溪，則常州人也。… 家本儒墨，我獨有邁俗之志，童丱邈焉異於常倫。[73]

There are no existing records that provide further information about the Qi 戚 family, but this passage suggests that the family had a long and solid residence in the area of Jinling 晉陵 of Jingxi 荊溪 (now in Jiangsu Province).[74] The underlined word 'Ru-Mo' 儒墨 means that Zhanran was born into an educated family that followed the tradition of 'Ru-Mo'. 'Ru-Mo' can be literally translated as 'Confucians and Mohists', but here they are two representatives of an open category that contains other indigenous intellectual schools.[75] It stands for a category that opposes

[72] *Shi* 釋 (venerable) is a surname shared by Chinese Buddhists, a tradition initiated by Daoxuan 道宣.

[73] T50, no. 2061, p. 739b10–18.

[74] See Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku josetsu*, 60 and Limei Chi 池麗梅, 'Jingxi Zhanran yu Yuan-chao zhi luan' 荊溪湛然與袁晁之亂, *Pumen Xuebao* 34 (July 2006): 12.

[75] In the Buddhist context, *Ru-Mo* has two meanings: 'the Confucians and the Mohists', such as in Chengguan's 澄觀 *Dafangguangfo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔 (The Meanings Proclaimed in the Subcommentaries Accompanying the Commentaries to the Flower Ornament Sūtra with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddha; T36, no. 1736, p. 36a1–8), or a general category for followers of Chinese traditional teachings in contrast to Buddhist teachings.

the Buddhist teachings, setting up a boundary between the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist.

A boundary between the non-Buddhist and Buddhist communities existed, but they also coexisted. Zhanran's interactions with people from a non-Buddhist background are evident from the fact that he created the *Zhiguan dayi* for the government official Li Hua, and also the significance of his disciple Liang Su in establishing his status in the Tiantai lineage. Interactions between other Buddhists and non-Buddhists are also found in various historical records.

The demarcation between the Buddhist and non-Buddhist is made by Zhanran himself in the *ZFCJ* when he borrows from external sources, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Three will also demonstrate, through Zhanran's use of non-Buddhist sources in the *ZFCJ*, that his educational background clearly shaped his scholarly library, thereby supplementing the limited evidence available regarding his relationship with the non-Buddhist community. This analysis will reveal

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It is possible that the use of Ru-Mo as a general category received influences from the elusive use of this concept in traditional Chinese texts, as suggested by Lee Ting-mien's study of this concept from the perspective of Sinology, see Ting-Mien Lee, 'When "Ru-Mo" May Not Be "Confucians and Mohists": The Meaning of "Ru-Mo" and Early Intellectual Taxonomy', *Oriens Extremus* 53, (2014): 115–16. Therefore, it is more sensible to believe *Ru-Mo* here refers to the Confucian and other indigenous intellectual traditions, as traditionally the term has an inclusive connotation and the other five uses of *Ru-Mo* found in the *Song Gaoseng zhuan* do not indicate a clear relation to the Mohists. For the other uses of *Ru-Mo* in the *Song Gaoseng zhuan*, see T50, no. 2061, p. 721c15–16, p. 804b21–23, p. 809a2–5, p. 810b16–18.

In addition, while the *Song Biographies* is the earliest biographical work that records Zhanran's life, it was the source material for many other works that did not use the word 'Ru-Mo' but 'Ru', 'Confucians', to describe Zhanran's educational background. See Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 42. The authors of these other biographies may have left out this information because they were aware of the elusive meaning of 'Ru-mo' in Chinese traditional writings and knew that 'Ru-Mo' did not necessarily mean that Zhanran learnt from Mohism. The works that mention Zhanran's Confucian educational background are: the *Tiantai jiuzu zhuan*, the *Shimen zhengtong,* the *Fozu tongji,* the *Liu xueseng zhuan* 六學僧傳 (Biographies of Monks According to the Six Pāramitās; X77, no. 1522), the *Tiantai shan fangwai zhi* 天台山方外志 (Gazetteer of the Monastic World of Mount Tiantai; GA 88, no. 89).

not only the extent of his familiarity with non-Buddhist traditions but also his strategies for including them in his writing.

The discussion above shows the historical context of Zhanran's creation of the *ZFCJ*, deepening our understanding of its nature. It highlights the possible sources of knowledge that may have shaped the creation of the *ZFCJ*, among which the most evident is Xuanlang's teaching. This is supported by Zhanran's own account, which acknowledges that his writing relied heavily on 'what has been passed down to him' – it may well be an accumulative work, incorporating layers of earlier interpretations and contributions.

However, this possibility does not necessarily invalidate Zhanran's contribution as a commentator. It should not be forgotten that Xuanlang was also a popular teacher with many students in his time and had many students.[76] Yet Zhanran was the only one who took up and completed this commentarial enterprise of textualising the interpretations of Zhiyi's works. His endeavour was remarkably significant, and his commentarial skills are worth exploring.

Combining Zhanran's records and materials regarding his life experiences written by others, we also illustrated the historical context of Zhanran and the major incidents that played important roles in his writing of the *ZFCJ*, including the stimulation of its creation, such as pressure of the political turbulence, and the influences of the intellectual communities he engaged with that may have contributed to its content.

Building upon the history outlined so far, we will further explore how Zhanran developed his writing, thus establishing a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the *ZFCJ*. It will become clear that Zhanran's composition of the *ZFCJ* was an active response to the circumstances of his time. The immediate external threats were not the only cause; it also originated from a conscious effort to establish a correct and authoritative understanding of the *MHZG*.

[76] Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 36.

Output: The Aims of the *ZFCJ*

Zhanran's understanding of his commentarial creation is reflected in the opening of the *ZFCJ*, where Zhanran explains the title *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* in three parts.[77] As presented below, the first part points out the significance of *xing* 行 (practice), *jiao* 教 (doctrine), *zong* 宗 (lineage or foundational teaching), *li* 理 (essence), and *chuanhong* 傳弘 (transmitting and spreading), and how these five aspects are interlocked.

> Part One
>
> The doctrine that assists the [*zhiguan*] practice is based on fundamental doctrines [of the Tiantai lineage]; believing in the doctrine can support the practice [of *zhiguan*]. Practice that manifests the doctrine accords with the essence [of things]; conducting the practice can transmit and carry forward [the doctrine]. How can the practice be disseminated broadly? Only by establishing it on the basis of various doctrines. How can the doctrine be assisted? Only through the sublime practice. Thus, [this work] will rely on the repeated instruction [from my teacher) to ensure that the doctrine and the practice are on the same track.
>
> 濟行之教有宗，信教堪輔行。顯教之行符理，驗行可傳弘。行何所弘？非眾教不立。教何所輔？非妙行莫詮。乃漸以三聞，全教行一轍。[78]

The meaning of this part seems playful, which might be a deliberate style of writing to demonstrate the nuanced relationships among ideas. This is not unusual in Zhanran's writing and is also reflected in the following part, which presents the varied meanings of *jue*.

[77] For a full translation of this part, see Bowring, 'Zhanran', 815–16. A discussion on this part with the SOAS Buddhist Texts Reading Group helped me comprehend this piece more thoroughly. See also Chi, *Tōdai tendai bukkyō fukkō undō*, 290–99.

[78] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b11–13.

To facilitate the explanation here, I will use the translations of these terms instead of their *pinyin*. There is a reciprocal relationship between the 'doctrine' and 'practice' of cessation-and-contemplation, in which each contributes to the effective dissemination and support of the other. The first sentence explains the relationship between the practice and doctrine, whose mutuality is, as mentioned, an essential proposition of the Tiantai tradition. The 'practice' in this context refers to the cessation-and-contemplation, and 'doctrine' is likely to refer to the theories about the cessation-and-contemplation, such as its theoretical validation and the right way to practise it. Zhanran declares here that the doctrine is well-founded, based on fundamental principles of the Tiantai lineage. Believing in the Tiantai doctrine about the cessation-and-contemplation will, in turn, assist the practice of cessation-and-contemplation. The second sentence has two pieces of information: first, that the teaching about cessation-and-contemplation is also well-founded; and second, that just as the doctrine will assist the practice of cessation-and-contemplation, so the practice of cessation-and-contemplation is a way of manifesting the doctrine and so will help transmit the doctrine.

While the first two sentences focus on 'transmitting the doctrine' and the 'assisting the practice', the following two rhetorical questions switch to 'assisting the doctrine' and the 'transmitting practice'. The last sentence indicates Zhanran's acknowledgement of his reliance on the knowledge he received from his predecessors, which is similar to the accounts he gives in his letter and in the *Souyaoji*, and also highlights the purpose of balancing the 'doctrine' and 'practice'.

What was his plan to fulfil this purpose of balancing the 'doctrine' and 'practice', then? The answer follows in the second part, where he lists the polysemy of *jue* (decisive interpretation or clarification) as different methods he employed to determine or clarify the content of the *MHZG*.

Part Two

Sometimes I consult and receive an oral elucidation [about the *MHZG*]; sometimes I examine and analyse the essential theories [involved in the

MHZG].

Sometimes I raise queries in order to resolve questions [regarding the *MHZG*];[79] sometimes I select from the same kind to make decisions [about how to understand the *MHZG*].[80]

Sometimes I cite widely to clarify what is inadequately explained [in the *MHZG*]; sometimes I draw from a wide range of references to decide what is right [about understanding the *MHZG*].

Sometimes I determine and clarify the manner of the text [where its writing does not flow well]; sometimes I clear the way for contemplation.

Sometimes I rely on the text(s) to determine failings [of how to understand the *MHZG*]; sometimes I depend on the context caused by the use of different methods of teaching to judge faults [in understanding the *MHZG*].[81]

若咨稟口決，若審理要決；

若設徵決疑，若取類決擇；

若引廣決略，若攝廣決正；

若決疏文勢，若決通觀道；

若案文判失，若準部斷謬。[82]

[79] ' Raise queries' is the translation of *she zheng* 設徵. Another example of using *she zheng* is found in Zhanran's *Fahua wenju ji*, which points to a sentence where Zhiyi raises an issue and adds an answer to it. See T34, no. 1719, p. 300a22–23.

[80] 'The same kind' is the translation of *lei* 類. In English, *lei* is translated as 'kind' or 'sort.' The term *lei* has been studied as a vital concept of ancient Chinese analogism. See Jana S. Rošker, 'Structural Relations and Analogies in Classical Chinese Logic', *Philosophy East and West* 67, no. 3 (2017): 841–63.

[81] 'The context caused by the use of different methods of teaching' refers to the term *bu* 部. *Bu* in the Tiantai tradition is associated with the 'Four Modes of Teaching' (*huayi sijiao* 化儀四教) in its doctrinal classification system. For an explanation of *bu*, see Yu, *Zhanran yanjiu*, 250–51. This suggests that many misunderstandings arise from overlooking the specific contexts of the Buddha's teachings, and that awareness of these contexts can correct those mistakes.

[82] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b13–16.

The five couplets are presented in parallel structure, with the two lines in each couplet following the same grammatical structure. While the structure itself is rather clear, the meaning of the last word *jue* not only changes its meaning but is also polyfunctional, serving in multiple syntactic roles as a noun or a verb. The five couplets are a list of possible explanations of *jue*. Zhanran seems to engage in 'wordplay' here to interpret its meaning in various ways, demonstrating subtlety and fluidity in its verbal use. This writing style makes the content of this part challenging to fathom.

The topics in the five couplets also vary. Particularly noteworthy is the relationship between orality and the production of commentaries in the first couplet, the combined verb *jue-shu* 決疏 in the fourth, and Zhanran's assumptions about the *MHZG* reflected in the fifth.

In the first couplet, a similarity shared by the two lines is that they both contain a noun that is compounded with the character *jue*. In the first couplet, it is combined respectively with *kou* 口, meaning 'oral', and *yao* 要, meaning 'essential', to form two nouns, *koujue* 口決 (oral elucidation)[83] and *yaojue* 要決 (essential theories), indicating two distinct sources of knowledge. *Koujue* signifies the explanations or insights passed on verbally from Buddhist masters to their disciples,[84] which originally meant phrases or verses with mnemonic qualities to

[83] *Koujue*, as a noun, is used in two ways in Buddhist texts from the Tang Dynasty. The first is as a noun, referring to the 'chant' or 'Sanskrit incantation' such as the chant at the end of the *Heart Sūtra* (in multiple Chinese translations, of which Kumārajīva's and Xuanzang's are most well-known), which is popular throughout East Asia. Secondly, as it is used here, *koujue* means 'instruction' that is received from one's teacher. The Chinese characters *jue* 決 and 訣 are sometimes interchangeable. *Jue* 訣 is often used as a noun, meaning 'rhymed formula' or 'knack', but when it is transposed with *jue* 決, it shares its verbal meaning of 'determining'. Conversely, *koujue* 口決 here can be understood as *koujue* 口訣, meaning 'instruction'.

[84] As mentioned in his biographical materials, Zhanran was taught by several teachers, including Fangyan, Tanyi, and Xuanlang. It is noteworthy which of these figures Zhanran intended to acknowledge.

facilitate learning in Buddhism.[85] In this context, *koujue* is understood as 'oral elucidations', which involves the confirmation by a teacher of a disciple's doctrinal comprehension. This aspect is also manifested by dialogues between the Buddha and his disciples, known as *vyākaraṇa* – a term that is more widely recognised as referring to Buddha's prophecies of the eventual enlightenment of his disciples (*shouji* 授記, *shoujue* 授決, or *jibie* 記別, etc.) but initially meant the question-and-answer format, which is sometimes translated as *jue* 決 in Chinese.[86] *Yaojue*, meaning 'essential theories' in the second line, likely signifies addressing crucial questions identified by Zhanran, generally referring to key Tiantai teachings.[87]

Jue is the last word of the title of the *ZFCJ*. The last word in the title of a Chinese Buddhist commentary can often signify its genre, such as *lun* 論 for 'treatises' and *shu* 疏 for 'annotations'. In some cases, *jue* is indeed a kind of literary genre. Texts with *jue* in their title can be found written in a question-and-answer format, such as the *Fahua xuanzan yi jue* 法華玄贊義決 (Decisions on the Meaning

[85] Bunkyō Kin, 'Chapter 2 Vernacular Reading in East Asia', in *Literary Sinitic and East Asia: A Cultural Sphere of Vernacular Reading*, trans. Ross King et al. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2021), 86.

[86] For a detailed summary of the linguistic explorations of *jue*, see Yang, 'Zhongguo fojiao shouji sixiang yu shouji tuxiang', 4–19.

In the traditional classification of Buddhist scripture, *vyākaraṇa* is one of the categories included in the ninefold division of the Buddha's teachings (*navāṅga*) based on content and literary style, which is found in the Pāli tradition and some Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit sources, and it is retained in the expanded twelvefold division (*dvādaśāṅga*). The earlier ninefold classification comprises *sūtra* (discourses), *geya* (aphorisms in mixed prose and verse), *vyākaraṇa* (prophetic teachings or expositions), *gāthā* (verses), *udāna* (ecstatic utterances), *itivṛttaka* (quotations, 'thus-saids'), *jātaka* (stories of previous lives), *adbhutadharma* (marvellous events), and *vaipulya* (extended or elaborate teachings). The twelvefold scheme, attested in Sanskrit Buddhist sources, builds on the earlier ninefold one by adding three further categories: *nidāna* (framing stories or episodes), *avadāna* (heroic tales or narratives), and *upadeśa* (instructions). See Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 276.

[87] Youyan 有嚴 (1021–1101) in the *Zhiguan fuxing zhulan* 止觀輔行助覽 (Auxiliary Guide to the *Zhiguan to Support Practice*; X55, no. 920) cited the idea of 'insentient beings' having Buddha-nature' 無情有性, a theory propounded by Zhanran, as an example of 'yaojue'. (X55, no. 920, p. 863c24–864a1)

of Glorification of the *Lotus Sūtra*; T34, no. 1724) and *Jingtu jue* 淨土決 (Clarification of Pure Land Teachings; X61, no. 1157), seemingly related to *vyākaraṇa*. The question-and-answer format is, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, one of the commentarial approaches in the *ZFCJ*, but cannot summarise its genre. Instead of picking an established term that signified the genre of the work or matched the question-and-answer format, Zhanran selected the word *jue* and established a homonymous genre, one that entailed a particular format with annotations.

The fourth couplet indicates that Zhanran treats the *MHZG* as an authoritative text and refrains from any criticism of it, except in cases of editorial corrections. Not only in this couplet, but also throughout the previous part on the mutuality between 'doctrine' and 'practice', as well as in the following section which gives his ten reasons for creating the *ZFCJ*, his devout attitude toward commenting on the *MHZG* clearly demonstrates how much he values it.

This invites us to wonder where he would place Zhiyi's works in relation to Buddhist scriptures such as the *sūtra*, *vinaya*, and *abhidharma*, which, with their Indian origin (or attributed origin), had a more established authority, compared to the *MHZG*, which, though it also received wide recognition, was relatively newly established.

Interestingly, in the fourth couplet where it indicates Zhanran's aim of 'determining and clarifying the manner of the text' 決疏文勢 (*jue shu wen shi*),[88] *jue* 決 is placed side by side with *shu* 疏. This is a metaphorical expression: the manner of the *MHZG* is compared to a blocked waterway in need of clearing or dredging. The two terms, *jue* and *shu*, are linked through their shared metaphorical meaning of 'dredging or clearing a blocked waterway', and this semantic echo may have facilitated a further convergence, allowing *jue* to take on the traditional connotation of *shu* as a commentarial genre.

Jue is only missing in the fifth couplet. However, although *jue* did not appear

[88] T46, no. 1912, 141b15.

directly, both *pan* 判 (to judge) and *duan* 斷 (to decide) are in fact synonyms of 'determine', as noted by Congyi 從義 (1042–1091) in the *Fahua jing san da bu buzhu* 法華經三大部補註 (Supplementary Notes on the Three Major Works of the *Lotus Sūtra*; X28, no. 586), '"To judge" means "to determine". "To decide" is equal to "to determine"' 判亦決也, 斷即決也'.[89] The fifth couplet indicates that the *ZFCJ* is intended to correct people's misconceptions of Zhiyi's teaching and provide a 'correct' understanding.

Through the repetition of the word *jue*, Zhanran emphasised what is the major aim of the commentary – to determine the most reliable interpretation for the *MHZG*.[90] However, it is paradoxical that *jue*, which has the meaning of 'to determine', can be understood in so many ways that its meaning can hardly be 'determined'. In other words, what Zhanran is doing here is to present the meaning of 'determine' by not determining it but showing as many possible meanings of it as he could. He seems to indicate that meanings could be only grasped through ambiguities and that ambiguity and clarity are compatible. However, this is not to deny that the meanings can be truly comprehended, but to present a flexible and comprehensive reading to grasp the subtle and profound meanings. If we simply cut off all the other possible readings, we might fail to understand the true meaning and elicit more questions and uncertainties. The way Zhanran presents the various meanings of *jue* seems to be a way to indicate how these meanings coexist with a certain degree of ambiguity, trying out the possible ways to understand and interpret.

Lastly, the third part is a humble acknowledgement of his aim of creating this commentary. This concluding sentence also has a parallel structure.

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[89] X28, no. 586, p. 334a22

[90] In the repetition of *jue*, there seems to be a mechanism of presenting meaning through enumeration, which reminds us of Zhiyi's analysis of the word *miao* 妙 (sublime) in the title of the *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義. Zhiyi devoted nearly ninety percent of the section to interpreting the meaning of 'sublime' 妙 (*miao*) in the title, which is one of his Fivefold Profound Meanings 五重玄義 (*Wuchong xuanyi*), the 'explication of the title of the sūtra' 釋名 (*shiming*). For the introduction to the Fivefold Profound Meanings, see Rhodes, 'Tiantai Hermeneutics', 139–53.

Part Three

Gathering all these meanings becomes the head title (the title of the *ZFCJ*). [I] merely demonstrate what has been transmitted [to me], so that the previous ideas will not be left behind.

攬斯眾旨，輒為首題, 聊申所傳，不遺先見。

From this opening of the *ZFCJ*, especially the first part, we see that Zhanran has a clear idea about the importance of determining the correct interpretation of the *MHZG* and his plan to achieve this. Following this opening section, Zhanran elaborates on the ten reasons for creating this commentary, which can also be taken as the aims that he intended to achieve through his writing.

The first and second reasons emphasise the importance of adhering to doctrinal orthodoxy.

First, this is written to let people know that the teaching I have received has been passed down through a formal lineage, rather than being my personal opinions that differ from the master's intentions.

一為知有師承非任胸臆異師心故。[91]

Second, this is written for those who once followed the lineage but abandoned its foundational teachings and followed unrecognised perceptions.

二為曾師承者而棄根本隨未見故。[92]

The third and fourth reasons express worries about the potential loss of the Tiantai doctrine and stress the importance of preserving and transmitting it.

Third, this is written for transmission to future generations to prevent the rise

[91] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b20–21.

[92] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b21–22.

of misinterpretations and the loss of the original teachings.

三為後代展轉隨生異解失本依故。[93]

Fourth, this is written for those who believe in this lineage and are eager to learn it, but cannot find a teacher elsewhere, so they have a reference to rely on.

四為信宗好習餘方無師可承稟故。[94]

The fifth and sixth reasons indicate that the commentary is beneficial for those aspiring to study Tiantai teachings, as it supports understanding of the doctrine and meditative practice. The mutuality between these two aspects, as mentioned, is essential to the Tiantai doctrine.

Fifth, this is written for those who cultivate both doctrines and meditative practice and wish to rely on the Tiantai teachings, so they have a backup for their practice and comprehension.

五為義觀俱習好憑教者行解備故。[95]

Sixth, this is written to clearly indicate the essential points of the teachings and to exhaustively interpret the essential texts, succinctly or extensively.

六為點示關節廣略起盡宗要文故。[96]

The seventh reason again emphasises the importance of establishing the interpretations of Zhiyi's teachings, so that they will not be lost in the future.

Seventh, this is written to establish the correct interpretations from the

[93] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b22–23.

[94] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b23–24.

[95] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b24.

[96] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b25.

teachers to prevent their loss and thus benefit future generations.
七為建立師解使不淪墜益來世故。[97]

The final three reasons adopt a more personal perspective, suggesting that the creation of the commentary serves both as a reference for Zhanran himself and as a means of presenting his own understanding of the *MHZG* to seek correction from the public. At the same time, the creation of the *ZFCJ* reflects his embodiment of the Mahāyāna ideals of great compassion and the aspiration to benefit others.

Eighth, this is written to benefit my own meditation and doctrinal comprehension to prevent mistakes and make it easier to seek corrections.
八為自資觀解以防誤謬易尋討故。[98]

Ninth, this is written to present my interpretations openly in case there are any mistakes and to seek aid in amending them.
九為呈露所解恐有迷忘求刪削故。[99]

Tenth, this is written to obey the Buddha's intentions, exercising great compassion and benefiting others.
十為隨順佛旨運大悲心利他行故。[100]

The ten reasons listed above are almost consistent with the message presented in Parts One and Two. The first seven reasons reflect three interlocking themes of (1) combining meditation practice with doctrinal teachings, (2) achieving a correct understanding of Zhiyi's teachings, and thereby (3) properly preserving and transmitting them.

[97] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b25–26.

[98] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b26–27.

[99] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b27–28.

[100] T46, no. 1912, p. 141b28–29.

The frequent appearance of such terms in the translation as doctrine 教 (*jiao*), practice 行 (*xing*), meaning 義 (*yi*), contemplation 觀 (*guan*), the foundational teaching 宗 (*zong*), and the teachers' lineage (*shi cheng* 師承) shows a strong intention of maintaining the tradition.

The third, fourth, and fifth reasons are suggestive of the target audience for the *ZFCJ*. The third reason reflects concern that the Tiantai doctrine might be lost and stresses the importance of preserving and transmitting it to future generations. The fourth and fifth reasons indicate that the commentary is for those who aspire to study the Tiantai teachings. Zhanran's intended readers and listeners here are students of Tiantai and belong not only to the present generation but also to future generations. One of the reasons he strove to incorporate various sources was probably in order to preserve as much detail as possible, ensuring these elements would support and enhance learners' understanding. It also reflects a sense of anxiety surrounding the challenges of self-study, which explains the highly didactic commentarial style of the *ZFCJ*, which will be elaborated in the following chapter. This helps explain the inclusion of extensive background information that would typically be conveyed by a teacher in an oral instructional setting. This also seems to reflect a decisive shift from oral transmission to self-directed study, resonating with our previous discussion on Zhanran's possible sources of knowledge.

We can also read these ten reasons from another perspective as Zhanran's understanding of the effectiveness of the commentarial genre. It not only provides explanations that support learners and propagate Tiantai teachings but also helps establish an authoritative interpretation of the *MHZG*, itself an authoritative text.

To summarise, the three key aspects that Zhanran aimed to address in the *ZFCJ* are:

(1) Establishing definitive interpretations of the *MHZG*.

(2) Ensuring that these interpretations could support meditative practice.

(3) Preserving and transmitting the Tiantai teachings.

Among these three, establishing the correct comprehension lays the foundation for the other two; only when the comprehension is correct should it be established.

Hence, decisive interpretation and clarification must be meticulously undertaken, emphasising the necessity of skilful interpretation.

Concluding Remarks

Creating commentaries occupied a significant part of Zhanran's career. The commentaries can be seen as his response to external pressures caused by the misinterpretation and the loss of Zhiyi's teaching. They were tailored to meet various needs, as evidenced by the four different commentaries he created for the *MHZG*, including the *ZFCJ*.

The actual writing of the *ZFCJ* took Zhanran at least ten years to complete. The work holds a significant place in Zhanran's oeuvre and addresses the practice of cessation-and-contemplation and the mutual relationship between teaching and practice. The work is aimed at correcting the existing erroneous understanding of the *MHZG* and providing a decisive interpretation of the *MHZG*, thereby supporting the practice of cessation-and-contemplation and ensuring the continuity of this essential aspect of the Tiantai tradition.

Our exploration of Zhanran's educational background and his own accounts of the sources of the *ZFCJ* suggest the possibility that the *ZFCJ* is an accumulative work. It may have derived from Xuanlang's teaching, as Zhanran himself acknowledges, and may have been influenced by knowledge exchanges with other intellectual communities, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

This possibility invites a reconsideration of the nature of the *ZFCJ* and Zhanran's contribution as a commentator. We need to look beyond the possibility that the content of the *ZFCJ* may not have been entirely the result of Zhanran's efforts and instead pay attention to how he organised the available material, namely, his commentarial methods, which reveal the deeper significance of his contribution as a commentator. Through these methods, he textualised material that was likely transmitted orally, thereby preserving it and making it accessible for future generations to both understand the *ZFCJ* and practice cessation-and-contemplation

correctly.

The following chapter explores the types of explanation included in the *ZFCJ*, further clarifying the nature of the *ZFCJ* as well as Zhanran's expertise as a commentator.

Chapter 2 The Commentarial Methods of the *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we gained a grasp of Zhanran's commentarial enterprise, in which the *ZFCJ* takes on a crucial topic for the Tiantai tradition of cessation-and-contemplation. It comes together with three other commentaries on the same base text – the *MHZG*. This observation highlights the importance of the *ZFCJ* in Zhanran's endeavour of keeping the Tiantai tradition, but also raises some further questions. This chapter and the next will focus on the question of how exactly the *ZFCJ* explains the *MHZG*. In other words, this is to ask what the commentarial methods of the *ZFCJ* are.

An illustration of how these commentarial methods are executed will demonstrate that the *ZFCJ* seeks both clarity and credibility in its explanation. Its clarity is achieved through the comprehensive and systematic arrangement of its commentarial approach, with its varied commentarial methods and organised pattern of how its explanation develops. It is also achieved through skilful treatment of three aspects on the level of content: these involve not only a more surface-level philological explanation and a deeper doctrinal interpretation of the *ZFCJ* but also convincing his readership of the reliability of his commentary and the superiority of the Tiantai tradition by providing argumentative evidence from external sources.

Although separately denoted here, the three aspects of explaining, interpretating and convincing are, in fact, not exclusive to each other: The philological explanation is essential for further interpretation of philosophical ideas, and the clarity created by such explanations also serves to convince the readers of their reliability. This also applies to the philosophical interpretation. The introduction of external sources is, on the other hand, not only essential to provide clear explanations and interpretations, but also relies on textual authority from external

sources. The discussion of these three aspects in this chapter and the next will further address the three key aims that Zhanran pursued in the *ZFCJ*, as summarised in the questions from the previous chapter,

(1) Establishing definitive interpretations of the *MHZG*.

(2) Ensuring that these interpretations could support meditative practice.

(3) Preserving and transmitting the Tiantai teachings.

This chapter in particular will illustrate the methods that are involved in the commentarial process of the *ZFCJ* that contributes to its clear, systematic and comprehensive explanation. The commentarial process of the *ZFCJ* involves different textual elements, ranging from whole chapters to individual characters, adding up to a systematic and comprehensive explication of the *MHZG*. Its explanation encompasses different layers, including (1) the marking of the different layers of content, (2) the mapping of the textual structure, (3) clarifying the underlying logic, (4) engaging with doctrinal explanation in question-and-answer format, (5) providing a reading guide for the readers and (6) editorial corrections. Those various methods combine to offer a clear explanation of the *MHZG*.

A discussion of the commentarial methods in the *ZFCJ* will further clarify its exact commentarial format, which needs to be clarified due to the nuanced differences within the commentary genre, and which shows its differences from Zhanran's other three commentaries on the *MHZG*. It also raises a more abstract issue about the nature of commentarial methods as tools and how we should approach them. Most of the commentarial methods in the *ZFCJ* have precedents in Zhiyi's writings and in earlier or contemporaneous commentarial literature. Zhanran's following of precedents, however, does not undermine his expertise as a commentator. On the contrary, his skilful use of those methods, as well as his deep understanding of commentarial approaches, demonstrate his expertise in commentarial practice.

Some of Zhanran's commentarial methods have particularly significant similarities to those in Zhiyi's fully developed exegetical system, most notably the

Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps 七番共解 (*Qifan gongjie*), so this resemblance provides stronger evidence of Zhanran's adherence to the Tiantai tradition. Here we point out these correspondences in a preliminary way; Zhanran's adherence to the Tiantai tradition on the methodological level will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Four.

One of Zhiyi's other commentaries on the *MHZG,* the *Zhiguan yili,* provides a summary of Zhiyi's exegetical principles, some of which appear to relate to the methods Zhanran himself employs in the *ZFCJ*. This work, therefore, serves as one of our resources for examining the relationship between Zhiyi's and Zhanran's methodology, as well as showing us Zhanran's deep understanding of exegesis in general. The *Zhiguan yili* will therefore be cited in connection with the relevant methods. The content and structure of this work will also be examined in detail in Chapter Four.

1. Location Indication

As it is a sub-commentary, writing the *ZFCJ* confronted Zhanran with the problem of how to effectively weave together the three different voices it included, namely Zhiyi's voice (the *MHZG*),[1] Zhanran's voice (his comments), and others' voices (external sources). As we will see, a set of expressions is used to distinguish those voices, which we will refer to as 'identifiers' in our discussion.

The term 'identifier' used here is inspired by Freschi's notion of 'marks' that signify quotations in Sanskrit texts of Indian philosophy, such as *ity uktam* and *iti manyate*, meaning 'it is said'.[2] In this study, however, due to the nature of the *ZFCJ* as

[1] It is possible that when Guanding 灌頂 was recording the *MHZG*, his voice was introduced to the text, but it is difficult to distinguish it from Zhiyi's voice. This chapter will not separate their voices unless they are differentiated by Zhanran, as the focus of this study is Zhanran's explanation of the *MHZG*, and in most cases, he perceived the *MHZG* (apart from the introduction, which is clearly attributed to Guanding) as Zhiyi's words.

[2] Elisa Freschi, 'The Reuse of Texts in Indian Philosophy: Introduction', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 43, no. 2 (2015): 91.

a sub-commentary, the term 'identifier' applies both to borrowings from external sources as well as to the content of the *MHZG*.

a) Introducing the Content of the *MHZG*

Each section of the *ZFCJ* starts with an indication of where the content that is being commented on can be found in the *MHZG*. The *ZFCJ* provides explanations of the *MHZG* following its structure, elucidating different units of the *MHZG* verbatim, including characters, glosses, phrases, sentences, and passages. This required Zhanran to develop a schema for including these contents to facilitate clear and effective writing that could satisfy his readership.

An annotated section in the *ZFCJ* can be as short as a lexical element or as long as a sentence. For shorter lexical elements such as characters, words and phrases, frequently used identifiers are *zhe* 者, *ye* 也, and *zi* 字.

Zhe 者 functions grammatically as a topic-initial marker that roughly means 'as for'. The character highlights the start of an explanation as well as the content that awaits explanation. It functions grammatically as a sentential topic marker, turning the part before it into a noun or noun-phrases as the subject for the following explanation.[3]

The grammatical particle *ye* 也 appears at the end of the comment, which can be seen as a sentence-final marker in case of its location in the sentence, or an assertive particle in case of its grammatical function. It is also functional in many other ways, such as expressing doubt, exclamation, or an imperative tone, but these functions are rarely found in the *ZFCJ*, where the marker is almost exclusively utilised for assertive factual statements.[4]

[3] This explanation is based on the definition of *zhe* found in Paul W. Kroll et al., *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, Third edition, newly revised and expanded (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 597, with my modification to allocate it within the context of the *ZFCJ*.

[4] As the *ZFCJ* is quite voluminous, there may be occasional cases where *ye* is utilised in the senses above that I missed. However, this will not affect our statement here in a significant sense, as it is used to make assertions in the majority of cases.

Although *zhe* 者 and *ye* 也 can be used independently, the example below shows an explanatory structure that features both of them, which is a typical form of a gloss, a well-established basic commentarial figure found across premodern Chinese texts.

> Case 1: [Annotated part] *zhe* 者, [comment].
> As for *yi*, it is to pour out liquor.
> Example 1: “挹”者，斟酌也。[5]

Zi 字 is a less frequently used identifier, literally meaning ‘the character’. It usually aids graphical and phonetic explanations of glossaries. For example,

> The character *ji* should be written with the *nü* 女 (female) radical (instead of ‘亻’, the *ren* [human] radical), which refers to female performers. [6]
> 伎字應從女，謂女藝也。[7]

Here, the difference of radicals is illustrated, making an editorial note. Such philological explanations occur quite frequently in the *ZFCJ* and, in fact, represent a commentarial method, the glossary definition. In the *ZFCJ*, nearly every explanation includes glosses for every character or term of significance, often to an exhaustive

[5] T46, no. 1912, p. 143b15

[6] The reason, as indicated by Zhanran, is that ‘the character *ji* with the *ren* radical has a harmful meaning and is not what the original content intended to mean.’ 從人者，害也，非今文意。(T46, no. 1912, p. 265b18). Here, Zhanran suggests that all the senses of the word *ji* 伎 are essentially harmful. However, while Zhanran applied this remark to *ji* 伎, it is actually *zhi* 忮 that denotes harmful traits such as brutality, ruthlessness, jealousy, and resentment. Although the two characters differ in pronunciation, their forms are visually similar; Zhanran was likely influenced by the loan usage 假借 (*jiajie*) of *ji* 伎 to denote *zhi* 忮 in the *Mao Shi* 毛詩 (Mao Commentary) on the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry), and thus mistakenly took *ji* 伎 to have the harmful connotation that properly belongs to *zhi* 忮.

[7] T46, no. 1912, p. 265b17–18.

degree. This type of glossing often draws on Chinese character dictionaries and other types of Chinese non-Buddhist writings, a point to be examined further in the following chapter, where I summarise this exhaustive glossing practice under the rubric of 'philological exposition'. This strategy is not unique to Zhanran; as Buswell has also noted with regard to the Korean Buddhist exegete Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617–686), 'Sinitic Buddhist exegetes learned to gloss most every term of significance in the text' in order to bridge 'the immense gulf in religious and cultural understanding'.[8] However, Zhanran's case differs from Wŏnhyo's case in significant ways.

Wŏnhyo's commentary is based on the *Vajrasamadhi Sūtra*. The text is now recognised by scholars as Korean in origin, but Wŏnhyo assumed it to be a Chinese translation of an Indian text,[9] which led him to contextualise the reader accordingly and provide substantial explanations framed within an Indian setting. By contrast, the *ZFCJ* is a sub-commentary on a base text authored by a Chinese writer, replete with indigenous allusions. Given the nature of this base text, such allusions would presumably have required less bridging for its intended readership than Wŏnhyo's commentary. Nevertheless, the *ZFCJ* exhibits an unusually high density of glosses. In this respect, the situation described by Buswell does not fully apply to the extensive glossing in the *ZFCJ*; its pattern is not purely a response to pedagogical need but more plausibly explained by the influence of Chinese traditional exegesis, known as *xungu* 訓詁 (lit. explicate the meaning of ancient texts with contemporary expressions).[10]

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[8] Robert E Buswell Jr, 'Wŏnhyo: Buddhist Commentator "Par Excellence"', *Journal of Korean Religions* 8, no. 1 (2017): 142. This paper is an adaptation of Buswell's earlier monograph, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment: Wonhyo's Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi-Sutra (Kumgang Sammaegyong Non), Collected Works of Wonhyo* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), so the same content can be found in this work as well.

[9] Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 453–54.

[10] As pointed out by Matsumori, a traditional style of exegesis is also found in Zhanran's other commentary, the *Fahua xuanyi shiqian* 法華玄義釋籤 (T33, no. 1717). Hideyuki Matsumori 松森秀幸, 'Tannen Hokke Genji *Shakusen* no In'yō Bunken' 湛然『法華玄義釈籤』の引用文献, *Bulletin of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy*, no. 22 (2006): 196–175.

Up to this point, the discussion is at the level of individual characters or terms. When the focus shifts to sentences or larger textual units, the commentary necessarily moves beyond lexical elucidation to summarising the content and purpose of the unit as a whole, which is also a regular commentarial step in the *ZFCJ*. When the annotated part is lengthy, the structure changes to '[Annotated part] *deng zhe* 等者' (… and so on) or indicates its range by '[Annotated part starting point] *zhi* 至 [Annotated part ending point] *zhe*' (from … to …) to abbreviate the annotated part. The same approach of copying the commented content in the commentary when it is short and abridging it when it is lengthy is observed in earlier sūtra commentaries such as Daosheng's 道生 (355–434) *Miaofa lianhua jing shu* 妙法蓮花經疏 (Annotation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*; X27, no. 577).[11] Identifiers such as *qu* 去 (since) and *xia* (below)下 are also used to introduce original content that is abbreviated from the *MHZG.*

> [The meaning of the passage] from 'dangzhi (one should know)' to 'jianfo (witness the Buddha)', [is that] hearing teachings from the Buddha in the past and now hearing them again can be equated to the witness of the Buddha.
> "'當知'至'見佛'"者，昔從佛聞，今復重聞，義同見佛。[12]

> Below the phrase 'zhaorun', [the *MHZG*] successively introduces four parables to compare the mutual support [of the understanding and the meditative practice].
> "照潤"下，續舉四譬，以譬相資。[13]

The identifiers above refer to the content of the *MHZG* in the *ZFCJ*. Identifying

[11] Hiroshi Kanno, 'Chinese Buddhist Sutra Commentaries of the Early Period', *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University [Academic Year 2002]* 6 (2003): 308.

[12] T46, no. 1912, p. 184c17–19.

[13] T46, no. 1912, p. 278c24.

portions of the *MHZG* helps readers quickly locate the corresponding sections, but this still requires either access to the original text or prior familiarity with it. The omission or abbreviation of the original text appears to presuppose a readership already well-acquainted with the source material and further implies that the commentary is intended to be read in conjunction with, rather than independently of, the root text.

Indirect indications that only give the location of a passage without presenting its content in the *MHZG* cause even more difficulties. Indirect indication uses expressions such as *chu si ju* 初四句 (the initial four sentences), *ci er ju* 次二句 (the following two sentences), and *chu zhi si zi* 初之四字 (the first four characters). This kind of indication is often given in structural explanations which divide a paragraph of the *MHZG* and summarise each section of it. This relates to the commentarial step of 'structural distinction', which will be discussed in the next section.

It is noteworthy that this way of intentionally condensing or skipping portions of the base text is also found in the *MHZG*, which Zhanran summarised in the *Zhiguan yili* under the label 'Indication of Omission' (*zhu yunyun zhe* 注云云者) as one of the exegetical approaches of the *MHZG*. Zhanran's explicit classification of this approach suggests that such treatment needed to be highlighted for the reader's attention, implying that it had not yet become a commonplace practice.

This practice of incorporating excerpts from the base text in the commentary, as mentioned in Chapter 1, manifests the formal shift from interlinear sūtra commentary to expository sūtra commentary. Kanno further suggests that it might have been due to the expansion of the exegetical focus from 'superficial matters' to 'underlying themes of the text' and the need to provide a segmental analysis 科判 (kepan).[14] Kanno seems to regard the appearance of segmental analysis as a

[14] Kanno, 'Chinese Buddhist Sutra Commentaries', 302–303. The form of interlinear commentary is not entirely abandoned, though: see, for example, Chuyuan's 處元(1030–1120) *Zhiguan yili suishi* 止觀義例隨釋 (Sequential Explanation of the *Meaning and Principles of Mohe zhiguan*; X56, no. 923), a sub-commentary on Zhanran's *Zhiguan yili*.

consequence of this shift, but this is difficult to determine. This point will be addressed in the following discussion on the commentarial step of 'Structural Distinction'.

Whether directly or indirectly, references to the base text are interwoven with the commentary by means of specific identifiers. Each comment is always initiated by such identifiers; interpretation can then follow, whether as a gloss or as a summary of the annotated section. The use of these identifiers, as well as the leading role of these formulae, exemplifies a certain degree of formality. It gives the *ZFCJ* a regular form and thereby helps readers to keep track of what they are reading. However, readers still need to refer to the *MHZG* to follow the *ZFCJ*, unless they have a considerable familiarity with the text. In either case, readers must have access to the text of the *MHZG*. This indicates that the readership is selective.

b) Quotation

The identifiers are also used to signify quotations. This involves a process of adding content from external sources while differentiating those sources from the other two voices – the *MHZG* and Zhanran's comments.

The use of quotations in the *ZFCJ* involves complicated issues regarding intertextuality. The number of sources is, first of all, incredibly large and belongs to a wide range of genres. How they are processed differently by the commentator and play different roles in the interpretation are issues worth exploring, but will be left to the next chapter. Here in this section, we will focus on how they are woven into the text.

The quotations in the *ZFCJ* were selected by two authors: Zhiyi and Zhanran. The quotations used in the *MHZG* are often unmarked, which means that they are not clearly distinguished from the rest of the text. There is a possibility for readers who have limited familiarity with those quoted lines to misperceive them as Zhiyi's own words. In other cases, Zhiyi marks the quotation but does not identify its source. To improve on this, the hidden and unidentified quotations in the *MHZG* are traced

and clearly indicated in the *ZFCJ*. The word *yin* 引, literally meaning 'to quote', is specifically used for this purpose. For example,

> The phrase below 'jing yun' (the sūtra says), is quoted [in the *MHZG*] from the *Pañcaviṃśati Sūtra* to prove that the quality of indeterminacy does not cause hindrance.
> "經云"下引《大品》，證無記不障。[15]

In this example, Zhanran indicates that the content after 'the sūtra says' was quoted by Zhiyi from the *Pañcaviṃśati Sūtra*. He also summarises the purpose of this quotation as to prove that *wuji*, namely *avyākṛta or* 'neutral actions' that are without good or evil karmic effects, will not hinder the practice of concentration. After identifying the source of Zhiyi's quotation, Zhanran will often quote the corresponding content in detail or paraphrase it if it is too lengthy. Zhanran also actively selects quotes from other sources to enrich the text. In these two circumstances, the quotation is selected by Zhanran. Zhanran's own quotations are always accompanied by the identifier *yun* 云. The identifier is a verb that initiates a statement, identical to the function of 'say' or 'indicate' in English. For example,

Case 1: [Title] *yun* 云：[quote]。
[Title] says [quote].

[15] T46, no. 1912, p. 390a8–9. Swanson translates *wuji* here as 'neutral actions' and points out that the corresponding part of the *Pañcaviṃśati Sūtra* is found in T8, no. 223, p. 368b17. See Swanson, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 1294. *Wuji* 無記 is the translation of *avyākṛta*. It is one of the three moral categories to evaluate activities. While the other two categories can result in good or evil karmic effects, *avyākṛta* is neutral, with no consequences, whether positive or negative, and thus will not hinder concentration. After this quotation in the example above, Zhanran cites another source to support the teaching that *avyākṛta* will not hinder concentration, because rapid switching between distraction and re-entering of concentration is an established way of *samādhi,* as in the *Shizi fenxun sanmei* 獅子奮迅三昧 (Eng. the lion-like, strenuous samādhi; Skt. *siṃha-vijṛmbhita-samādhi*).

Sources are not always cited with exact quotations from their content, however. Sometimes only their titles are mentioned, indicating similar cases can be found in these references. For example, when explaining the correlation between the constant rotation of the 'twelve causes and conditions' 十二因緣 (*shier yinyuan*) and the repetition of the 'three paths' 三道 (*sandao*), the *ZFCJ* lists several other references such as the *Da zhi du lun* 大智度論, the *Shier yinyuan lun* 十二因緣論 (T32, no. 1651), the *Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 (T27, no. 1545), and the *Fo shuo shidi jing* 佛說十地經 (T10, no. 287) as evidence.[16]

In analysing the entire text of the *ZFCJ*, I found about 1,700 citations. Considering this large number, it would not be an overstatement to say that Zhanran made every external citation explicit. Throughout the *ZFCJ*, Zhanran's endeavour to identify Zhiyi's quotations and signal his own quotations demonstrates his regard for the textual foundation.

We can also see a connection between Zhanran's and Zhiyi's exegetical methods, as the use of quotations, or 'quoting the proofs' 引證 (*yinzheng*), is the second of Zhiyi's Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps. This liking for quotations is also demonstrated in the first set of Zhiyi's exegetical principles summarised by Zhanran's *Zhiguan yili*. Except for the sixth point, all the other nine points in this set explain the principles that guided the borrowing of external sources in the *MHZG*, which we will explore further in the following chapter.

We have now discussed Zhanran's ways of indicating two different voices, the voice of the *MHZG* and the external voices conveyed by the quotations. What remains is the voice of Zhanran himself. Yet his authorial voice is, in fact, already subtly articulated and embedded within the other two voices: The excerpts of the original text that are highlighted reflect Zhanran's thoughts about which content

[16] T46, no. 1912, p. 239c25–26. *Shier yinyuan lun* 十二因緣論: the *Treatise on the Twelve Limbs of Dependent Arising*. *Posha* 婆沙: an abbreviation of the *Abhidharma-Mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*. The full title in Chinese is *Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論. *Shidi jing* 十地經: the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*. In Chinese, the *Fo shuo shidi jing* 佛說十地經 (T10, no. 287).

needs explanation; additionally, using parts of the original text to indicate which section an annotation corresponds to, also involves the issue of how to segment the original text, which further reflects Zhanran's perspective.

As for how to evaluate Zhanran's use of identifiers to distinguish different voices, it is hard to conclude that it showcases the originality of Zhanran's commentarial methodology. Zhanran did not invent this methodology, nor did he coin the terms he used for it. The identifiers are descriptive words that are used in the same technical sense as in earlier texts and were widely used in earlier commentaries as well, whether Chinese indigenous or Buddhist. If the practice was common, then why is it important, after all, for us to pay attention to these identifiers? This issue will be examined in greater detail in the discussion that follows.[17]

2. Structural Distinctions

In our discussion of the commentarial step 'location indication', we observed that when Zhanran introduces content from the *MHZG* into the *ZFCJ*, this is often accompanied by a note on the structure of the *MHZG* and a summary of the content and purpose of the section at hand. Such structural explanations occur across different textual layers: in the *ZFCJ*, as we have discussed above, on smaller units of individual paragraphs to larger divisions, such as chapters of the base text. Being a sub-commentary in nature, apart from explaining the structure of the *MHZG*, the *ZFCJ* also demonstrates its own structure. Whether applied to the *MHZG* or to the *ZFCJ* itself, this kind of structural distinction is consistently placed at the beginning of each explanatory unit and addresses not only the general structure but also the

[17] Freschi reflected on the significance of citation studies. Elisa Freschi, 'The Reuse of Texts in Indian Philosophy', 86–7. Matsumori did not, but his research focus on the philological perspective demonstrates what he considers to be the importance of citation studies. See Matsumori, 'Tannen Hokke Genji *Shakusen* no In'yō Bunken', 196–75. Matsumori and Freschi view the significance of studying identifiers mainly in terms of their utility for identifying quotations in other research, while the present study approaches them as a method in their own right.

organisation of smaller subdivisions or micro-structural elements. I will present several examples to illustrate this in what follows.

In some cases, the distinction specifies the number of parts that make up the content in question, as in the way the *ZFCJ* explains that the ten kinds of non-arising and arising indicated in the *MHZG* are divided into three categories, 'the meanings contained inside can be divided into three' 於中分為三意.[18] Such distinctions may also indicate the sequence of the parts within a section and summarise the content of each part. For example,

> In this section, [the *MHZG*] first elucidates the 'Transmission by the Golden Mouth [of the Buddha]',[19] then illuminates the 'Transmission by the Teachers of the Present Time'.
> 於中先明金口祖承，次明今師展轉相承。[20]

At times, the *ZFCJ* goes further by summarising the function of each part, as the example below shows,

> The part from 'if the passenger hears' to 'the original tenet' is a general answer …… The part from 'the great awakening' to 'overcome the Māra' responds to [the three categories] respectively.
> "行人若聞"至"宗元"者，總答也。……從"大覺"至"降魔"者，別答也。[21]

The comment points out how these answers in the *MHZG* are made on different levels. In doing so, its explanation goes beyond the surface level into an analysis of the logic behind the content of the *MHZG*.

The above examples exhibit subtle differences between enumerative

[18] T46, no. 1912, p. 323b19.

[19] See the entry '*Jinkou* 金口' in Hodous and Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 283.

[20] T46, no. 1912, p. 145a21–22.

[21] T46, no. 1912, p. 144a1–5.

indications (stating how many parts there are), descriptive indications (summarising what each part contains), and functional indications (explaining what each part does within the argument). In this use of structural distinctions in the *ZFCJ*, whether they concern the overall structure of the base text or go deep into each individual passage, these structural presentations at the beginning help readers to grasp the structure of the *MHZG* and follow its argument step by step. They emphasise the key points in the *MHZG*, helping the readers to focus on the most important information, thereby aiding their understanding and reinforcing their impression of the topic at hand. This helps to establish normative explanations of the structure of the *MHZG*, which in turn prevents misunderstandings of it.

Where does Zhanran's practice of providing structural indications come from? We can already see the same approach in the *MHZG*. Zhiyi uses the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps and another exegetical scheme named the Five Categories of Profound Meaning 五重玄義 (*wu chong xuan yi*) as two major tools to develop the *MHZG* and further summarises their respective functions: the former serves as a 'general explanation' 通釋 (*tongshi*), while the latter functions as a 'respective explanation' 別釋 (*bieshi*). There is a structural distinction between the two tools. Zhiyi's use of this method also appears in his other commentaries, such as the *Jinguangming jing xuanyi* 金光明經玄義 (Profound Meanings of the *Golden Light Sūtra*; T39, no. 1783) and the *Renwang huguo bore jing shu* 仁王護國般若經疏(T33, no. 1705), where he explicates the function or subject of specific sections of their base texts.

The explanation of structure is tied to an important method in Buddhist exegesis, *kepan* 科判 (segmental analysis). *Kepan* constitutes a functional indication, and more importantly, its summary of the functions is marked by a specialised term. This differentiates its nature from the more general forms of structural indication, such as the enumerative and descriptive types discussed above, as its methodological and historical implications go beyond the mere organisation of content. *Kepan* may have originated as a procedural step adapted for sūtra preaching

lectures 講經 (*jiangjing*), and was subsequently recorded in written form as part of commentarial works.[22]

Kepan exists in multiple versions, and Zhanran incorporates more than one of these into the *ZFCJ*. Zhanran uses the *kepan* method in the introduction to the *ZFCJ* to divide the *MHZG* into three parts, which resemble Dao'an's tripartite schema of *kepan*: (1) *xu fen* 序分 (introduction), which gives the setting of the discourse (location, participants, occasion); (2) *zhengzong fen* 正宗分 (main body), which consists in the discourse proper, and (3) *liutong fen* 流通分 (eulogy), which describes the joy of the listeners and the promise of the spread of the dharma.[23] Zhanran also adopts two versions of *kepan* formulated by Zhiyi that we mentioned above, namely the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps and the Five Categories of Profound Meaning. However, it is noteworthy that the different versions of *kepan*, including Dao'an's tripartite classification schema and Zhiyi's two versions, were initially applied exclusively to *sūtra* interpretation. Zhanran's application of them suggests that the scope of this commentarial method was eventually broadened to include Chinese Buddhist texts in general.

Moreover, while *kepan* initially emerged within commentarial literature, it also came to function as an independent textual genre in its own right, known as *kewen* 科文 (segmental analysis of literature). As noted in Chapter 1, several works in Zhanran's oeuvre were composed in this format, which can likewise be regarded as instances of his application of *kepan*. *Kewen*, in the form of graphic charts or 'scriptural cartography' as suggested in Buswell's paper, maps out the narrative structure of its base text.[24] It is possibly rooted in homiletics, or mnemonic aids for oral interpretation.[25]

Although I noted that *kepan* stands out from other more general methods of structural indication and allows us to trace connections among its different versions,

[22] Shindatsu Chijun, 'Gojū gen gi no kenkyū' (PhD diss., Taisho University, 2009), 41.

[23] Translation and explanation quoted from Mayer, 'Commentarial Literature', 169.

[24] Buswell Jr, 'Wŏnhyo', 143.

[25] Mayer, 'Commentarial Literature', 168.

the debates in current scholarship concerning its origin show that it still shares the problem of methodological originality with those more general methods. For example, scholars suggested that it may have originated from *zhangju* 章句 (lit. chapter and sentence), a traditional Chinese exegetical method that separates texts at the chapter and sentence levels and annotates them according to each segment.[26] Here I do not intend to propose a new theory about the origin of *kepan*, but rather to use this case to consider how one might approach the study of a 'method' and, by extension, to reflect on how we assess Zhanran's mastery in the art of commentary.

The larger question concerns how we understand the very nature of commentarial methods. While the development of new methods may indeed reflect one's exegetical mastery, just as original and insightful theoretical analyses are often valued in scholarly work, a commentator's mastery should not be overstated in terms of innovation alone.

The examples discussed so far, from location indicators and structural distinctions to the uncertain origins of *kepan* and even the use of the question-and-answer format, which will be addressed below, all point to a more complex reality: Firstly, methodological development does not follow a sequential and traceable 'pedigree'. Secondly, while the uniqueness of some methodologies is evident, such as Wang Bi's 王弼 (226–249) Interlocking Paralleled Style,[27] the distinctiveness of more

[26] Sun, for example, suggests that before *kepan*, Chinese Buddhists used the *zhangju* method in their scriptural commentaries, as evidenced by the *Shihui zhangju* 十慧章句. Shangyong Sun, 'Jingxue zhangju yu fojing kepan ji Han Wei Liuchao wenxue lilun', *Journal of Northwest University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)* 39, no. 4 (July 2009): 23. However, since the *Shihui zhangju* is no longer extant, we cannot confirm whether it truly belongs to the *zhangju* genre, especially given that the category *zhangju* has multiple meanings.

Assandri also argues that the *zhangju* and *kepan* are different through a comparison of the *Heshang gong Commentary* with the *Laozi heshang gong zhangju* 老子河上公章句, suggesting that while *zhangju* divides and summarises the base text by chapters and sentences, *kepan* further divides the text into paragraphs as well as sentences. Friederike Assandri, 'Structure and Meaning in the Interpretation of the Laozi: Cheng Xuanying's Hermeneutic Toolkit and His Interpretation of Dao as a Compassionate Savior', *Religions* 13, no. 4 (April 2022): 5–6.

[27] Interlocking Paralleled Style is a term introduced by Rudolf Wagner to describe the structural

commentarial methods is often difficult to assert. This is understandable, considering that the consensus on what constitutes a clear explanation is inherently cross-temporal and cross-cultural; indeed, the act of commentary itself rests on such shared assumptions.

In light of these two observations, an exclusive pursuit of the 'originality' of a commentarial step risks leading us into a cul-de-sac. However, this is not to criticise the research into methodological developments of Chinese Buddhist exegesis, but rather to highlight some points to sharpen the methodology in such discussions.

One point is that exegetical innovations generally take shape within textual traditions. They may arise by adapting techniques from other traditions, but in most cases can be assessed most effectively through comparison with other commentaries in the same tradition. In Zhanran's case, his innovations would thus have to be measured against the commentarial methods of Zhiyi, on which he clearly builds. For this reason, each commentarial step in this chapter is analysed in comparison with Zhiyi's exegetical methods.

The other point concerns the commentators' reworking of the available 'repertoire' of commentarial methods. The term 'repertoire' is a borrowing from the study of Cultural Sociology, which is used interchangeably with 'toolkit' to stress that cultural action is neither rigidly determined nor completely open-ended, but provides 'the characteristic repertoire' for the agents to selectively mobilise their actions.[28] This theory is helpful for describing the shaping of Zhanran's commentarial approach, as his commentarial approach shows how exegetes use historically available repertoires to shape their interpretations, rather than inventing new

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feature of the argumentation in the *Laozi* that presents ideas in a mirrored way, pairing clauses or phrases across a passage while interweaving elements from the first half into the second in structures such as A-B/A-B, A-B/B-A or A-B/(other clauses or phrases)/B-A. Wang Bi's awareness of this style facilitates his interpretation of the *Laozi*. See Wagner, *The Craft of a Chinese Commentator*, 62–96.

[28] Ann Swidler, 'Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies', *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (April 1986): 284. For a reflection on the repertoire theory, see Ilana Friedrich Silber, 'Pragmatic Sociology as Cultural Sociology: Beyond Repertoire Theory?' *European Journal of Social Theory* 6, no. 4 (2003): 427–49.

methods from scratch. Zhanran's ability to skilfully employ varied commentarial methods to address the base text from multiple angles also demonstrates his expertise as a commentator.

3. Reasoning

An important part of the interpretative process of the *ZFCJ* is the elucidation of the logic of the statements made in the *MHZG*. In this kind of interpretation, expressions such as *gu* 故 (therefore, thus; since), *shi gu* 是故 (for this reason), *gu zhi* 故知 (thus one knows that …), *suoyi* 所以 (the reason why, that by which), *ji* 即 (namely) are utilised to draw out the reasons and the consequences, and how they are connected. Some frequently used formulae are,

> Case 1: The reason why [consequence] is because [reason(s)].
> *Suoyi* 所以 [consequence] *zhe* 者，[reason(s)] *gu* 故。
> Case 2: [Reason(s)]. This is the reason why it says [consequence].
> [Reason(s)]. *Gu yun* 故云 [consequence]也。
> Case 3: Since [reason(s)], therefore it is said (by the *MHZG*) that [consequence].
> [Reason(s)] *gu* 故, *yue* 曰 [consequence].

I will draw on an example here to show how this kind of interpretation is conducted.

> Once the sublime practice is complete, one takes up teaching to benefit others; hence, it is said [in the *MHZG*] that 'it is not merely self-practice'.
> 妙行既满，起教益他。故云非但自行而已。[29]

[29] T46, no. 1912, p. 279a5–6.

This passage explains why the *MHZG* says that the sublime practice is not merely a private undertaking: once that level is attained, one acquires the capacity to instruct and benefit others. It is important to point out that Zhanran's unpacking of the logical relationships in the *MHZG* not only resolves the challenges its readers face in reading the *MHZG*. At the same time, it creates additional interpretive space for a deeper grasp of the work, as in the way the example here reveals the mutual relationship between meditative practice and the teaching of doctrine.

A discussion of reasoning is found in the *shengqi* 生起 (tracing the order of the discourse) and *kaihe* 開合 (analysis and synthesis) in Zhiyi's Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps, with the former tracing the order of the discourse and the latter indicating the 'unfolding' and 'folding' of the meaning of different layers.

4. Posing Questions

The use of questions to elicit answers can be seen as a variant of the previous method for illustrating the logical relationships in the text. Raising questions, however, can capture the readers' attention and stimulate their thinking. For example, when explaining the idea of the 'eye of wisdom' 慧眼 (*huiyan*), the interpretation is supported by the use of a question.

> Therefore, in Chapter 45 of the *Dalun* (=*Da zhidu lun* 大智度論), it is indicated that 'The Buddha does not perceive everything through the eye of wisdom'. Then why does the *MHZG* elaborate on how to view through the eye of wisdom [if the aim is to be enlightened as the Buddha was]? The answer is: When one is enlightened, the eye of wisdom becomes the Buddha's eye. Thus, the four kinds of eyes lose their original names, just as when rivers join the sea, they lose their original names.
>
> 故論四十五料簡云："佛見一切非是慧眼。"云何而言慧眼見耶？答：慧

眼成時轉名佛眼，乃至四眼失本名字，如河入海失本河名。[30]

Questions are also used in a rhetorical manner to doubt the feasibility of a proposition in the absence of certain conditions. For example,

> Without the Four Modes of Instruction, how would it be possible to comprehend the ways to practice oneself and thus teach others?[31]
> 若無四悉，將何以曉自行化他？[32]

Here, unlike in the previous case, the answer is not provided. It is omitted simply because it is unnecessary – the question itself has already clearly implied the answer.

The use of questions is also the fifth step of Zhiyi's Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps to interpret the *Fahua xuanyi*. That part is written in the form of a dialogue, consisting of a series of questions and answers. As suggested by Zhiyi's Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps, the posing of questions will stimulate the

[30] T46, no. 1912, p. 230a21–24.

[31] *Si xi* 四悉 is an abbreviation of the *si xitan* 四悉檀, meaning the 'four siddhānta' or 'four modes of instruction'. The concept refers to the four modes of explaining the causes and conditions from the four different perspectives that the Buddha adopted in teaching: the worldly 世界 (*shijie*), the individual 各各為人 (*gege weiren*), the therapeutic 對治 (*duizhi*), and the supreme 第一義 (*diyi yi*). Luis O. Gomez, 'Buddhist Books and Texts: Exegesis and Hermeneutics', in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1272.

The meaning of *siddhānta* in the context of the 'four siddhāntas' differs from its use in Indian traditions. In Sanskrit, it literally means 'conclusion' or 'tenet', and may refer to philosophical positions, to the schools defined by those positions, or to systematic works that set out and evaluate them. Such works were typically polemical rather than neutral. Śāntarakṣita's (725–788) *Tattvasaṃgraha*, for instance, surveys rival views in order to establish the superiority of the Madhyamaka position. The genre reached fuller development in Tibet, where *siddhānta* evolved into increasingly elaborate doxographical classifications of Indian, and later also Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian Buddhist traditions. Buswell and Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 816–17.

[32] T46, no. 1912, p. 232a5–6.

'mind of wisdom' 慧心 (*huixin*), connecting the exegetical method to a meditative practice.[33] Considering Zhanran's familiarity with the *Faxuan xuanyi* and Zhiyi's exegetical schemata, it would not be surprising if his use of questions to support the interpretation was also influenced by Zhiyi.

The use of questions can be traced back to Indian Buddhist writings, many of which, especially the *sūtras*, are framed in the form of dialogues between the Buddha and his disciples, which reflects their oral origins. Asking questions and answering them is a significant method in the teaching of Buddhism, as denoted by its Sanskrit term, *vyākaraṇa*. The *Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 (T27, no. 1545), for example, offers a summary of four occasions where *vyākaraṇa* appear in the sūtras, including disciples asking the Buddha questions 弟子問如來記說 (dizi wen rulai ji shuo), the Buddha questioning disciples 如來問弟子記說 (rulai wen dizi ji shuo), disciples questioning each other 弟子問弟子記說 (dizi wen dizi ji shuo), and dialogues occurring with heavenly beings 化諸天等問記 (hua zhutian deng wen ji).[34] Also, as suggested by the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (T25, no. 1509), the Buddha has four ways of answering the questions called *caturdhā vyākaraṇam*, including the direct answer 定答 (*ding da*), the discriminating answer 分別義答 (*fenbieyi da*), answering a question with a question 反問答 (*fanwen da*), and answering with silence 置答 *(zhi da*).[35]

In other intellectual traditions, the Q&A format is equally significant, as seen in the *Analects* and Socratic questioning. Intriguingly, some evidence indicates that Confucian texts may have derived from records of oral instruction.[36] This raises the possibility that posing questions, as an exegetical method, could originate from the textualisation of oral instruction. As discussed in Chapter One, oral transmission

[33] T33, no. 1716, p. 682a14–15.

[34] T27, no. 1545, p. 659c28–660a1.

[35] T25, no. 1509, p. 253b14–15.

[36] For example, drawing on two recovered manuscripts, Poli and Li argue that the practice of collecting sayings attributed to Confucius can be dated back to ca. 300 BCE. Maddalena Poli and Yumeng Li, 'New Manuscript Evidence on the Formation of the Analects: The Warring States Anhui University *Zhongni Said and the Wangjiazui *Kongzi Said', *Early China*, 23 May 2025, 1–41.

played a role in Zhanran's life, whether hearing lectures or giving lectures or lessons himself; this may well have been a source for the questions he posed.

5. Reading Guide

Zhanran offers guidance on how to read the *MHZG* correctly. This guidance was required by the features of premodern Chinese that originally had no punctuation. It was up to readers to figure out where to pause in a sentence. As Chinese texts are written without spaces between words, this may lead to ambiguity that results in multiple ways of reading or causes misunderstandings. Therefore, to make sure that the sentences in the *MHZG* are divided and comprehended, Zhanran provides guides on where to pause. For example,

> Those who read this text should take the character *liang* as the end of the phrase.
> 讀此文者應以"良"字而為句末。[37]

Zhanran points out that the corresponding sentence in the *MHZG* should stop at the character *liang* 良. To clarify the difference, we compare Zhanran's suggested punctuation and the problematic punctuation.

The Original Content	書言生知者上學而次良法門浩妙為天真獨朗為從藍而青。[38]
The Wrong Punctuation	書言。生知者上。學而次。良法門浩妙…… The Book says, 'Those who are born with knowledge are the uppermost, those who acquire it through learning

[37] T46, no. 1912, p. 143c16–17.

[38] T46, no. 1911, p. 1a11–13.

	are next.' The good Dharma-gate (=Buddha's teaching) is vast and subtle.
Zhanran's Punctuation	書言。生知者上。學而次良。法門浩妙…… The Book says, 'Those who are born with knowledge are the uppermost, those who acquire it through learning are the next best.' The Dharma-gate (=Buddha's teaching) is vast and subtle.

Table 6 The Differences Caused by Punctuations

If read with the wrong punctuation, *ci* 次 and *liang* 良 are separated, and *liang* serves as an adjective for *famen*, namely the 'Dharma-gate' or 'the Buddha's teaching'. With the correct punctuation, however, *ci* 次 and *liang* 良 are read together as 'the next best', leaving *famen* without a modifier.

As can be seen from the two translations in the table, the differences in punctuation only lead to slight variations in meaning, and they do not significantly impact the comprehension of the doctrine. Despite this, Zhanran addressed and corrected such errors, highlighting his attention to detail. Moreover, this indicates that grammatical issues could have contributed to misunderstandings of *MHZG* at that time. This reading guidance has a corrective function and prevents the misreading of the *MHZG* from spreading.

6. Editorial Corrections

The *ZFCJ* also corrects editorial mistakes. The previously mentioned example about the characters *ji* 伎 and *zhi* 忮 demonstrates this function. I present another example below,[39]

[39] Examples are also found in [188b17–18], [189c11–14], [202a3–4], [216a1–4], [302b4], [340c4], [346c29], [352a29–b2], [367a20–21], [374b27], [375b24], [387a26], [398b14], [399c26–27], [404c18–21], [407c26], [415c25], [416c21–22], [419c4–5], [420c3], [441a17], [443b20].

For the word *mou-dun* 牟楯, the character *mou* 牟 should be written as *mao* 矛 or [in its homophonous written form] *mao* 鍪, which indicates a kind of weapon that is two *zhang* (approx. 5 metres) in length and erected on a war chariot. The character 楯 should be written as *dun* 盾, which is also a kind of weapon, namely a side shield. The *dun* 楯 used here denotes a barrier or railing, while *mou* 牟 here refers to the mooing of cattle; neither meaning aligns with the intended meaning in this context.

“牟楯”者，“牟”字應作“矛”，或作“鍪”，兵器也，長二丈，建於兵車。“楯”字應作“盾”，亦是兵器，即旁牌也。此“楯”是欄楯字耳，此牟是牛鳴也，並非文意。[40]

This example shows how Zhanran points out the problematic use of the characters *mou* 牟 and *dun* 楯 and suggests options that fit the context better. His grasp of nuanced distinctions in vocabulary demonstrates not only Zhanran’s attention to detail in understanding the *MHZG* but also his philological expertise in Chinese.

Editorial corrections were likely out of consideration for the dissemination of the text. It is noteworthy that in the current edition of the *MHZG* in the Taishō canon, the passage corresponding to the above example no longer contains the word *mou-dun* 牟楯,[41] which has been replaced with *mao-dun* 矛盾, the word Zhanran suggested was correct.[42] The word *mou-dun* 牟楯, however, can still be found in other texts, such as Fabao’s 法寶 *Jushe lun shu* 俱舍論疏 (Commentary on the *Abhidharmakośabhāsya*).[43] This may suggest that Zhanran’s editorial corrections played a role in updating the *MHZG* text.

Editorial corrections do not appear as a particular method in Zhiyi’s exegetical

[40] T46, no. 1912, p. 352a29–b3.

[41] T46, no. 1911, p. 82c20–21.

[42] T41, no. 1822, p. 644b20.

[43] T41, no. 1822, p. 554c2.

schemata but were not an uncommon part of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature. Dao'an's *Ren ben yusheng jing zhu* includes editorial corrections of the translated *Mahānidāna-sūtra,* pointing out missing characters or parts and wrongly written characters.[44]

Concluding Remarks

The foregoing discussion has centred on two main foci: the methods Zhanran used to address the commentarial goals outlined at the outset of the *ZFCJ*, and how we should understand these methods.

First, let us revisit the three key aspects that Zhanran aimed to fulfil through the *ZFCJ*, as summarised in the questions from the previous chapter, in order to clarify how his methods operate. The three key aims were,

(1) Establishing definitive interpretations of the *MHZG*.

(2) Ensuring that these interpretations could support meditative practice.

(3) Preserving and transmitting the Tiantai teachings.

The three aspects all rely on clear explanations: interpretations cannot be definitive unless they are clear; meditative practice cannot be well guided if the supporting theory and the process of its application are not elucidated; and explanations that are unclear do not merit preservation or transmission. Yet, ironically, how to achieve 'clarity' is itself not entirely clear. Zhanran's commentarial methods illustrate the ways in which clarity of explanation may be attained.

The *ZFCJ* shows us that clarity is achieved through a systematic approach, reflected in the ordered sequence of commentarial methods from weaving the base text and external sources into the commentary to providing further explanations, as well as in the organisation of textual structure and clarification of logical flow. Clarity is also achieved through comprehensiveness, reflected in an all-encompassing range of different commentarial methods. Finally, clarity is achieved through guidance to

[44] Yanqiu Tu, 'Kepan chuxian qian zhongguo fojiao zhujing fangfa yanjiu', *Foguang xuebao* New 4, no. 2 (1 July 2018): 34–38.

the reader and through editorial corrections. Such clarity of explanation not only demonstrates Zhanran's thoroughness as a commentator but also serves to support the Tiantai tradition.

Second, we saw the similarity between Zhiyi's hermeneutical methods, especially the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps, and the commentarial methods in the *ZFCJ*. Those commentarial methods were not entirely unique in Chinese Buddhist exegesis at the time, as equivalent and similar cases can be found in other Chinese exegetical texts. This, however, as we suggested, does not lessen the importance of Zhanran's commentarial approach or the necessity of studying it, because his application of these methods still demonstrates his agency in developing the most suitable commentarial plan for the *MHZG*. We have also noted his summary of Zhiyi's exegetical principles in the *Zhiguan yili*, which reflects his more abstract, meta-level understanding of commentarial practice, demonstrating his expertise as a commentator and his methodological contribution to the Tiantai tradition. This point will be explored further in Chapter Four.

Thus, the current chapter has explored the ways in which Zhanran explains and interprets the text of the *MHZG*. His commentarial methods can also contribute to a further goal, that is, to reveal the deeper meaning of the *MHZG* through doctrinal interpretation and to convince its readership of the reliability of the *ZFCJ* as a definitive commentary for understanding the *MHZG* as well as of the superiority of the Tiantai tradition. The way Zhanran uses to convince his readers operates in a more skilful way, which will be discussed in the following chapter on his management of external sources. This will further highlight his expertise as a commentator and his role as a Tiantai adherent and advocate.

Chapter 3 The Management of External Sources and Construction of Textual Authority[1]

Introduction

This chapter examines the distinctive way that Zhanran's commentary uses quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other kinds of reference, collectively referred to as 'borrowings' here. In the *ZFCJ*, the borrowings from external sources not only aid in detailed exegetical analysis but also involve an interplay of textual authority – drawing upon established authoritative texts to construct and legitimise new interpretations. Borrowings from external sources can be found in commentaries across time and cultures, but what makes this case distinctive is Zhanran's management of sources by selecting them and establishing the connections between these sources and the main text, as well as among the sources themselves. It is this specific selection and integration of sources that demonstrates why Zhanran deserves the title of 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'.

In Chapter 2, we examined how Zhanran's commentarial methods not only provide a clear explanation and interpretation of the *ZFCJ* but also build confidence in the reliability of his commentary and in the superiority of Zhiyi's teachings. Among these methods, the use of external sources, while also contributing to detailed explanation and interpretation through a strategy of 'literal exposition', engages with the complex dynamics of textual authority. In this regard, the use of external sources is more complicated than other commentarial methods, as it involves evaluating and

[1] Some of the research for this chapter, particularly in the sections on the 'Selection of External Sources' and 'Borrowing Non-Buddhist Quotations', has been published under the title 'What Is Other than "Us": The Non-Buddhist Sources in the Chinese Buddhist Commentary *Zhiguan Fuxing Chuanhong Jue*', *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies* 5 (2024): 207–23.

managing those sources – whether endorsing them, criticising them, or even 'agreeably' criticising them, using a strategy I will refer to as 'interpretative integration'.

Underpinning these two strategies for managing external sources are two interconnected yet distinct approaches: selection and integration. The external sources incorporated into the *MHZG* reflect a process of deliberate selection, demonstrated by Zhanran's categorisation of sources, for instance, his distinction between non-Buddhist and Buddhist works. These distinctions determine the varying ways in which the sources are handled, which is a form of management. The specific methods of such handling reveal how these sources are integrated into the *ZFCJ*, thereby contributing to intertwining the three voices of Zhiyi, Zhanran, and the cited external sources. It is even more challenging to select and integrate external sources while navigating these three layers of voices.

However, when speaking of 'how' external sources are used in the works of Zhiyi, Zhanran, or within the Chinese Buddhist community more broadly, existing scholarship has predominantly focused on their philosophical contributions. While a more technical approach to how external sources are used in Buddhist texts has emerged in the past thirty years, this perspective remains relatively underexplored. Thus, a study of the use of external sources in the *ZFCJ* will help to fill this gap in the scholarship.

Apart from demonstrating how these external sources are strategically employed in the *ZFCJ*, this chapter suggests the possibility that additional, unacknowledged voices beyond the three primary voices identified (Zhiyi, Zhanran, and the external sources in the *ZFCJ*) may have influenced the text. While not entirely denying Zhanran's own eloquence, the extensive use of the external sources quoted in the *ZFCJ* may reflect his engagement with the broader processes of knowledge transmission within the Buddhist community, as we have mentioned in Chapter One. The knowledge of the external sources used in the *ZFCJ* may have been acquired not only through textual study but also through oral instruction and communal learning when Zhanran studied with Xuanlang and on other occasions. Thus, this study also

enriches the broader narrative of how Zhanran engaged with the Tiantai school. It extends the textual analysis into the historical context of Buddhist knowledge exchange. It argues that Zhanran is best understood not primarily as an innovator, but as a successor who consciously builds upon existing doctrinal resources, engaging with tradition through his commentarial creation.

The first section offers an overview of the external sources, examining the textual categories of the external sources used in the *ZFCJ* and how they are demarcated by Zhanran. This explains the selection of external sources. The second section focuses on the purposes for which he used external sources and the strategies behind their use, demonstrating Zhanran's integration of external sources. It shows that the use of these sources both transmits tradition and creates new textual authority. The conclusion retraces the path of our inquiry, moving from an initial, surface-level survey of the external sources cited in the *ZFCJ* to a more focused consideration of their selection, and ultimately toward a sustained methodological reflection on Zhanran's engagement with such materials.

Selection of External Sources

ZFCJ contains about 1,700 textual references in the form of quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other kinds of borrowings, drawn from a wide range of sources. This section begins with a methodological reflection on how I found them and then engages with a technical discussion of the implicit and explicit implications of quotations, and of the structural features of *ZFCJ* as an annotation that follows the structure of the *MHZG*. This facilitates a general understanding of the external sources in the *ZFCJ*.

When introducing these external sources, I first categorise them based on my observations to provide readers with an overview. This categorisation, however, does not fully represent Zhanran's categorisation of sources, which deserves investigation as it also reflects how he selected them. Zhanran distinguishes between external sources based on their intellectual tendencies, drawing boundaries between

Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources, as well as between his allies and rivals within the Buddhist community. These two types of demarcation will be discussed in this section.

Overview

As established in the preceding chapter, the *ZFCJ* makes use of specific identifiers to signal the incorporation of quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other kinds of reference in the *ZFCJ*: with the word *yin* 引 ('to quote'), to trace and indicate the borrowings in the *MHZG* that are marked but without a clear source; and with the word *yun* 云 ('to say, to indicate') to mark the borrowings introduced by Zhanran. These identifiers helped me detect Zhanran's borrowings from external sources. As the complete list of these entries is provided in the appendix, this section does not aim to examine them in detail, but rather to highlight the key features of their usage and thereby offer a general overview for the reader.

This section first discusses two criteria by which the *ZFCJ*'s borrowing from external sources can be examined, in order to illuminate problems concerning the clarity of references and the extent of abridgement:

1) By acknowledgement of sources: hidden, explicit, or implicit.

2) By similarity with the sources: verbatim quotations, near-verbatim quotations, paraphrase, references.

The section then focuses on the pattern of arrangement of the references. It demonstrates that the frequency of the use of certain references, as well as the places where they are mostly quoted in the *ZFCJ,* are influenced by the outline of the *MHZG*, which is not entirely surprising considering the *ZFCJ* is a line-by-line annotation of the *MHZG*.

The Form of Quotations

Quotations Hidden, Implicit, or Explicit

The explicitness of the sources of the quotations is important for the clarity of the commentary's explanation and for the establishment of textual authority. The sources of quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other kinds of reference are mostly explicit in the *ZFCJ*, but the *MHZG* quotes or paraphrases the sources 'silently' without explicit identification or attribution, as noted by Swanson,

> There are many cases in which Chih-i does not specifically say 'in the sūtras' or identify the source he is quoting, but in fact he is either quoting or summarizing a scriptural source. There is therefore more 'quoting' going on than one might assume from just picking up the passages identified as from a specific sūtra. [2]

Those unidentified borrowings, which I refer to here as 'hidden quotations', create challenges for readers who are less well-versed in the subject, thereby creating a commentarial task for the *ZFCJ* to identify and clarify them.

There are also cases where the quoting is identified, but the source is vague, such as quotations introduced with the words 'the sūtra says' 經云 (*jing yun*) without specifying which sūtra it is. I will refer to these quotations as 'implicit quotations', in contrast to 'explicit quotations' that are both identifiable and clearly attributed. As the content is often summarised by Zhiyi, Zhanran will cite more details to provide the context, thus occasionally even explicit quotations also require further elaboration.

Based on the different degrees of explicitness of the quotations, paraphrases and other kinds of borrowings in the *MHZG*, the quotations in the *ZFCJ* can be categorised as:

[2] Paul L. Swanson, 'What's Going on Here? Chih-i's Use (and Abuse) of Scripture', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 20, no. 1 (30 June 1997): 6.

1) Hidden Quotations: Not identified; sources implicit.

2) Implicit Quotations: Identified but with their sources implicit.

3) Explicit Quotations: Identified with explicit sources.

One of the purposes of quoting external sources in the *ZFCJ* is to trace the hidden, implicit and explicit quotations in the *MHZG*. Examples of this tracing of sources will be given and discussed in the following section 'Functions and Strategies of Adopting External Sources'.

Presumably recognising the importance of identifying quotations in the course of his commentarial work, Zhanran, in contrast to the *MHZG*, generally marks quotations in the *ZFCJ* with clear attribution. We will mainly focus on these explicit quotations because they support the argument that the clarity of sources facilitates the *ZFCJ*'s appeal to their textual authorities. However, implicit quotations are not entirely absent from the *ZFCJ*. They account for only about 4% of the borrowings, yet they raise several noteworthy issues.[3]

As with Zhiyi's implicit quotations, there are occasionally quotations in the *ZFCJ* whose sources are not attributed to specific texts or authors, but to broader, less precise categories such as *sudian* 俗典, *zishu* 字書 (dictionaries), or phrases like *shiren yun* 世人云 ('as people in this community say') or *you ren yun* 有人云 ('as

[3] There may also be hidden quotations that I have not been able to detect. Identifying them presents an additional level of challenge, as it requires deep familiarity with the relevant intellectual landscape. Currently, there is no effective method for reliably identifying such hidden citations. While tools like BuddhaNexus (https://buddhanexus.net/) could potentially assist, it is still a challenging task. As will be discussed in the next section, the citations in the text are not always verbatim, which limits the usefulness of digital humanities tools for comparative searches — unless the tool is sophisticated enough to handle approximate matches or conceptual parallels. The only viable approach for now is to develop a profound understanding of the Buddhist thought of Zhanran's time so that particular lines can be quickly associated with corresponding ideas or sources. This is especially challenging given the already considerable diversity of Indian Buddhist thought, which became even more complex after Buddhism's introduction to China and its subsequent reinterpretation by Chinese Buddhists up to the eighth century. It is hoped that continued academic exchange across studies of different Buddhist figures and traditions will eventually help uncover the intellectual relationships embedded in the citations of the *ZFCJ*, but this task falls beyond the scope of the present study.

someone says'), all of which obscure the origin of the source. For example, when explaining the word 'wo chu' 臥出 (fall asleep) discussed in the *MHZG*, Zhanran cites a question from 'someone':

> [As for the word] *wo chu*, someone says, 'If [the *MHZG*] just names 'wo' 臥 (=lying down) for [indicating] 'chu' 出 (=departing), why would it be unacceptable?'
> "臥出"者。有人云："秖名臥為出，有何不可？"[4]

The reason why the sources are implicit is intriguing. It can simply be because the source was uncertain from the very beginning, for instance, Zhanran forgot who said it, or he heard this from another person whose identity was unclear. This, again, indicates the possible influences of communal learning and supports our hypothesis of the *ZFCJ* being an outcome of generations of interpretations. It is worth considering that these sources may have been transmitted to Zhanran through inherited learning, accumulated over generations, during which their origins may have become obscured.

It is also possible that this unattributed question was raised by one of Zhanran's pupils during his teaching. Considering the fact that Zhanran once taught the *MHZG* in the Kaiyuan Monastery of Suzhou, it is possible that the students' questions inspired his writing of the *ZFCJ*.

Another possible explanation for their implicitness is that the person who raised the question here is fictional. The person is a 'ventriloquist's dummy' for Zhanran's inner questioning and plays a rhetorical role to elicit the following explanations.

Another possibility is that they are deliberately anonymised, as a way of avoiding direct conflicts with the rivals of the Tiantai tradition. This will be discussed further in the following section 'Demarcation of "Us" and "Others"'.

[4] T46, no. 1912, p. 186b11–14.

Does such deliberate anonymity contradict Zhanran's stated intention of transmitting Zhiyi's teachings to assist the learning and meditative practice of contemporary and later generations? Not necessarily. Such implicitness might not have been a problem for Zhanran's contemporary readers, who may have been more familiar with the contexts and thus able to recognise the exact sources.

This section has highlighted the varying degrees of explicitness of quotations in the *ZFCJ*. Both the attribution and omission of sources reflect the commentator's priorities and can be understood as forms of source management. This analysis also raises several further questions that will be explored in the sections that follow. When explicitness is considered in relation to textual authority, which kinds of sources are deemed worthy of acknowledgement, and which are not? How is the authority of these sources recontextualised within the *ZFCJ*? Conversely, are sources of lesser authority incorporated using different strategies?

Verbatim or Not

The sources of quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other kinds of reference are deployed in various forms: they are either quoted almost verbatim,[5] paraphrased, summarised, or referenced indirectly through their titles. While distinctions are drawn here, in practice, these categories are somewhat arbitrary. They should therefore be understood as points along a spectrum that reflects varying degrees of resemblance to the original content.[6]

[5] The quotations in the *ZFCJ* often exhibit minor differences from the quoted texts. These differences could be unintentional, or they might be deliberate alterations by Zhanran. Another possibility is that the version of the *ZFCJ* or the referenced texts at the time of writing differed from the transmitted versions available today.

[6] But again, it is hard to say what the 'original content' is. It is hard to be sure the 'minor differences' that occurred in near-verbatim citations are truly differences because we are uncertain about the edition that the author used, and there are also possibilities that the citing or cited texts were modified deliberately or accidentally during transmission. See Freschi, 'The Reuse of Texts in Indian Philosophy', 89. It may also be mistakes caused by copyists. Ibid., 93.

The differences between the borrowings and the original content invite us to reflect on the factors that may have led to these differences. The more similar the borrowings are to the original texts, the greater the possibility that Zhanran had access to the original sources. However, this does not work the other way around: even when borrowings diverge significantly from the original texts, this does not automatically suggest limited access to the original content. The paraphrase or abridgement of the original content may result from intentional editorial choices by Zhanran who, may have rephrased the original content for clarity or abridged it because it lacked relevance.

The 'paraphrase' type borrowings are similar to but not exactly the same as the original text. A paraphrase contains most of the content but is expressed in a different way. There is also an arbitrary line between this type and the 'near-verbatim' type. The difference is that the 'near-verbatim' type has almost the same structure as the original lines, and the changes only occur in a small number of words, but the paraphrase changes the structure and more of the wording, which may reflect Zhanran's intentional choices or indicate an indirect acquisition of the content. Below is an example of near-verbatim borrowings:

> Therefore, the *Dalun* (=*Da zhidu lun*) says: The so-called 'Mohe' has three meanings, namely 'great', 'numerous', 'surpassing'.
> 故《大論》云：言"摩訶"者名含三義，謂大、多、勝。[7]

To compare, the original line in the *Dalun* 大論 is:

> 'Mohe', in Chinese, means 'great', 'numerous' or 'surpassing'.
> [摩訶]，秦言大，或多，或勝。[8]

Zhanran also frequently summarises the content of external sources, or even just

[7] T46, no. 1912, p. 142a13–14.

[8] T25, no. 1509, p. 79b25.

cites the title of the text or the name of the author or speaker, but does not include the content at all.

> Type 1: The citation only summarises the source's content
> The imperial decrees from the Emperor of Sui (i.e., the Emperor Yang of Sui) and the letters from the kings [issued] are nearly fifty. The tokens given are all [recorded] in the *Guoqing bailu*.[9]
> 隋主并諸王勅及書疏近五十道。所施信物並在《國清百錄》。[10]

> Type 2: The citation only mentions the source title
> In the *Dalun*, the *Shier yinyuan lun*, the *Posha* and the *Shidi jing*, [the idea] is the same.
> 《大論》第二、《十二因緣論》、《婆沙》、《十地經》等並同。[11]

A possible reason for abridging quotations in the two examples above is that they do not require full citation – they are less central to the discourse or are well-known to the readership. The abridgement helped to streamline the text. Such reductions may have been influenced by practical considerations, as writing materials were not readily accessible or abundant. Considering the extensive number of borrowings in the *ZFCJ*, their abridgement represents an effective management of these materials.

It is possible that the differences between the borrowings and original content were caused by the way Zhanran encountered the materials. We know from relating to Zhanran's educational background that he had memorised and taken notes of what he learned, as we discussed in Chapter One. His different management of borrowings likely points to a shift from oral teaching settings to self-directed learning. Our appreciation of his efforts in managing this extensive body of sources deepens when we consider how he managed to collect and keep track of a huge

[9] *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄: written by Guanding 灌頂, a work about Zhiyi's life. T46, no. 1934.

[10] T46, no. 1912, p. 148a25–26.

[11] T46, no. 1912, p. 239c25–26.

number of these sources, given the challenges of accessing these resources in his time.

Zhanran's accounts of his learning indicate that he both memorised and took notes of what he learned from his teacher Xuanlang. Some of the differences between the original text and the borrowing may be explained by memory errors or lapses, or he may instead have encountered their content through indirect means, such as the teachings he received from his teachers, or other occasions that involved intellectual exchange. Apart from this, we are also curious about the other ways he accessed some of the sources and collected them.

Zhanran's later life experiences provide hints of possible access to external sources. This includes his travel to the Vinaya Master Tanyi's place for the dharma-gathering 法集 (*fa ji*) – an occasion where there were sermons from a Buddhist teacher or discussion among monks on how to understand Buddhist scriptures. His several years of teaching at Kaiyuan Monastery of Suzhou 蘇州 allowed him to interact with the Buddhist community. More importantly, the monastery seems to have possessed a collection of texts, evidenced by Zhanran's letter sent from Folong 佛隴 on Mt. Tiantai, where he spent his late years until his death. In the letter, he assigned his three major works, including the *ZFCJ*, the *Fahua wenju ji* 法華文句記 (Notes on the *Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sūtra*; T34, no. 1719) and *Fahua xuanyi shiqian* 法華玄義釋籤 (Explanatory Notes on the Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra; T33, no. 1717), to be kept at Folong, implying the existence of a textual collection there. Details do not exist on what the textual collections were like in the areas where Zhanran lived, but there are some peripheral sources that we could refer to for information on how textual sources were kept in Chang'an 長安, the capital city at that time, which hosted a Buddhist centre in the north, in contrast to the south, where Zhanran resided.

Simply put, there were three kinds of locations for textual collections in monasteries in Chang'an 長安: pagodas 塔, which were deeply influenced by Indian tradition, such as the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda 大雁塔 at the Ci'en Monastery 慈恩

寺;[12] the scripture repository 經藏;[13] and the court (Skt., *ārāma*) 院.[14] These textual collections were not all for viewing, however – the collections in their scripture platform were possibly there to be reverenced, while those in the scripture cabinet were for daily viewing.[15]

For a record from a site geographically closer to Zhanran and composed not long after his time, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), a well-known Tang poet, mentioned that his poetry was collected at the Southern Chan Monastery in Suzhou 蘇州南禪院 and at Donglin Monastery 東林寺, indicating the existence of non-Buddhist textual collections in these Buddhist monasteries. [16] The record attests to a restriction on access to the monastery's textual collection: Bai asked the elder monks at Donglin Monastery to ensure that his poetry collection was not lent out but read only within the monastery, in the same manner as the works of the monastery's leading light Lushan Huiyuan 廬山慧遠 (334–416).[17] Similarly, in Chang'an, the Japanese monk Enchin 圓珍(814–891) recorded that the monk who had lent him the texts was reprimanded for doing so, and therefore urged Enchin to complete the transcription without delay.[18] This might have resulted in some sort of obstacles to obtaining textual sources, another factor that should also be noted when considering the way that Zhanran acquired his knowledge of external sources, and the value of his

[12] Xiang Wang, 'Beiye yu xiejing: Tangdai Chang'an de Siyuan tushu'. *Tang yanjiu*, no. 15 (2009): 495–96.

[13] Ibid., 498–501

[14] Ibid., 502–3.

[15] Zhan Ru, 'The Buddhist Canon of Ximing Monastery and Tang China.' *Studies in Chinese religions* 3, no. 2 (2017): 189.

[16] The *Suzhou Nan chanyuan Baishi wenji ji* 蘇州南禪院白氏文集記 (*Records of Bai's Collection of Writings at the Southern Chan Monastery in Suzhou*) is a record closer to Zhanran's time as well as geographical location. Although it is unknown whether this monastery existed during Zhanran's time, the similarity in date and the fact that he taught the *MHZG* in Suzhou would suggest that literary collections in monasteries were equally flourishing when Zhanran was alive, and he could possibly have gained access to literary texts in this way.

[17] Christopher Nugent, 'Literary Collections in Tang Dynasty China.' T'oung pao 93, no. 1 (2007): 28.

[18] Wang, 'Beiye yu xiejing', 492.

endeavour.

Zhanran might have copied some short texts into his notes, but large-scale copying would have been unlikely, given that transcription was an expensive and labourious task. For example, when Saichō visited Mt. Tiantai to bring back the teachings to Japan, he was sponsored by the Tiantai monastic group as well as by the local official Lu Chun 陸淳 for the transcription task, for which the latter donated paper and hired 20 students, and it took half a year at the Longxing Monastery of Linhai 臨海龍興寺.[19] According to the *Taishū catalogue*, more than two hundred texts were copied, which is about the same amount as the works cited by Zhanran.[20]

Later, Ennin 圓仁 noted down the transcription tasks he did in his travel notes, the *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (Record of Travel to the Tang in Search of the Dharma).[21] It took Ennin half a year to finish copying the *Niansong famen* and some newly translated sūtras.

The previous two sections outlined the fundamental characteristics of the quotations used, focusing on their acknowledgement of sources and their degree of resemblance to the original content. When presenting these features, I also highlight key observations, including the background knowledge possessed by Zhanran's intended audience. This showed that Zhanran's commentarial endeavour is closely tied to its historical context, and that Zhanran's acquisition and management of this

[19] Recorded in the *Tendai Hokkeshū Denbo ge* 天台法華宗傳法偈 (*Gāthā of the Dharma-transmission of the Tendai Hokke School*), which can be found in the Hieizan Senshūin Fuzoku Eizan Gakuin 比叡山專修院附属叡山学院 ed., Dengyō daishi zenshū 傳教大師全集 (Complete Collection of the Works of Dengyō Daishi Saichō). (Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai, 1989), 28.

[20] See the *Taishū Catalogue* in T55, no. 2159, p. 1057c18–21. One should note that although the two contain a comparable number of texts, the difference in their respective scroll numbers could lead to differences in scope. According to the *Taishū catalogue*, the texts copied amounted to 345 scrolls in total. However, since some of the works cited by Zhanran are no longer extant, it is impossible to determine their total number of scrolls and thus to compare it with the figure given in the *Taishū catalogue*.

[21] The text was translated into English, see Reischauer, Edwin O. 1955. *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*. New York: Ronald Press.

extensive body of sources stands out as an exceptional achievement, given the circumstances.

The following section further examines structural aspects of these quotations, considering patterns in where and how frequently they are quoted, as well as the categories of the selected sources.

Pattern

There are a total of 207 references in the *ZFCJ*, but not all of them are equally important. This section explores patterns in the quotation of references: some references are regularly quoted throughout the *ZFCJ*, while some are only accumulated in particular parts of it.

According to Swanson's study of the sources used in the *MHZG*, the most frequently quoted texts are the *Lotus Sūtra* 妙法蓮華經, the *Nirvana Sūtra* 大般涅槃經, the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* 維摩詰所說經 and the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (including its base text, the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*). The texts that are relatively frequently quoted are the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 大方廣佛華嚴經, the various *Agama Sūtras* 阿含經, the *Mahavaipulyamahasamnipata Sūtra* 大方等大集經, the *Middle Treatise* 中論 and the *Chengshi lun* 成實論.[22] We can also find in the *Zhiguan yili* Zhanran's summary of the major proof-texts used by Zhiyi, which correspond to the situation in the *MHZG*:

> Still, the meaning and doctrinal principles that are used [in Zhiyi's teaching] address the *Lotus Sūtra* as the bone of the central purport, the *Da zhidu lun* as the guiding compass, the *Nirvana Sūtra* as the support to unravel [the meaning], and the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* as the method of contemplation. [It] quotes sūtras to increase credibility and quotes the treatises to support the perfection.
>
> 況所用義旨以法華為宗骨，以智論為指南，以大經為扶疏，以大品為觀

[22] Swanson, 'What's Going on Here?', 19.

法。引諸經以增信,引諸論以助成。[23]

The same pattern is also evident in the *ZFCJ*.[24] The chart below presents a comparison of the texts most frequently cited in the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ*,

Rank	*MHZG*	*ZFCJ* (Count)
1	*Lotus Sūtra*	*Da zhidu lun* (334)
2	*Nirvana Sūtra*	*Nirvana Sūtra* (220)
3	*Vimalakīrti Sūtra*	*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (82)
4	*Da zhidu lun* (includes the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā prajñāpāramitāsūtra*)	*Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā* (61)
5	*Avataṃsaka Sūtra*	*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (52)
6	The various *Agama Sūtras*	*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (52)
7	*Mahavaipulyamahasamnipata Sūtra*	*Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (51)
8	*Middle Treatise*	*Lotus Sūtra* (48)
9	*Chengshi lun*	*Fahua xuanyi* (37)

Table 7 Frequently Quoted Texts in the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ*

The four texts listed in Zhanran's summary in the *Zhiguan Yili* of Zhiyi's sources, namely the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Da zhidu lun*, the *Nirvana Sūtra* and the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, are also used frequently in the *ZFCJ*, demonstrating the same choice of sources as in the *MHZG*.

The most frequently quoted texts in the *ZFCJ* are the *Da zhidu lun* and the *Nirvana Sūtra*, both being quoted more than a hundred times. The next is the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* 摩訶般若波羅蜜經, quoted 82 times,

[23] T46, no. 1913, p. 452c28–453a1

[24] Likewise, these four texts are frequently quoted in Zhanran's other commentary, the *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*. See Matsumori, 'Tannen Hokke Genji *Shakusen* no In'yō Bunken', 179.

with the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā* 阿毗曇婆沙論, *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* 阿毘達磨俱舍論, and the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* follow behind. Although the *Lotus Sūtra* is frequently cited, it appears less prominently in the *ZFCJ* than in the *MHZG*, ranking only eighth among all quoted texts.

Another noticeable point is that the *Fahua xuanyi*, another work of Zhiyi's, is also quoted about forty times in the *ZFCJ*. This can be read as a gesture of interweaving Zhiyi's works to further build up the consistency of Zhiyi's teaching.

Swanson points out that some frequently used texts are not used regularly throughout the *MHZG* but have particular relevance to certain content.[25] For example, the *Pratyutpanna-buddha saṃmukhāvasthita samādhi sūtra* is mostly used in the section on the Constantly-Walking Samādhi 長行三昧 (*changing sanmei*), which is one of the Four Samādhis 四種三昧 (*sizhong sanmei*; four different ways to practice concentration).[26] This pattern can also be observed with the other three Samādhis, as described in the 'Synopsis' of Scroll One of the *MHZG*, where the 'Four Kinds of Samādhi' are discussed, and each is shown to be based on a specific reference or references, as indicated in the chart below.

Four Kinds of Samādhi	Reference(s)
Constantly-Sitting Samādhi *Changzuo sanmei* 常坐三昧	*The Perfection of Wisdom spoken by Mañjuśrī* *Wenshushili suoshuo bore boluomiduo jing* 文殊師利所說般若波羅蜜經[27]
Constantly-Walking Samādhi *Changxing sanmei*	*Pratyutpanna-buddha saṃmukhāvasthita samādhi sūtra* *Bozhou sanmei jing*

[25] Swanson, 'What's Going on Here?', 19.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Translated by Saṃghabhara 僧伽婆羅 in T8, no. 233. A different translation by Mandrasena 曼陀羅仙 can be found in T8, no. 232, with a different title, the *Wenshushili suoshuo mohe bore boluomi jing* 文殊師利所說摩訶般若波羅蜜經. The same content is also included in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (T220), as the seventh of the sixteen assemblies 十六會 (*shiliu hui*), called the Mañjuśrī portion 曼殊室利分 (*manshushili fen*).

長行三昧	《般舟三昧經》[28] *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā* *Shizhu piposha lun* 《十住毘婆沙論》[29]
Both-Walking-and-Sitting Samādhi *Banxing banzuo sanmei* 半行半坐三昧	*The Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Sūtra* *Dafangdeng tuoluoni jing* 《大方等陀羅尼經》[30] *Lotus Sūtra* *Miaofa lianhua jing* 《妙法蓮華經》[31]
Neither-Walking-nor-Sitting Samādhi *feixing feizuo sanmei* 非行非坐三昧	*Sūtra of the Spell the Dhāraṇī for Invoking Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva in Order to Get Rid of Poisonous Vexations* *Qing Guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluoni zhou jing* 《請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼呪經》[32]

Table 8 The Four Kinds of Samādhi and Their Scriptural Sources

These six sources are basically cited frequently in the corresponding parts of the *ZFCJ*. Ten of the twelve citations of the *Pratyutpanna-buddha saṃmukhāvasthita samādhi sūtra* are in Scroll One. The *Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā* is mentioned twelve times, and ten of these references are in Scroll One. The *Dafangdeng tuoluoni jing* is cited sixteen times, with fourteen of these references found in Scroll One. The *Qing Guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluoni zhou jing* is cited eleven times in total, and ten of these entries appear in Scroll One.[33]

[28] Translated by Lokakṣema, found in T13, no. 417 and no. 418.

[29] T26, no. 1521. Created by Nāgārjuna, translated by Kumārajīva.

[30] Translated by Fazhong 法眾, stored in T1339. Its original title in Sanskrit is missing.

[31] It has multiple Chinese translations. The one cited by Zhiyi and Zhanran should be Kumārajīva's translation because it was the most popular one, which now can be found in T9, 262.

[32] T20, no. 1043. Translated by Nandi. A different version of it is the *Liuzi shenzhou wang jing* 六字神呪王經 (T20, no. 1045a&b).

[33] When discussing the Constantly-Sitting Samādhi, the *ZFCJ* never cites the *Wenshushili suoshuo bore boluomiduo jing* but the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* instead. An alternative version of the *Wenshushili*

The discussion of the specific texts used regularly or for particular topics in both the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ* highlights the importance of taking the outlines of both works into consideration when discussing the pattern of quotations in the *ZFCJ*. Being clear about the outlines of the two works makes it easier to understand in which part of the *ZFCJ* a quoted passage falls, and the proportion of passages from each source that appear in each section.

By examining the quotations in the *ZFCJ* in terms of source acknowledgement and their degree of similarity to the original texts, as well as identifying structural patterns in their use, we have gained a basic understanding of their general features. These characteristics also reflect a kind of textual management in the *ZFCJ* at the formal level. The following section turns to a more nuanced type of management: the distinctions made between sources being quoted, depending on the category.

Demarcation of 'Us' and 'Others'

This section demonstrates that the category of a text is closely linked to its perceived authority: the closer a text is to the Buddha—whether in origin, attribution, or doctrinal proximity—the greater its authoritative status.

When introducing these external sources, I first provide readers with a

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suoshuo bore boluomiduo jing is included in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, called the 'Mañjuśrī portion'. Therefore, Zhanran might have cited from the 'Mañjuśrī portion'. The two texts cited by Zhiyi and Zhanran are of the same origin, but they are different versions. However, this does not mean that Zhanran made mistakes. Zhiyi was very likely to be familiar with the content of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, as he relied greatly on its commentary, the *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*.

Daniel B. Stevenson speculates that Zhiyi was aware that the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and the *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* talked about the One-Practice Samādhi (in Sanskrit, *ekavyūha-samādhi*; a different name Zhiyi used to refer to the Constantly-Sitting Samādhi) but chose to rely on the *Wenshushili suoshuo bore boluomiduo jing.* Daniel B. Stevenson, 'The Four Kinds of Samadhi in Early T'ien-T'ai Buddhism', in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, eds. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel B. Stevenson (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2021), 43:54–5.

general overview based on my observations. This categorisation, however, does not fully reflect Zhanran's own classification of sources, which forms part of his broader strategy for managing external materials. Zhanran differentiates between sources not only on doctrinal grounds, but also according to their intellectual tendencies—drawing clear boundaries between Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts, as well as between allies and opponents within the Buddhist community. These two forms of demarcation will be the focus of this section.

The *ZFCJ* contains about 1,700 textual references drawn from a wide range of sources, which I categorise as:

(1) Doctrinal Buddhist literature: Indian Buddhist canons (known as *tripiṭaka*, the 'three baskets') and Chinese-language Buddhist exegetical works.

(2) Non-doctrinal Buddhist literature, such as Chinese-language Buddhist biographies and historical records.

(3) Non-Buddhist texts, including dictionaries, historical records, gazetteers, and the representative classics of various indigenous intellectual traditions.

The first two, namely Buddhist doctrinal texts and non-doctrinal texts produced by the Buddhist community, can be referred to as 'Buddhist sources'. While the former category is treated in the *ZFCJ* as proof texts, the credibility of the latter category, containing opinions expressed by other Buddhists, is not always acknowledged and could be subject to criticism. Such criticism is evident in the paradigm of 'Mahayana/Hinayana' or 'Tiantai/non-Tiantai', a manifestation of the distinction between 'us' and 'others'. The third category corresponds to what Zhanran called *sudian* 俗典 (non-Buddhist classics) or *sushu* 俗書 (non-Buddhist books). His differentiation of these 'non-Buddhist sources' will be discussed in the following section.

'Non-Buddhist' Texts

As illustrated by the use of character *su* 俗 in terms such as *sudian* and *sushu*, the *ZFCJ* actively differentiates non-Buddhist sources from Buddhist sources. To

investigate the differing treatment of Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources in the *ZFCJ*, we will start by exploring how the text employs the terms *sudian* and *sushu* and then consider what this permits us to infer about Zhanran's understanding of what those terms meant and how they differed from other categories of literature.

The character *su* 俗 is furnished with a range of connotations, but in the Buddhist context, it can be understood as 'lay', as opposed to *seng* 僧, a translation of the Sanskrit word *saṅgha* meaning the community of Buddhist monks and nuns in general, or an individual monk or nun. In the *ZFCJ*, *su* is used primarily to denote something that is 'non-Buddhist' in nature.[34] The use of these terms to differentiate between 'Buddhist' and 'non-Buddhist' is also commonly encountered in other Chinese Buddhist texts.[35] Besides *sudian* and *sushu*, the *ZFCJ* uses the character *su* in other combinations, such as *sujiao* 俗教 (non-Buddhist teachings), which is used to indicate indigenous intellectual traditions.

The term *sushu* appears only once in the *ZFCJ*, where Zhanran summarises Zhiyi's approach to integrating non-Buddhist sources.

> Whenever [the *MHZG*] uses non-Buddhist books, their meaning is always taken partially, rather than in their entirety.
> 凡用俗書皆取少分，非全其意。[36]

This passage follows immediately after Zhanran's interpretation of why the story of the 'Fight between a Snipe and a Clam' (*yu bang xiang zheng* 鷸蚌相爭) appears in the *MHZG*.[37] Zhanran notes that the source of this story is Kong Yan's 孔衍 (268–320) *Chunqiu houyu* 春秋後語 (Post-Spring and Autumn Discourses), a non-

[34] In this sense, *su* contrasts with *shi* 釋, which signifies 'Buddhist' and is adopted as a surname by members of some monastic orders of East Asian Buddhism.

[35] For example, see Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (The Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks; T50, no. 2060), p. 636b27.

[36] T46, no.1912, p. 302b20–21.

[37] T46, no. 1912, p. 302b12–19.

Buddhist Chinese text.[38]

The term *sudian* occurs ten times in the *ZFCJ*,[39] and twice in the *Souyao ji*, which is an abridged version of the *ZFCJ*.[40] In some of these instances, the context sheds light on how Zhanran himself understood the term. These include references to:

(1) Single-character dictionaries such as the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 and *Erya* 爾雅;

(2) Confucian and Daoist classics such as the *Lunyu* 論語, the *Laozi* 老子, and the *Zhouyi zhu* 周易註 by Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) and Han Kangbo 韓康伯 (n.d.);

(3) Texts like the *Guanzi* 管子 and *Bowu zhi* 博物誌, which do not fit neatly into a distinct philosophical tradition.

Thus, it can be seen that the terms *sudian* and *sushu* are used in the *ZFCJ* to describe both non-doctrinal and doctrinal non-Buddhist sources. *Sudian* is further categorised as Chinese non-Buddhist sources 此方俗典 (*cifang sudian*) and Indian non-Buddhist sources 西方俗典 (*xifang sudian*),[41] although Indian non-Buddhist content is not actually utilised in the *ZFCJ.*[42]

[38] The story of 'The Fight between a Snipe and a Clam' is more commonly associated with the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策(Strategies of the Warring States) in contemporary sources, while Zhanran explicitly attributes it to the *Chunqiu houyu*. Although the *Chunqiu houyu* has mostly been lost, with only fragments surviving, we can find the story in the sections that have been preserved in the Wang Mo (recomp.), *Han-Wei yishu chao* 漢魏遺書鈔 (Chongqing: Xi'nan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2011), 6:496–508. The version in the *Chunqiu houyu* is remarkably similar in structure and content to that in the *ZFCJ*, see ibid., 507.

[39] T46, no. 1912, p. 143c12, p. 153b7, p. 189c29–190a1, p. 190c22, p. 222a5, p. 238b6, p. 304a26, p. 304b29, p. 325b27, p. 374c14.

[40] X55, no. 919, p. 743a22, and p. 746c16.

[41] Respectively mentioned in T46, no. 1912, p. 238b6 and p. 222a5.

[42] It is also noteworthy that the term *waidian* is used in the *ZFCJ* to differentiate the 'Buddhist' from the others. Although the term appears only once in the *ZFCJ* (T46, no. 1912, p. 339b12), without a

A wide range of Chinese non-Buddhist sources (*sudian* and *sushu*) are used in the *ZFCJ*. They include dictionaries, historical records, gazetteers, compendia, and classics. In total, there are 288 borrowings from seventy-three non-Buddhist sources. However, the *ZFCJ* is a voluminous work of approximately 500,000 characters in ten fascicles; it invokes Buddhist sources 1407 times, making the non-Buddhist content a relatively small proportion of its references, about 17%. However, its use of non-Buddhist sources was commented on unfavourably within the tradition. In the *Guketsu geten shō*, Prince Tomohira 具平親王 (964–1009) reports a conversation that he claimed was one of his reasons for composing the text.

> Last year, a monk said to me, 'The Dharma literature of our [Tendai] school cites extensively from extrinsic sources. Among them, the commentary *Hongjue fuxing* [i.e., *ZFCJ*] is crowded with redundancies. Learners of latter generations need not include [this material] in their studies.'
> 去年有一僧相語曰："我宗法文多引外典，就中弘決輔行記太為繁粹。後來末學不必兼習。"[43]

As the passage shows, the commentary is perceived by this Japanese Tendai monk as an example of excessive use of *waidian*.[44] How should we interpret this

clear connotation, its usage in Zhanran's other writings suggests that it refers to Indian non-Buddhist sources. The term *waidian* (Jpn. *geten*) has a different connotation in the *Guketsu geten shō*. The *Guketsu geten shō* refers to Chinese non-Buddhist sources, as well as non-canonical Chinese Buddhist sources, as *geten*. A catalogue of these texts is provided at the beginning of the *Guketsu geten shō*. Feng summarises the texts quoted or otherwise borrowed from and their frequency of use, in Lihua Feng 馮利華, *'Hongjue waidian chao' zhengli yu yanjiu* 《弘決外典鈔》整理與研究 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2022), 137–142. The diverse interpretations of the term *waidian* highlight its ambiguous nature and call for further research into its implications in different textual contexts.

[43] Tomohira Shinnō 具平親王, *Guketsu geten shō* 弘決外典鈔, 1709 edition, image 1, in the *Konoe Collection* 近衛文庫.

[44] As mentioned above, the term *waidian* only refers to Indian non-Buddhist sources in Zhanran's writings, but in the *Guketsu geten shō,* the term refers to Chinese non-Buddhist classics as well as non-canonical Chinese Buddhist classics. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that the Japanese monk

claim? As non-Buddhist content only constitutes a relatively small proportion of the *ZFCJ*, the claim that the *ZFCJ*'s use of non-Buddhist material is 'crowded with redundancies' seems to be more a matter of quality than of quantity. Readers across different regional contexts and time periods would have had various needs and reading habits, so whether the information provided was strictly 'necessary' was a subjective matter. However, the monk's claim naturally raises the question of the ways in which Zhanran integrates non-Buddhist sources, which will be discussed in the following sections.

Internal Rivalries

The preceding section examined the notion of the 'others' in contrast to the Buddhist community. However, Zhanran also constructs another category of 'others' within the Buddhist community itself. These internal 'others' may be characterised as those who hold divergent or erroneous views that either contravene or fail to grasp the Mahayana perspective or the doctrines of the Tiantai school. While some of these opponents are explicitly identified, others remain unnamed or indeterminate. The following discussion will address both categories.

The most clearly recognised form of rivalry is with the 'Hinayana'. Zhanran's critique of it is primarily textual rather than a response to active sectarian rivals. While there were groups such as the Jushe and Chengshi schools in earlier periods of Chinese Buddhism, there is no evidence to suggest that Zhanran was engaging with them as living communities. 'Hinayana' occupies an inferior position within the Tiantai doctrinal taxonomy, known as the *wushi bajiao*. This taxonomy is structured according to three criteria: the chronological period in which a sūtra was taught by the Buddha; the level of doctrinal profundity or ultimacy it conveys; and the pedagogical method employed by the Buddha. The 'Hinayana' corresponds to the 'Tripiṭaka Teachings' 藏教 (*zangjiao*), which were delivered during the 'Deer Park period' 鹿苑時 (*luyuanshi*), also referred to as the 'Āgama period' 阿含時 (*A'han shi*).

was referring to the non-Buddhist sources used in the *ZFCJ*.

These teachings are classified as 'Gradual Teaching' 漸教 (*jianjiao*) and were intended for practitioners of limited capacity. Their scriptural significance is, however, not denied by this taxonomy. They are viewed as provisional in contrast to the *Lotus Sūtra*, yet they are not displaced by it.

'Hinayana' sources are employed either for explanatory purposes or in comparison with Mahayana sources. Such comparisons are generally presented in a milder tone than those involving non-Buddhist sources, with the emphasis placed on highlighting doctrinal differences rather than making a direct criticism. For instance, when discussing the 'eighty-four thousand' teachings of the Buddha—a conventional numerical expression denoting the vast scope of the Dharma—the *ZFCJ* cites 'Hinayana' interpretations, such as those from the Sarvāstivāda school 薩婆多 (*sapoduo*), to illustrate what is encompassed within these teachings. However, it ultimately demonstrates that the 'Hinayana' explanation is inconsistent with the context of the *MHZG*.[45]

Erroneous opinions are implicitly attributed, depending on their nature and degree of error. An example of a lexical mistake can be found in the *ZFCJ*, where it comments on the two verbs *guan* 冠 and *dai* 戴, both of which can mean 'to wear a hat' and symbolise a significant moment, as the word carries the meaning of the ceremonial mark of a man's coming of age at twenty. In the *MHZG*, these verbs are used metaphorically to describe the structural feature of summarising content at both the beginning and the end. The *ZFCJ* states that 'someone' 有人 (*youren*) interprets *guan* and *dai* as respectively corresponding to the imagery of heaven and earth.[46] Zhanran, however, disagrees with this interpretation. He argues that if this were the case, the character *dai* should be replaced with *zai* 載, which, while similar in shape, carries a different meaning, namely 'to convey'. Zhanran's reasoning is that

[45] T46, no. 1912, p. 175b20–28.

[46] T46, no. 1912, p. 159c20–22. 'Someone has said: "The crown images the heavens, and what is worn on the head images the earth. This introductory section likewise covers and supports everything, like heaven and earth embracing what lies between.' 有人云：“冠象於天，戴象於地。此大意章亦如天地覆載其間。”

heaven can 'cap' or cover something, but the earth cannot; it only conveys.[47] The correction makes sense as the phrase *tianfu dizai* 天覆地載 is a standard way of addressing the different functions of Heaven and Earth in early Chinese texts, originating from the expression in the *Book of Rites* 'wherever the heavens overshadow and the earth sustains' 天之所覆，地之所載 (*tian zhi suo fu, di zhi suo zai*).[48]

The *ZFCJ* also corrects a misunderstanding of the mechanism of *piyu* 譬喻 (parables or metaphors). For example, 'someone' 有人 (*youren*) interprets the metaphor from the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, which states that 'the essence 理 (*li*), like the sea, embraces all the dharmas, and the practitioners are bathing in it' 理具諸法如海水也，修觀行者如在浴也, as disappointing,[49] as this interpretation suggests that the image of bathing implies the practitioner only experiences a limited part of the 'sea,' rather than its entirety. However, Zhanran contends that this view fails to recognise the intent of the metaphor, which merely seeks to convey the vastness of the highest Dharma 最上法 (*zuishang fa*) by comparing it to the boundless nature of the sea; there is no need to compare the two metaphors in such a manner, nor to overanalyse their differences.[50]

As mentioned, there are several possible explanations for the anonymity of these voices. Two such explanations are that anonymity may serve to avoid direct conflict with other schools, and/or that the intended readership was assumed to be sufficiently familiar with the intellectual debates of the time, making explicit

[47] T46, no. 1912, p. 159c23. If this were the intended interpretation, the original text would have used the character *zai*. 若作此釋，應改為載字。

[48] Translation quoted from James Legge and F. Max Müller, *The Texts of Confucianism: Part IV The LI KI, XI–XLVI*, Sacred Books of the East; No. 28 (XXVIII) (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1885), 327.

[49] T46, no. 1912, p. 155c28–29.

[50] T46, no. 1912, p. 156a5–7. 'It is clear that this person does not grasp the intent of the metaphor. For whenever a metaphor is made, it is always in relation to what is presently at hand; thus, a superlative instance (the ocean's boundlessness) is cited here only to illustrate [the vastness of] the highest Dharma. Such a Dharma is surely sudden and complete; why, then, struggle over the metaphor?' 當知此人不曉喻旨。夫立喻者皆約現事，故引極事喻最上法。法必頓足，何須難喻？

identification unnecessary. Although unnamed, it is not entirely impossible to discern the identity of some of these anonymous figures. The major rivals of Tiantai at the time included, but were not limited to, the Huayan 華嚴, the Chan 禪, and the Faxiang 法相 schools. In fact, two anonymous cases in the *ZFCJ* appear to relate specifically to the Chan tradition. Unlike his engagement with 'Hinayana', in these instances, his critiques were not merely on a textual dimension but were shaped by actual interactions and direct intellectual exchanges with contemporary representatives of these lineages. The first is the reference to 'the *dhyāna* teaching associated with the transmission of the robe and bowl flourishes' 預廁禪門，衣鉢傳授者盈耳, which clearly suggests the Chan school.[51] The second is Zhanran's discussion of insentient beings' Buddha nature, which was directed against a contrary view current at the time, including that of the Chan figure Shenhui 神會.[52]

The above discussion has demonstrated the general patterns and forms of quotations in the *ZFCJ*, as well as how different types of external sources are distinguished. This reflects a deliberate process of selection and management of external sources. The following section will examine in more detail how these external sources are used.

Functions and Strategies of Adopting External Sources

The following section focuses on the functions served by external sources and the strategies behind their use. This section adopts an approach of combining etic and emic angles to explore these functions and strategies.

First, I present my summary of the functions of the external sources in the

[51] Nobuyoshi Yagi 八木信佳, 'Tai-Zen ryoshu no kosho ni tsuite' 台禅両宗の交渉について, *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 18, no. 2 (1970): 611.

[52] Yagi, 'Tai-Zen ryoshu no kosho ni tsuite', 612

ZFCJ and Zhanran's strategies in adopting them. The external sources serve multiple purposes: tracing the hidden and implicit quotations in the *MHZG*, offering philological explanations, providing doctrinal interpretations to support Zhiyi's arguments, and supporting Zhanran's own interpretations.

The incorporation of sources includes two strategies, which I summarise as 'literal exposition' and 'interpretative integration'. The former occurs in instances which do not involve doctrinal discussion, serving to integrate Zhanran's knowledge into his interpretation of the *MHZG*, almost as if showcasing his vast compendium of generalist knowledge. In doctrinal discussions, there are instances of other intellectual traditions being presented as in direct opposition to the Tiantai doctrine. This also reflects a tension between openness and closure within the text – the *ZFCJ* seeks to establish a definitive understanding of the *MHZG*, yet, to achieve this, Zhanran anticipates and considers his readers' background knowledge, leading him to introduce external sources to aid their comprehension. Meanwhile, 'interpretative integration' occurs mainly in the doctrinal discussion, which juxtaposes additional sources to affirm the superiority of the *MHZG*. Together, these strategies demonstrate Zhanran's expertise as a commentator and an advocate of the Tiantai tradition.

Building on my observations and analyses, the next section explores Zhanran's thoughts on the use of external sources in the *Zhiguan yili*. As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Zhiguan yili* examines the commentarial principles of the *MHZG*, with several entries reflecting its different uses of external sources. While these ideas do not directly focus on the *ZFCJ*, Zhanran's summary of these principles still provides indirect material that sheds light on Zhanran's views on the use of external sources. This serves as a reference for comparing with my summary above, integrating the two perspectives (my own and Zhanran's) for a more comprehensive understanding of Zhanran's use of external sources in the *ZFCJ*.

Borrowing Non-Buddhist Quotations

As cited above, when discussing Zhanran's demarcation of non-Buddhist and

Buddhist sources, Zhanran summarises the principle of how non-Buddhist sources are used in the *MHZG*.

> Whenever [the *MHZG*] uses non-Buddhist books, their meaning is always taken partially, rather than in their entirety.
> 凡用俗書皆取少分，非全其意。[53]

A similar idea is also elaborated in the *Zhiguan yili*,

> The eighth [principle] is about quoting and utilising the Confucian and Daoist [sources]. Whether the quoting is to refute or to establish, it does not violate the doctrinal essentials of the [Tiantai] school. It only briefly distinguishes the differences and similarities between the Tiantai and others, rather than going into details. [We should] not take their meaning as identical [to the Tiantai] just because the names are similar. This is why the content quoted [from non-Buddhist sources] is rough and abbreviated.
> 八者引用儒道。若破若立，不違本宗，略辨異同，不在委細。不以名似，將為義同。是故所引粗爾存略。[54]

Both sources, the *ZFCJ* and the *Zhiguan yili*, indicate that the *MHZG* uses content from non-Buddhist sources with reservations, adopting their ideas in small measure rather than in their entirety, with this partialness conceptual, not physical. Thus, a complex methodology underlies the selection of concepts and the distinction made between Buddhist and non-Buddhist materials.

Unlike Buddhist doctrinal texts, non-Buddhist sources are seldom employed as 'proof texts', that is, as scriptural excerpts utilised to substantiate doctrinal arguments. As we shall see in this section, when it comes to doctrinal discussions, Zhanran takes a cautious and critical view of the use of non-Buddhist sources.

[53] T46, no.1912, p. 302b20–21.

[54] T46, no. 1913, p. 447c6–8.

Nevertheless, far from being excluded wholesale, non-Buddhist sources are sometimes used in a neutral way or accepted with conditions. In certain cases, they are even used uncritically, and without reservation, that is, taken 'in their entirety' rather than just 'partially'.

Philological Exposition: Quoting for General Explanation

The *ZFCJ* often cites non-Buddhist sources as a means to provide general explanations of non-doctrinal points, for example, to elucidate non-Buddhist elements, or supplement information on terminology, historical figures and events, or classical allusions. When engaged in this 'philological exposition' of non-doctrinal points, Zhanran exhibits a tendency to provide summaries of his knowledge on the subject at hand, invoking all kinds of sources. This makes the *ZFCJ* a varied compendium of knowledge, reflecting Zhanran's extensive scholarly interests.

Several factors may have contributed to this tendency towards 'philological exposition'. Given that the *MHZG* is embedded in its author Zhiyi's cultural context, and thus infused with indigenous cultural elements, the *ZFCJ* employs Chinese non-Buddhist sources for required explanations and contextual clarifications. The non-Buddhist sources employed for general explanations come from various genres. Traditional Chinese dictionaries, for example, offer explanations for glosses in the *MHZG*, following an approach of traditional Chinese exegesis, *xungu* 訓詁. However, it is unlikely that Zhanran's abundant use of character dictionaries for literal explanations was inherited from Zhiyi, as the *MHZG* does not use dictionaries to define terms in as much detail or as frequently as the *ZFCJ*. This tendency seems more attributable to Zhanran's previous training as a Confucian scholar, which would have familiarised him with such methods as standard exegetical approaches.[55] It also serves to persuade readers trained in these philological traditions of particular

[55] The *Song gaoseng zhuan* records that he was born into a Confucian family (T50, no. 2061, p. 739b17) and maintained the identity of a Confucian scholar until he was formally ordained in his thirties (p. 739b25–26).

interpretations.

The *MHZG* incorporates many allusions and terms without the elucidation needed by those less well versed in the subject. It quotes or paraphrases some non-Buddhist as well as Buddhist sources 'silently' without explicit identification or attribution. As Swanson points out in his study of Zhiyi's use of quotations, the result of this is that the *MHZG* is 'often abbreviated and cryptic',[56] giving rise to the need for a commentary like the *ZFCJ* to provide explanations for non-Buddhist Chinese terms and allusions in the text.

For example, where Zhiyi was discussing Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, Zhanran's use of Chinese non-Buddhist sources often served as a way to resolve issues of untranslatability in cases where Chinese lacked an equivalent for a term in the source language. In his gloss on *gui* 鬼 (ghost) and its equivalent *preta* in Sanskrit (ghost), Zhanran adds an explanation from *Erya* for clarification.[57] Similarly, the *ZFCJ* cites many Chinese historical or geographical records and compendia when it delves into the cultural-historical context of words and passages. For instance, it quotes the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Records of the Three Kingdoms) to illustrate the life of Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220).[58] It cites the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas) to shed light on the question of the timing of the invention of the plough,[59] and it cites the *Picang* 埤蒼 (Increased Cangjie), a traditional Chinese dictionary, to introduce the idea that the pincers of a crab could be described as 'holding fire', which, though intriguing, is a deviation from the sense as used by the *MHZG*.[60] It even includes dietary advice from the *Bowu zhi*.[61]

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[56] Swanson, 'What's Going on Here?', 7.

[57] T46, no.1912, p. 195c13–14. '*Gui* is called in India *she-li-duo* (a transliteration of the word; the initial syllable *she* 闍 appears to be an error, possibly made by Zhanran or arising from a copying mistake during the text's transmission). In this land, it is called the "ancestral father." The *Erya* says, "*Gui* means to return."' "鬼"者。梵云"闍梨哆"，此云"祖父"。爾雅云："'鬼'者，歸也。

[58] T46, no. 1912, p. 294b2.

[59] T46, no. 1912, p. 172c1.

[60] T46, no. 1912, p. 389c1.

[61] T46, no. 1912, p. 274c2.

While non-Buddhist sources in the *ZFCJ* provide information necessary for supporting readers' understanding of the *MHZG*, the above examples also tend to include any pertinent knowledge Zhanran happened to possess, making the commentary in certain respects a compendium of his personal knowledge.

However, whether the information he chose to provide was strictly 'necessary' remained a subjective matter, so it is understandable that Zhanran's 'philological exposition' elicited diverse feedback. For readers seeking to absorb a wide array of knowledge from the *ZFCJ*, the detailed inclusion of various non-Buddhist elements is likely to have been appealing. On the other hand, readers already equipped with a fundamental understanding of traditional Chinese philology and culture who hoped the *ZFCJ* would grant them deeper insights into the Buddhist concepts discussed in the *MHZG* might well have found such detail superfluous, as illustrated above by the *Guketsu geten shō*.

The assumptions above can be related to what we have discussed in Chapter One about Zhanran's intended readership and the sources of his extensive quotations.

Quoting to Compare, or to Adopt?

Besides being used in the *ZFCJ* to explain non-doctrinal points, non-Buddhist sources are also invoked in order to draw comparisons with Buddhist thought on doctrinal issues. These comparisons reflect the tension between Buddhism, an imported intellectual tradition, and indigenous traditions, especially Daoism and Confucianism.

Buddhism took a long time to establish itself in China. That process involved competing with and negotiating with these pre-existing traditions.[62] The conflict

[62] In this field, most monographs on the history of Chinese Buddhism include an account of the early transmission of Buddhism up through the Tang and its interaction with preexisting intellectual traditions. Among the most influential references are Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China.* 3rd ed (Leiden: Brill, 2007), Yongtong Tang 汤用彤, *Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi* 汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2020), and Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

played out physically, such as in the debate over whether monks should kneel before figures of political authority, and is also reflected in texts such as the *Laozi huahu jing* 老子化胡經 (Sūtra on Laozi's Conversion of the Barbarians; T54, no. 2139),[63] which claims that Laozi had been the Buddha's teacher, thus asserting the superiority of Daoism over Buddhism. Given the conflict between Buddhism and indigenous traditions, the extent to which non-Buddhist texts are utilised in the *ZFCJ* could be cause for surprise. Moreover, since the eponymous aim of the *ZFCJ* is to preserve and disseminate the Tiantai teachings, its integration of external sources is even more noteworthy.

The *ZFCJ* generally takes a critical perspective when using non-Buddhist sources in doctrinal discussions. At certain points, the *ZFCJ* is openly critical of non-Buddhist traditions. One comment, for instance, says that reading the *Chunqiu* 春秋, one of the 'Five Classics' (*wujing* 五經) of Confucianism, and its commentary, the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 could only result in 'a mind wandering through the battle array and lips enacting deceitful stratagems' 心遊戰陣、口演詐謀.[64]

More in-depth criticism appears in the *ZFCJ's* theoretical discussions. For example,

> Du Yanye says, 'There are five kinds of blessings: the first is called the blessing of longevity; the second, the blessing of prosperity; the third, the blessing of

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Press, 1987). In addition, there are also several articles that directly address Tiantai Buddhism in relation to Confucianism and Daoism, for example, Hoshimiya Chikō, 'Chūgoku Bukkyō ni okeru dentō shisō hōsetsu no hitokoma: Tendai Daishi to Jukyō (Shōwa 43 nendo Tendai shū Kyōgaku Taikai kinen gō) 中国仏教における伝統思想包摂の一齣：天台大師と儒教 (昭和四十三年度 天台宗教学大会記念号)', *Tendai Gakuhō* 11 (1968): 84–95; Rosan Ikeda, 'Tendai kyōgaku to Rō-Sō shisō 天台教学と老荘思想', *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu ronshū* 21 (1990), 73–84; and Kantor, 'Tiantai's Reception and Critique of the Laozi and Zhuangzi'.

[63] The term *hu* was used in premodern China to collectively refer to foreigners, but has also acted as a reference to various specific groups throughout history. Sometimes derogatory in connotation, it is often translated as 'barbarians'.

[64] T46, no. 1912, p. 341b7–8.

health and tranquillity; the fourth, the blessing of virtuous deeds; and the fifth, the blessing of a peaceful death at a venerable age.' This worldly Confucian view only recognises the presence of blessings yet does not discern what it is they are experiencing, nor does it suggest the need for precepts that would enable one to become a proper vessel for receiving the blessings. The more blessings they have, the more sins they beckon.

杜延業云：“福有五種。一曰壽福。二曰富福。三曰康寧福。四曰攸好德福。五曰考終命福。”此之俗儒但知有福而不辨所感，亦不云須戒以為受福之器。以福多故，招罪亦多。[65]

Here, the *ZFCJ* refers to the idea of the *wufu* 五福 (five blessings) as a 'worldly Confucian' 俗儒 perspective, which fails to urge people to exercise restraint when enjoying these blessings (as Buddhism does with its idea of *śīla*), thereby causing them to accumulate as many bad karmas as the blessings they receive.

It is noteworthy that this reference to Du Yanye's thought was introduced by Zhanran; it is absent from the base text, the *MHZG*. In fact, the corresponding passage in the *MHZG* makes no specific mention of Du Yanye, nor does it imply that the kind of person who is inclined towards goodness but ends up sinful is 'Confucian'. Instead, the corresponding passage in the *MHZG* reads,

Suppose that, wishing to abandon the three [evil] destinies, you take delight in the five [basic] moral precepts and the ten good deeds. But to cultivate goodness only formally is like lightly bartering and exchanging goods at the

[65] T46, no.1912, p. 300a26–30. The *ZFCJ* attributes the idea of five blessings to Du Yanye 杜延業, and the *Guketsu geten shō* elaborates that it is from Du's *Jin chunqiu* 晉春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals of the Jin Dynasty. Lost during the Song dynasty, the relevant content is absent from surviving fragments.

market; [the effects or awareness of] your offences will only increase.[66]

設使欲捨三途，欣五戒十善，相心修福。如市易博換，翻更益罪。[67]

The *MHZG* merely stresses the need to become *wulou* 無漏 (uncontaminated, Skt. *anāsrava*), because those who adhere to the *wujie* 五戒 (five moral precepts) and practise the *shishan* 十善 (ten good deeds) through a desire to evade misfortunes in their next life are cultivating the blessings with a superficial heart and will consequently incur bad karma. It was Zhanran who chose to deploy non-Buddhist content in such a detailed way to elaborate on the idea of the blessings.

Although the examples above demonstrate that Zhanran could be critical of Confucianism, overall, his critiques of Confucian ideas are relatively infrequent, and most of these references actually serve to explain anecdotes used by Zhiyi. Much like Zhiyi, on the other hand, Zhanran is more openly critical of Daoism.

According to Ikeda's summary, Zhiyi finds fault with three aspects of Laozi's and Zhuangzi's thought,[68] which I further identify as conceptual, epistemological, and ethical critiques. First, Laozi and Zhuangzi fail to grasp the truth of *yinguo* 因果 (cause and effect). Zhiyi criticises Zhuangzi's concept of *ziran* 自然 (spontaneity), which he regards as failing to effectively explain the cause and effect of things, unlike the Buddhist idea of dependent arising. Second, he notes that Laozi and Zhuangzi blindly venerate the concept of *jueyan* 絕言 (the ineffable), unlike Buddhism, which seeks to ground its ethics in rationality.[69] Third, whereas Buddhism seeks to benefit

[66] This is Swanson's translation, see *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 837. In the *ZFCJ*, *fu* 福 is associated with 'blessings', but in this passage, it is rendered as 'goodness'. It is unclear how this metaphor, which likens the mere formal cultivation of goodness to bartering and exchanging goods at the market, is to be understood.

[67] T46, no. 1911, p. 56a1–3.

[68] Rosan Ikeda, 'Tendai kyōgaku to Rō-Sō shisō', *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu ronshū* 21 (1990): 73–84.

[69] For a detailed discussion on Tiantai's criticism of the Daoist interpretation of the ineffable, see Kantor, 'Tiantai's Reception and Critique of the Laozi and Zhuangzi'.

others, Laozi and Zhuangzi lack such wholesome aspirations.[70]

Similarly, Zhanran criticises these three aspects of Laozi's and Zhuangzi's thought from conceptual, epistemological, and ethical perspectives. Zhanran not only aligns himself with Zhiyi's view but also criticises Daoist views in a similar manner from the three perspectives. He belittles Zhuangzi's understanding of *ziran* for the same reason that Zhiyi gives, that it 'does not comprehend the Dharma of dependent arising' 不達緣起之法.[71] He criticises Zhuangzi and Laozi for recognising that the five sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body) cause harm, yet failing to grasp the root of their emergence.[72] He also criticises Laozi for enticing his disciple Yin Xi 尹

[70] Ikeda, 'Tendai kyōgaku to Rō-Sō shisō', 73.

[71] T46, no. 1912, p. 238b9–13. 'Thus, Zhuangzi says, "The heavens: are they spinning? The earth: is it standing still? The sun, the moon: are they vying back and forth for position? What is in charge of spreading all this before us? What nets and tethers all of this together? What remains itself unoccupied by any activity and yet shoves all this around to make it happen?" Since Zhuangzi did not know the Dharma of dependent arising, he did not understand who suspended the heavens, who spread out the earth, or who set the sun and moon in motion. Because he did not understand that [the environment we live in] is a karmic result, he attributed what is in fact *yibao* 依報 ('circumstantial retribution') to *ziran* (spontaneity).' 故莊云：“天其運乎？地其處乎？日月諍於所乎？孰主張是？孰綱維是？孰居無事而推行是？”莊既不達緣起之法，而亦不知誰張於天，誰綱於地，誰推日月。不測其業故，推依報而屬自然。The translation of the *Zhuangzi* is quoted from *Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings*, trans. Brook Ziporyn (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2020), 118.

[72] T46, no. 1912, p. 270c8–13. 'Zhuangzi says, "The five colours mess up the eyes so that they can no longer see well; the five tones mess up the ears so that they can no longer hear well; the five fragrances infiltrate the nose, besieging and irritating the brow; the five flavours sully the mouth, diseasing and impairing it. Preferences and dislikes unsettle the heart and mind, making the inborn nature flighty and unstable." All five of these things are harmful to the life in us. They are harmful to the five roots. Laozi says much the same. Although their teaching (=Daoist teaching) speaks of how harms arise, it does not discern the root from which harms arise. It only recognises that harms are produced by the five [sensory organs] but remains perpetually ignorant of the way to eliminate them.' 莊曰五色亂目，使目不明；五聲亂耳，使耳不聰；五臭亂鼻，因悛中顙；五味濁口，使口厲爽。取捨滑心，使性飛揚。此五生害，害於五根。老語大同。彼教雖云害生，不知害生之本。唯知為五所害，永迷去害之方。Up to the line 'making the inborn nature flighty and unstable', the content is identical with the corresponding passage in the *Zhuangzi*; the translation of this portion follows Ziporyn's rendering, with minor modifications to fit the context of the *ZFCJ*. See Ziporyn's

喜 (n.d.) to harm his kin, which, as he points out, is behaviour that would even be unacceptable to Confucians, who advocate filial piety.[73] In contrast, Zhanran writes, 'the teaching gate of the Tathāgata takes great compassion as the principle 如來教門大慈為本'.[74]

These examples show how Zhanran uses various approaches to criticise Confucianism and Daoism. While there are clearly marks of the influence of Zhiyi's criticism, not all the content that is criticised in the *ZFCJ* is mentioned in the original *MHZG*; these are sometimes additions made by Zhanran. In this way, the commentary broadens the discussion in the *MHZG*, while remaining tethered to it.

However, while the above examples show instances of criticism being levelled at non-Buddhist sources in the *ZFCJ*, that is not the only kind of treatment they receive. Non-Buddhist ideas are sometimes accepted, even without criticism, but

translation in *Zhuangzi*, 107. What follows, however, are Zhanran's own words.

[73] T46, no. 1912, p. 325b24–28. 'According to the *Huahu jing* (=*Laozi huahu jing*), When Laozi was traveling west of the 關 (=Han'gu Pass 函谷關, a gateway marking the western boundary beyond which one left the political and cultural heartland of the time), Xi wished to follow Laozi (= Dan 聃, which is his courtesy name) and asked to go with him. Laozi said, "If you truly wish to leave with wholehearted resolve, you must bring me the heads of your parents and five other [kins], seven people in all, and then you may go [with me]." Xi then followed this instruction [and brought the heads to Laozi], but all seven heads transformed into pig heads. In non-Buddhist classics, the Confucianists even revered the wooden images [of their ancestors]; Laozi, however, devised this to cause Yin Xi to harm his own kins.' 準化胡經，老過西喜欲從聃求去。聃云：“若欲志心求去，當將父母等七人頭來，乃可得去。”喜乃從教，七頭皆變為猪頭。然俗典孝儒尚尊木像，老聃設化令喜害親.

The source of this record is said to be the *Laozi huahu jing,* but the content mentioned is not present in the extant text. Rather, it can be found in Zhen Luan's 甄鸞 (535–566?) *Xiaodao lun* 笑道論 (Laughing at the Dao), which is now included in Daoxuan's *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (*Further Collection for Propagation and Clarification*; T52, no. 2103; the *Xiaodao lun* is from p. 143c20–152c17). There is a translation of the *Xiaodao lun* by Livia Kohn, see *Laughing at the Tao: Debates among Buddhists and Taoists in Medieval China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995). The part that the *ZFCJ* seemed to rely on is from p. 149c27–150a13, where it is indicated that Yin Xi killed his parents and brought their heads to show he had listened to Laozi's teaching to cut off affinities and was ready to follow Laozi.

[74] T46, no. 1912, p. 325b28.

given a lower status in a hierarchy. By demonstrating that non-Buddhist texts' understanding of the same issue is inferior to Buddhist interpretations, the *ZFCJ* constructs a complex relationship that acknowledges the validity of the opposing viewpoint but ultimately incorporates it within a Buddhist framework. Non-Buddhist ideas are partially included on the Buddhist side to show the comprehensiveness of its wisdom. This approach of juxtaposition is illustrated in the following two examples:

> As for [passages] such as '[One] should not cheat the Buddha', deceiving someone means to insult them. If the *Lunyu* states, 'A man of noble character should not be hoodwinked', then how even more so for the Buddha?
> "不欺佛"等者，欺物曰陵。論語曰:"君子不可罔也。"況復佛耶？[75]

> The *Li* states, 'Alcohol is used for offering sacrifices'. It does not call it a regular drink. If drinking when one is not offering sacrifices even violates societal propriety, then how even more so for the Buddhist regulations?
> 禮云：“酒者，因祭祀而用之。”非謂常飲。非祭而飲，尚違世禮。況佛制耶？[76]

The first example cites the *Analects* to show that deceit is not proper Confucian behaviour, while the second example compares the restrictions on alcohol in Buddhism to those in the *Book of Rites*. The two examples end with similar rhetorical remarks, 'then how much more so the Buddha/Buddhist regulations?' That these remarks can be made without any further elucidation reflects the idea that the good sense of these Buddhist ideas is self-evident, implying by extension that the teachings of Buddhism are always comprehensive and universal. Hence, when other intellectual traditions happen to have understood something correctly, that understanding is already naturally subsumed within Buddhism.

[75] T46, no. 1912, p. 182c10–11.

[76] T46, no. 1912, p. 342a17–19.

Occasionally, non-Buddhist content is granted almost equal treatment to Buddhist content. For example, the *MHZG* likens the practice of *lishi guan* 歷事觀 (phenomenal contemplation) [77] to the six tusks of the white elephant symbolising the 'Bodhisattva's undefiled six supranormal powers'.[78] When explaining this, the *ZFCJ* indicates that a similar approach of seeing the truth through analogies with physical processes can be found in non-Buddhist works, such as the statement by Zihua 子華 (n.d.) that just as farmers cultivate their crops, a nobleman cultivates himself by maintaining a righteous character and righting wrongs.[79] Citing this example, Zhanran comments on this common approach:

> How could this be the preserve of Buddhism; the non-Buddhist classics also regard it to be so… This just means that the great teachers inwardly concur, and that's all.
>
> 何但釋教，俗典亦然……但謂大師內合而已。[80]

However, we would be naïve to understand this as a promotion of non-Buddhist sources. Rather, Zhanran's point is that even non-Buddhists can comprehend such rudimentary principles. Therefore, although it is possible to draw parallels with Buddhist teachings, non-Buddhist teachings barely make the grade to

[77] *Lishi guan* (also *tuoshi guan* 托事觀) is one of the *sanzhong guanfa* 三種觀法 (three kinds of contemplation). The three kinds of contemplation, although they appear in the *MHZG*, were classified and formalised by Zhanran, particularly in the *Zhiguan yili* (T46, no. 1913, p. 458a10–15). Tam translates *Lishi guan* as 'phenomenal contemplation', meaning 'contemplation of mind that resorts to phenomenal (ritual and cultic) distinctions', see Wai Lun Tam, 'The Life and Thought of A Chinese Buddhist Monk Zhiyuan (976–1022 C.E.)' (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1996), 74. In the example we cite here, *lishi guan* means 'contemplation of bringing oneself into the verses of Buddhist scriptures', see Sakamoto Kobaku 阪本廣博, 'Sanshu kanoo - toku ni takujikan ni tsuite' 三種観法 -特に託事観について-. *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 32, no. 2 (1984): 953.

[78] Translated by Swanson, see Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 315–16.

[79] T46, no. 1912, 190c22–25. This content seems to have a close connection to the *Li zhongjie chao* 勵忠節鈔 (Excerpts Encouraging Loyalty and Integrity; *Pelliot chinois* 2711, col. 16–17).

[80] T46, no. 1912, p. 190c22; 26–27.

be admitted to the hierarchy. For example:

> Even the non-Buddhist teachings say that 'Loftiness takes lowliness as the foundation; nobility takes humility as the base'.
> 俗教尚云:"高以下為基，貴以賤為本。"[81]

In this example, there is an acknowledgement of the viewpoints of non-Buddhist teachings. However, the concessive expression 'even' 尚 (*shang*) reflects a subtle reconciliation of Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings: the correct viewpoint that even non-Buddhist teachings share is naturally included in Buddhist teachings. This implicitly affirms Buddhist superiority: Buddhism not only encompasses but also transcends other intellectual traditions, rendering the Buddhist perspective not only correct but also the more profound and comprehensive.

Both this intrinsic alignment and the hierarchy allow us to observe the influence of *panjiao* in Chinese Buddhist hermeneutics. Rhodes indicates that Chinese Buddhist hermeneutics developed in response to the ongoing importation of numerous and frequently conflicting sūtras from India, each asserting their authenticity as records of the Buddha's teachings, and that this stimulated Zhiyi's aspiration to formulate his comprehensive guidelines for organising the Buddha's words. [82] Rhodes' comments on the motivation behind Chinese Buddhist hermeneutics appear also to be applicable in both Zhiyi's and Zhanran's case:

> Buddhists were not motivated to develop hermeneutic strategies solely to assert the dominance of their own vision of Buddhism over that of others. Their overriding concern was to discover the contents of the Buddha's enlightenment by discerning the true meaning of the Buddha's words.[83]

[81] T46, no. 1912, p. 162a17. This passage is found in the *Laozi* chap 39, see Wang Bi, *Laozi daode jing zhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 109.

[82] Rhodes, 'Tiantai Hermeneutics', 140.

[83] Ibid.

In other words, the approach taken by Buddhist scholars, including Zhiyi and Zhanran, to resolve contradictions was not to eliminate opponents or to ignore them, but to manage to uncover an overarching 'truth' within them that was equally shared by 'us' and 'them', thereby harmonising these contradictions within a cohesive framework.

In the context of this section, 'we' stands for the Buddhist tradition, while 'they' refers to 'non-Buddhists'. When the Tiantai were trying to resolve contradictions within the Buddhist community, an internal distinction was further drawn between 'Tiantai' and 'other Buddhists'. Although quotations, paraphrased excerpts and other uses of Buddhist and non-Buddhist material differed in nature, with one set of sources being intrinsic and the other extrinsic, it is apparent that a similar logic underlies the Tiantai tradition's approaches to both kinds of source. The distinction lies in the fact that while we do see Buddhist doctrines being arranged into hierarchies, they are not criticised outright, whereas Confucian and Daoist doctrines are not only relegated to the lowest tier of the doctrinal hierarchy but must also face direct criticism.

Borrowing Buddhist Quotations

In the previous section, we discussed the use of non-Buddhist sources in the *ZFCJ*, demonstrating two strategies involved in their use: 'philological exposition' and 'interpretative integration'. In this section, we will see that the two strategies are also evident in the *ZFCJ*'s use of Buddhist sources, but the two kinds of sources differ in that the Buddhist sources can be treated as prooftexts. As depicted in the 'Demarcation of "Us" and "Others"', erroneous thoughts from Buddhist sources are also criticised, albeit not in exactly the same way as non-Buddhist sources. This then highlights the textual hierarchy behind the quoting and other forms of borrowing in the *ZFCJ*, as a method of skilful integration.

This section, however, will not follow the same structure as the previous

one that introduced the discussion of the two strategies. It will focus directly on the functions that the citations serve, reflecting on how each of them manifests the two strategies, as the application of Buddhist sources is operated in a more ample and nuanced way than the non-Buddhist sources. Thus, it will help us understand how Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources are differently used, as well as highlight the functions of Buddhist sources that support both basic exegetical explanations and the interplay of textual authority. Such interplay involves the three voices existing in the *ZFCJ*, namely utilising (1) external sources to support both the authority of (2) Zhiyi's voice (the *MHZG*) and (3) Zhanran's voice (the *ZFCJ*).

Providing more information for the *MHZG*

The application of Buddhist sources in the *ZFCJ* serves both to support the interpretation of the *MHZG* and to reinforce Zhanran's own arguments, though the former function is prominent. This reflects the nature of the *ZFCJ* as a commentary on the *MHZG*, rather than a platform for the expansion of Zhanran's own ideas, which he reserved for other genres of writing, such as treatises.

The support provided by these Buddhist sources includes identifying the hidden borrowings of the *MHZG*, offering definitions, and supplementing its content with additional, thematically relevant examples.

Tracing the External Sources Used in the *MHZG*

The first function of the citations is to trace the sources referenced in the *MHZG*. This task is necessary because, as discussed in the previous section, although some citations in the *MHZG* are clearly attributed, in most cases the text quotes other sources without identifying them. In this regard, the quotations and corresponding explanations provided by the *ZFCJ* offer important contextual information for understanding Zhiyi's teaching. The following example demonstrates both the method and level of detail involved in such explanations and raises further questions about what these efforts might imply.

MHZG: In many *Mahāyāna sūtras*, there are practices of this type, such as the repentance of the seven Buddhas and the eight bodhisattvas…[84]

《摩訶止觀》：諸大乘經有此流類，或七佛八菩薩懺……[85]

ZFCJ: The phrase 'Seven buddhas and the eight bodhisattvas' and so on, [will be explained] with a reference to the sūtras. The *Sūtra of the Spirit-Spells by the Seven Buddhas* begins with a clarification that each of the seven buddhas has a *dhāraṇi* (magical formula) and explains how their efficacy formulates the respective kinds of repentance. The following part declares the eight bodhisattvas: first, Mañjuśrī; second, Ākāśagarbha; third, Avalokiteśvara; fourth, Trāṇamukta;[86] fifth, Bhadrapāla; sixth, Mahāsthāmaprāpta; seventh, the [Bodhisattva] *Jianyong* (strong and courageous);[87] the eighth, Śākya Mahānāma Kulika. Each of them has its spirit-spell and its efficacy for repentance.

《止觀輔行傳弘決》:"七佛八菩薩"等者，次約諸經。《七佛神呪經》中，初明七佛各有陀羅尼,及說功能以為懺法。次文明八菩薩：一文殊，二虛空藏，三觀世音，四救脫，五跋陀和，六大勢至，七堅勇，八釋摩男。亦各有神呪及功能悔法。[88]

While the *MHZG* merely mentioned it as an example, 'the repentance of the seven Buddhas and the eight bodhisattvas' is elaborated in the *ZFCJ*. The *ZFCJ*

[84] The translation here is quoted from Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 343.

[85] T46, no. 1911, p. 15b17–18.

[86] The 'Trāṇamukta' is a back-translation of the Chinese term *jiu-tuo* 救脫, meaning 'rescue and emancipation'. For the translation of the name 'jiu-tuo', see Diego Loukota, 'Made in China? Sourcing the Old Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabhasūtra*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139, no. 1 (January–March 2019): 81.

[87] The corresponding Sanskrit name for this Bodhisattva is not found.

[88] T46, no. 1912, p. 196c8–13.

clarifies that the source is the *Miraculous Spells of the Seven Buddhas*,[89] and offers a summary of the corresponding content. This case shows how the *ZFCJ* enriches the *MHZG* with the clarified source and further explanations of corresponding content by returning to the original source that the *MHZG* did not fully explain. However, as the following example shows, the clarification of external sources sometimes uses a specialised title or refers to a certain section within the source that neither premodern readers nor modern readers unfamiliar with the titles would instantly recognise, which shows that its readership is specific to a certain community. The example compares the original content from the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is implicitly quoted in the *MHZG*, and the explanation offered in the *ZFCJ* of this hidden quotation in the *MHZG*.

> *Lotus Sūtra*: Thereupon Śāriputra leapt up ecstatic and joyful.[90]
>
> 《法華經》：爾時舍利弗踊躍歡喜。[91]
>
> *MHZG*: [As the *Lotus Sūtra* says,] 'Tathāgata diligently proclaimed this Dharma' and 'the one who hears it was joyful'.[92]

[89] The full title is *Qi fo ba pusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神呪經, meaning the *Sūtra of the Great Dhāraṇi Spirit-Spells Spoken by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas*. Its Chinese version is collected in T21, no. 1332. The translator of the text is unknown, but the translation was completed during the period of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420).

[90] The translation here is from *The Lotus Sūtra*, 2nd Rev. ed, trans., Kumārajīva, Tsugunari Kubo, and Akira Yuyama, *BDK English Tripiṭaka Series* 13–I (Moraga, California: BDK America, 2007), 47. There is a small modification for the word 'yongyue' 踊躍, which was originally translated as 'standing up' instead of 'leaping up'.

[91] T9, no, 262, p. 10b29.

[92] The translation mainly depends on Paul Swanson's translation, with some modifications of vocabulary to emphasise the shared usage of the word 'joyful' 歡喜 (*huanxi*) in the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ*. Another modification is applied to the word *wenzhe*, which was translated as 'those who hear it' as a plural form by Swanson, but since it refers to the specific figure Śāriputra, here it is translated in singular form as 'the one who hears it'. See Swanson's translation in Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity*, *Quiet Insight*, 107.

《摩訶止觀》：如來殷勤稱歎此法。聞者歡喜。[93]

ZFCJ: At the beginning of the second scroll [of the *Lotus Sūtra*], Śāriputra received an explication [from the Tathāgata and] was said to 'leap up ecstatically and joyfully'. Therefore, [the *MHZG*] says 'the one who heard it was joyful'.

《止觀輔行傳弘決》:第二卷初，身子領解云"歡喜踊躍"。故云"聞者歡喜"。[94]

It is also noteworthy that Zhanran gave a rather clear explanation about the *MHZG*. He added the scroll number, revealed the identity of the 'listener' referred to in the *MHZG* as Śāriputra, and explained verbatim why the *MHZG* said that 'the one who heard it was joyful', even if this sentence does not have particular importance in the doctrinal aspect. His strategy here is to provide explanations in as much detail as possible, which again, embodies the strategy of 'literal exposition'.

Intriguingly, when explaining this hidden citation, Zhanran indicated the scroll number rather than clarifying the title of the source. One might argue that the title was left out because it is mentioned in the previous part, but this is not the case. The title of the *Lotus Sūtra* is very likely to have been omitted, and the reason for this is that it holds an unquestionable place as the foundation of the Tiantai doctrines. It is mentioned so often in the *ZFCJ* that it would be superfluous to specify it every time. Apart from avoiding wordiness, it is probably also because Zhanran assumed this would not hinder his readers, as they were well aware of the importance of the *Lotus Sūtra* and had enough familiarity with its sections to immediately grasp its source.

What is the point of the clarification of sources, then? It is, of course, for a clear explanation. But apart from this, the explicitness of the sources also reveals the textual authority those sources possess, from which the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ* gain their credibility. In another sense, the clear explanations and clarification of sources by the *ZFCJ* both demonstrate the commentator Zhanran's and the author Zhiyi's

[93] T46, no. 1911, p. 2b18.

[94] T46, no. 1912, p. 154a1.

familiarity with authoritative Buddhist texts, which also establishes their proficiency as Buddhist teachers. This point will be revisited in the discussion that follows of the two functions of external sources in the *ZFCJ*.

Providing Definitions

Whereas non-Buddhist borrowings provide definitions for indigenous Chinese terms and concepts, Buddhist sources are more often used to define Buddhist terms and concepts. For example,

> The content of 'five shades' and so on is found much the same in the sūtras and treatises. The *Tattvasiddhi* says, 'Just like the heaven, the sun and the moon, they are bright in nature, but [due to the effects] of the five shades, namely smoke, cloud, dust, fog and so on, they become unseen/invisible.' One of the five shades that is not included in the treatise here is the hands of Asura.
> "五翳"等者，經論大同。《成論》云："譬如天日月，其性本明淨，煙、雲、塵、霧等五翳則不現。""等"者等取阿修羅手。[95]

Here the *ZFCJ* quotes the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* 成實論 (*Chengshi lun*; T32, no. 1646) to explain the concept of 'the five shades' 五翳 (*wu yi*) mentioned in the *MHZG*. In the *MHZG*, the concept of 'the five shades' is referred to when demonstrating the harms that a distracted mind would cause.[96] By consulting the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, an established and authoritative text, the *ZFCJ* offers a reliable explanation for this term in the *MHZG*.

The importance of using authoritative text is emphasised by the underlined

[95] T46, no. 1912, p. 304b19–22.

[96] T46, no. 1911, p. 57b12–15. Swanson's translation for this part reads: 'A distracted mind is the most pernicious of all evils. … [It obstructs understanding and insight,] like the five [overlapping] shades such as dust and mist that block the light of the sun, so that both the eyelashes that are up close and the sky that is far away cannot be seen.' Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 851–52.

sentence, where Zhanran adds the fifth shade, 'the hands of Asura', as the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* omits it. This indicates that Zhanran had the knowledge of what the five shades include. But rather than listing them using his own words, he took a detour by quoting the incomplete list from the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra* and completed it.

In fact, the *Da zhidu lun*, a very central text in Tiantai that Zhanran presumably was familiar with as a Tiantai master, includes the full list of the five shades,[97] which might have been a better choice for defining the *wu yi* than the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*. This is intriguing, as it appears to suggest that the external sources cited in the *ZFCJ* may not always represent the most effective or appropriate choices. In contrast to the previous section, which addressed the deliberate selection of sources, the present case seems to indicate a degree of arbitrariness in the process of citation. This observation should not be taken as a denial of Zhanran's scholarly expertise; rather, it raises the question of how and from where Zhanran accessed these sources.

It is also noteworthy that, after the quote from the *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, the *ZFCJ* also refers to the *Erya*, an indigenous dictionary, to further explain the character *yi* 翳.

> *Erya* says, 'The overcast weather accompanied by wind is called *yi*.' *Yi* denotes the covering of light. In this context, based on the shared effect [of smoke, clouds, dust, fog, and the hands of Asura] of blocking light, the five are all termed 'shades'.
>
> 《爾雅》云：“陰而風曰翳。”“翳”謂障光。今則通取五皆能障通名為“翳”。[98]

The combination of Indian and indigenous sources thus results in a

[97] T25, no. 1509, p. 185a10–12. 'For example, just as the sun and moon, when covered by five sorts of matters – namely smoke, cloud, dust, fog, and the hands of Asura – are unable to shine forth clearly…' 譬如日月，以五事覆暖（=翳）：煙、雲、塵、霧、羅睺阿修羅手障，則不能明照……

[98] T46, no. 1912, p. 304b21–22.

meticulous explanation, providing not only essential but also comprehensive knowledge for understanding this content. This, once again, exemplifies the strategy of literal exposition.

Adding More Supportive Examples

The *ZFCJ* cites external sources to provide additional examples that supplement and enrich the discussion, thereby developing intertextuality and coherence between the *MHZG* and other texts. This serves as a means of indicating further references for supplementary reading. Moreover, it functions as a form of doctrinal support within the interpretative framework of the *MHZG*, as illustrated in the following example,

> Meanwhile, the phenomenal contemplation (=contemplation of bringing oneself into the verses of Buddhist scriptures) can be found in the sūtras and treatises,[99] rather than being something unique in this text (=*MHZG*). For example, 'the head as the hall' is said by the *Nirvana Sūtra*, 'a patient heart like a robe that guards against external harms' by the *Lotus Sūtra*, 'treating the delight in the Dharma as someone's wife' by the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the 'Lion's Roar' by the *Da zhidu lun*, and so on.
> 然歷事觀法，經論皆爾，非獨今文。如《大經》云"頭為殿堂"等，《法華》云"忍辱衣"等，《淨名》中"法喜妻"等，《大論》中"師子吼"等。[100]

In this instance, the *ZFCJ* cites the *Nirvana Sūtra*, the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, and the *Da zhidu lun* to demonstrate that metaphorical expressions and phenomena are employed in Buddhist scriptures as vehicles for conveying doctrine. This, in turn, affirms the legitimacy of phenomenal contemplation as a method grounded in engaging directly with scriptural verses. By introducing these external sources into the discussion, the *ZFCJ* forges a link between Zhiyi's

[99] See footnote 77 for the explanation of the *Lishi guan*.

[100] T46, no. 1912, p. 190c19–22.

contemplative theory and authoritative textual traditions, thereby exemplifying the strategy I have termed 'interpretative integration'.

The example above illustrates how the *ZFCJ* cites authoritative texts to support the doctrinal discussions in the *MHZG*, remaining closely aligned with the original context. However, there are also instances where the commentary goes beyond what is directly addressed in the *MHZG*, moving towards a more supplementary position on the interpretative spectrum. In these extended explanations, external sources are employed to introduce content that, while less directly relevant, remains useful. This approach not only broadens the scope of the discussion but also creates a contrast with the original topic, thereby expanding the interpretative space rather than merely reinforcing the initial argument. The following example will illustrate this point in detail, where the *ZFCJ* further develops the connection between the concept of inexplicability 不可說 (*bu ke shuo*) and the notion of Absolute Cessation and Contemplation 絕待止觀 (*juedai zhiguan*) as presented in the *MHZG*.

The term *absolute* 絕待 (*juedai*) is set in contrast to *relative* 相待 (*xiangdai*), a conceptual pair used to describe the interdependent and contingent nature of all phenomena.[101] The Absolute Cessation and Contemplation places the Cessation and Contemplation at the absolute level where its supremacy requires no comparison to be established,[102] emphasising its transcendent nature beyond all conceptualisation, all passions, all karma, all recompense, all verbal teachings, all concepts of contemplation, all ideas and ideals of enlightenment.[103] To elaborate on the

[101] The most well-known application of this set of concepts in Tiantai is its explanation of *miao* (sublimeness) 妙 in the Chinese title of the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經. The sublimeness of the *Lotus Sūtra* is relative in comparison with other sūtras, and is called the Relative Sublimeness 相待妙 (*xiangdai miao*); but at the same time, its sublimeness is intrinsic and thus does not need any comparisons to confirm it, which makes it the Absolute Sublimeness 絕待妙 (*juedai miao*).

[102] Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 425.

[103] T46, no. 1911, p. 22a14–16. 今言“絕待止觀”者，絕橫豎諸待，絕諸思議，絕諸煩惱、諸業、諸果，絕諸教、觀、證等。 The summary in the text is based on Swanson's translation, see Zhiyi,

transcendency and inexplicability of the Absolute Cessation and Contemplation, the *ZFCJ* quotes the case of Vimalakīrti's silence from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, which is recognised by the Boddhisattva Mañjuśrī as an unexpressed expression of truly entering the dharma of non-duality 不二法門 (*bu'er famen*),[104] and then highlights that these concepts found in other Buddhist texts are all synonymous with *juedai*,

> In addition [to this case], the 'inexplicability' in the *Nirvana Sūtra*, the 'speechlessness' in the *Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra*, the 'perfect cleanness' in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, the 'stopping of a sigh' in the *Lotus Sūtra*, the 'non-birth' in the *Nirvana Sūtra* are all synonymous of *juedai*. However, it should be known that the meanings of 'absolute' in all the other teachings differ; only when it is identical both on the level of temporary truth and the ultimate truth to the current context can they be equalled to it.
> 又《大經》"不可說",《大集》"無言",《般若》"清淨",《法華》"止歎",《涅槃》"不生",皆"絕待"之異名也。然又須知諸教"絕"異,開顯無外方稱今文。[105]

Thus, the *ZFCJ* introduces cases from other sources to supplement the context. However, compared to the previous examples, they appear less relevant to the original topic. Such a move may be seen as an innovative expansion of the discourse.

Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight, 433–34. Swanson's original rendering is: 'Now, absolute cessation-and-contemplation goes beyond all the relative horizontal and vertical aspects [as discussed above] to transcend all conceptualization; it involves transcending all passions, all karma, all recompense; [it involves] all [verbal] teachings, all [concepts of] contemplation, and all [ideas and ideals of] enlightenment.'

[104] T46, no. 1912, p. 219c2–6.

[105] T46, no. 1912, p. 219c12–14. The idea of *kai xian* 開顯 here literally means to 'open up and reveal'. It features in the Tiantai school's interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra* as both containing temporary truth that needs to be 'opened up' and also the ultimate truth to be 'revealed'.

Supporting Zhanran's Argument

As previously noted, there are three distinct voices present in the *ZFCJ*: the voice of Zhiyi, the voice of Zhanran, and the external sources cited by either Zhiyi or Zhanran. While we have examined how external sources are employed to clarify and reinforce Zhiyi's teachings, instances in which Zhanran articulates and develops his own doctrinal positions are relatively rare in the *ZFCJ*. One notable example, however, is found in Zhanran's use of multiple scriptural references to support his theory that Buddha nature is inherent in insentient beings such as grass, wood, and even bricks – an idea summarised in the phrase *wuqing you xing* 無情有性.

> Besides, the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* says, 'since all the sentient beings are thus, all the dharmas are thus'. If there is no Buddha-nature (for the insentient beings), the essence would be small-scale, the teaching would be temporary.
>
> 又淨名云：“眾生如故，一切法如。”如無佛性，理小教權。[106]

He was probably not interested in developing his own theoretical paradigm in the *ZFCJ*. His awareness of adhering to the textual genre is evidenced by the fact that he developed the theory elsewhere, in a treatise called the *Jin'gang pi*,[107] whose genre as a treatise made it more suitable for this presentation. In this treatise, Zhanran established the bold claim that even insentient beings possess Buddha-nature. This claim was part of an ongoing debate begun by Daosheng 道生 (355–434) over whether Buddha-nature should be attributed to all sentient beings, including the *yichanti* 一闡提 (incorrigibles; Skt. *icchantika*) who were traditionally thought to lack it.[108] Zhanran's theory stretched the applicability of Buddha-nature to its

[106] T46, no. 1912, p. 152a18–19.

[107] T46, no. 1932. For a complete English translation of the *Adamantine Scalpel*, see Penkower, 'T'ien-t'ai during the T'ang Dynasty', 367–556.

[108] Whalen Lai, 'Sinitic Speculations on Buddha-Nature: The Nirvāṇa School (420–589)', *Philosophy East and West* 32, no. 2 (1982): 135–49. See also Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定, *Busshō no kenkyū* 佛性の研

outermost limits. While this claim highlights his theoretical originality, it is still based on the Tiantai tradition, reflecting his adherence to it. The claim rests on Zhiyi's doctrine of the Threefold Buddha-nature,[109] and the two additional notions Zhanran invokes, *Faxing* (Dharma-nature) and *Zhenru* 真如 (suchness), are reconfigured in accordance with the Tiantai doctrinal framework.[110]

Cross-Referencing

A particularly noteworthy feature of the *ZFCJ* is its use of cross-referencing. It refers to other parts of itself or the *MHZG* to explain the content under discussion. For example: both the fourth and fifth scrolls of the *MHZG* discuss the concept of *jijing men* 寂靜門 (the gate of serenity), meaning the serene nature of all the beings, which is another way to indicate the emptiness of dharmas;[111] when Zhanran

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究 (Tōkyō: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1973).

[109] For an explanation on Zhiyi's Threefold Buddha-nature, see Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy*, 133–34.

[110] This observation is based on my Master's dissertation, see Rusha Jin, 'Zhanran Jin'gang pi wuqing youxing shuo yanjiu 湛然《金刚錍》"无情有性"说研究' (MA diss., Remin University of China, 2020), 23–47. For studies on Zhanran's 'sentient beings' Buddha-nature', see the most recent one by Shuman Chen, 'The Liberation of Matter: Examining Jingxi Zhanran's Philosophy of the Buddha-Nature of Insentient Beings in Tiantai Buddhism' (PhD. thesis, 2014).

Faxing and *Zhenru* are closely related to Huayan, one of the Tiantai school's principal doctrinal rivals. Therefore, Zhanran's interpretation of these two concepts is a matter of particular significance. Some important studies on this issue are: Yukio Sakamoto 坂本幸男, 'Hijō ni okeru busshō no umu ni tsuite: Tokuni Tannen, Chōkan o chūshin to shite 非情に於ける佛性の有無について-特に湛然・澄觀を中心として', *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 7, no. 2 (1959): 416–25; Ryōjun Ōkubo 大久保良順, 'Kongōbeiron to Daijō kishinron to no kankei', *Tendaigakuhō*, no. 4 (1961): 66–70; Yating Liu, 'Tannen no 'zuien setsu' ni kansuru ichikōsatsu', *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 55, no. 2 (2007): 623–26.

[111] T46, no. 1911, p. 40b21–29 and p. 49c19–22. 法者，眼、耳、鼻、舌，陰、入、界等，皆是寂靜門，亦是法界，何須捨此就彼？出《寶篋經》。Swanson's translation for this part is, '"Dharmas" refers to the fact that the sense fields of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and so forth are all the gates to quiescence; they are the *dharmadhātu*. Why should we then abandon this [phenomenal world] and

encounters the concept again in in his annotation of the fifth scroll of the *ZFCJ*, he indicates that *it* was already mentioned previously in his explanation of the fourth scroll, thereby establishing a cross-referential link within the structure of the *ZFCJ* and with the *MHZG*. [112]

This self-referencing case can hardly be called external referencing as it stays with the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ*. But there are also quotations from Zhiyi's and Zhanran's other works in the *ZFCJ*, which might be described as a particular case of using external sources. Such cross-referencing occurs on several occasions. For example, Zhanran's other writings are quoted in the *ZFCJ*, when he is explaining the meaning of *diyu* 地獄 (hell; Skt. *naraka*) and quotes the detailed explanation for this concept that can be found in the *Fahua xuanyi shiqian*.[113] And cases where the *ZFCJ* uses Zhiyi's other works, including the *Guanxin lun* 觀心論 (T46, no. 1920), the *Fahua wenju* 法華文句, *Fahua xuanyi* 法華玄義, *Weimo jing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏 (Profound Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra; T38, no. 1777), the *Si nian chu* 四念處 (The Four Bases of Mindfulness; T46, no. 1918), and so on, all of which replenish its interpretation of the *MHZG*.[114]

This kind of referencing is different from the use of other kinds of external sources, as it is in a way more 'internal'. Although outside the *ZFCJ*, Zhanran's and Zhiyi's other works exhibit a close textual intimacy that generates a distinctive intertextual network in Tiantai literature, connecting the works and thought of Zhiyi

depart for that [world of enlightenment]? So it says in the Jewel Trunk Sūtra. You should know that there are no dharmas outside the *dharmadhātu*, and which are [really] successive [or hierarchical].' Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 762.

[112] T46, no. 1912, p. 260b13–28 and p. 282a8–9. 'What the *MHZG* states here, "the eyes and others are the *jijing men*," is explained in detail with a citation in Scroll Four.' 所言"眼等為寂靜門"者，具如第四卷引。

[113] T46, no. 1912, p. 195c11–13. Hibi listed the sixteen quotations of the *Shiqian* found in the *ZFCJ*, see Senshō Hibi, *Tōdai Tendaigaku josetsu*, 137–38. Cross-referencing is also meaningful as it provides valuable references that can help date texts. Hibi's study of Zhanran's works relies on this approach. For example, Hibi uses a quotation from the *Shiqian* to speculate on the completion date of the *ZFCJ*, see Ibid., 137–41.

[114] For all the works of Zhanran that are quoted in the *ZFCJ*, see the Appendix.

and Zhanran and strengthening the coherence and credibility of the Tiantai doctrinal system. This was probably also a practical consideration of saving paper and providing the reader with a more convenient reading.

Concluding Remarks

The above section presents Zhanran's management of external sources, looking at both his selection and integration of them. It not only enhanced our understanding of the function of borrowings within Buddhist commentarial practices but also offered a case study of knowledge transmission, exemplifying broader patterns of intellectual exchange in Chinese Buddhism.

First, an overview of the external sources used in the *ZFCJ* shows that Zhanran selectively incorporates a substantial number of references drawn from diverse textual categories. His explicit identification of the hidden borrowings in the *MHZG* reflects his effort to provide clear explanations, and his abridgement of quotations, which is based on contextual relevance and the significance of the source, demonstrates his editorial judgement and textual management. Another aspect that manifests in his selection of external sources is their thematic integration according to the content of the *MHZG*.

His management of sources is also shown in his demarcation of external sources as 'Buddhist' and 'non-Buddhist'. It is not a neutral taxonomy but his conscious positioning of knowledge within a sectarian and polemical framework, constructing an 'us-others' boundary to legitimise the Tiantai tradition while discrediting rival voices or assimilating them.

This demarcation, along with the functions of the external sources used in the *ZFCJ*, respectively, shows Zhanran's selection and incorporation of external sources in the *ZFCJ*. The external sources serve as a strategic tool not only for elucidating obscure or undeveloped aspects of the *MHZG* through the strategy of 'literal exposition' but also for addressing contradictions between 'us' and the 'others' and integrating opposing voices through 'interpretative integration' to reinforce the

doctrinal legitimacy of both the *MHZG* and his own commentary.

By incorporating external sources, Zhanran not only broadens the scope of his commentary but also demonstrates the potential for intellectual inclusivity and adaptability in Tiantai teachings. This underscores the role of commentaries not just as interpretive guides but also as platforms for broader intellectual discourse.

The discussion in this chapter also echoes the conclusion of Chapter One regarding the influences of the historical environment on the creation of the *ZFCJ*, which helped us further explore the features of the borrowing in the *ZFCJ*.

The huge number and varied kinds of external sources, though sometimes a certain level of randomness is manifest in the strategy of 'literal exposition', are not just aimlessly piled up but demonstrate a solid understanding and skilful use of the sources, which may be an outcome of knowledge exchange within the intellectual community. The knowledge exchanges, both oral and textual, as well as the targeted readership of the *ZFCJ*, help to explain Zhanran's selection of sources and the strategies he employed.

This knowledge exchange also underpins two foundations that facilitated the establishment of new textual authority based on existing authorities. First, as discussed above, it supplied the materials necessary to create internal alignment among different references. Second, it reinforced the shared acknowledgement within the Buddhist community of the authority of Buddhist canonical scriptures and the occasional reliability of non-Buddhist sources. This discussion further reveals the deeper mechanisms of the Buddhist commentarial practice of using existing textual authority to support one's writings. These two foundations thus ensure the handing down of texts through generations.

The chapter also situates Zhanran's use of external sources within the broader context of Chinese Buddhism, interpreting it through the lens of knowledge exchange and sectarian advocacy. In doing so, it explores how the use of external sources in the *ZFCJ* reflects not only personal exegetical strategies but also larger dynamics of textual transmission and community engagement, thus highlighting both the methodological significance of this practice in Buddhist exegesis and the qualities

that underpin Zhanran's reputation as the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'.

Although this chapter provides illustrative examples in the discussion, its primary focus is on outlining the general patterns of Zhanran's use of external sources in the *ZFCJ*. A more comprehensive analysis of how Zhanran integrates quoted material into his philosophical interpretation would offer further insights into the nuances of his exegetical approach, which can be the topic for future research. The Appendix lays the groundwork for such a study, offering a ready resource for tracing the textual relationships within the *ZFCJ*.

Whereas the present chapter offers my own observations and analyses of how Zhanran manages external sources viewed from an 'outsider' perspective, the next chapter turns inward, examining his own reflections on their use in the *Zhiguan yili*. Although the *Zhiguan yili* does not directly address the *ZFCJ* and its attention is instead centred on summarising and explicating the principles of understanding the *MHZG*, it nonetheless offers valuable insights into Zhanran's attitudes toward the integration of external sources. In doing so, the following chapter will also bridge the discussion of Zhanran's commentarial methods in Chapters Two and Three with the broader Chinese Buddhist exegetical tradition, situating the *ZFCJ* within the wider landscape of the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition, thereby providing a comparative perspective on Zhanran's expertise as a commentator. At the same time, it offers a methodological reflection, demonstrating that innovation is not confined to doctrinal content but can also take shape in the very methods of commentary. Recognising this methodological dimension is essential for understanding why Zhanran occupies a preeminent place in the Tiantai tradition as a commentator.

Chapter 4 Bridging Text and Meaning: Zhanran's Exegetical Exploration

With a clearer idea of the commentarial methods in the *ZFCJ*, or, in other words, how exactly Zhanran conducted his exegesis, we can now take a moment to consider the nature of these commentarial methods. Considering the nature of the commentarial methods in the *ZFCJ* further reveals the nature of this commentarial work.

The previous two chapters focused on two related issues: the second chapter revealed how explanations are made in the *ZFCJ* at different levels of textual components, and the third chapter explored the more nuanced process of introducing external sources with strategies to provide contexts that facilitate understanding of the *MHZG*. Both contribute to reconnecting the readership with Zhiyi's teaching scene by contextualising its content. In this sense, the commentarial practice is to bridge the base text and the meaning, for the readership to reach the meaning via the text. This process is close to what Gadner refers to as 'brokering' to describe commentary in the Confucian tradition.[1] Gadner's remarks on the genre of commentary, especially the 'double-dialogue' established by commentary to address both 'the sages of the past' and the 'contemporary interpretative community' at the same time,[2] is also evident in our discussion of the *ZFCJ*. The aim of connecting the readership with the base text is not only explicitly stated by Zhanran in the introduction to the *ZFCJ* but also reflected in his detailed and multi-faceted commentarial treatment of the *MHZG*. As presented in Chapters Two and Three, to

[1] Gardner, 'Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History', 402.

[2] It is worth mentioning how Gadner's study makes a case that there is a 'dialogue' between the base text and the commentary. By dialogue he does not mean an exchange of content between the two – the base text cannot actually 'respond to' the commentary; instead, their dialogue is based on their mutual dependence and the limitations they put on each other: just as the commentary creates a range of possible explanations to limit the base text, to some degree, so the base text also limits the possible explanations that the commentary can put forward. See ibid, 401–2.

create a solid bridge, his commentarial treatment not only involves glossing, explanations of terms and allusions, and doctrinal discussions, but extends to more abstract levels of structural interpretation and the explication of the author's intentions. This invites us to realise that the bridging between 'text' and 'meaning' is, indeed, a challenging task.

Zhanran seems to gain insights from Zhiyi on how to resolve this challenging task: In Chapter Two, I pointed out the similarities that Zhanran's commentarial methods in the *ZFCJ* shared with Zhiyi's commentarial scheme of the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps; and in Chapter Three, I examined how Tiantai Hermeneutics may have influenced Zhanran's strategies for including external sources. This chapter, however, will demonstrate Zhanran's engagement with Zhiyi's exegesis, which operates at a more abstract level than the commentarial methods discussed in the previous chapters, yet is grounded in them. This discussion will further show that Zhanran's contribution to commentarial practice is outstanding.

The chapter consists of two parts. First, it will demonstrate Zhanran's adherence to the Tiantai tradition under Zhiyi's influence, a topic already discussed in Chapters Two and Three but still requiring an introduction to Zhiyi's three hermeneutical schemes for a clear contrast. Zhiyi's three commentarial schemes are applied to different texts and function at different levels of interpretation, which shows the flexibility of the commentator when forming their interpretative plan to effectively bridge the 'text' and 'meaning'. A clarification of which scheme influenced Zhanran most will show the similarities between their methodologies.

Zhanran's creativity and mastery in exegesis as well as his expertise in the Tiantai tradition are reflected in his advanced methodological reflection on Zhiyi's exegesis, which will be the focus of the second part of this chapter. As mentioned above, various commentarial methods reflect the commentator's attitudes on how to bridge 'text' and 'meaning'. Zhanran's systemisation of Zhiyi's exegetical principles in another of his commentaries, the *Zhiguan yili*, shows another level of what he believes is necessary to bridge the gap for his readers between the text of the *MHZG*

and its meaning. An examination of *Zhiguan yili* is meaningful not only because it demonstrates how deeply Zhanran understood Zhiyi's exegetical approach, which validates his authority within the Tiantai tradition, but also because it represents a rare example of technical reflection on the nature of exegesis itself during that period. In this way, it expands Zhanran's significance beyond Tiantai, positioning him within the broader landscape of Chinese commentarial practice.

Zhiyi's Exegetical Schemata: The *Wuchong xuanyi*, the *Qifan gongjie*, and the *Sizhong xiaoshi*

In this section, we will explore Zhiyi's three exegetical schemata for their features and roles, which demonstrate Zhiyi's thoughts on how to adjust his mode of interpretation to different texts and levels of meaning. This will provide a basis for understanding Zhanran's selection from Zhiyi's exegetical schemata. Moreover, we will particularly focus on Zhiyi's emphasis on the mutuality between exegesis and meditative practice, which relates to the mutuality between the teaching and meditative practice. His exegetical methodology indicates that exegesis does not work merely on the textual level but should extract the inherent logic of the scripture so that it can be internalised as an overarching guidance. While this guidance emerges from the text, its application transcends the textual dimension, providing a unified framework for both doctrinal interpretation and meditative practice. This, in turn, explains the importance of exegesis in Tiantai tradition and validates Zhanran's commentarial efforts.

There are three exegetical schemata established by Zhiyi in his writings: Five Categories of Profound Meaning 五重玄義 (*Wuchong xuanyi*),[3] Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps 七番共解 (*Qifan gongjie*), [4] and the Four Types of Explication 四

[3] The translations of the terms are borrowed from Swanson's translation of the *MHZG*. See Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 1954.

[4] Ibid., 2051.

種消釋 (*Sizhong xiaoshi*; or *Tiantai sishi* 天台四釋, Fourfold Exegesis of the Tiantai).

The Five Categories of Profound Meaning and Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps were used in the *Fahua xuanyi* but were also applied to Zhiyi's other works, such as the *Jinguangming jing xuanyi* and *Renwang huguo bore jing shu*. Therefore, they apply to both treatise and annotation, showing a degree of flexibility. In contrast, the Four Types of Explication are used specifically in Zhiyi's commentary on the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Fahua wenju* 法華文句.

The Five Categories of Profound Meaning are the basic framework of the *Fahua xuanyi* in which they are unpacked twice, in two large sections called 'general explanation' 通釋 (*tongshi*) and 'respective explanation' 別釋 (*bieshi*). The five categories include:

(1) *Shi ming* 釋名: explaining the text's title;

(2) *Bian ti* 辯體: expounding on the essence (of the text);

(3) *Ming zong* 明宗[5]: elucidating the fundamental teaching;

(4) *Lun yong* 論用: discussing the application;

(5) *Pan jiao* 判教: classifying the teachings (using Tiantai's doctrinal taxonomy of Five Periods and Eight Teachings 五時八教).[6]

In the 'general explanation', the five categories are explained in seven ways, namely, using the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps. This explanation serves as the introductory section of the work.[7] The Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps are:

(1) *Biao zhang* 標章: marking the sections.

(2) *Yin zheng* 引證: quoting proofs.

(3) *Sheng qi* 生起: tracing the order of the discourse.

[5] The *zong* here describes the fundamental teaching and should not be equated with the *zong* in the Tiantai *zong* (Tiantai School), which means the 'lineage', although the two definitions are linked, as the *zong* is the fundamental teaching that establishes the school.

[6] Paul Swanson's translation is cited here, with slight modifications. See Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 1954.

[7] The section on Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps takes up almost the entire first scroll of the *Fahua xuanyi*, in T33, no. 1716, p. 682a20–p. 691a5.

(4) *Kai he* 開合: explications based on analysis 開 (*kai*; 'to open up' [for analysis]) and synthesis 合 (*he*; 'to combine together' [in a synthesis]).[8]

(5) *Liao jian* 料簡 or *Wen da* 問答: the questioning and answering.

(6) *Guan xin* 觀心: contemplating the mind (based on the text).

(7) *Hui yi* 會異: communicating the differences (in other texts or teachings).

The Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps explain each of the Five Categories of Profound Meaning, and thus the two exegetical schemata are interlinked. For example, the third step of 'tracing the order of the discourse' explains the rationale for the five categories' sequence from 'explaining the text's title' to 'classifying the teachings'.[9]

After the 'general explanation', each of the five categories is interpreted again in the second part of the *Fahua xuanyi*, in a 'respective explanation' 別釋 (*bieshi*).

In contrast to the Five Categories of Profound Meanings, which are typically employed as a fixed set, the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps are more flexible, as individual steps can be found applied selectively in other contexts. For example, the five categories are also applied in Zhiyi's *Weimo jing xuan shu*, but its 'general explanation' is divided into six rather than seven steps.[10] However, five of the steps, including 'marking the sections', 'expounding the sequence', 'quoting proofs', and 'contemplating the mind', are apparently identical to the steps in Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps, and 'clarifying the general and the specific' is similar to the 'explications based on analysis and synthesis'. Only the sixth step, 'corresponding [the five categories] to the Four Siddhāntas', is not found in the seven steps of the *Fahua xuanyi*.

Therefore, the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps can be considered an exegetical module, demonstrating greater potential for application in other contexts

[8] See the explanation for *kai* 開 and *he* 合 in Buswell, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment*, 149.

[9] T33, no. 1716, pp. 684c28–685a2. 世諦為言，無名無以顯法，故初釋名。名，名於法，法即是體，尋名識體；體非宗不會，會體自行已圓，從體起用，導利含識；利益既多，須分別教相也。

[10] T38, no. 1777, p. 519a12–14. 就通釋五重，略為六意：一，通標五義名；二，辨次第；三，引證；四，明總別；五，約觀心；六，對四悉檀。

than the Five Categories. This indicates how Zhiyi actively shapes his approach in response to the context and the specific features of the base text. His adjustment of his exegetical scheme based on the differences between base texts is further evidenced in another exegetical scheme called the Four Types of Explications.

Whereas the Seven Steps and the Five Categories assist in the explanation of the *Fahua xuanyi*, the Four Types of Explication are used particularly in the *Fahua wenju*, an annotation on the *Lotus Sūtra.*[11] The Four Types of Explication are:

(1) *Yinyuan shi* 因緣釋: the interpretation of causes and conditions;[12]

(2) *Yuejiao shi* 約教釋: the interpretation of the classification of teachings;

(3) *Benji shi* 本跡釋: the interpretation of fundamentals and traces;

(4) *Guanxin shi* 觀心釋: the interpretation of the contemplation of the mind.

The Four Types of Explication are similar in nature to the Five Categories, explaining conceptual topics, rather than dealing with surface-level explanations like the Seven Steps. For example, the same type of 'classification of teachings' is the fifth of the Five Categories and the second of the Four Types, but it cannot be found in the Seven Steps.

The three different exegetical schemata indicate Zhiyi's adjustment of his exegesis. The differences between the Five Categories of the *Fahua xuanyi* and the Four Types of the *Fahua wenju* are based on the genre of texts and their different arrangement of content. As argued by Guo Chaoshun, the two are an application of the 'fundamentals' 本 (*ben*) and 'traces' 跡 (*ji*): the Five Categories are used to analyse the themes and essences, and the Four Types are used to deal with each sentence of the text and explore verbatim its deeper meaning.[13] The Five Categories

[11] The *Fahua wenju* and the *Fahua xuanyi* are both based on the *Lotus Sūtra* but vary in their genres: The *Fahua wenju* is an annotation that follows the sūtra's structure, whereas the *Fahua xuanyi* is a treatise that has its own independent structure.

[12] The 'interpretation of causes and conditions' is based on the concept of the 'four modes of instruction'. For the explanation of 'four modes of instruction', see footnote 33.

[13] Guo, 'Zhiyi siyi xiaowen de jiejing fangfalun', 249. The 'fundamentals (or originals) and traces' is the hermeneutical pair Zhiyi uses to divide the *Lotus Sūtra* into the 'original gate' and the 'trace gate'. The 'fundamentals' describes the second half of the sūtra, which is the final and ultimate revelation of the

and the Seven Steps of the *Fahua xuanyi* serve different levels of explanation. Zhiyi's adjustment shows his concern for developing systematic and effective exegetical approaches, but this in turn highlights and explains the flexibility of his exegetical methods. Such interchangeability is evident in the use of 'contemplation of the mind' in the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps and the Four Types of Explication, and similarly, the presence of 'classifying the teachings' in both the Five Categories of Profound Meaning and the Four Types of Explication. The methods are similar to building with LEGO pieces: the pieces can be used across different sets and do not exclusively belong to any of them, unless the piece possesses a distinctive originality, such as Wang Bi's interpretation of the Interlocking Paralleled Style in the *Laozi*.

Thus, the foregoing discussion of Zhiyi's exegetical schemata not only serves as a contrast to show the extent to which Zhanran employed them in his own commentary but also brings to light the issue of their active adjustment of method.

Our discussion in Chapters Two and Three shows that some of Zhanran's commentarial methods parallel the Seven Steps, indicating that his engagement with Tiantai was not limited to its texts and doctrines, but also extended to its exegetical schemata. Thus, it can be seen that tradition, to some extent, determines the areas in which a commentator engages in their commentarial practice. This situation, in fact, also applies to Zhiyi, since some of the methods in his schemata were used by other commentators of his time, such as the classification of teachings and the use of questioning and answering. Thus, it may also be said that Zhiyi was, to a certain extent, conditioned by the Chinese Buddhist exegetical tradition of his day.

This condition arising from the broader context stands in tension with the agency exhibited in Zhiyi's adjustment of his exegetical schemata in this chapter, as well as in our discussion of Zhanran's commentarial methods in the preceding chapters, both of which reveal a degree of initiative in shaping the interpretative plan. Realising this tension allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of

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Buddha's eternality and the Bodhisattva doctrines. The 'traces', on the other hand, are related to the Buddha's earthly life and previous teachings. See the entry '*Benji* 本迹' in Hodous and Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 190.

commentarial methods. It also points to the need to compare Zhiyi's exegetical methods with Zhanran's. Methodological resemblance is often difficult to trace with certainty, as there are countless similar cases across traditions, cultures, and time periods that, while superficially alike, are not necessarily related. Using Zhiyi as the reference point is particularly meaningful, given the demonstrable historical and intellectual connection between them. This connection provides a grounded, rather than arbitrary, basis for the comparison.

Another noteworthy point is Zhiyi's linkage of exegesis with meditative practice, which can be seen from the inclusion of the method of 'contemplating the mind' 觀心 *(guanxin*) in both the Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps and the Four Types of Explications.

Why is it even possible for 'contemplating the mind' to be combined with the other six steps, which all belong to textual interpretation? In light of what was noted at the beginning of this chapter that the commentarial method functions as a bridge between text and meaning, the incorporation of meditative practice can be seen as Zhiyi's way of addressing the problem of how such a bridge may be constructed.

The feature of Zhiyi's exegesis that incorporates meditative practice makes us aware that the bridging between text and meaning, while seemingly a matter grounded in the textual base, is in fact also a question that can extend beyond the textual base to the experiential and practical dimension. This outstanding feature of Zhiyi's exegesis can be seen as a response to the matter of the dynamic relationship between the enlightenment experience and linguistic expressions, which is the most important hermeneutical matter in the Buddha's teachings, as suggested by Kim Yong-pyo.[14]

An interpretation of 'contemplation of the mind' does not appear in the *ZFCJ*, probably because its explanation in the *MHZG*, which is a meditative guidance in nature, is itself an 'interpretation of contemplation of the mind'. However, as the

[14] Yong-pyo Kim, 'Scriptural Hermeneutics as Practice: Zhiyi's View on the Interpretation of Contemplating Mind', *International Association for Buddhist Thought and Culture* 25 (15 September 2015): 10.

combination of exegesis and meditative practice also involves unifying the teacher's mind and the reader's mind,[15] this leads us to consider that exegesis in general may be a reproduction of the scene of Buddha's teaching. In this sense, the *ZFCJ* can also be seen as a key for its readers to enter the scene of Zhiyi's preaching. In this regard, it is also necessary to refer back to the mutuality between 'doctrine' and 'practice' we discussed earlier. I suggest that exegesis concerns the question of how the correct approach to these two aspects is conveyed to the readership, that is, how the interplay between them should be addressed from an interpreter's or a teacher's angle.

I attempt here to look at the features of Zhiyi's exegesis from a deeper perspective. As we have noted earlier, whether in paired concepts such as doctrine and practice or fundamentals and traces (see footnote 13), or on a larger scale in Zhanran's strategy of negotiating tensions with non-Buddhist sources, one can observe a tendency to affirm the two aspects as distinct entities while at the same time employing nuanced means to dissolve the boundaries between them, as if to challenge all merely provisional relations. This same tendency can also be discerned in Zhiyi's understanding of the form of the *sūtra*, which can be extended from the textual level to everything in this world, from natural phenomena to human creations.[16] The critical interrogation of provisional relations is a recurring and fundamental feature of Buddhist philosophy, rooted in the doctrines of dependent origination and emptiness. Tiantai's distinctiveness, however, lies in its insistence on the necessity of the provisional, integrating it as a constitutive element of the path to the ultimate truth, rather than dissolving the provisional to the point of leaving nothing behind.

This characteristic seems to have been internalised, permeating various aspects, even extending to the interpretation of texts. In the following discussion of the *Zhiguan yili*, we will see how a mutual relationship between text and meaning

[15] Kim, 'Scriptural Hermeneutics as Practice', 19.

[16] Chao-Shun Kuo 郭朝順, 'Lun Tiantai Zhiyi de wenben gainian 論天台智顗的「文本」概念', *Zhexue yu wenhua* 哲學與文化 30, no. 3 (2003): 69–76.

comes into view, marked by an exploration of their boundaries: while the 'text' is treated as a channel to 'meaning,' it nevertheless continues to receive sustained emphasis in its own right. Moreover, Zhanran's treatment of Zhiyi's exegetical principles in the *Zhiguan yili* also reveals his deep insight into exegesis and his adherence to the Tiantai tradition at the methodological level.

The Relationships between 'Text' and 'Meaning': Zhanran's *Zhiguan yili*

While commentarial literature is abundant, writings in which commentators articulate exegetical principles in a more self-reflective or methodological manner are comparatively rare. However, we are fortunate to have Zhanran's *Zhiguan yili*, another commentary on the *MHZG*, as it provides us with valuable material to explore how Zhanran systematises the exegetical principles in the *MHZG* and develops a new schema based on Zhiyi's exegesis.

The *Zhiguan yili* and Its Importance

The *Zhiguan yili* is one of Zhanran's commentaries on the *MHZG*. The *Zhiguan yili* consists of seven precedents 例 (*li*)[17] and in the third precedent of 'Explicating the Text and Its Meaning' 文義消釋例 (*wenyi xiaoshi li*), we can find a particular focus on the exegetical principles of the *MHZG*. Compared to other commentaries that primarily explain the text based on its content, the *Zhiguan yili* is more systematically structured. It goes beyond literal interpretation and summarises the writing principles of the *MHZG*. The *Zhiguan yili* is not only Zhanran's final commentary on

[17] The introduction of the *Zhiguan yili* can be found in Ono and Maruyama, eds., *Bussho Kaisetsu Daijiten*, 159–60. Also in Ikeda Rosan, 'Maka Shikan no Yomikata — 'Shikan Girei' no Kaishakugaku o Tōshite', in *Bukkyo no Jissen Genri*, edited by Sekiguchi Shindai (Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin, 1977). The brief introduction of the third precedent is on page 290, while the other six precedents are on pages 287–90.

the *MHZG*, but also one of his latest works. Its highly technical nature may well be a result of the maturation of his thought.

From the creation of the third precedent alone, Zhanran's awareness of the importance of methodology is already manifest. His contribution to elaborating this aspect has been recognised by later Tiantai Buddhists, such as in the preface of Congyi's 從義 (1042–1091 CE) *Zhiguan yili zuanyao* 止觀義例纂要 (Essential Compilation of Interpretations and Principles of the Zhiguan; X56, no. 921),

> While the *ZFCJ* lays out its (the *MHZG*'s) details, the *Zhiguan yili* summarises its major divisions … Therefore, one should know that the transmission of the path of the *MHZG* without understanding the *Zhiguan yili* will overturn the sublime practice (= *zhiguan*, cessation-and -contemplation).
> 然輔行則披其細目，義例乃結其大科。……故知傳止觀之道而不明義例者，則妙行傾覆也。[18]

As indicated by the underlined section, the roles of the *ZFCJ* and the *Zhiguan yili* are complementary: the *ZFCJ* 'lays out the details' of the *MHZG*, providing verbatim explanations; in contrast, the *Zhiguan yili* outlines and summarises the principles for understanding the *MHZG*. This tells us that the methodology and the content depend on each other — without an understanding of the content, we cannot discern how the underlying methodology operates; conversely, failing to grasp the methodology may lead to misinterpretations of the deeper meanings embedded in the content. A comprehensive understanding of the *MHZG* relies on both, and only by integrating these two aspects can one correctly practise the cessation-and-contemplation and ultimately reach the state of liberation. And from the commentator's perspective, the bridging of text and meaning must be undertaken at both the level of content and that of method in order to comprehensively and effectively interpret the base text.

[18] X56, no. 921, p. 1a15–18.

The following discussion will show how Zhanran systematises Zhiyi's approach to bridging text and meaning.

The Third Precedent of 'Explicating the Text and Its Meaning'

The third precedent of 'Explicating the Text and Its Meaning' neatly restructures Zhiyi's exegesis and provides a detailed account of the exegetical principles of the *MHZG* to develop its structure and conceptual discussion.

Chuyuan's 處元 (1030–1120) *Zhiguan yili suishi* 止觀義例隨釋 (Sequential Explanation of the Meaning and Principles of Mohe zhiguan; X56, no. 923), a commentary on the *Zhiguan yili*, indicates that *wen* 文 (text) is the agent that carries out the interpretation (*nengquan* 能詮), referring to the one who, whereas *yi* 義 (meaning) is the object of interpretation (*suoquan* 所詮), referring to what is being interpreted.[19] It also points out that the pairing of 'text' and 'meaning' in the third precedent means they are in an interdependent relationship: 'Text is not without meaning, and meaning is not without text 然文非無義，義非無文', and therefore, this classification is 'only a matter of emphasis – determining which aspect is given greater focus 蓋從強而言之耳'.[20]

The reason why it is difficult to distinguish between 'text' and 'meaning', as Chuyuan explains, is their mutual dependence – they are inherently interconnected and stand in a nuanced combination. My own interpretation of this third precedent is that the nuanced combination can be read in three ways – as 'text and its meaning' (a parallel structure), as 'textual meaning' (the possessive grammatical relationship), and as the force that forms text and meaning.

Thus, the title of the third precedent, 'Text and its meaning', has a broader connotation than the mere juxtaposition of 'text' and 'meaning.' How, then, does Zhanran construct these three types of relationships in the third precedent, and what is their significance?

[19] X56, no. 923, p. 140b3–4.

[20] X56, no. 923, p. 140b4.

To begin with, the first question is: these relationships are embodied in Zhanran's structuring of the third precedent. As an aid to understanding its structure and the issues involved, I have visualised the structure of the third precedent in the figure below.

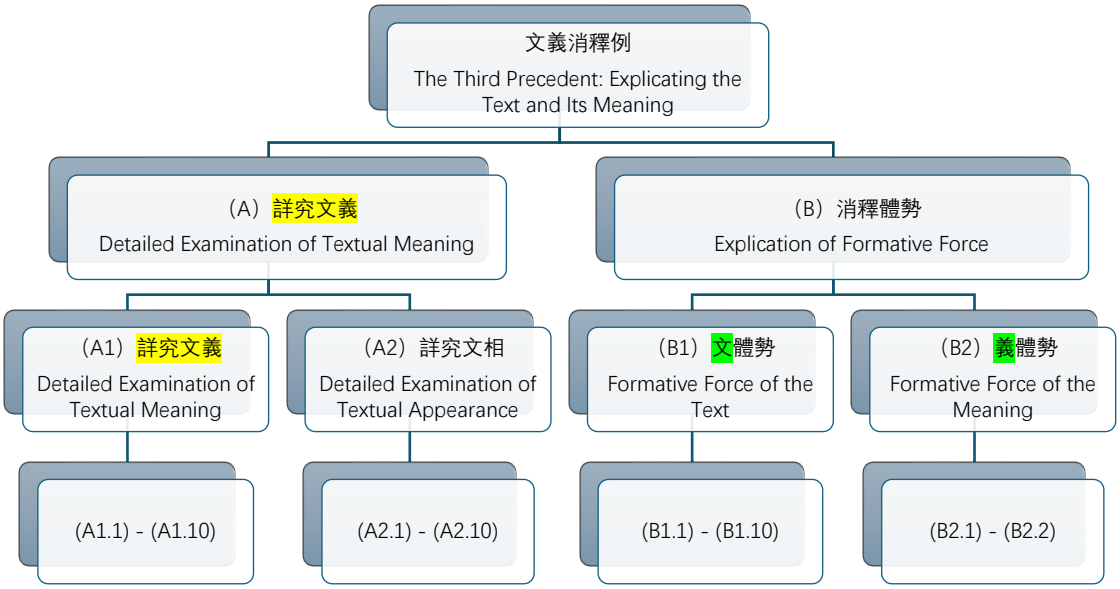

Figure 1 The Outline of the Third Precedent

The third precedent includes three levels. The first level consists of (A) a 'Detailed Examination of Textual Meaning' and (B) 'Explication of Formative Force', each of which is further divided into two categories at the second level. (A) 'Detailed Examination of Textual Meaning' is subdivided into (A1) 'Detailed Examination of Textual Meaning' and (A2) 'Detailed Examination of Textual Appearance', while (B) 'Formative Force' is subdivided into (B1) 'Formative Force of the Text' and (B2) 'Formative Force of the Meaning', making a total of four categories. At the third level, each of these four categories contains ten cases, amounting to forty cases in total. Due to space constraints, those cases cannot be presented in full, but some of them will be noted in the following discussion.[21]

[21] The challenge to understanding the third precedent lies in the fact that it is written in a succinct way for a readership that is familiar with the Tiantai doctrines, rather than for beginners. If we were to explain each of the forty cases, it would require elaborations on the contextual background within the

Just from looking at its structure, we can hardly tell the criterion that Zhanran follows. However, premodern commentaries on the *Zhiguan yili* and relevant modern studies, such as Ikeda Rosan's paper, have focused primarily on explaining its content.[22] While some attempts were made to explain its structure, these fell far short of offering a thorough and compelling account. Therefore, a deeper reading should be conducted on its rationale and use of concepts.[23]

There are two main reasons why the structure, as illustrated in the figure above, is difficult to clarify. First, the meaning of terms such as *wenyi* 文義 (text and meaning or textual meaning), *wenxiang* 文相 (textual appearance), and *tishi* 體勢 (formative force) is rather unfathomable. Second, the word *wenyi* 文義 appears repeatedly in the title of this precedent, (A) and (A1), as well as in the pairing of *wen* and *yi* in (B1) and (B2), which indicates the nuanced combination of 'text' and 'meaning' that we mentioned above. Both problems will be solved through an examination of the terms *wenyi*, *wenxiang* and *tishi.*

Regarding the meaning of *wenyi*, we will first take a closer look at (A1) 'Detailed Examination of Textual Meaning'. The ten cases in this category share a common feature: the deconstruction of boundaries and their nuanced re-establishment. They clarify the different units of content, including concepts, specific texts, textual corpora, and even entire intellectual traditions, found within the *MHZG*. The ten cases demonstrate that certain units can be made to communicate with one another and extended into new interpretative contexts. Meanwhile, such transpositions are always governed by certain constraints, which requires correct grasp of these constraints and skilful interpretation for the units to occur across

MHZG, significantly expanding the discussion. If such an elaboration were to occur from the beginning of this section, it would divert us from the main focus.

[22] Rosan Ikeda 池田魯参, 'Maka Shikan no Yomikata: Shikan girei no kaishakugaku o tōshite' 摩訶止観の読み方—『止観義例』の解釈学を通して, in Bukkyō no jissen genre 仏教の実践原理, ed. Sekiguchi Shindai 関口真大 (Tōkyō: Sankibō Busshorin, 1977), 290–301.

[23] It is problematic to presume every piece of text to be self-congruent, as this is not always the case. However, this does not mean that we should avoid this topic. It would be a meaningful endeavour to reflect on the question 'why does it make sense to the author'.

different units of content. For this reason, these ten cases are summarised under the rubric of 'Detailed Examination of Textual Meaning', which refers to the elucidation of the various levels of meaning within the *MHZG* and the conditions under which these levels may interact. I will select some examples from the ten cases mentioned above to clarify this.

For example, the second case 'citing broadly in a way that links different categories' 泛引流類 (*fan yin liu lei*) describes the application of terms from a particular context in another context in the *MHZG*.[24] Zhanran provides an example of this case as an explanation: modifiers in the doctrinal category can be applied to the meditative practice 引教證觀 (*yin jiao zheng guan*),[25] crossing between categories.[26] More specifically, the modifiers 'perfect' 圓 (*yuan*) and 'sudden'頓 (*dun*) in the Perfect Teaching 圓教 (*yuan jiao*) and the Sudden Teaching 頓教 (*dun jiao*) are extracted from the *Nirvana Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra*, 'gradual' 漸 (*jian*) in the Gradual Teaching 漸教 (*jian jiao*) from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, and 'indeterminate' 不定(*buding*) in the Indeterminate Teaching 不定教 (*buding jiao*) from the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa*. The same modifiers are applied by the *MHZG* to establish the three modes of *zhiguan* as the Gradual Cessation and Contemplation 漸次止觀 (*jianci zhiguan*), the Indeterminate Cessation and Contemplation 不定止觀 (*buding zhiguan*), and the Perfect and Sudden Cessation and Contemplation 圓頓止觀 (*yuan-dun zhiguan*). The following flowchart provides a visual representation of these ideas.

[24] The version of the copy held by Otani University published in the first year of Kyowa 享和元年刊大谷大學藏本 writes *fan* 泛, which is adopted here. In the Taisho canon, it is written as *kuang* 況. *Fan* is more suitable in this context.

[25] T46, no. 1913, p. 447b16.

[26] T46, no. 1913, p. 447b15–19.

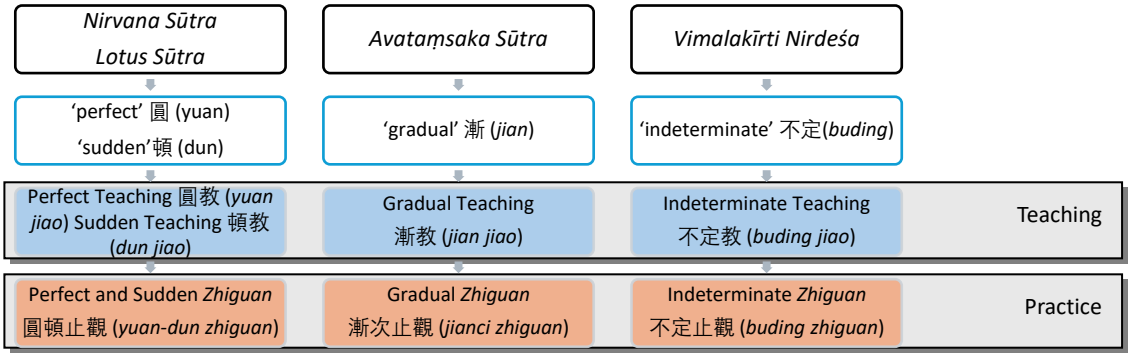

Figure 2 Three Kinds of Teaching and Practice

Another example is the principle of 'Borrowing the parables to transfer to another one' 借喻轉譬 (*jie yu zhuan pi*).[27] The case focuses on borrowing of a particular literary device, *piyu* 譬喻, namely parables or metaphors that are used to facilitate the teaching, such as the well-known Burning House Parable from the *Lotus Sūtra* that parabolises the world filled with sufferings. In this case, Zhanran observes that the *MHZG* borrows parables from other texts and applies them in a new context: the parable of Pigs Rubbing Their Bodies On the Gold Mountain 猪揩金山 (*zhu kai jinshan*) was originally used in the *Da zhidu lun* to express the merit of tolerance – (that the gold mountain by tolerating the pigs eventually makes itself shiny) – and is reused to express the quality of cessation in the context of *zhiguan*.[28] As indicated by Zhanran, the metaphors and analogies are just worldly substances that can be put to another use according to their meaning, and so are not confined to the original context.[29] This highlights the flexible application of analogies and metaphors – they are not exclusive to their original context but can be applied in new discussions as long as their application sticks to the underlying logic.

The principle of 'Quoting and utilising the core principle of a scripture' 引用

[27] T46, no. 1913, p. 447b23–27. 四者借喻轉譬。如火一物，諸經或時譬瞋譬智，或用照用燒，以形以性，若體若用。地、水、風等為喻亦然。是故不應局文為定。

[28] T46, no. 1913, p. 447b23-24. 如猪揩金山等，《論》喻"忍"等，今借譬"止"等。The corresponding passage in the *Da zhidu lun* is found in T25, no. 1509, p. 281a6–8.

[29] T46, no. 1913, p. 447b24–25, b27. 喻是世間物類而以，隨義轉用，何局本文？……是故不應局文為定。

宗要 (*yin yong zongyao*) describes the usage of references in the *MHZG* to allude to the thesis of the entire scripture that, by quoting one or two lines from a scripture. The word *zongyao* 宗要 here is used interchangeably with *wenxin* 文心 (the heart of the text), and *buyin* 部旨 (the theme of the volume).[30] This usage indicates an equality between the parts and the entirety of the scripture, which also implies consistency with the scripture.

These principles, while illustrated through examples from different units of content, share underlying mechanisms with Zhanran's strategy of 'interpretative integration' discussed above—for instance, the concept of *nei he* 内合 (inwardly concur) employed when engaging with non-Buddhist sources.[31] This indicates the basis for the juxtaposition between the two, though not in a strictly equivalent sense; rather, it reflects a subtle conditional correlation – what might be termed *interconnectedness*. This characteristic is equally evident in the use of Buddhist sources. For instance, Zhiyi's concept of 'phenomenal contemplation' is juxtaposed with expressions such as 'the head as the hall' from the *Nirvana Sūtra*, 'a patient heart like a road that guards against external harm' from the *Lotus Sūtra*, 'treating delight in the Dharma as one's wife' from the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, and the 'Lion's Roar' from the *Da zhidu lun*.[32] Similarly, Vimalakīrti's silence is compared with the 'inexplicability' in the *Nirvana Sūtra*, the 'speechlessness' in the *Mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra*, the 'perfect cleanness' in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the 'stopping of a sigh' in the *Lotus Sūtra*, and the notion of 'non-birth' in the *Nirvana Sūtra*.

These parallels serve to uncover the fundamental 'meaning' that is shared between the *MHZG* and external sources, thereby harmonising doctrinal differences and apparent contradictions within a unified interpretative framework. Such comparisons also draw upon the authority of canonical Buddhist prooftexts to establish the doctrinal legitimacy of the Tiantai tradition while asserting its

[30] T46, no. 1913, p. 447c3–6.

[31] See page 152.

[32] See page 152.

supremacy over non-Buddhist intellectual systems.

Therefore, 'Detailed Explanation of Textual Meaning' can be seen as Zhanran's endeavour to stratify the different dimensions of Zhiyi's exegesis. More specifically, 'textual meaning' refers to the fundamental meaning that facilitates the interrelations across different levels of units, such as individual concepts and passages, to entire works, textual corpora, and broader intellectual traditions.

In contrast to (A1) textual meaning 文義 (*wenyi*), which addresses the meaning embedded in the text, (A2) textual appearance 文相 (*wenxiang*) also describes textual features, but in terms of what is immediately observable, such as structural patterns or surface-level formulations. An example from the *ZFCJ* that includes both *wenyi* and *wenxiang* can clarify their differences,

> The fourth [of the Five Categories of Preparatory Means for Cessation and Contemplation], the textual meaning of 'regulating the five matters' is the same as previously explained. Their textual appearance is further divided into two: what is called 'to open up [for analysis]' and 'to combine together [for synthesis]'. Following the part of 'regulating the diet' is Zhiyi's principal explanation [of this passage], which also starts with the [five] matters and then follows the principle.[33] The [matters] of sleep and diet are respectively one regulation, and the remaining three matters are included in one regulation.
>
> 第四，"調五事"者文義同前。文相又二。所謂開合。從"調食者"下正釋，亦先事次理。眠食各為一調，餘三合為一調。[34]

This passage is a comment on the fourth of the five categories of the preparatory means for cessation-and-contemplation in Chapter 6 of the *MHZG*.[35] The

[33] For the corresponding translation of the *MHZG* is in Swanson's translation, see Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 690–93 (five matters), 693–97 (principles).

[34] T46, no. 1912, p. 274b21–26.

[35] The five categories are: (1) *Ju wuyuan* 具五緣 (Preparing the five conditions); (2) *He wuyu* 呵五欲

fourth category is 'regulating the five matters' 調五事 (*tiao wu shi*) as one of the preparations for practising the cessation-and-contemplation, which includes the regulations of diet 食 (*shi*), sleep 眠 (*mian*), body 身 (*shen*), breathing 息 (*xi*), and mind 心 (*xin*). Here, the *ZFCJ* says the 'textual meaning' of these five matters is 'the same as the aforementioned' 文義同前, indicating that the previous explanation of these five matters is also applicable to the current context.

Apart from the *wenyi* (textual meaning) of the five matters, the *ZFCJ* further indicates that the corresponding passage has two formal features in terms of its 'textual appearance' 文相 (wenxiang), involving *kai* 開 and *he* 合, two forms of articulation. *Kai* refers to the 'opening up' of an expandable concept, such as the five matters, for further analysis; *he*, in contrast, means the 'combining together' of the concept for synthesis, examining the collective features of its components. However, it remains unclear exactly which parts correspond to 'opening up' and 'combining together' in Zhanran's discussion. There are two possible ways to interpret this.

The first is to read the further categorisation of the five matters into three, namely (1) 'regulating diet' and (2) 'regulating sleep' and (3) the other three, as the 'combining together' synthesis. Another possible reading is to view the introduction of each of the five matters as the 'opening up' analysis and the following discussion on the principles of the five matters and their relations to the Threefold Contemplation as the 'combining together' synthesis.

Whichever reading is correct, as we can observe, both the 'opening up' and 'coming together' relate to the function of content, or more specifically, to what the content 'appears' to be.

Now that we have a clearer idea about the connotations of *wenyi* and *wenxiang* in (A1) 'Detailed Explanation of Textual Meaning' 詳究文義 and (A2) 'Detailed Explanation of Textual Appearance' 詳究文相, a question that immediately follows is why (A1) and (A2) can be together included in (A), which has the same title,

(Renouncing the five sensual desires); (3) *Qi wugai* 棄五蓋 (Rejecting the five impediments); (4) *Tiao wushi* 調五事 (Regulating the five matters); (5) *Xing wufa* 行五法 (Practicing the five [supplementary] matters). Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*, 577.

'Detailed Explanation of Textual Meaning' 詳究文義 as its sub-category (A1). A possible interpretation of this is to separate *wenyi* into *wen* 文 (text) and *yi* 義 (meaning), and consider them individually. As previously discussed, the relationship between text (*wen*) and meaning (*yi*) is interdependent. Chuyuan, for instance, explains the two as differing primarily in emphasis. In the larger category (A) 'Detailed Explanation of Textual Meaning', the focus ultimately falls on the understanding of meaning, and therefore it encompasses the two subcategories. The two subcategories together suggest that the comprehension of meaning involves not only tracing its variation across different contexts, but a proper grasp of its formal features is also equally essential, thus forming (A1) textual meaning and (A2) textual appearance.

The term *wenxiang* often appears in phrases such as *wenxiang kezhi* 文相可知 (can be known literally) and *wenxiang kejie* 文相可解 (can be understood at the textual surface level), indicating that the content is straightforward enough to be understood without any further interpretations.[36]

The use of the term *wenxiang* is found in the works of Zhanran's predecessors or contemporaries. However, apart from those usages found in Zhiyi's works, no cases of paring the terms *wenxiang* and *wenyi* are found in the works before or during Zhanran's time, although some are found in the works written by Zhanran's disciples or later generations of Tiantai.[37] Therefore, the combination of *wenxiang*

[36] For example, in Huiyuan's 慧遠 *Wuliang shoujing yishu* 無量壽經義疏 (Commentary on the Sutra of Immeasurable Life; T37, no. 1745, p. 105a17) and Jizang's *Renwang bore jing shu* 仁王般若經疏 (Commentary on the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*; T33, no. 1707, p. 320b23–24)

[37] The *wenyi* and *wenxiang* are also taken together as a set of concepts in Japanese Shin Buddhism 真宗 (also known as the Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗), as studied in Sasaki Genchi's 佐々木玄智 paper 'Shinshūgaku ni okeru bun'gi to bun-sō no kankei ni tsuite' 眞宗學に於ける文義と文相の關係について, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 3, no. 1 (1954): 200–202. On page 200, Sakaki describes the usage of *wenxiang* as the fact that can be 'observed in an objective and empirical way' 客観的、實證的に認識された事實, whereas *wenyi* is the 'explanation of the ideas of Shin Buddhism in terms of the meaning of doctrines' 真宗教義観の解釋. It is uncertain whether the pairing of these two concepts in Japanese Shin Buddhism was directly influenced by Zhanran's writing, but both are employed to

and *wenyi* and the technical analysis of their different layers can be seen as Zhanran's creative hermeneutical exploration. He pointed out that it is essential to accurately identify which specific sense of *wenyi* Zhiyi intends to convey in a given context of *wenxiang*, to thereby achieve a more precise understanding of Zhiyi's teaching.

In category (B) 'Explicating the Formative Force' 消釋體勢 (*xiaoshi tishi*), another concept, formative force 體勢 (*tishi*), is introduced, which is another essential aspect for understanding the *MHZG*. Compared to (A) 'Detailed Examination of Textual Meaning', which focuses on the internal characteristics of the text, making it more specific and static, (B) 'Explication of Formative Force' operates at a more abstract level and concerns the dynamic features that emerge as the text progresses. As Ikeda indicates, it is Zhanran's summary of Zhiyi's 'conceptualisation' 構想 (kōsō こうそう) of the *MHZG*.[38] This 'formative force' in exegesis represents the underlying intellectual motivation that drives the construction of text and meaning.

The two sub-categories in (B), namely 'formative force of text' 文體勢 (*wen tishi*) and 'formative force of meaning' 義體勢 (*yi tishi*), relate respectively to what might be called, borrowing Ikeda's term, the 'conceptualisation' of the structure and the theoretical framework of the text. More specifically, they are concerned with the shaping of the text – determining whether a passage should be concise or elaborated upon depending on the context, deciding which content should be retained or omitted, and structuring interrelated units, such as how a question and its answer should be arranged, among other considerations. In this sense, unlike the previous focus on 'textual meaning' and 'textual appearance', which emphasised the semantic and formal characteristics of the text, 'formative force of text' and 'formative force of meaning' are more closely related to the discussions of methodology.

It is noteworthy that the contrast between 'text' (*wen*) and 'meaning' (*yi*) is once again presented in the two subcategories 'formative force of text' and 'formative force of meaning'. This should be understood, as discussed above, as an

express different layers of meaning.

[38] Ikeda, 'Maka shikan no yomikata', 290.

emphasis on either 'text' or 'meaning', rather than as a strict dichotomy.

The term *tishi* 體勢 (formative force) is not found in Zhiyi's works, nor in Zhanran's other works. It is used once or twice in works such as Xuanzang's 玄奘 *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記, and works by Zhihong 志鴻, Yuanzhao 圓照, Li Tongxuan 李通玄, Fazang 法藏, Fabao 法寶, Daoxian 道暹, and Daoxuan 道宣, and more frequently used in works by Zhiyun 智雲 and Chengguan 澄觀, who both received doctrinal training from Zhanran. This fact indicates that, although the term was not entirely rare at the time, it was still not prevalent or drawing enough attention. Yet it is systematically employed in Zhanran's writing, demonstrating a distinctive originality in his conceptual construction.

Intriguingly enough, the term *tishi* is more commonly used as a crucial concept in Liu Xie's 劉勰 (? – 473) *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), an influential work on literary theory.[39] In its section 'On Choice of Style' 定勢 (*ding shi*), the term *shi* 勢 conveys a sense of 'tendency' or directional force, which resonates with the dynamic connotation of *tishi* in the *Zhiguan yili*. While the *Wenxin diaolong* did not appear in Zhanran's scholarly library (see the Appendix that lists all the references of the *ZFCJ*), it should be considered that Zhanran may have been influenced by factors that were not recorded in written texts.

The exploration above of the 'Explicating Text and Its Meaning' demonstrates Zhanran's systemisation of Zhiyi's exegesis, in which he endeavoured to clarify the complex, layered, and mutually related yet independent relationship between text and meaning. The structure and significance of his systemisation are not immediately transparent, but it is precisely his nuanced understanding that demonstrates his deep reflection on how to skilfully handle these two dimensions. While a text is, in itself, nothing more than a textual object whose meaning must be actively explicated, it is also not merely a text: it is constituted by meaning and carries both structural

[39] Xie Liu, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, New revised edition., trans. Youzhong Shi, Calligrams (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2015), 224.

organisation (textual appearance) and dynamic expressive features (formative force).

Concluding Remarks

Building on the discussion of commentarial methods in the previous two chapters, this chapter turns to a more abstract level by addressing commentarial methodology, or what may be described more precisely as interpretative principles or the philosophy of exegesis. Through an analysis of three texts—the *Mohe zhiguan*, *ZFCJ*, and *Zhiguan yili*—it becomes evident that both Zhiyi and Zhanran were engaged in sustained reflection on how to bridge text and meaning. While manifesting different features, Zhanran's engagement with the exegetical principles of the *MHZG* in the third precedent in the *Zhiguan yili* shows a deep understanding of Zhiyi's methodological structures. This understanding, in turn, informs and shapes his own explanatory strategies in the *ZFCJ*.

This broader methodological inquiry invites us to reconsider how creativity should be evaluated in commentarial practice. As noted in Chapter Two, commentarial innovation does not lie solely in the invention of new methods. Rather, when a commentator selects from existing methods based on the needs of a specific context, this process already reflects a deliberate interpretive judgment. Such decisions point to an underlying reflection on the task of bridging text and meaning.

In the first part of this chapter, we have seen that tradition, to some extent, conditions the commentator's methodological choices. For example, some of Zhanran's methods in the *ZFCJ* may have been drawn from Zhiyi's exegetical schemata. The methods in Zhiyi's schemata, in turn, share similarities with methods used by other commentators of his time. While this pattern can be read as a sign of the commentator's embeddedness in tradition, it may also be seen as evidence of the commentator's active engagement with that tradition. This also echoes the argument made in Chapter One that Zhanran's greatness lies in his skilful handling of textual materials, which likely stemmed from his learning experiences.

At the same time, we can observe meaningful adjustments in their selection

and application of methods. The inclusion of 'contemplation of the mind' in Zhiyi's exegetical schema shows that his interpretation of the textual base extends beyond the text itself to encompass experiential and practical dimensions. It can also be observed in the deeper principles of Zhiyi's and Zhanran's commentarial approaches, which may not be merely techniques, but expressions of the deeper philosophical commitments of Tiantai doctrine.

Zhanran's creativity as a commentator becomes even more evident in the second part of this chapter, which examines his innovative conceptualisations of the relationship between text and meaning. This discussion reveals that understanding the meaning of the *MHZG* involves more than the interpretation of its semantic content. It also requires attention to the way the structure of the text develops as well as to the conceptual framework through which meaning is generated within the text.

In addition to its methodological reflection that originality is neither the only nor the most essential lens through which to study commentarial methods and methodology, this chapter is meaningful in several other respects.

First, it assesses the extent to which Zhanran inherited Zhiyi's methodology, which is an aspect often overlooked in existing discussions, which have primarily focused on Zhanran's philosophical development beyond Zhiyi's. So far, Zhanran's adherence to the Tiantai tradition has been approached mainly from theoretical perspectives, such as Penkower's exploration in her annotated translation of Zhanran's *Jin'gang pi* of how Zhanran innovatively developed his theory of 'insentient beings' Buddha nature' based on Tiantai doctrines and the second half of Yu's monograph that discusses Zhanran's contribution to the development of the Tiantai doctrines.[40] This chapter, however, demonstrates a key aspect that has been overlooked and underexplored, that is, how Zhanran's commentarial expertise and sectarian adherence can also be evident in the aspect of commentarial methodology. This also shows that his success as a commentator lies in a more profound factor,

[40] Penkower, 'T'ien-t'ai during the T'ang Dynasty', 361–556. Yu, *Zhanran Yanjiu*, 127–304.

that is, his deep understanding of Zhiyi's exegesis.

Zhanran's comprehensive, meticulous, and skilful commentary on the *MHZG* clearly reflects his deep engagement with the work and his reverence for it, which invites a further question as to how highly he regarded it. This question leads us to consider his commentarial assumptions, namely, whether the *MHZG* occupied a higher position within his textual hierarchy than other Buddhist scriptures.

It is noteworthy that Zhiyi's Seven Common Hermeneutical Steps were originally designed for the *Lotus Sūtras*, but were applied by Zhanran in the *ZFCJ*, which is based on the *MHZG*. This suggests a methodological interchangeability across genres and implies that Zhanran regarded the *MHZG* as important enough to merit the same exegetical treatment as the sūtras. His commentarial assumption is also evidenced by his exhaustive exploration of exegetical principles. This, again, resonates with the shift in commentarial preference from Indian Buddhist scriptures, as the base texts, to the works of Chinese Buddhist schools, including the Tiantai School, [41] which may relate to a deeper transformation in the Buddhists' understanding of 'authoritative texts' at that time. These observations, in turn, raise important questions concerning the transformation of textual authority in Buddhist traditions and the role that commentarial literature plays in this evolving landscape.

[41] Li, 'Genres of Buddhist Commentarial Literature in Medieval China', 72–3.

Conclusion

The study uses Zhanran's significant commentary *ZFCJ* to explore his title as the 'Tiantai Master of Commentary'. The title acknowledges Zhanran's contribution to the Tiantai tradition through his extensive commentarial work, indicating a fundamental aspect of his importance within the Tiantai tradition and his broader significance in Chinese Buddhism. The precise meaning of this title was, however, unclear, prompting the following four questions:

1. What made Zhanran a commentator, and why does the *ZFCJ* matter within his corpus?
2. What are Zhanran's commentarial approach and methods?
3. How can Zhanran's exegesis support the Tiantai tradition?
4. What does Zhanran's case tell us about the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition?

The first question is addressed in Chapter One. It examines Zhanran's commentarial works through two complementary classificatory approaches: formats and themes. It shows that Zhanran's commentaries on Zhiyi's works are a significant proportion of his oeuvre. This highlights both his sustained efforts to preserve the correct interpretation of Zhiyi's teaching and his identity as a Tiantai commentator. His choice of format also reflects his familiarity with and mastery of multiple modes of commentary. The chapter explores the different formats of Zhanran's commentarial works and their distinctive features, addressing one of the persistent challenges in discussions of the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition, namely, the subtle variation that exists within the genre. By presenting cases that bring out such variation, this study enables a clearer understanding of the formats of Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature.

The discussion in Chapter One shows that among Zhanran's works, the *ZFCJ* is particularly significant. Thematically, it focuses on the meditative practice aspect within the Tiantai tradition. And both Zhanran's own accounts and our reconstruction

reveal his painstaking devotion to the creation of the *ZFCJ*. It has a significant role, as suggested by the word *jue* in its title, a term that conveys its decisive and authoritative intent. It goes beyond the explanatory function of commentarial literature and was composed as a means of defending and sustaining the Tiantai tradition. This discussion adds evidence from Zhanran's own account that supports earlier suggestions of its accumulative character, building on the interpretive efforts of previous generations. At the same time, it reveals the persistent tension between tradition and innovation within commentary: Zhanran's attribution of the *ZFCJ* to the teachings he received from his teachers, especially Xuanlang, can be read as a strategic gesture aimed at securing the work's credibility as an authoritative guide.

Moreover, this observation highlights its particular character and sharpens our understanding of commentarial practice, while also raising the broader question of how the creativity of commentarial literature should be evaluated. Our discussion of this question suggests that even if a large portion of the *ZFCJ* was not by him, this does not diminish Zhanran's contribution as a commentator. This is because, first, as the second guiding question demonstrated in Chapters Two and Three, Zhanran's work clearly goes beyond mere compilation. The scale and complexity of this commentarial enterprise required a high level of commentarial skill and commitment. His use of external sources also demonstrates his commentarial strategies, which not only provide the necessary context for understanding the *MHZG* but also serve to integrate other sources into it. By revealing the comprehensiveness of Zhiyi's teaching, Zhanran reinforces and extends its theoretical supremacy.

Chapters Two and Three also demonstrate how Zhanran's detailed and skilful commentary supports the Tiantai tradition, the third guiding question. The contribution of these two chapters lies in their detailed examination of how commentarial practice actually operates, offering a concrete and nuanced case study for understanding Chinese Buddhist exegesis. In particular, the analysis of Zhanran's use of external sources highlights a striking feature: when engaging with material that differed from his own positions, he did not simply refute them but often

subordinated them through strategies of integration. This observation sheds light not only on the skilfulness of Zhanran's commentarial method, but also on the broader textual encounter between Buddhism and other Chinese intellectual traditions.

Zhanran's deep adherence to, and support for, the Tiantai tradition is also addressed in Chapter Four. This chapter not only clarifies Zhanran's flexible use of Zhiyi's exegetical schemata but, more importantly, highlights how Zhanran establishes the pairing of text and meaning on different levels, which can be seen as his methodological reflections on how these two dimensions might be bridged in commentaries. The discussion also highlights the value of the *Zhiguan yili* in Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature: unlike ordinary commentaries, it systematically summarises exegetical principles and displays a rare methodological self-consciousness, which demonstrates Zhanran's creativity in exegesis. This observation further leads to the recognition that the task of bridging text and meaning is a problem faced by all commentators, and the changing commentarial formats in the Chinese Buddhist commentarial tradition reveal what different commentators considered most essential for understanding the Buddha's words.

The *ZFCJ* thus demonstrates that commentary is not merely explanatory or passively confined to the scope of the base text. Rather, it is an active textual practice with distinct focuses. The commentators' decisions on interpretive methods, the focus of interpretation, and the hermeneutic strategies necessary for producing persuasive commentaries all reflect the inherent creativity involved in commentarial writing. Such 'commentarial creativity' is shaped by deliberate pedagogical choices. Zhanran's interpretative strategies were not merely abstract innovations, but practical responses to the needs of his community, intended to make the Tiantai tradition more teachable, accessible and actionable for practitioners. The fact that Zhanran composed four distinct commentaries on the *Mohe zhiguan* also reflects these deliberate pedagogical choices, tailored to the specific needs of different audiences.

The foregoing analysis fully illustrates the role and value of commentarial literature and why studying it remains essential, as it both aids understanding of individual exegetes such as Zhanran and appreciation of the broader dynamics in Chinese Buddhist intellectual history. The *ZFCJ* retains its significance today, as it is still actively used in monastic education.[42] Its significance extends to modern scholarship on Tiantai Buddhism and the interpretation of Zhiyi's *MHZG*. For example, Paul Swanson's translation of the *MHZG* relies on the *ZFCJ*'s interpretations.[43]

At the same time, this line of analysis points us towards a further problem that requires consideration. As presented in this study, every aspect of his commentarial creation, including his purpose in writing commentaries, his reverence for the base texts written by the school's founder Zhiyi, and Zhiyi's influence on the commentarial methods he employed, reflects Zhanran's connection to the Tiantai tradition and his deep commitment to it. But exactly how significant was the *MHZG* to Zhanran? This is a question about Zhanran's commentarial assumptions.

As Li indicates, in the earlier period of Chinese commentarial creation, the base texts were mostly Indian Buddhist scriptures, rather than the relatively newly created Chinese Buddhist Literature.[44] In this sense, Zhanran's commentary on the *MHZG* seems to signify a change in the concept of the 'authoritative text'. To understand this process of establishing textual authority, we need to be aware that the definition of 'authoritative texts' in Buddhism has always been an elusive one due to the openness and fluidity of the Buddhist canon, and the role that commentarial literature plays in it.

In Buddhism, there are several 'canons' coined by different Buddhist lineages and schools, instead of a fixed one. As stated by Harrison, 'There is no such thing as 'the' Buddhist canon'.[45] There are several 'canons' coined by different Buddhist

[42] From a personal communication with a monastic member of Fo Guang Shan on 30 October 2022.

[43] Zhiyi, *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight.*

[44] Li, 'Genres of Buddhist Commentarial Literature in Medieval China', 72–3.

[45] Paul Harrison, 'Canon', in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell Jr., vol. 1 (New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 111.

lineages and schools instead of a fixed one. For example, in Indian Buddhism, there is the Pāli canon of the Theravada school. In East Asian Buddhism, there are the Jiaxing Tripiṭaka ('three baskets', Buddhist canonical collection) 嘉興藏, the Korean Buddhist Tripiṭaka 高麗藏, and the Japanese Taishō Tripiṭaka 大正藏. Steven Collins summarises two approaches to the concept of 'Canon.' The first is more inclusive, not limiting texts to a fixed list but assigning varying degrees of authority to them, with the possibility of adding more texts in the future; The second is exclusivist, presenting a closed list of 'foundational documents.'[46] This categorisation leads Collins to argue that the Pali canon is unique in having such an exclusive list, in contrast to other Buddhist scripture collections.

This indicates that while the inclusion of a text in the Buddhist canon provides one criterion for assessing its authority, the fact that a work is not (or not yet) included does not diminish its potential importance. Textual authority is established through more subtle and complex processes than canonical status alone. It was not until 1024 CE (in the Song Dynasty) that the *MHZG* and the *ZFCJ* were officially included in the Chinese *tripiṭaka* ('three baskets', Buddhist canonical collection) called the *Kaibao Tripiṭaka* 開寶藏 (*Kaibao zang*). However, even before their formal canonisation, they had already attained the status of scriptures within the Tiantai community, and even beyond it, as evidenced by the Chan monk Fangyan's expertise in the *MHZG*. It would be more accurate to say that it was precisely this already established recognition that led to their inclusion in the canon.

Chinese Buddhist canons contained a growing body of authoritative commentarial literature. However, this does not mean that commentarial literature had the same status as texts in the other two canonical categories, such as the *Lotus Sūtra*. As Mayer suggests, 'commentaries are situated downstream of the flow of tradition', they can never supersede the status of scripture, thus the two should not be considered equal. Similarly, Buswell indicates that *shu* commentaries 'had only

[46] Steven Collins, *Self & Society: Essays on Pali Literature and Social Theory 1988–2010* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2013), 4.

semicanonical status'.[47]

It is true that commentarial literature by nature is of a somewhat lower status than the other two Buddhist scriptural genres. This may be because newly produced commentarial literature had to undergo more cautious evaluation in order to gain trust. Nevertheless, this did not discourage Buddhists from engaging with commentarial practice, which was theoretically grounded.

As Mayer points out, Buddhist tradition prioritises *artha* (meaning) before *vacana* (wording).[48] That is to say, the substance of a message is more crucial than its delivery or speaker. A description that can be found in various scriptures supports this viewpoint, 'just as whatever the Buddha speaks is well spoken, so also whatever is well spoken is the word of the Buddha', which indicates that a text does not need to be directly spoken by the Buddha to be authoritative.[49] Thus, *Buddhavacana* (the words of the Buddha) inherently possesses scriptural authority, but this concept extends to any teachings compatible with the Dharma, making the speaker a mouthpiece for the Buddha. By this definition, a well-composed piece of commentarial literature could also be regarded as an 'authoritative text'.

Through a wide range of genres, formats, and interpretive methods, Buddhist commentarial literature demonstrates the various aspects that commentators believed to be crucial for approaching the word of the Buddha and developing connections to the Buddha. Zhanran's efforts to explicate and defend Zhiyi's teachings stand as a prominent example of commentarial practice in Chinese Buddhism. For Zhanran, Zhiyi himself was a mouthpiece of the Buddha, his voice serving as a lens through which the truth could be clarified. Thus, Zhanran not only pursued clarity and effectiveness in explaining Zhiyi's intended meaning but also endeavoured to emphasise the significance of the Tiantai tradition as a superior pathway to Buddhist wisdom. By integrating external sources, the *ZFCJ* reveals the interconnectedness between the *MHZG* and various canonical texts, thereby

[47] Buswell, *Cultivating Original Enlightenment*, 31.

[48] Mayer, 'Commentarial Literature', 166.

[49] Naomi Appleton, 'Buddhist Scriptures: An Overview', The Expository Times 125, no. 12 (2014): 575.

affirming the superiority of the *MHZG*.

Through examining the concepts of the canon and commentarial literature and recognising the fluidity and openness inherent in both, we are reminded of the importance the commentary genre places on transmission, as well as the commentators' efforts to overcome differences of time, language, and culture in their pursuit of truth. We can see that in this process of interpreting the truth, commentarial literature is utilised as a textual genre that serves to preserve and transmit recognised interpretations. In this way, new texts are continuously layered upon existing foundations and become new authoritative texts, reflecting a microcosm of Chinese Buddhist exegetical practice.

To conclude, this study not only provides an illustrative case study but also offers a paradigm and raises important questions for future research on Chinese Buddhist commentarial literature. It is also meaningful for cultural and religious studies more broadly.

Future research incorporating a broader range of Zhanran's commentarial works would provide a more comprehensive understanding of his overall commentarial enterprise. Another potential avenue for future research relates to recent studies on the new findings of the Stele of the Site of the Path for Practising Chan 修禪道場碑 (*xiuchan daochang bei*), which offer valuable information about the community established by Zhanran's followers.[50] Notably, the donor lists recorded on the stele include monastic members, government officials, local elites, and laypeople, suggesting the wide scope of Zhanran's influence.

This raises an important question: did this wide scope of influence result from Zhanran's commentarial enterprise, earning him recognition even from those who may not have read his works directly? In other words, is it possible that textual creation served not only as a scholarly or religious activity, but also had a wider

[50] Lu Yang, 'Xiuchan daochang bei yu tangdai Tiantai zong fuxing yundong xinjie', *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 61, no. 2 (2024): 85–98. And Chi Limei, '"Shūzen Dōjōhi" ni mieru Tendai Bukkyō fukkō undō no shūchakuten', *Tōhōgaku* 147 (January 2024): 40–58.

impact on the social sphere?

Considering Zhanran's teaching experiences, it is a noteworthy point whether his pedagogical efforts extended beyond the monastic community to include lay practitioners as well. These observations invite reflection on Buddhist education in Tang and the role of commentarial literature within it.

This study has primarily focused on the *ZFCJ*, situating the work within the broader context of Chinese Buddhist commentarial practice. While such a focus has allowed for a more precise analysis of Zhanran's commentarial methods and contributions, it also leaves room for further inquiry. A more systematic study of Zhanran's other commentarial writings would offer a fuller picture of his exegetical strategies. Furthermore, a more comprehensive understanding of Buddhist commentary can be achieved through a closer engagement with the Indian exegetical tradition, which provides an indispensable background for the development of Chinese practices. In a broader sense, such a comparative approach would make it possible to contribute more fully to delineating the features of commentary as a textual genre.

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Abbreviations

B = *Dazang jing bu bian* 大藏經補編. See Secondary Sources, Lan Jifu, ed.

DDZ = *Dengyō daishi zenshū* 傳教大師全集. See Secondary Sources, Hieizan Senshūin Fuzoku Eizan Gakuin, ed.

GA= *Zhongguo Fosi Shizhi Huikan* 中國佛寺史志彙刊. See Secondary Sources, Du Jiexiang, ed.

MHZG = *Mohe zhiguan*, See Primary Sources.

T = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. See Secondary Sources, Takakusu and Watanabe, eds.

X = *Manji shinsan Dainihon zokuzōkyō* 卍新纂大日本續藏經. See Secondary Sources, Kawamura Kōshō, ed.

ZFCJ = *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue*. See Primary Sources.

ZW = *Zang wai fojiao wenxian* 藏外佛教文獻. See Secondary Sources, Fang Guangchang, ed.

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Appendix

Relevance to the Current Study

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the *ZFCJ* contains a large number of quotations, paraphrased excerpts, and other kinds of references. This section presents a detailed list of those references. It showcases both the sources and the genres of those borrowings, and when they were created. In a way it reflects Zhanran's scholarly library. With the presentation of the huge amount and varied genres of references in the *ZFCJ*, the list further highlights the richness of references in the *ZFCJ* and Zhanran's sophisticated management of sources. Besides that, this appendix also opens up a space to solve the two issues mentioned but unresolved in Chapter 3.

Firstly, as pointed out in Chapter 3, a standout feature of Zhanran's exegesis is the explicit attribution of external sources. However, such identification is not effective all the time. This is because, first, the title of the source is often abbreviated. While some abbreviations are commonly known and rather fixed, some are less common or can be applied to more than one source,[1] creating uncertainties about the origin of sources. It is even challenging for readers in modern times to detect its reference. Another obstacle to tracing the source of these references is that they may have varied translations and therefore require further examination on which one Zhanran might have consulted.[2] As such, the appendix endeavours to identify the abbreviated titles and the possible version of translation that is used by Zhanran. The identification of sources draws a clearer picture of sources included in the *ZFCJ*, raising the questions of where these sources were acquired and the reason for including such a huge number of sources.

[1] For example, *zhuangyan lun* 莊嚴論 can be the abbreviated title for both the *Da zhuangyan lun jing* 大莊嚴論經 (T201; Skt. *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*) and the *Dacheng zhuangyan jing lun* 大乘莊嚴經論 (T1604; Skt. *Mahāyānasūtrālamkārakārikā*).

[2] There are also cases that Zhanran used multiple versions of translations. For example, he differentiates the newly translated *Jinguangming jing* 金光明經 (Skt. *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*) from the older version.

Occasionally, the attribution is provided in broader, less precise categories such as *sudian* 俗典, *zishu* 字書 (dictionaries), or phrases like *shiren yun* 世人云 ('as said by people in society'), or attributed to the author without clarifying which text it is (e.g. Jia Kui 賈逵, Guo Pu 郭璞, etc.). If the source is found, then its location will be added to the corresponding text; if not, it remains in these general categories.

The second issue lies with the differentiation of whether a source is introduced by Zhanran or Zhiyi. Due to its nature of commentary, some of the sources in the *ZFCJ* are carried over from the *MHZG* rather than Zhanran's own pick. But since the source is made explicit in only the *ZFCJ*, the attribution is credited to Zhanran, and its reference is consequently included in the list here. Pointing out every instance of this situation is challenging due to the large number of entries, and it may not be necessary as it would lead to redundancy and offer little to support the thesis argument. However, by dating the creation or translation of the references, we can at least circle out the works produced after Zhiyi and confirm that they represent Zhanran's selection.

The list also serves as a provision for further studies. It sheds light on the texts that were in circulation during Zhanran's time, which might have also formed part of monastic library collections. Additionally, it can support bibliographical studies by facilitating comparisons between the existing editions of a text and its quoted content in the *ZFCJ*. The list is also useful for those interested in texts that are now lost but partially preserved within the *ZFCJ*. It also benefits the study of intellectual history on how certain texts were interpreted by Zhanran compared to other Buddhist scholars.

Scope

The list includes:

1. The title of the reference in Chinese, English, and Sanskrit (if available, in Romanised form; if not, only in Chinese and English). And if it is a Buddhist source and extent in the Taishō Canon or other collections, its text number will

be added.[3]

2. The name(s) of the author(s) and/or translator(s) and their date of birth and death. For Buddhist authors and translators, the dates are found in the Person Authority Database (https://authority.dila.edu.tw/person/) of the Buddhist Studies Authority Database Project by Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA). For non-Buddhist authors, the dates are mainly based on *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature: Volume 1* and *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature*. Any research that is referred to will be specified in the footnote.
3. The counts of how many times each source is referred to as well as the location of each borrowing in the *ZFCJ* by the page number, the column (a, b, or c), and the column number, following the numbering of the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts Association (CBETA) (https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/).

Method of Organisation

The sources are organised in the structure below,

1. Indian Texts
    1) Sūtra
    2) Vinaya
    3) Abhidharma and other commentarial literature
2. Chinese Texts
    1) Buddhist Texts
        A. Doctrinal
        B. Non-Doctrinal
    2) Non-Buddhist Texts
        A. Doctrinal
        B. Non-Doctrinal

[3] The text may belong to multiple collections, but for clarity, the list includes information from only one collection, primarily from the Taishō Canon.

The structure contains several layers, which are meant to comply with the arguments of this thesis. The first layer is marked by the categorisation of Indian texts and Chinese texts; the former is usually used as prooftexts without any restrictions while the latter is involved in a more complicated situation. The *tripiṭaka* (three baskets) is used here to categorise the Indian texts for it is an established and well-known categorisation of Buddhist literature and thus can navigate better the readers through the huge number of texts in this category. It also shows the preference of utilising more sutras than the other two categories, although they are utilised differently by Zhanran from their original roles. A point that requires clarification here is that the origin of some of the sutras is questionable in the field. Those sutras are called *yiwei jing* 疑偽經 (Buddhist spurious literature or apocryphal literature), such as the *Brahma's Net Sutra* and the *Awakening or Faith*. Spurious sūtras encompass the many Mahāyāna sūtras that would not have been included in the early Tripiṭaka but which share the genre title and attribution to the Buddha's own authorship. That they are still included in the 'Indian Text' category is to reflect how Zhanran saw them. It will be noted if the source text is spurious.

The second layer is the division of Chinese Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts. The reasons for categorisation have been elaborated in Chapter 3. Although not made utterly explicit, such demarcation between Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature is implied in the *ZFCJ* with its use of terms such as *sudian* 俗典 (non-Buddhist classics). We follow his paradigm here as it allows us to elaborate on Zhanran's understanding of and different strategies towards the two categories. Presenting the strategic difference is also the reason for the third layer, which divides the texts by doctrinal or non-doctrinal. As discussed in Chapter 3, non-doctrinal texts are usually considered safe as they do not undermine the Tiantai teachings, whereas doctrinal texts, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist, receive more delicate treatments to reconcile them with the Tiantai theories.

Limitations

Although the borrowing of external sources is often made distinctive, it still requires further examination to affirm there is absolutely no implicit references. However, this demands the familiarity of Buddhist texts to detect those hidden references, which outreaches my ability and the scope of current argument, but can be a further project with the assistance of digital humanities that facilitates fuzzy search and search in text similarity, such as BuddhaNexus (https://buddhanexus.net/).

The limitation also lies with the possibility that the version of the *ZFCJ* or the referenced texts at the time of writing differed from the transmitted versions available today due to unintentional changes during transmission, such as deterioration over time, or editorial alterations. Given this, the assumption I made about the sources of the references may be incorrect.

Total References: 207

Total Number: 1695

Indian Texts

Sūtra[4]

1. *Bozhou sanmei jing* 般舟三昧經 (T418)[5]
   Pratyutpanna-buddha saṃmukhāvasthita samādhi sūtra
   Translator: *Lokakṣema* 支娄迦讖 (147 CE – ?)
   [185b6] [186c04] [187a15] [187a28] [187b01] [187b04] [187b05] [187b07] [188c21] [188c26] [193b14] [260a12]
   Count: 12
2. *Da baoji jing* 大寶積經 (T310)
   Mahāratnakūṭa sūtra
   Translator: Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (572 – 727 CE)
   [168a14] [168c06] [177b22] [177c14] [177c18] [185b19] [271c04] [269a06]
   Count: 8
3. *Da fangguang baoqie jing* 大方廣寶篋經 (T462)
   Mahāyāna sūtra on the treasure basket
   Translator: Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (394 – 468 CE)
   [260b16] [349c25]
4. *Da fangbian baoen jing* 大方便佛報恩經 (T156)
   Great Skillful Means Sutra on the Buddha's Repayment of Kindness
   Translator: unknown
   [166b17] [168b03] [168b05] [175b28] [187c24] [324b26] [369a10]
   Count: 7
5. *Beihua jing* 悲華經 (T157)
   Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka
   Translator: Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (385 – 433 CE)
   [384b04]
   Count: 1
6. *Chanmi yaofa jing* 禪秘要法經 (T613)
   Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
   [412a02]
   Count: 1
7. *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經 (T1)
8. *Dīrgha Āgama*
   Translator: Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 (fl. 5th century CE), Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (fl. 5th century CE)
   [145a26] [145b01] [153a22] [153a24] [196a08] [291b28] [304b01] [315a07] [363a25] [434b10] [436c25]
   Count: 11

[4] Only the name(s) of translator(s) are included for this category.

[5] *Pratyutpanna-buddha saṃmukhāvasthita samādhi sūtra* has four different versions of translation.

9. *Chuyao jing* 出曜經 (T212)
   Sutra of the Appearance of Light (*Dharmapada* with additional material)
   Author: attr. comp. Dharmatrāta 法救 (ca. 2nd century CE?); trans. Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (fl. 5th century CE)
   [205c25]
   Count: 1
10. *Da bore boluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (T220)
    Mahā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra
    Translator: Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE)
    [280c16]
    Count: 1
11. *Da fangdeng rulai zang jing* 大方等如來藏經 (T666)
    Tathāgatagarbha sūtra
    Translator: Buddhabhadra 佛馱跋陀羅 (359 – 429 CE)
    [209c13] [227b16] [244b18] [244b28] [244b29] [247c05] [251a24] [254b09] [259a06] [260a12] [345b05] [366a17] [366a06] [429a10]
    Count: 15
12. *Da fangguang rulai mimi zang jing* 大方廣如來秘密藏經 (T821)
    Great Extensive Sutra on the Secret Storehouse of the Tathagata
    Translator: unknown
    [178a15] [178b08] [178b15]
    Count: 3
13. *Da jixiang tiannü shier qi yibaiba ming wugou dacheng jing* 大吉祥天女十二契一百八名無垢大乘經 (T1253)
    Śrīmahādevīvyākaraṇa sūtra
    Translator: Amoghavajra 不空 (705 – 774 CE)
    [314b22] [314c11] [314c15]
    Count: 3
14. *Da fangdeng daji jing* 大方等大集經 (T397)
    Mahāsaṃnipātasūtra
    Translator: 曇無讖 Dharmakṣema (385 – 433 CE)
    [144b15] [219c12] [239c02] [261b21] [365b11] [374a20] [399a13] [407b18] [410a20] [417a10] [417c02] [427b23]
    Count: 12
15. *Da bo niepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (T375)[6]
    Mahāparinirvāṇamahā sūtra
    Translator: See the note below.
    [143b17] [150a12] [150a20] [155c01] [155c04] [155c06] [157a20] [160a05]

[6] There are two editions of the *Da bo niepan jing*. The Northern Edition was translated by Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 and the Southern Edition was revised by Huiyan 慧嚴, Huiguan 慧觀, Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 et al, which was based on the Northern Edition and also Buddhabhadra 佛陀跋陀羅 and Faxian 法顯's translation of the Nirvana Sutra called the *Daban nihuan jing* 大般泥洹經. Matsumori, 'Tannen Hokke Genji *Shakusen* no In'yō Bunken', 195.

[160b04] [161b17] [165a12] [169a16] [172b21] [172b04] [178b27] [179b18] [180a23] [180b15] [180b15] [180b04] [181c12] [187c22] [188a06] [190c20] [191a27] [192a20] [192c25] [196a27] [196b19] [198a10] [199a13] [201b19] [201c01] [203a18] [203a08] [203b16] [206c01] [208c20] [212b10] [212c20] [214a20] [215b17] [215b23] [215c13] [216a11] [216b23] [216c13] [217a04] [219c12] [221b15] [221b09] [222c21] [224b06] [224c01] [224c15] [225c15] [226b16] [227a14] [227b01] [232b28] [234b10] [235a09] [235b19] [238a12] [238a16] [239b11] [241b16] [241b28] [244b14] [244b29] [244b30] [247b22] [247c06] [248c02] [248c03] [249c03] [251a13] [251c21] [254a09] [254c15] [254c02] [254c20] [255c28] [256b22] [257c12] [258b06] [259a12] [259b02] [259c28] [260a09] [260b28] [260b04] [261c29] [262a29] [262b04] [263a22] [263b11] [263b12] [266c12] [267c09] [271b20] [272a24] [275c28] [279c27] [280b06] [282c06] [285b19] [285c20] [287a20] [287b26] [287b28] [287c07] [288c21] [288c22] [293b26] [293c23] [295a24] [296b21] [296c15] [299b23] [300b26] [303a23] [303b13] [303c23] [304c17] [304c02] [304c07] [305b17] [305b06] [305b07] [306c19] [312c23] [313b16] [315b16] [317c11] [323a03] [324b22] [326a14] [326b02] [326b24] [330c16] [331a01] [338a04] [340b21] [341a27] [341c01] [343b26] [344b04] [346b23] [346c17] [346c02] [346c29] [348a29] [348b15] [348b23] [348c07] [351a17] [351a24] [351c29] [352a04] [353a12] [353c19] [355b07] [359a11] [359a11] [359b21] [359b22] [359b23] [361c18] [361c23] [363a11] [363a11] [366a20] [366b01] [371b20] [372a11] [372b16] [373b02] [374a01] [376a08] [377c21] [382b27] [383b14] [384b18] [384b19] [386a11] [168b18] [389a11] [392b14] [397a06] [397b14] [397b07] [402b18] [406c25] [409b24] [412a15] [414a12] [414b21] [418b07] [419c16] [420b02] [421c29] [422a11] [422a13] [424a10] [426c01] [428b07] [429a24] [429a29] [429b11] [431b10] [431b03] [432a03] [442a11] [443a19] [444a18] [165a07] [166a03] [169a01] [172a28]

Count: 220

16. *Mohe bore boluomi jing* 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 (T223)
    Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra
    Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
    [172c18] [152c04] [154a04] [173b28] [178c18] [185a04] [185a05] [191a25] [192a20] [193a13] [199c06] [200b06] [201a13] [202b17] [216b21] [219c12] [227b16] [229a26] [229b19] [229b27] [229c21] [230a05] [231c28] [239c02] [241b26] [242a22] [242a25] [244b18] [244b19] [247b14] [247c05] [251a24] [253a09] [255b29] [261a27] [268c12] [273b28] [275c29] [276a10] [276a03] [280a16] [280a20] [280a05] [280c15] [281b24] [281c04] [288a28] [288b01] [289b21] [308a11] [308a09] [308b11] [309a08] [317c10] [322b06] [327a04] [330c08] [332c28] [333b12] [333b16] [339a08] [344c19] [352c22] [359c11] [359c12] [366a17] [366a06] [376c14] [376c18] [383b24] [385b19] [387a18] [390a19] [403b24] [406b04] [407a15] [408b08] [419b05] [420a01] [444c09] [446c20] [446c08]

    Count: 82

17. *Pusa dichi jing* 菩薩地持經 (T1581)

Bodhisattvabhūmi sūtra
Translator: Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (385 – 433 CE)
[273c05] [356b05] [378c27] [411a18]
Count: 4

18. *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (T262)
Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra
Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[148c03] [153c24] [153c29] [162c04] [200c27] [217b16] [219c12] [239c21] [245c19] [165a03] [143c03] [190c21] [205c07] [294b23] [153c08] [170a17] [170a19] [170a21] [170a23] [191b25] [192b28] [192c02] [192c03] [192c04] [216b21] [223c19] [247c05] [248c03] [366a13] [366a18] [155b13] [163b14] [242b28] [243b13] [244b13] [250b10] [251b04] [279c24] [286b22] [366a24] [377c05] [383b22] [383c09] [388b11] [399b11] [429a10] [429a13] [446c15]
Count: 48

19. *Faju jing* 法句經 (T210)
Dhammapada
Author: Compiled by Dharmatāta 法救 (ca. 2nd century CE?); translated by Vighna 維祇難 (ca. 3nd century CE), etc.
[152b22] [213c06] [259c21] [374c02]
Count: 4

20. *Fan wang jing* 梵網經 (T1484)
Brahmajāla sūtra
Translator: attr. Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)

21. *Da fangdeng tuoluoni jing* 大方等陀羅尼經 (T1339)
Mahāvaipulyadhāraṇī sūtra
Translator: Fazhong 法眾 (ca. 5th century)
[189a20] [189b25] [189c16] [190a06] [190a09] [190a15] [190a23] [190b01] [190b05] [190b07] [190b22] [191a02] [191a03] [192b01] [254b04] [442c19]
Count: 16

22. *Foshuo guanding jing* 佛說灌頂經 (T1331)
The Sutra of Consecration
Translator: Śrīmitra 帛尸梨密多羅 (? – 335～342 CE)
[168b20] [308c04]
Count: 1

23. *Foshuo weicengyou yinyuan jing* 佛說未曾有因緣經 (T754)
Adbhutadharmparyāya
Translator: Tanjing 曇景 (Southern Qi, 479 – 502 CE)
[161a01] [272a25]
Count: 2

24. *Foshuo xianren bojie jing* 佛說仙人撥劫經 (collected in T154)[7]

[7] In the *ZFCJ*, the name is written as Jiebo 劫撥 and rephrases the story taught in the *Foshuo xianren bojie jing* to discuss the danger of sexual desire. The *ZFCJ* claims that the story is also quoted in the *Da zhidu lun*, but the content is not found. In the *Souyao ji* (the abridged version of the *ZFCJ*), it is even

The Sutra on the Ṛṣi Bojie
Translator: Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (239 – 316 CE)
[270b17]
Count: 1

25. *Foshuo nainüqipo jing* 佛說柰女耆婆經 (T554)
Āmrapālī and Jīvaka Sutra
Translator: An Shigao 安世高 (fl. c. 148 – 180 CE)
[321b11]
Count: 1
26. *Foshuo guanfo sanmei hai jing* 佛說觀佛三昧海經 (T643)
Sūtra on the Ocean-like Samadhi of the Visualization of the Buddha
Translator: Buddhabhadra 佛馱跋陀羅 (359 – 429 CE)
[144b15]
Count: 1
27. *Foshuo guan puxian pusaxing fa jing* 佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經 (T277)
Samantabhadra Meditation Sūtra
Translator: Dharmamitra 曇摩蜜多 (356 – 442 CE)
[192b23] [192c06] [384b04] [384b06]
Count: 4
28. *Guan zizai pusa huashen rangyulige tongnü xiaofu duhai nuoluoni jing* 觀自在菩薩化身蘘麌哩曳童女銷伏毒害陀羅尼經 (T1264)
Jāṅgulīnāmavidyā
Translator: Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (704/5 – 774 CE)
[195b11]
Count: 1
29. *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 (T278, T279)
Mahāvaipulyabuddhāvataṃsaka sūtra
Translator: Buddhabhadra 佛馱跋陀羅 (359 – 429 CE)
[152b05] [152b15] [153b18] [153b08] [155a23] [155b12] [156a14] [157c03] [157c05] [164c25] [164c27] [166b22] [170b12] [175a12] [175a27] [175b05] [176a24] [176a25] [177a27] [177b01] [177b04] [185a06] [205a08] [216b17] [223a02] [239c02] [243c25] [244a01] [244b15] [245c19] [247c06] [253a10] [268a15] [268a29] [272c18] [288c28] [289a11] [290c23] [293a03] [304b01] [308c06] [365c28] [366a04] [377c06] [380b22] [381a09] [382a18] [385b16] [427b23] [429a10] [434b15]
Count: 51
Translator: Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (652 – 710 CE)
[154b03] [384b17] [406c27]

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omitted the *Foshuo xianren bojie jing*, attributing the content to the *Da zhidu lun*. However, it is found in the *Da zhidu lun* the story of *Ṛṣi Ekaśṛṅga*, where also tells the danger of sexual desire, and has a similar plot that the *ṛṣi* loses his supernatural power due to the rise of sexual desire caused by the touch of a women. This error indicates that when writing this section, Zhanran probably referred to the *Foshuo xianren bojie jing* rather than the *Da zhidu lun* directly.

Count: 3

30. *Huanxi xing jing* 歡喜行經 (unfound)
[201b27]
Count: 1
31. *Huishang pusa wen dashan quan jing* 慧上菩薩問大善權經 (T345)
Upāyakauśalyajñānôttarabodhisattvaparipṛcchā sūtra
Translator: Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (239 – 316 CE)
[205b23]
Count: 1
32. *Jie shenmi jing* 解深密經 (T676)
Saṃdhinirmocana sūtra
Translator: Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE)
[313a04]
Count: 1
33. *Jingang bore boluomi jing* 金剛般若波羅蜜經 (edition uncertain)
Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra
[154b27] [197c17] [271a15]
Count: 3
34. *Jinguangming jing* 金光明最勝王經 (T16. No.665)
[144a18] [144a21] [144a22] [176b27] [216c19] [238c17] [260a12] [295c27] [302a26] [308c22] [350a27]
Count: 11
35. *Foshuo jingdu sanmei jing* 佛說淨度三昧經 (X15) (Spurious literature)
Samādhi-sūtra on Liberation through Purification Spoken by the Buddha
Translator: unknown
[413c09]
Count: 1
36. *Weimojie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所說經 (T475)
Vimalakīrtinirdeśa
Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
168b19] [152a18] [152a20] [165a29] [162c05] [163b14] [170a17] [170a20] [170a22] [180a15] [185a15] [185b29] [190c21] [192a18] [168c08] [198b12] [209a11] [212c10] [216b18] [219c02] [223a02] [225a28] [231b13] [234c29] [245c18] [251b06] [255c29] [256a20] [256b29] [264c03] [266a22] [278b02] [282a12] [287b25] [308b11] [308b13] [313a06] [339a08] [339b08] [339b09] [339c17] [366a07] [377c04] [383c08] [168b18] [394c16] [397a22] [402a18] [409c20] [424b25] [427b06] [444c28]
Count: 52
37. *Dacheng ru lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽經 (T672)
Laṅkāvatārasūtra
[155a23] [163b15] [173c16] [175c10] [184b19] [240b29] [240c22] [242b02] [243a06] [250b09] [312b10] [312b21] [320a04] [320c13] [321b05] [329a17] [332c29] [341b22] [353b03] [368a02] [388b17]
Count: 21

38. *Mile da chengfo jing* 彌勒大成佛經 (T456)
    The Great Sūtra of Maitreya achieving Buddhahood
    Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
    [172c16]
    Count: 1
39. *Foshuo mile pusa suowen benyuan jing* 佛說彌勒菩薩所問本願經 (T349)
    Maitreyaparipṛcchā sūtra
    Translator: Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (239 – 316 CE)
    [382b29]
    Count: 1
40. *Foshuo mile xiasheng jing* 佛說彌勒下生經 (T453)
    Maitreyavyākaraṇa sūtra
    Translator: Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (239 – 316 CE)
    [336a14]
    Count: 1
41. *Modengjia jing* 摩登伽經 (T1300)
    Mātangī sūtra
    Translator: Zhu Lüyan 竺律炎 (ca. 3rd century CE), Zhiqian 支謙 (ca. 3rd century CE)
    [438a23]
    Count: 1
42. *Mohe moye jing* 摩訶摩耶經 (T383)
    Mahāmāyāsūtra
    Translator: Tanjing 曇景 (479 – 502 CE)
    [419a17]
    Count: 1
43. *Naxian biqiu jing* 那先比丘經 (T1670A&B)
    Miliṇḍapañha
    Translator: unknown
    [143c02]
    Count: 1
44. *Da sazhe niqianzi suoshuo jing* 大薩遮尼乾子所說經 (T272)
    Mahāsatyanirgranthasūtra
    Translator: Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (572 – 727 CE)
    [271b18] [271b24] [274b25] [338b01] [341a02] [380b20]
    Count: 6
45. *Piyu jing* 譬喻經 (T217)
    Sūtra of similes
    Translator: Yijing 義淨 (635 – 713 CE)
    [189a01] [211b25] [263c28] [268b07] [272a15] [301c06] [399a25] [434b07]
    Count: 8
46. *Pusa shanzi jing* 菩薩睒子經 (T174)
    Śyāmakajātakasūtra
    Translator: unknown
    [265b29]

Count: 1

47. *Wenshuzhili puchao sanmei jing* 文殊支利普超三昧經 (T627)
Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanasūtra
Translator: Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (239 – 316 CE)
[272c08]
Count: 1
48. *Fo shuo guan puxian pusaxing fa jing* 佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經 (T)
Sutra on the Methods for Contemplating Bodhisattva Samantabhadra
Translator: Dharmamitra 曇摩蜜多 (356 – 422 CE)
[388b07]
Count: 1
49. *Qifo bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni Shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神呪經 (T1332)
The Divine Spells of the Great Dhāraṇıs Taught by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas
Translator: unknown
[196c09]
Count: 1
50. *Qingjingfa xing jing* 清淨法行經 (Lost)
Sūtra of the Practice of the Pure Dharma
Translator: unknown
[343c18]
Count: 1
51. *Qing guanshiyin pusa xiaofu duhai tuoluonizhou jing* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼呪經 (T1043)
Saḍakṣaravidyāmantrasūtra
Translator: Nandi 難提 (ca. fl. 5th century CE)
[170b11] [194a19] [194b08] [194b23] [194c13] [195a04] [195a09] [195a11] [195b14] [210a01] [417c05]
Count: 11
52. *Renwang boremiduo jing* 仁王般若波羅蜜経 (T245)
Prajñāpāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings
Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[154b15] [241c05] [243a06] [429c25]
Count: 4
53. *Taizi ruiying benqi jing* 太子瑞應本起經 (T185)
Sūtra of the auspicious original rise of the prince
Translator: 支謙 (ca. 3rd century CE)
[143c05] [144b01] [155a01] [167b01] [172c02] [276c14] [442b06]
Count: 7
54. *Sheng shanzhuyi tyanzi suowen jing* 聖善住意天子所問經 (T341)
Suṣṭhitamati(devaputra)paripṛcchā(sūtra)
Translators: *Vimokṣaprajñā-ṛṣi 毗目智仙 and *Prajñāruci 般若流支 (both ca. 6th century CE)

[174c27] [185a17]
Count: 2

55. *Sheng tianwang boreboluomi jing* 勝天王般若波羅蜜經 (T231)
Suvikrāntavikrāmiparipṛcchāprajñāpāramitāsūtra
Translator: Upaśūnya 月婆首那 (ca. 6th century CE)
[200b18] [187c25]
Count: 2
56. *Foshuo shidi jing* 佛說十地經 (edition uncertain)
Daśabhūmikasūtra
[239c26] [411a18]
Count: 2
57. *Shoulengyan sanmei jing* 首楞嚴三昧經 (T642)
Śuraṅgamasamādhisūtra
Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[152c16] [170c05] [179c14] [200b11] [200b05] [201b16] [203a11] [220c20] [221b09] [287c11]
Count: 10
58. *Tiwei boli jing* 提謂波利經 (lost, partly preserved in Dunhuang manuscripts)
Sutra of Trapusa and Ballika
Author: Tanjing 曇靖 (ca. 5th century CE)[8]
[342a11]
Count: 1
59. 文殊師利問經 T468
Mañjuśrīparipṛcchā
Translator: Saṃghabhadra 僧伽婆羅 (460 – 524 CE)
[176c08] [257a17] [375b07] [410c21] [435b20]
Count: 5
60. *Fo shuo guan wuliangshoufo jing* 佛說觀無量壽佛經 (T365)
Amitāyus Contemplation Sūtra
Translator: Kālayaśas 畺良耶舍 (383 – 422 CE)
[192b23] [384b04] [384b06] [166b16]
61. *Zhufa wuxing jing* 諸法無行經 (T650)
Sarvadharmapravṛttinirdeśasūtra
Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[184b18]
Count: 1
62. *Xian jie jing* 賢劫經 (T425)
Bhadrakalpikasūtra
Translator: Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (239 – 316 CE)
[175c01]
Count: 1
63. *Xukong yun pusa jing* 虛空孕菩薩經 (T408)

[8] Two versions: The original one was lost. Tanjing decided to rewrite it.

Ākāśagarbhasūtra
Translator: Jñānagupta 闍那崛多 (523 – 600 CE)
[257c04]
Count: 1

64. *Xukong zang pusa jing* 虛空藏菩薩經 (T405)
Ākāśagarbhasūtra
Translator: Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 (fl. 5th century CE)
[196c18] [196c18] [254b5]
Count:3

65. *Yangjuemoluo jing* 央掘魔羅經 (T120)
Aṅgulimālīyasūtra
Translator: Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (394 – 468 CE)
[203c25] [204a27] [361c21] [362a02] [376c25] [378c29]
Count: 6

66. *Yingluo jing* 瓔珞經 (edition uncertain)
[152c05] [152c20] [156a19] [180a16] [183c15] [191c11] [200b11] [225a19] [225a28] [225b16] [240b17] [242c27] [251c14] [295b23] [317c03] [353c19] [353c20] [379c19] [385b21] [385b09] [411c26] [416a23] [426a15] [430a01]
Count: 24

67. *Ayuwang jing* 阿育王經 (T2043)
Aśokarājasūtra
Translator: Saṃghabhadra 僧伽婆羅 (460 – 524 CE)
[272a09] [422c19]
Count: 2

68. *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經 (T99)
Saṁyuktāgamasūtra
Transaltor: Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (394 – 468 CE)
[212a20] [362b17] [400a06] [400b20]
Count: 4

69. *Zengyi ahan jing* 增壹阿含經 (T125)
Ekottarika Āgama
Translator: Gautama Saṃghadeva 僧伽提婆 (ca. 4th century CE)
[143b28] [145a04] [204a16] [212b16] [214a04] [240b14] [266c07] [267a23] [267a07] [274c07] [288c26] [342c04] [363a25] [363a25] [371a04] [387c09] [409b18]
Count: 17

70. *Zhancha shane yebao jing* 占察善惡業報經 (T389)[9]
Sūtra on the Divination of the Effect of Good and Evil Actions
Translator: Putideng 菩提燈 (in Sui, 581 – 618 CE)
[197b22] [254b09] [260a12] [382b27] [382c03]
Count: 5

71. *Zhengfa nianchu jing* 正法念處經 (T721)

[9] May have been created in China.

Saddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra
Translator: Prajñāruci 般若流支 (ca. 6th century CE)
[195c07]
Count: 1

72. *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經 (T26)
Madhyamāgamasūtra
Translator: Gautama Saṃghadeva 僧伽提婆 (ca. 4th century CE)
[145a14] [169b26] [173b06] [191b27] [210a07] [321b21] [434b09]
Count: 7
73. Zhu jing 諸經
Various sutras
[195c06]
Count: 1
74. *Zuimiao shengding jing* 最妙勝定經 (ZW10)
Translator: unknown
[231a14]
Count: 1
75. *Zuochan sanmei jing* 坐禪三昧經 (T614)
The Sutra on the Seated Dhyāna Samādhi
Translator: Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[425c22] [163c25] [163c27]
Count: 3

Abhidharma

1. *Apidamo shunzheng lilun* 阿毘達磨順正理論 (T1562)
Nyāyānusāriṇī
Author: Saṅghabhadra* 眾賢 (ca. 5th century CE); Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE)
[161c03]
Count: 1
2. *Bai lun* 百論 (T1569)
Śataśāstra
Author: Kāṇadeva 迦那提婆 (ca. 3rd century CE); commented by Posou kaishi 婆藪開士 (dates unknown); trans. Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[243c26] [280b22]
Count: 2
3. *Jiujing yicheng baoxing lun* 究竟一乘寶性論 (T1611)
Ratnagotra-vibhāgo Mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra
Author: Ratnamati 勒那婆提 (fl. ca. 6th century)
[175b4]
Count: 1
4. *Chengshi lun* 成實論 (T1646)
Tattvasiddhi

Author: Harivarman 訶梨跋摩 (ca. 3rd – 4th century CE); Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[304b19] [225a20] [254b13] [290b26] [304b19] [305a12] [316b14] [329a19] [329b11] [371c23] [412b14] [413c22] [415a25] [418b15] [420c22] [420c27] [421a17] [421c05] [444b18] [444b20] [445c02] [445c06]
Count: 22

5. *Dabo niepan jing shu* 大般涅槃經疏 (T1767)
Commentary on the *Nirvana Sutra*
Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
[157a25] [160a12] [181c20]
Count: 3
6. *Dacheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 (edition uncertain)
Awakening of Faith
T1666
Author: Aśvaghoṣa 馬鳴 (100 – 160 CE), trans. Zhendi 真諦 (499 – 569 CE)
T1667
Author: Aśvaghoṣa 馬鳴 (100 – 160 CE), trans. 實叉難陀 (652710 CE)
[200c1] [213b1]
Count: 2
7. *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (T1509)
Māhāprājñāpāramitāśāstra
Author: Nāgārjuna 龍樹 (ca. 2nd century CE), Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[142a13] [142c27] [143b27] [144b13] [144b18] [144b28] [150a13] [150a14] [150a22] [150a26] [154b14] [155b10] [155b13] [155b05] [156c11] [157c07] [158a22] [161b18] [161c28] [162a07] [162b15] [163b02] [168a14] [168b08] [168b26] [163c25] [163c28] [173a04] [173a05] [173c18] [175c13] [177a19] [177b11] [177b19] [177b28] [178a26] [178c20] [179b29] [179c03] [180c05] [181a22] [181a27] [181b15] [182a15] [182a23] [182a26] [182b09] [182c11] [183a03] [183c14] [184c08] [185a26] [185c13] [185c14] [186a10] [186a06] [186b14] [187a07] [187c23] [188a10] [188b09] [188b20] [190c21] [192c24] [195c07] [196a07] [197c24] [199a20] [199c07] [200b04] [200b11] [201a11] [202a08] [202b20] [202b26] [203a01] [203a14] [203b10] [203c04] [206b16] [206b18] [208c18] [213b04] [213c08] [214a11] [214b09] [214c24] [220a09] [220c20] [221b15] [221b09] [224c27] [225a16] [228c08] [229a22] [229b29] [229c25] [230a08] [231c24] [232c19] [234b12] [234b28] [236a20] [239c25] [240a01] [242a22] [242a25] [243c21] [251c06] [252a26] [252c23] [253a9] [255c04] [256b22] [257b16] [257c18] [258b21] [259b19] [259c03] [260c14] [261b05] [262b17] [264c16] [266a25] [266b19] [266c10] [267b09] [267c14] [268c13] [269b27] [270a18] [270b17] [271b19] [271b22] [271b29] [271c24] [272c01] [273a11] [273b13] [273b27] [273b05] [274a02] [276a06] [276c13] [276c03] [278b18] [278b26] [280a23] [281a27] [285c24] [293c16] [298a25] [299b28] [299b03] [300b09] [301c18] [304b18] [308a09] [308a16] [314c16] [314c19] [314c21] [315b21] [316c03] [316c16] [317a10] [317c24] [318c17] [319c29] [320a01] [320a02] [320c23] [322a28] [322b03] [323a05] [323c10]

[323c25] [326b20] [326b21] [326b24] [329c06] [330c25] [330c07] [331b01] [331b09] [332a06] [333a27] [334a10] [334a07] [334c22] [334c29] [335b24] [336a15] [336a22] [336a27] [336a06] [336c10] [337a11] [337a19] [337b10] [337b17] [337c12] [339b22] [339c02] [344c21] [348b04] [348b09] [348c17] [348c23] [351a07] [353c19] [358b22] [358b22] [360a10] [360a03] [361b29] [361b29] [361c06] [362a14] [362a08] [364a13] [364a13] [364c12] [364c29] [369a23] [369a25] [369b15] [369c03] [370a11] [370a28] [370b15] [370b25] [370c24] [371a17] [371b17] [372c08] [372c13] [374a17] [374a22] [374b09] [374c22] [375a13] [376a14] [377c28] [378c14] [379a16] [379a19] [379a22] [379a28] [379a03] [380a10] [380a23] [380b15] [382c21] [383a23] [383b06] [383c11] [383c17] [383c24] [384b12] [386a03] [386b26] [386c22] [386c26] [387c01] [388b24] [390c23] [391a11] [391b24] [172a18] [392a24] [392c14] [392c04] [393b18] [394a12] [394c27] [395a15] [397a20] [398c12] [401a15] [403b17] [403b25] [405a19] [406a15] [406b11] [406c12] [407a16] [408a10] [409b20] [409c03] [410a24] [410b28] [410b03] [412b19] [412b29] [414c24] [415b14] [415b02] [416a26] [416c29] [418c08] [419b10] [419b17] [419b05] [168b11] [422c09] [424b06] [429c11] [431a15] [431a17] [431a20] [431a23] [431b11] [431c03] [432a03] [172a25] [434a20] [434a26] [434b14] [435a27] [435c03] [437a25] [437b02] [437b27] [438b28] [438c09] [440b05] [441b17] [441c12] [442a01] [443c11] [446b29] [167a15] [168a05]
Count: 334

8. *Fangbian xin lun* 方便心論 (T1632)
   Upāyahṛdaya
   Author: unknown, trans. Kivkara 吉迦夜 (ca. 5th century CE)
   [435b01]
   Count: 1
9. *Fenbie gongde lun* 分別功德論 (T1507)
   Puṇya-vibhaṅga
   Author: unknown
   [425c07]
   Count: 1
10. *Guanxin lun* 觀心論 (T1920)
    Treatise on Contemplating the Mind
    Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
    [277c23] [298a13]
    Count: 2
11. *Jingang bore lun* 金剛般若論 (T1510a)
    Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitāsūtraśāstra
    Author: written by Asaṅga 無著 (315 – 370 CE), trans. Dharmagupta 達摩笈多 (? – 619 CE)
    [184a09]
    Count: 1
12. *Jingangming jing wenju* 金光明經文句 (T1785)
    Words and Phrases of the Sūtra of Golden Light

Authors: taught by Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE); recorded by Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
[382c15] [397a2]
Count: 2

13. *Apidamo jushe lun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論 (T1558)
Abhidharmakośabhāṣya
Author: written by Vasubandhu 世親 (4th – 5th century CE), trans. Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE)
[144a16] [154c27] [175b26] [175b26] [193b01] [208c16] [233a04] [234b17] [234b25] [234b27] [242c14] [253b11] [253b18] [253b20] [253c10] [253c27] [253c07] [263b03] [271a02] [271a25] [271b12] [284a04] [285a24] [286a08] [286a09] [290b10] [290b04] [293b22] [296c02] [313b17] [316a25] [316a27] [316b02] [318c10] [325b03] [329c24] [330b23] [331b29] [332a08] [335c28] [337a04] [358c13] [358c13] [373a26] [403b16] [412b14] [412b18] [418c10] [422c05] [423b01] [428b03] [434a25]
Count: 52

14. *Apitan piposha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論 (T1546)
Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra
Author: Katyāyanī-putra 迦栴延子 (ca. 2nd – 1st century BCE), trans. Buddhavarman 浮陀跋摩 (ca. 5th century) and Daotai 道泰 (ca. 5th century), etc.
[145c04] [157c24] [161c01] [169c04] [175c10] [192a09] [193a23] [193b04] [196a20] [196a05] [199b21] [215b11] [225a21] [231a04] [234b17] [239c17] [239c26] [241c20] [246b15] [246b25] [253b18] [253c07] [256a16] [260c21] [270c29] [272a07] [290a16] [290a25] [290b03] [323a07] [329a23] [331b02] [336a08] [362a13] [362a15] [362b15] [362b15] [368b15] [371b23] [379c26] [382c03] [401b03] [408a26] [412b11] [412b20] [415a03] [415b23] [415c13] [418a03] [418c14] [419a10] [420a08] [422c08] [424a10] [424b12] [424b18] [424b28] [424b04] [424c25] [424c03] [425c01]
Count: 61

15. *Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 (T1545)
Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra
Author: Katyāyanī-putra 迦栴延子 (ca. 2nd – 1st century BCE), Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE)
[258b19]
Count: 1

16. *Zhonglun* 中論 (T1564)
Mūlamadhyamakakārikā
Author: Nāgārjuna 龍樹 (ca. 2nd century CE), commented by Piṅgalanetra 青目 (4th century CE), trans. Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
[149c10] [183c22] [194b29] [304c12] [304c06] [325c15] [353c10] [353c28] [405b12] [426a25] [426b16] [437c05] [444a12] [444c18]
Preface
Author: Sengrui 僧叡 (355 – 439 CE)
[243b07]

Count: 14

17. Sapoduo 薩婆多
    Sarvāstivāda
    [175b21]
    Count: 1
18. *Shier yinyuan lun* 十二因緣論 (T1651)
    Pratītyasamutpādaśāstra
    Author: Śuddhamati 淨意 (dates unknown), trans. Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (572 – 727 CE)
    [239c26]
    Count: 1
19. 十住毘婆沙論 (T1521)
    Daśabhūmikavibhāṣā
    Author: Nāgārjuna 龍樹 (ca. 2nd century CE), Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
    [166b10] [170b17] [185b24] [186a21] [186b14] [186b20] [188a07] [188b06] [188b09] [188b20] [263c20] [264b10]
    Count: 12
20. *She dacheng lun ben* 攝大乘論本 (T1594)
    Mahāyānasaṅgraha
    Translator: Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE)
    [221c07]
    Count: 1
21. *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論 (T1579)
    Yogācārabhūmiśāstra
    Author: Maitreya 彌勒菩薩, trans. Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE)
    [313a04]
    Count: 1
22. *Za apitan xinlun* 雜阿毘曇心論 (T1552)
    Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra
    Author: written by Dharmatāta 法救 (ca. 2nd century CE?) , trans. Saṃghavarman 僧伽跋摩 (ca. 5th century CE)
    [372b04]
    Count: 1
23. 大乘莊嚴經論
    波羅頗迦羅蜜多羅

Vinaya

1. *Mishasai bu hexi wufen lü* 弥沙塞部和醯五分律 (T1421)
    Mahīśāsakavinaya
    Translator: Buddhajīva 佛陀什 (5th century CE), Daosheng 竺道生 (355 – 434 CE)
    [386b04]
    Count: 1

2. *Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 (T1425)
   Mahāsaṅghavinaya
   Translator: Buddhabhadra 佛馱跋陀羅 (359 – 429 CE), Faxian 法顯 (ca. 337 CE – ca. 422 CE)
   [173a19] [272a01] [272a04]
   Count: 3
3. *Da biqiu sanqian weiyi* 大比丘三千威儀 (T1470)[10]
   Three Thousand Regulations for Great Bhikṣus
   Translator: 安世高 An Shigao (fl. c. 148 – 180 CE)
   [182b24]
   Count: 1
4. *Shisong lü* 十誦律 (T1435)
   Sarvāstivādavinaya
   Translator: Puṇyatāra 弗若多羅 (? – 404) , Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344 – 413 CE)
   [182b23] [416b25]
   Count: 2
5. *Sifen lü* 四分律 (T1428)
   Dharmaguptavinaya
   Translator: Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 (fl. 5th century CE), Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (fl. 5th century CE)
   [182b26] [416b25]
   Count: 2
6. *Youposai jie jing* 優婆塞戒經 (T1488)
   Upāsakāśīlasūtra
   Translator: Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (385 – 433 CE)
   [166b18] [184b14] [185c05]
   Count: 3

Chinese Texts

Buddhist Texts

Doctrinal

1. *Mouzi lihuo lun* 牟子理惑論 (collected in T2102)
   Master Mou's Treatise Settling Doubts
   Author: Mou Rong 牟融 (ca. 2nd century CE)
   [247b09] [279a15] [279a25] [324c15] [324c21]
   Count: 5
2. *Xiaodao lun* 笑道論 (collected in 2103)

[10] May have been created in China.

Laughing at the Dao
Author: Zhen Luan 甄鸞 (ca. 535 – 566? CE)
[149c27]
Count: 1

3. *Shi chan boluomi cidi famen* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門 (T1916)
Understanding Dhyāna Pāramitā: A Method in Stages
Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
[156b28]
Count: 1
4. *Erjiao lun* 二教論 (collected in T2103)
The Treatise of the Two Teachings
Author: Daoan 道安 (312 – 385 CE)
[324c09]
Count: 1
5. *Fahua xuanyi shiqian* 法華玄義釋籤 (T1717)
Comments on the Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra
Author: Zhanran 湛然 (711 – 784 CE)
[180c01] [195c13] [253b19] [255a28] [332b02] [332b25] [337c27]
Count: 7
6. *Miaofa lianhua jing wenju* 妙法蓮華經文句 (T1718)
Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra
Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
[162a16]
Count: 1
7. *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法蓮華經玄義 (T1716)
Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra
Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
[150b10] [165a26] [165a27] [170a25] [170b05] [170b10] [163a21] [183a12] [196b19] [199c03] [219b23] [231a17] [239a28] [240c13] [240c22] [241a03] [247b23] [250b02] [250c23] [255a27] [289c20] [292a10] [295b21] [313a21] [332b25] [334b13] [344c06] [346a24] [368a08] [381a05] [381c09] [396c23] [406c25] [425a20] [425a28] [425c04] [446a11]
Count: 37
8. *Fajie cidi chumen* 法界次第初門 (T1925)
Step-by-Step Introduction to the Analysis of the Dharma Realm
Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
[419a16] [419b04]
Count: 2
9. *Fajie xing lun* 法界性論 (lost)
Treatise on the Nature of the Dharma-realm
[268a20]
Count: 2
10. *Guanyin xuanwen* 觀音玄義
Profound Meaning of the *Avalokitêśvara Chapter*

Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
[296a16]
Count: 1

11. *Guanyin yishu* 觀音義疏 (T1728)
Commentary on the Meaning of the Chapter of the Universal Gate of Avalokitêśvara Bodhisattva
Author: taught by Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE); recorded by Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
[194a01]
Count: 1
12. *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (T2103)
A Further Collection of Essays on Buddhism
Author: Daoxuan 道宣 (596 – 667 CE)
[231a01]
Count: 1
13. *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論 (T2110)
Treatise on Revealing the Correct
Author: Falin 法琳 (572 – 640 CE)
[258b18] [325a04]
Count: 2
14. *Liumiao famen* 六妙法門 (T1917)
The Six Subtle Dharma Gates
Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
[156c01]
Count: 1
15. *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (T1804)[11]
Author: Daoxuan 道宣 (596 – 667 CE)
[254b06]
Count: 1
16. *Weimo jing xuanshu* 維摩經玄疏 (T1777)
A Commentary on the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa
Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
[289a18] [295c04] [298c28] [368a08] [385b18] [429c01] [436b06]
Count: 7
17. *Pusa jie yishu* 菩薩戒義疏 (T1811)
Commentary on the Meaning of the Bodhisattva Precepts
Author: taught by Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE); recorded by Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
[162b27] [385b13]

[11] Quoted as nanshan chao 南山鈔. Nanshan refers to Daoxuan. Three of his works has the word chao in their title, including 四分律比丘尼鈔 and 拾毘尼義鈔. From the comparison between the content in the *ZFCJ* and that of these three works we can hardly tell which Zhanran quoted from, but presumably 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔, as it is the most influential one.

Count: 2

18. *Qing guanyin jingshu* 請觀音經疏 (T1800)
    Commentary on the Saḍakṣaravidyāmantrasūtra
    Author: taught by Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE); recorded by Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
    [195a08] [195a10]
    Count: 2
19. *Si nian chu* 四念處 (T1918)
    Four Bases of Mindfulness
    Author: taught by Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE); recorded by Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
    [152a25] [153c13] [164a14] [169b02] [237a17] [248b11] [291a21] [291b17] [296a07] [338c27] [339b04] [353a07] [373a06] [383b20] [385b10] [385b13] [388a15] [417b04] [423b16]
    Count: 19
20. *Suiziyi sanmei* 隨自意三昧 (X903)
    Samādhi of Following One's Thoughts
    Author: Huisi 慧思 (515 – 577 CE)
    [264a21]
    Count: 1
21. *Xiuxi zhiguan zuochan fayao* 修習止觀坐禪法要 (T1915)
    Essentials for Sitting in Meditation and Cultivating Calmness and Contemplation
    Author: Zhiyi 智顗 (539 – 598 CE)
    [296a04]
    Count: 1

Non-Doctrinal

1. Seng Biao 僧彪 (Tang dynasty, 618 – 906 CE)
   Also as Shi Biao 釋彪.
   [400c12]
   Count: 1
2. *Dashi yu jizang shu* 大師於吉藏書 (not found)
   Letter from Master Zhiyi to Jizang
   Author: Jizang 吉藏 (549 – 623 CE)
   [279a11]
   Count: 1
3. *Da tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (T2087)
   Records of the Western Regions during the Great Tang
   Author: taught by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602 – 664 CE), recorded by Bianji 辯機 (? – 649 CE)
   [258b20] [167b20]
   Count: 2
4. *Fu fazing yinyuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳 (T2058)

Chronicle of the Successive Transmission of the Dharma Canon
Author: trans. Kivkara 吉迦夜 (ca. 5th century CE) and Tanyao 曇曜 (ca. 5th century)
[145a24] [145a28] [145c16] [146a18] [147a13] [147a17] [147b02] [149b24] [196c28] [266c02] [272c28]
Count: 11

5. *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄 (T1934)
Hundred Records of Guoqing Monastery
Author: Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
[148a26] [190b21] [190b29] [193c24] [194a19] [399c04]
Count: 6
6. *Jinglü yixiang* 經律異相 (T2121)
Different Aspects of the Sūtras and Vinaya
Author: Baochang 寶唱 (ca. 5th – 6th century CE)
[398b22]
Count: 1
7. *Shimen zijing lu* 釋門自鏡錄 (T2083)
Record for Self-Reflection in the Buddhist Community
Author: Huaixin 懷信 (ca. 5th century CE)
[266b15]
Count: 1
8. *Sui tiantai zhizhe dashi biezhuan* 隋天台智者大師別傳 (T2050)
Additional Biographical Information on Tiantai Master Zhizhe in Sui
Author: Guanding 灌頂 (561 – 632 CE)
[143a19] [156b14]
Count: 2
9. *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (T2060)
The Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks
Author: Daoxuan 道宣 (596 – 667 CE)
[385c21]
Count: 1

Non-Buddhist Texts

Doctrinal

1. *Lunyu zhu* 《論語》註
Commentary on the Analects
Author: Ma Rong 馬融 (79 – 166 CE)
[159c10]
Count: 1
2. *Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義
Author: Ban Gu 班固 (32 – 92 CE)

[196a25] [244a02] [244a26] [308c03] [342a04] [398c27] [421c23]
Count: 7

3. *Chunqiu* 春秋
   Spring and Autumn Annals
   Author: attr. Confucius 孔子 (551 – 479 BCE)
   [279b03]
   Count: 1
4. *Chunqiu houyu* 春秋後語
   Later Comments on the Spring and Autumn Annals
   Author: Kong Yan 孔衍 (268 – 320 CE)
   [302b19] [343b12]
   Count: 2
5. *Dadai liji* 大戴禮記
   Book of Rites Compiled by Dai the Elder
   Author: Dai De 戴德 (fl. 43 – 33 BCE)
   [304b27]
   Count: 1
6. *Guanzi* 管子
   Author: Guan Yiwu 管夷吾 (? – 645 BCE)
   [153b06]
   Count: 1
7. *Guoyu* 國語
   Discourses of the States
   Author: attr. Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (556 – 451 BCE or 502 – 422 BCE)
   [182c21] [197a28] [264b29] [301b22]
   Count: 4
8. Han Kangbo 韓康伯 (Eastern Jin, 317 – 420 CE)
   [189c29]
   Count: 1
9. *Hongfan wuxing zhuan* 洪範五行傳
   Commentary on the Five Phases in the Hongfan/Great Plan
   Five Agents Exegesis of the ‘Vast Plan’
   Author: unknown
   [285a20]
   Count: 1
10. *Huainan zi* 淮南子
    Author: Liu An, Prince of Huainan, *et al*. 淮南王刘安 (179122 BCE)等
    [156a01] [279c12] [324c03] [348a19] [388c10] [433b25]
    Count: 6
11. Jia Kui 賈逵 (30 – 101 CE)
    [165c03]
    Count: 1
12. Lao-Zhuang 老莊
    ‘Lao-Zhuang’ is the joint reference to Laozi 老子 and Zhuangzi 莊子.

[270c08]
Count: 1

13. Laozi 老子 (attr. 6th – 5th century BCE)
[162a17] [162a23] [216c23] [279a17] [304a20]
Count: 5
14. *Li ji* 禮記
The Book/Records of Rites
Author: Unkown
[182b20] [196a19] [231a09] [244a28] [302b09] [342a17] [373a03] [386a15] [387a20] [391c15] [421c24] [244a28]
Count: 12
15. *Liang Wu fayuan wen* 梁武發願文
Votive text of Emperor Liang Wudi
[214b03]
Count: 1
16. *Liezi* 列子
Author: attr. Lie Yukou 列御寇 (Warring States Period, 403 – 221 BCE)
[189a18] [407c24]
Count: 2
17. *Liuzi xinlun* 劉子
Author: attr. Liu Zhou 劉晝 (ca. 514 – 565 CE) or Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465 – 522 CE)
[265b27] [279c11] [144a07]
Count: 2
18. *Lun heng* 論衡
Critical Essays
Discourses in the Balance
Author: Wang Chong 王充 (ca. 27 – 100 CE)
[299c18]
Count: 1
19. *Lunyu* 論語
Analects
Author: disciples of Confucius, most written in ca. 475 – 221 BCE, finalised in mid-Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE)
[143c13] [157a17] [182c10] [196a01] [294c24] [323a26] [424b15]
Count: 7
20. *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋
Mr Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals
Author: Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (? – 235 BCE), etc.
[266a09]
21. *Mao shi* 毛詩
A Commentary on the Book of Songs by Mao Heng and Mao Chang
Author: Mao Heng 毛亨, Mao Chang 毛苌 (both in the Western Han dynasty, 206 BCE – 8 CE)
[265b14]

Count: 1

22. *Mengzi* 孟子
    Mencius
    Author: Mencius 孟子 (ca. 372 – 289 BCE)
    [269a01]
    Count: 1
23. *Shangshu* 尚書
    Book of Documents
    Author: attr. Confucius 孔子 (551 – 479 BCE)
    [274b20] [317b13] [388c06] [388c15]
    Count: 4
24. *Shangshu dazhuan* 尚書大傳
    Great Commentary to the Book of Documents
    Author: Fu Sheng 伏勝 (ca. 268 – 178 BCE)
    [264c01]
    Count: 1
25. *Shizi* 尸子
    Author: Shi Jiao 尸佼 (ca. 390 – 330 BCE)
    [195c14] [195c15] [271c12]
    Count: 3
26. *Shi* 詩
    Book of Songs
    Author: unknown
    [143b15] [144a10] [157b28] [162b14] [172a16] [191b17] [266a10] [284a19] [296a02] [325c08] [385c16] [433c06]
    Count: 12
27. *Shi zhuan* 詩傳
    The Commentary to the Book of Songs
    Author: Presumably Mao Heng 毛亨 and 毛苌 Mao Chang
    [196a15] [270b05]
    Count: 2
28. *Taixuan jing* 太玄經
    The Canon of Supreme Mystery
    Author: Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 BCE – 18 CE)
    [244a19]
    Count: 1
29. *Xiaojing zhu* 孝經注
    Commentary to Classic of Filial Piety
    Author: Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127 – 200 CE)
    [388c01]
    Count: 1
30. *Xunzi* 荀子
    Author: Xun Kuang 荀況 (ca. 310 – c. after 238 BCE)
    [143c29]

Count: 1

31. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127 – 200 CE)
    [294c23] [397a16]
    Count: 2
32. *Zhou li* 周禮
    Rites of Zhou
    Author: attr. Zhou Gongdan 周公旦 (dates unknown, r. 1042 – 1035 BCE)
    [159c16] [161c25] [189a19] [265b20] [340c06] [391c13]
    Count: 6
33. *Zhouli zhu* 周禮註
    Commentary on the *Rites of Zhou*
    Author: Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127200 CE)
    [425a10] [161c20] [189c10]
    Count: 3
34. *Zhouyi* 周易
    Changes of Zhou, Classic of Changes
    Author: unknown
    [168a21] [168a22] [179a26] [179b09] [196a18] [244a25] [305b29] [440c07] [440c13]
    Count: 9
35. *Zhuangzi* 莊子
    Zhuangzi
    Author: Zhuangzi 莊子 (369 – 286 BCE)
    [156c07] [211c11] [216c21] [217b04] [238b09] [247b16] [265c01] [265c15] [270c08] [299c15] [340c08] [386b25] [390c18] [415a01] [433b11]
    Count: 15
36. *Shiyi jiumi lun* 十異九迷論
    Treatise on the Ten Heresies and Nine Confusions
    Author: Li Zhongqing 李仲卿 (fl. 7th century CE)
    [325a04]
    Count: 1

Non-Doctrinal

1. *Shennong bencao jing guo zhu* 《神農本草經》郭註
   Guo's Commentary on the Shen-nong's Herbal Classics
   Author: unknown
   [399a24]
   Count: 1
2. *Bowu zhi* 博物誌/博物志
   Records of Diverse Matters
   Author: Zhang Hua 張華 (232 – 300 CE)
   [148c19] [161c24] [274c02] [342b17] [398c08] [398c27] [399a13]
   Count: 7
3. *Cangjie pian* 蒼頡篇/倉頡篇

Cangjie's Chapters
Author: Li Si 李斯 (? – 208 BCE)
[172b29] [182c22] [232c02] [371b16] [399a15] [414a09]
Count: 6

4. *Chen gui* 臣軌
   Guidelines for Imperial Subjects
   Author: Wu Zetian 武則天 (624 – 705 CE), Yuan Wanqing 元萬頃 (? – 690 CE), Liu Yizhi 劉禕之 (631 – 687)
   [256a12]
   Count: 1
5. *Chu ci* 楚辭
   Verses of Chu
   Author: 屈原 (ca. 340 – 278 BCE), 宋玉 (ca. 303 – 221 BCE), etc.
   [302b08]
   Count: 1
6. Jin Chunqiu 晉春秋
   Spring and Autumn Annals of the Jin Dynasty
   Author: Du Yanye 杜延業 (in Tang, from 618 – 906)
   [300a26]
   Count: 1
7. *Erya* 爾雅
   Approaching Correctness
   Author: Unknown
   [142c05] [149b14] [160c19] [161c22] [162a16] [162b23] [195c14] [196b27] [203a16] [256b17] [267a29] [269b27] [271c12] [274b29] [281a08] [294a18] [295a18] [304b19] [304b28] [305c24] [307c10] [308c02] [323a28] [325c07] [326a12] [340c26] [344b01] [358b02] [372a08] [374b01] [388c01] [391c12] [406a29] [407c26] [445a11]
   Count: 35
8. *Fu dashi duzi shi* 傅大士獨自詩
   The Poems of Solitude by Great Scholar Fu
   Author: Fu Xi 傅翕 (497 – 569)
   [197b28] [208b7]
   Count: 2
9. *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義
   Comprehensive Meaning of Customs and Mores
   Author: Ying Shao 應劭 (ca. 2nd – 3rd century CE)
   [179a25] [265a13]
   Count: 2
10. *Guangya* 廣雅
    Expanded [Er]ya
    Author: Zhang Yi 张揖 (3rd century CE)
    [149c14] [157b15] [159c09] [160c03] [294a19] [388c12] [391c08] [400c11] [421c29] [440c05]

Count: 10

11. Guo Pu 郭璞 (276 – 324 CE)
    [203a16] [279c13] [299c10] [370c21] [370c22] [388c04] [433c06]
    Count: 7
12. *Han shu* 漢書
    The History of the Han
    Author: Ban Gu 班固 (32 – 92 CE)
    [340c27] [378a13] [397a17]
    Count: 3
13. *Lie xian zhuan* 列仙傳
    Biographies of Exemplary Immortals
    Author: attr. Liu Xiang 劉向 (ca. 77 – 6 BCE)
    [325b21]
    Count: 1
14. Houhan shu 後漢書
    Book of the Later Han 'Biographies'
    The History of the Later Han
    Author: Fan Ye 范曄 (398 – 445 CE)
    [343b06]
    Count: 1
15. *Liutao* 六韜
    Six Secret Teachings
    Author: attr. Lü Shang 呂尚 (fl. 12th century – 11th century BCE)
    [278c13] [438c08]
    Count: 2
16. *Picang* 埤蒼
    Increased Cangjie
    Author: Zhang Yi 張揖 (Three Kingdoms, 222 – 280 CE)
    [387a25] [389c01]
    Count: 2
17. *Sanguo zhi* 三國志
    Records of the Three Kingdoms
    Author: Chen Shou 陳壽 (233 – 297 CE)
    [294b02]
    Count: 1
18. *Shanhai jing* 山海經
    Classic of Mountains and Seas
    Author: unknown
    [172c01] [279c13] [391b24]
    Count: 3
19. *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經
    Shennong's Herbal Classics
    Author: attr. Shennong 神農 (dates unknown)
    [445c18]

Count: 1

20. *Shiji* 史記
    The Grand Scribe's Records
    Author: Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145 – ca.86 BCE)
    [168a21] [409b10]
    Count: 2
21. *Shiming* 釋名
    Explanation of Terms
    Author: Liu Xi 劉熙
    [156c09] [171c03] [172b15] [265a12] [265a21] [265b22] [399a16]
    Count: 7
22. *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字
    Explaining Graphs and Analysing Characters
    Author: Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58 – ca. 148 CE)
    [145a01] [147a17] [150a11] [153b05] [154c03] [157b14] [160c02] [172b29] [172b29] [172c16] [173a17] [191b17] [193a06] [205a07] [231a08] [247c16] [247c23] [265a10] [265a13] [269a03] [270b06] [270b06] [271c13] [279c14] [302b10] [340c26] [373a02] [384a25] [385c14] [388c09] [388c10] [388c11] [388c13] [388c19] [389c03] [421c26] [438b09]
    Count: 37
23. *Shuoyuan* 說苑
    Garden of Stories
    Author: Liu Xiang 劉向 (ed.) (ca. 77 – 6 BCE)
    [215c05]
    Count: 1
24. *Sudian* 俗典
    non-Buddhist classics
    Author: unknown
    Count: 1
25. *Tongsu wen* 通俗文
    Collection of Vernacular Sayings
    Author: Fu Qian 服虔 (Late Eastern Han dynasty, 25 – 220 CE)
    [321c16]
    Count: 1
26. *Jin shu* 晉書
    Book of Jin
    Author: Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578 – 648), Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596 – 658 CE), etc.
    [210c08] [210c26]
    Count: 2
27. *Wen xuan* 文選
    Selections of Refined Literature
    Author: Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501531 CE)
    [278c11] [302c21] [390c18]

Count: 3

28. *Xijing fu* 西京賦
    Rhapsody on the Western Capital
    Author: Zhang Heng 張衡 (78 – 139 CE)
    [321c15]
    Count: 1
29. *Xiaozi zhuan* 孝子傳
    Accounts of Filial Offspring
    Author: Liu Xiang 劉向 (ca. 77 – 6 BCE)
    [265a18] [265a22]
    Count: 2
30. *Xiuwendian yulan* 修文殿御覽
    A Book for the Emperor's Inspection Compiled at the Hall of Promoting Culture and Education
    Author: compiled under the imperial order; completed in 572 CE
    [244b06]
    Count: 1
31. *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓
    Family Teachings of the Yan Clan
    Author: 顏之推 (531 CE – ?)
    [374b29]
    Count: 1
32. *Funan yiwu zhi* 扶南異物誌
    Records of the Exotica of Funan
    Author: 朱應 (Three Kingdoms, 220 – 280 CE)
    [269a02]
    Count: 1
33. *Yu pian* 玉篇
    Jade Chapters
    Author: Gu Yewang 顧野王 (519 – 581 CE)
    [142c03] [147c10] [153b01] [165b18] [175b18] [189c26] [321c14] [367a21] [373a01]
    Count: 9
34. *Zi lin* 字林
    Forest of Characters
    Author: Lü Chen 吕忱 (Jin dynasty, 266 – 420 CE)
    [392a09] [434a17]
    Count: 2
35. *Zi shu* 字書
    Dictionary
    [143c05] [182b14] [405a19] [414c11]
    Count: 4
36. *Zi tong* 字統
    Unification of Character

Author: Yang Chengqing　楊承慶 (Northen Wei, 386 – 535 CE)
[159c11] [294c22]
Count: 2

37. *Zuo zhuan* 左傳
The Commentary of Zuo
Author: attr. Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 (Spring and Autumn Period, 770 – ca. 481 BCE)
[210b18] [285a21]
Count: 2