

The Śamatha and Vipāśyanā in Tian Tai¹

Fa Qing

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Introduction

Chinese Buddhism

The development of Buddhist thought in India may be chronologically described as different interpretations of the Buddha's teachings that gave rise to Buddhist schools. Followers of those early Buddhist schools, except the Sautrāntikas, can be called Ābhīdhārmikas, because all of them believe in the theory of *dharmas*, and have their own Abhidharma literatures. Most scholars agree that the Mahāyāna schools arose in the process of reacting to and opposing the interpretation of *dharmas* by the Abhidharma schools.

The earliest form of Chinese Buddhism was introduced to China via Central Asia. The doctrines were mainly those of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma and of the early Mahāyāna literature.

In the development of Buddhist thought in China the meditation texts were first translated into Chinese, adopting the prevalent Daoist and Confucian terms. The early Mahāyāna Buddhist literature, such as the *Prajñāpāramitā* and the works of Nāgārjuna, were introduced to China at an early stage. When the translations were made by Kumārajīva, the Chinese started to understand the Indian thoughts more accurately. There were no more readings of Daoist and Confucian notions into the Buddhist texts. The early Chinese schools, such as the *Kośa* (Sarvāstivāda), the Pure Land, the *Sanlun* (Madhyamaka), the Tiantai, and the *Huayan* (*Avāntasaka*) schools were developed by the Chinese. Subsequently, in the Tang dynasty, with the new translations made by Xuangzang, the Chinese *Faxiang* (Yogācāra) School was formed. Later, the *Zhenyan* (Tantra) school became popular at the Tang court of China. Following the advent of the Chan School and neo-Confucianism, academic activities declined in the tradition of Chinese Buddhism. It may be said that the historical development of Buddhism in China is a history of translations of the Indian Buddhist texts. These texts came to exert much influence on the development of the Chinese Buddhist tradition.

The Tiantai School

After the introduction of Buddhism to China, Tiantai was the first Chinese school which systematically developed its thoughts on theory and practice. This is the first time that the Chinese expressed their understanding of Indian Buddhism with confidence. The real founder of the school was Zhiyi (538-597), who spent most of his life practicing meditation on Mount Tiantai in modern Zhejiang, from which the school gets its name. Most of Zhiyi's numerous and voluminous works were transcribed by his disciple Guanding (561-632), and those transcribed works became authoritative for all later Tiantai tradition. This tradition is characterized by the emphasis on the practice of meditation, and by its exegetical method.

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Zhiyi constructed a vast syncretistic system of Mahāyāna thought and practice, which aimed at giving a comprehensive overview of the whole of Buddhism. His system found a place for all known modes of practice and doctrine. Confronted with the massive influx of Mahāyāna texts translated into Chinese, many of which directly contradicted one another in matters of both doctrine and practice, Zhiyi faced the challenge of accommodating the claim that all these texts represented the authoritative teachings of the Buddha. The solution he arrived at can be described as an insight into the interconnection between two central Mahāyāna doctrines: The concept of *upāya* (expedient means), particularly as presented in the Lotus Sūtra, and the concept of *śūnyatā* (emptiness), particularly as developed in the Madhyamaka school. From the synthesis of these ideas, Zhiyi developed a distinctive understanding of the Buddha-nature, rooted especially in the universalistic exposition given in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, and the identity between delusion and enlightenment as invoked in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, and in other sūtras. His understanding of the Buddha-nature entailed a reconfiguring of both *upāya* and *śūnyatā* as they had been understood in earlier Mahāyāna Buddhism. (Brook, 2004)

The unique characteristic of Tiantai is that both its doctrine and praxis stress the unity of diversity. Zhiyi's biography shows that he studied and gave dharma talks at an early age, and he went to Tiantai Mountain, meditating there for more than ten years. At his later stage, he gave lectures on round (meaning perfect) and abrupt meditation.

The Theory of Practice in Tiantai

The practice of this school consists of meditation based on the methods of *zhi* and *guan* (*śamatha-vipaśyanā*). *Zhi* (*śamatha*): 'Stabilizing meditation' and 'calm abiding.' It refers to meditative practices aimed at the stilling of thought and at the development of concentration. *Guan* (*vipaśyanā*): "Through understanding of the threefold truth enlightenment may be attained in a single spontaneous thought." "Three thousand words in one thought" is the famous Tiantai theory about how one thought embodies the universality of all things. It is translated with such terms as 'analysis' or 'clear observation', and refers to the application of one's power of concentration to dependent co-arising.

Zhiyi's *zhiguan* system:

1. Gradual: Threefold contemplation.
2. Round and Abrupt : Advanced Contemplation.
3. Indeterminate.

The gradual approach is how to observe the three truths in our daily life. Each moment of mind can be checked by the three: Empty, conventional, and the middle. Gradual methods are taught in the *Gradual Śamatha-vipaśyanā (Explanation of the Gradual Dharma Gate of the Dhyāna Pāramitā* T46, No.1916).

Indeterminate is for a higher level practice. These instructions are recorded in the Zhiyi's book: *The Six Wondrous Gates of Liberation (Liu miao famen* T46, No.1917).

The round and abrupt meditation is recorded in Zhiyi's book: *The Great Śamatha-vipaśyanā (Mohezhi guan* T46, No. 1911) and *The Lesser Śamatha-vipaśyanā (Lesser Zhiguan 小止觀*, T46, No.1915), a summarized version of *Mohezhi guan*.

The Lesser Zhiguan

The Lesser *Śamatha-vipaśyanā* is said to be the *Beginner's Zhiguan* (童蒙止觀). It is also known as *The Essentials for Practicing Zhiguan (Xiuxi zhiguan zuochan fayao 修習止觀坐禪法要* T46, No.1915). This book is divided into ten chapters, and the first five chapters deal with the twenty-

five skillful devices taught in the *Mohezhi-guan*, Chapter six.

In the 'Preface' Yuanzhao 元照 states: “The Lesser *Zhi-guan* refers to this book. The master explained it to his lay brother Chen Zhen. It is a summary of the *Mohezhi-guan*, the vital step to enter the path. *Zhi-guan*, *samādhi-prajñā*, cessation-lighting, clarity-calm, all are the same meaning but different names.”(T46, No.1915, 462a).

Some contents of the text are more detailed than those in the *Mohezhi-guan*, specially concerning the guidelines of adjusting, sitting, breathing, etc. Often Chinese Chan masters use this text to guide their students. The language of The Lesser *Zhi-guan* is easy to understand and there are less technical terms. It is more suitable for modern sitting meditation practitioners.

The *Mohezhi-guan* (*Mahā-śamatha-vipaśyanā*)

The whole text of *Mohezhi-guan* consists of seven Chapters (originally proposed were ten²), and physically divided into ten fascicles. The first Chapter (fasc. 1-2) functions as a compendium of the book, translated and studied in English by Neal Donner and Daniel B. Stevenson. Chapters 2 to 5 (fasc. 3) mainly explain terminology and general concepts of Tiantai. Chapter 6 (fasc. 4) explains the preparatory stage of meditation (twenty-five skillful devices) and the basic techniques of sitting meditation. Chapter 7 (fasc. 5 to 10) occupies more than half of the text (6/10). It deals with meditation proper, consisting of the “ten meditative objects,” where the first object – the sphere of the *skandha/āyatana/dhatū* -is defined as “the ten modes of contemplating mind,” known as the ten modes of contemplation in Tiantai.

The text ended with the seventh chapter, Proper Contemplation (正觀), the contents of which contain half of the entire text. It is considered to be the core of the *Mohezhi-guan*. The last three topics proposed in the text are not explained, but their general meaning can be found in the first chapter.

Zhiyi's Meditation System in the *Mohezhi-guan*

Zhiyi has assigned *zhiguan* (*śamatha-vipaśyanā*) as a proper practice for a beginner to cultivate a calm mind, to control distractions, to remove passionate afflictions and delusions, and to prepare for the realization of wisdom. There are two types of *zhiguan*, says Zhiyi (T46. 466c28-29): Sitting in meditation 坐, and 'responding to objects in accordance with conditions' 歷緣對境, that is, maintaining a calm and insightful mind under any and all conditions of life. (*Mohezhi-guan*, T46, No.1911, 100b17).

While reading the *Mohezhi-guan*, the impression one gets is that Zhiyi is trying to include all Buddhist doctrines and concepts in his *zhiguan* system. He is trying to quote from all Buddhist *sūtras* available at that time in China. For the meditation practice we can find in the first chapter contents with some important information about four *samādhis* (fascicle 2). The sixth chapter is for twenty-five skillful devices (fascicle 4), while the seventh chapter (fascicle 5-10) contains methods of practice. The real instruction in meditation should contain:

- 1) Twenty-five skillful devices.
- 2) Four *samādhis*.
- 3) Ten modes of contemplation.

The twenty-five skillful devices are a preparatory stage, or a foundation for the later progress. The four lotus *samādhis* are for beginners who wish to practice meditation intensively, as in a short time retreat, or for hermits in the mountains.

² T46, 3b10: 1.General Meaning, 大意 2. Explanation of Terms 釋名 3. Features and Characters 體相 4. Encompassing *dharma*s 攝法 5. Incomplete and Perfect 偏圓 6. Skillful Devices (Twenty-five preparatory devices)方便 7. Proper Contemplation 正觀 8. Results and Recompense 果報 9. On Instilling the Teachings 起教 10. Final Destination 旨歸.

Zhi, śamatha (calm), *guan, vipaśyanā* (insight), *zhiguan*, explained by Zhiyi, is that one should see all phenomena as empty, conventional/transitory, and the middle in one single thought.

For the beginners one conventionally needs to follow these steps.

Twenty-five Skillful Devices (T46, 35c1–48c20).

i. Fulfill the Five Conditions.

- Equip with food and clothing.
- Observe precepts.
- Stay alone in a quiet place.
- Avoid learning, disputes, relations, etc.
- Have spiritual friends (*kalyānamitra*).

In the first chapter of *The Lesser Zhigua*, the ten methods of practice repentance are explained (T46, No.1915, 462c) under observing precepts (*śīla*). For Zhiyi, repentance is essential for observing *śīla*. Repentance makes one a sense of “pure”, thus enhance one's confidence in practice.

Confidence is the first stage of practice in Tiantai/Mahāyāna.

ii. Restrain the Five Desires.

Against any temptation from the sense of sight, of hearing, of smell, of taste, of touch.

iii. Throw Off the Five Covers.

Resist the distracting influence of desire, of hatred, of drowsiness, of remorse, of doubt.

iv. Arrange the Five Matters.

Adjust food: neither starve nor satiate; Adjust sleep; Adjust the body, neither too relaxed nor tense; Adjust breathing; Adjust thoughts.

In *The Lesser Zhigua*, Zhiyi dedicates one chapter (the 4th) to explain how to adjust the body, breathing and thoughts (T46, No.1915, 465b).

v. Perform the Five Dharmas.

Positive desire, effort, awareness (*smṛti*), wisdom to distinguish karma, One- pointed mind.

The Four *Samādhis*

The four *samādhis* refer to intensive practice, such as retreat (as Zhiyi himself did on Tiantai Mountain). The four *samādhis* are also the initial training for further meditational practice.

The third *samādhi* (neither walking nor sitting) or lotus *samādhi* is used nowadays (starting from the Song and Ming dynasties) in the morning and evening services in most Chinese monasteries.

i. Constantly Seated Samādhi.

The practitioner remains seated (motionless, erect, cross-legged position) for a period of ninety days, leaving his seat only for reasons of natural need. He must think single-mindedly on the “*dharma-sphere*” (T46, 11a21).

ii. Constantly Walking Samādhi.

Ninety days walking clockwise around his place of contemplation. While circling, he is to keep Amitābha constantly in mind and repeat his name aloud in uninterrupted continuity (T46, 12a19).

iii. Half-Walking Half-Seated Samādhi.

Attaining two kinds of *samādhi* practice, one can choose at will (T46, 13a24):

- *Vaipulya samādhi*: Cultivation with marks, chanting Mahāyāna *sūtras*, having a vision of Samantabhadra bodhisattva.
- Lotus *samādhi*: Cultivation without marks, highly concentrated contemplation of the emptiness of all *dharmas*.

While performing the *vaipulya samādhi* the practitioner is required to first contemplate emptiness. Then he should contemplate the middle, in connection with chanting *vaipulya sūtras*, and with the

ceremonies concerning the *samādhi*, etc.

Lotus (Fahua) Samādhi:

Preparatory stage:

1. Cleansing of one's sins by the devices of fivefold penance.
2. Penance: Confessing the past sins and guarding against future ones.
3. Pray all the Buddhas in the universe to come into one's presence.
4. Rejoice over and praise meritorious roots.
5. Directs one's merits toward the attainment of Buddhahood for all.
6. Take vows.

Practice *Samādhi* by³

1. Purifying the place
2. Purifying the body
3. Honoring the Buddha in deed, word and thought.
4. Calling upon the Buddha to be present.
5. Worshipping the Buddha.
6. Repenting of all sins committed with the six senses.
7. Walking clockwise round the place.
8. Reciting the *Lotus Sutra*.
9. Sitting in contemplation.
10. Envisioning the Buddha with all his distinguishing marks in one's mind's eye.

Often people refer to the lotus *Samādhi* as a round and abrupt *Samādhi*. Later on, Chinese Buddhist ritual practices: Repentance, morning and evening chanting, are all rooted in Tiantai's lotus *Samādhi* and *vaipulya samādhi*.

iv. Neither Walking nor Sitting Samādhi.

This *samādhi* also named "the awareness of mental factors" (覺意). When one's mental factors arise, one contemplates them continuously as "not moving, not originated, not extinguished, not coming, not going."⁴

The practitioner is advised to fix his mind on its object (with the distinction of *kuśala*, *akuśala*, and indifferent). Having thought them in relation to the "six sensations," he proceeds to seek them in relation to the "six actions."

The Contemplation Proper

The first six chapters are based on *sūtras* and lead us to understand the teachings. Now based on the understanding, one sets up the proper practice. While one diligently practices obstructions and demons will arise, such as heavy sleepiness and distraction. In such cases one needs not to follow them, nor to be afraid of them. By following them we are led to the devil's path. If we are afraid of them, they will become obstructions to the path.⁵

After the preparation of the four kinds of *samādhi*, the practitioner is now in a position to engage himself in the contemplation proper: Ten possible objects of contemplation; Ten possible modes of

³T46, no.1911, 14a5-9: 法華亦明方法勸修。方法者。身開遮。口說默。意止觀。身開為十。一嚴淨道場。二淨身。三三業供養。四請佛。五禮佛。六六根懺悔。七遶旋。八誦經。九坐禪。十證相。

⁴T46, 14b26. 行者心數起時反照觀察。不見動轉 根原終末。來處去處。

⁵T46, no.1911, 48, c28-p. 49a7: 第七正修止觀者。前六重依修多羅以開妙解。今依妙解以立正行。膏明相賴目足更資。行解既勤。三障四魔紛然競起。重昏巨散翳動定明。不可隨不可畏。隨之將人向惡道。畏之妨修正法。當以觀觀昏即昏而朗。以止止散即散而寂。如豬蹠金山衆流入海。薪熾於火風益求羅耳。此金剛觀割煩惱陣。此牢強足越生死野。慧淨於行行進於慧。

contemplation. Of the ten objects, only the first is present to all practitioners.

The Ten Objects of Contemplation

The seventh chapter of the *Mohezhi-guan* occupies half the contents of the entire text. It is divided in ten topics, known as the ten objects of contemplation (T46, 49a27).

1. The object of *skandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu*: This refers to the objects of our mind. Zhiyi explains this more in detail than any other object. From this object the ten modes of contemplation are further explained.
2. The object of *kleśa*, affliction: When practicing contemplation, *kleśa* may arise.
3. The object of illness: One needs to overcome illness from meditation.
4. The object of karmic marks: Some illnesses may relate to former actions, *karma*.
5. The object of demonic forces: One needs to overcome the demons which appear in one's mind as one's practice increases.
6. The object of *dhyāna* concentration (*samādhi*): Various forms of *dhyāna* may appear to distract one's mind.
7. The object of false views: False views formerly held by the practitioner may now come up to distract one's attention.
8. The object of overwhelming pride: Having overcoming false views, one may become proud and fancy oneself to have arrived at the final stage.
9. The object of the two vehicles: Even if able to overcome pride, one may fall into *śrāvakahood* or *pratyekabuddhahood*.
10. The object of bodhisattvahood: The practitioner may mistakenly come to imagine the tentative role of the bodhisattva is the ultimate goal. Thus, one needs to continue the practice to overcome this object.

The object of *skandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu* is stressed, and its contents occupy one fifth of the entire book (two fascicles). Objects eight, nine and ten are omitted, but they are explained in the first fascicles.

In any case, all *skandhas* and sense entrances—whether part of this world [of delusion] or of the realm beyond delusion—all arise dependent on the mind. The Buddha once said to a monk, “One *dharma* encompasses all *dharmas*. This [‘one *dharma*’] is the mind.” The *Treatise* says: “In the entire world there is only name-and-form. If one wishes to contemplate reality as it is, then one should merely contemplate name-and-form.” (*Da zhidu lun*, T 25.259b25–28). The mind is the basis of delusions. This is its meaning. If you wish to contemplate, you must sunder the roots [of delusion], as when applying to the right points in order to heal disease. As you abandon yards to measure feet, and abandon feet to measure inches, so you should leave behind the other four *skandhas* such as form (and feelings, perceptions, and impulses), and only contemplate the *skandha* of consciousness. The *skandha* of consciousness is the mind.⁶

Among the five *skandhas*, twelve *āyatanas*, eighteen *dhātus*, the most important one is the mind. Everything starts with the mind. In meditational practice one should start with the mind. The contemplation of mind includes ten modes of practice.

The Ten Modes of Contemplation

Among the ten objects of contemplation listed above, the first one, the object of *skandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu*, is the core of the topic, where the ten modes of contemplation are expounded (T46,

⁶T46, no.1911, 52a24-b1: 然界內外一切陰入皆由心起。佛告比丘。一法攝一切法所謂心是。論云。一切世間中但有名與色。若欲如實觀。但當觀名色。心是惑本其義如是。若欲觀察須伐其根。如炙病得穴。今當去丈就尺去尺就寸。置色等四陰但觀識陰。識陰者心是也。 Translation is based on Paul L. Swanson. 1994. Website: <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/~pswanson/mhck/mhck.html>

52b01).

1. Contemplating objects as inconceivable.
2. Arousing compassionate thoughts (*bodhicitta*).
3. Skillful means for easing one's mind.
4. The thorough deconstruction of *dharmas* (frees oneself of all attachment).
5. Knowing what penetrates and what obstructs the path.
6. Cultivating the steps to the path.
7. Regulating through auxiliary methods.
8. Knowing the stages.
9. Peace through patient recognition.
10. Avoiding passionate attachment to *dharmas*.

The person with sharp faculties requires only the first, while others require more or all ten.

If you have attained realization of (1) the subtle objects [through contemplation of inconceivable objects], then you raise a vow (2) to have compassion for others. Next you (3) take action to realize your vow. If you skillfully perform this vow and practice, there are (4) no limits to [the evil *dharmas*] that can be destroyed or deconstructed. While destroying [evil *dharmas*] everywhere, you (5) come to minutely know what penetrates and what obstructs [contemplation and the attainment of enlightenment]. This leads to progress in (6) [cultivating] the parts of the path, and it is useful as (7) auxiliary aids for opening up the path. (8) The stages along the path are already known both to you and to others. You are (9) peaceful and patient internally and externally with regard to honor and humiliation, and you are (10) not attached to the middle way nor passionately attached to *dharmas*. Thus one can reach attainment quickly and realize the level of a bodhisattva.⁷

1. Contemplating objects as inconceivable

As the title indicates, this refers to an unthinkable higher stage experienced by the enlightened ones. Zhiyi explains this as one thought containing three thousands worlds. This is more than listing some technical terms, such as the ten suchness. Zhiyi quotes *sūtras* and *śāstras* to explain the ten suchnesses as the Buddha's experience. For the meditation practitioners, it is not wise to stick to those concepts, rather it is more important to be aware of one's thoughts at each moment. When we think it is hell, we are experiencing hell. When our mind is open, it is close to suchness, and we are experiencing Buddhahood. In short, the mind is inconceivable.

[The contemplation of] objects as inconceivable is as follows. As it is said in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*: “The mind is like an artist that creates the various *skandhas* [like a painter creates images with various colors]. But in the whole world there is nothing that is not created by the mind.”⁸

Those who are not skilled in contemplation do not believe that mind embeds all the characteristics.⁹

One Mind Contains Three Thousands Worlds

Zhiyi divided the realms of existence into the ten inter-penetrating realms or destinies: Buddhas, bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, śrāvakas, heavenly beings, fighting spirits (*asura*), human beings, beasts, hungry spirits or ghosts (*preta*), and depraved hell beings (hell). These are not ten separate

⁷T46, no.1911, 52b4-9: 既自達妙境即起誓悲他。次作行填願。願行既巧破無不遍。遍破之中精識通塞。令道品進行。又用助開道。道中之位已他皆識。安忍內外榮辱莫著中道法愛。故得疾入菩薩位。Translation is based on Paul L. Swanson. 1994. Website: <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/~pswanson/mhck/mhck.html>

⁸T46, no.1911, 52c6-8: 不可思議境者。如華嚴云。心如工畫師造種種五陰。一切世間中莫不從心造。

⁹T46, no.1911, 53a20: 不善觀者不信心具一切相。

distinct worlds, but rather experiences or states of existence in one reality. He refers to these ten “destinies” as states of experience.¹⁰ For example, when one performs an altruistic deed, one experiences the realm of the bodhisattva. When one has an insight into the true nature of reality, one experiences the realm of the Buddha. These realms are inter-penetrating, or mutually inclusive. Each sentient being experiences these realms in accordance with his actions.

Each realm is a process of causes and effects that inherently entails all the other realms. Each of these realms can at each moment be characterized by the ten “suchnesses”, referred to in the *Lotus Sūtra*. This may be understood either in terms of the environment conditioning these sentient beings to experience these realms, or these beings are considered in terms of their components. The ten realms, each including all the others, make one hundred. One hundred multiplied by the ten suchnesses, makes one thousand, and one thousand multiplied by the three aspects become three thousands.

“One thought is endowed with the ten realms. One realm is endowed with the [other] ten realms. Thus one hundred realms. One realm is endowed with thirty kinds of worlds [i.e., each of the ten *dharma* realms is included in each of the three types of worlds: The world of sentient beings, the worlds of the five *skandhas*, and the worlds of lands]. Then one hundred realms are endowed with three thousand worlds. The three thousand worlds are in one thought. If there is no thought, there is no world. If there is a momentary thought, then there are three thousand [worlds]. Neither can we say that the single thought has prior existence, and that all phenomena exist later, nor can we say that all phenomena have prior existence, and that the single thought exists later.”¹¹

In the final analysis, every reality is an integrated and interdependent unity. Everything contains everything else, and the whole contains all things. It is described in terms of “the inter-inclusiveness of the ten realms” (十界互具). These three thousand worlds are contained in one thought. (T.46, 54a5-9)

If “all things arisen from one thought” refers to vertical and if “one moment containing all things” refers to horizontal, then there can neither be vertical nor horizontal. The very thought is all *dharmas*. All *dharmas* are the thought. Neither vertical, nor horizontal, neither identical, nor different. They are profound and unique. Neither something cognizable, nor what is to be cognized, neither something expressible, nor what is to be expressed. Thus, it is said to be an “inconceivable state.”¹²

It is not really three thousands, but the unthinkable stage that is beyond language and thought. It refers to the higher meditational experience, where language and mind cease. This is beyond words. Discursive thought is inadequate. Therefore they are called “inconceivable objects.”¹³

It is also a kind of concept of non-differentiation. One is all and all are the one. One cannot become attached to anything, including the stage of attainment. This is why the last stage is called the non-attached *dharma* stage (無法愛).

¹⁰ T33, no. 1716, 696a: 又心遊法界者，根塵相對，觀一念心，於十界中，必屬一界。若屬一界，即具百界千如。於一念中，悉皆備足。此心之幻師，常於一日夜，造種種衆生、種種五陰、種種國土。所謂地獄，假實國土，乃至佛界，假實國土，行人自選擇，可從於何道。

¹¹ T46, no.1911, 54a5-10: 夫一心具十法界。一法界又具十法界百法界。一界具三十種世間。百法界即具三千種世間。此三千在一念心。若無心而已。介爾有心即具三千。亦不言一心在前一切法在後。亦不言一切法在前一心在後。

¹² T46, no.1911, 54a13-18: 若從一心生一切法者。此則是縱。若心一時舍一切法者。此即是橫。縱亦不可橫亦不可。祇心是一切法。一切法是心故。非縱非橫非一非異玄妙深絕。非識所識。非言所言。所以稱為不可思議境界在於此

¹³ T46, no.1911, 54b27-28: 言語道斷心行處滅。故名不可思議境。

The actual number, a thousand or a hundred or whatever, is irrelevant. What matters is the inclusion and interpenetration of all things in one reality. In other words, all the above categories of the various characteristics of existence and the world of co-arising causes and conditions are progressively summarized as the four noble truths, the two truths of *saṃvṛtisatya* and *paramārthasatya*, and the threefold truths of emptiness, conventional existence, and the middle path. Finally, the one truth of reality is a perfectly integrated unity. In the end, even this one truth is reduced to the term “no truth”. But “no truth” is still a conceptualization, which is inadequate to describe reality itself. “That which is beyond conceptualization is called subtle” (T.33, 681a24). Reality cannot be grasped conceptually. Truth is beyond words. One needs words and concepts to describe verbally what is ultimately indescribable. One should be aware of this limitation.

The Three Truths: Round and Inter-inclusive (三諦圓融).

The three truths doctrine in Tiantai follows the doctrine of dependent co-arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*, Pali: *paṭiccasamuppanna*) explained in the *Madhyamakakārikā* by Nāgārjuna, which holds that every thing arises from causes and conditions. Thus things are devoid (*śūnya*) of inherent nature (*svabhāva*).

What is the nature of reality and existence? If the perfect and ordinary are separate realms, how are they related, and how does one get “from here to there?” If they are the same, why suffering and imperfections are so obvious in our mundane lives? Nāgārjuna’s answer, which served as the basis for much of subsequent Mahāyāna Buddhist thought, is found in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, most succinctly in chapter twenty-four, verses eight and nine:

8. All Buddhas depend on two truths
In order to preach the *dharma* to sentient beings.
The first is the worldly mundane truth.
The second is the truth of supreme meaning.

9. If one is not able to know
The distinction between the two truths,
One cannot know the true meaning
Of the profound Buddha *dharma*.

Conventional truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*), also called “worldly truth” (*lokasaṃvṛtisatya*), is the ordinary, common acceptance of the everyday phenomenal world as experienced and interpreted through our senses. What is the relationship between conventional and supreme truth (*paramārthasatya*)? The two truths are actually one. The twofold truth are two ways of viewing one reality. Then what is the relationship between the two views?

Zhiyi developed a solution utilizing a threefold structure. Zhiyi’s threefold truth concept is an extension of the traditional Mādhyamika theory of the two truths as taught in chapter twenty-four, verses eight and nine, of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. The direct literary inspiration for the formulation of the threefold truth concept is found in verse eighteen of the same chapter.

<i>yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ</i>	Dependent co-arising
<i>śūnyatām tām pracakṣmahe</i>	We declare to be <i>śūnyatā</i>
<i>sā prajñāptir upādāya</i>	That is dependent concept
<i>pratipat saiva madhyamā</i>	That is the Middle Path.

Pratītyasamutpāda means all things arise due to a multitude of causes and conditions. *Śūnyatā* means the lack of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). *Svabhāva* is defined as something absolute, uncreated and not dependent on anything else, and it never changes. *Śūnyatā* is an attack on such concepts. *Prajñāptirupādāya* (dependent concept) refers to our phenomenal world which has a temporary reality. This is called conventional existence. *Madhyamā* means the teaching of *śūnyatā* denies the

view of extremes. The teaching of conventional designations denies the view of nihilism.

To say that one *dharma* is all *dharma*s is [an expression of the phrase from the *Middle Treatise*, verse 24:18, that] “Things arise through causes and condition” . This refers to conventional designations and the contemplation of conventionality. To say that all *dharma*s are one *dharma* is [an expression of the phrase] “This I explain as emptiness,” which is the contemplation of emptiness. To say “neither one nor all” is the contemplation of the middle way.¹⁴

The emptiness of one [thing] is the emptiness of all. Just because there are the meanings of conventional existence and of the middle, that does not mean that they are not empty. This is the general contemplation of emptiness.

The conventionality of one [thing] is the conventionality of all. Just because there are the meanings of emptiness and of the middle, that does not mean that they do not have conventionality. This is the general contemplation of conventionality.

The middleness of one is the middleness of all. Just because there are the meanings of emptiness and of conventionality, that does not mean that they do not have middleness. This is the general contemplation of the middle. Thus, as the *Middle Treatise* explains, this is the threefold contemplation of a single thought [or, “the single-minded threefold contemplation (of objects)”] as inconceivable. All phenomena that we experience are also likewise.¹⁵

Co-arising, emptiness, conventional existence, and the middle are not four realities, four separate existences, or four independent doctrines, but four ways to express the same one reality, the Buddha-*dharma*, which is *saṃsāra* to us, common ignorant mortals, and *nirvāṇa* to a Buddha. Hence the common Mahāyāna proposition that “there is no difference between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.” (Swanson 1989: 5-6).

For Zhiyi the threefold truth is an integrated unity with three aspects. The first, emptiness, is often identified with the highest truth. The second, conventional existence of the phenomenal world as co-arising, is often identified with the worldly truth. The third, the middle, is a simultaneous affirmation of both emptiness and of conventional existence as aspects of a single integrated reality. Thus, these three components are not separate from each other, but integral parts of a unified reality. They are simultaneous aspects of one reality.

One must realize the Middle Path. One must realize the emptiness of phenomenal reality simultaneously with the temporal and the provisional reality of these empty objects.

This middle path, however, must not be grasped as eternal. It is rather manifested in and through, and is identical with temporal phenomenal reality, which is again in turn empty of an unchanging substance. The circle is complete in itself, what Zhiyi calls “a round and inter-inclusive threefold truth.” Zhiyi summarized this in his *Fahua xuanyi*:

The “round threefold truth” means that it is not only the middle path which completely includes the Buddha-*dharma*, but also the real and the mundane [truths]. This threefold truth is round and inter-inclusive, one-in-three and three-in-one.¹⁶

In other words, the real truth, the mundane truth, and the middle path are three ways of expressing

¹⁴T46, no.1911, 55b13-15: 若一法一切法。即是因緣所生法。是為假名假觀也若一切法即一法。我說即是空空觀也。若非一非一切者即是中道觀。

¹⁵T46, no.1911, 55b15-19: 一空一切空無假中而不空。總空觀也。一假一切假無空中而不假。總假觀也。一中一切中無空假而不中。總中觀也。即中論所說不可思議一心三觀。

¹⁶T33, No. 1716, 705a5-7: 圆三谛者，非但中道具足佛法，真俗亦然，三谛圆融一三三一。

the threefold aspects of a single integrated reality. This concept of the threefold truth plays a central role in Zhiyi's Tiantai philosophy and provides the structure for his interpretation of the *Buddha-dharma*.

The threefold truth in Tiantai is not really three, but one rounded and integrated doctrine. One is all and all are one. In reality, it is one truth, but conventionally we speak of three. Zhiyi quotes from the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra* to support his idea. (T46 p.28)¹⁷

The Round teaching in Tian Tai is based on the three truths. Each truth mutually includes each other. With the inter-inclusive three truths, one can understand the Round teaching better. These three truths also offer a theory for our daily practice. One needs to observe each moment of one's mind with three truths. Then one will accept others and be calm and serene. In fact, the threefold truth is the fundamental theory for Tian Tai's meditation practice. The notion of threefold truth is Zhiyi's understanding of the Buddha's teaching through his practice.

2. Arousing Compassionate Thoughts

Once we know the inconceivable objects, others' sufferings become ours. Thinking of the past, we have created unwholesome karma due to our ignorance. Thus we feel pity for ourselves. This kind of feeling of pity is also extended to others.¹⁸

Thinking of others and myself, one arouses great compassion and makes the vows:

1. I vow to take across the numberless living beings.
2. I vow to cut off endless afflictions.¹⁹
3. I vow to study the countless *dharma* gates.
4. I vow to realize the supreme Buddha way.²⁰

Compassion is wisdom. Wisdom is compassion. Compassion is to help all without any conditions, without any thinking. It is to do one's best to help others, to make others happy. It is not sharing with hatred. There is no miscomprehended emptiness, no attachment, or wrong views. This is the true arising of the *bodhicitta*.²¹

3. Skillful Means for Easing One's Mind

Skillful means for easing one's mind means calming and contemplation to ease one's mind by using appropriate methods. Skillful here indicates that there is no fixed method to rest one's mind.

“To ease one's mind has two methods: 1) Instructed by others, 2) Through self-practice. Again, each has two kinds of practice:

- confidence practice and
- *dharma* practice.

The practices refer to calming (*zhi*) and to contemplation (*guan*). Again, each practice has eight steps (T46, 55c26).

1. To praise the calming by following one's likes in order to arouse one's interest in the practice of calming the mind.
2. To praise the calming by the appropriate actions to arouse one's interest in calming the mind. If one's mind becomes one, all wholesome actions grow, leading to full

¹⁷T46, no.1911, 28b12-14: 次圓教但明一實諦。大經云。實是一諦方便說三。今亦例此。實是一諦方便說三。法華云。更以異方便助顯第一義耳。

¹⁸T46, no.1911, 55c26-27: 既深識不思議境。知一苦一切苦。

¹⁹T46, no.1911, 56a10-12: 思惟彼我鯁痛自他。即起大悲興兩誓願。衆生無邊誓願度。煩惱無數誓願斷。

²⁰T46, no.1911, 56a29: 法門無量誓願知。無上佛道誓願成。

²¹T46, no.1911, 56b9-12: 慈悲即智慧智慧即慈悲。無緣無念普覆一切。任運拔苦自然與樂。不同毒害不同但空不同愛見。是名真正發心菩提義。

enlightenment.

3. To praise the calming as antidote to one's distractions to arouse one's interest in calming the mind.
4. To praise the calming that can induce one to the highest reality (*paramārtha satya*), to arouse one's interest in the practice calming the mind.
5. To praise the contemplation to arouse one's interest in the practice calming the mind.
6. To praise the contemplation by the appropriate actions to arouse one's interest.
7. To praise the contemplation as antidote to one's unwholesome thinking.
8. To praise the contemplation and *prajñā* to make one understand the importance of practicing contemplation.

Consequently, the number reached by Zhiyi is 512. The method is either *zhi* or *guan*. As said by Zhiyi:

“Just as one preserves health and nurtures the body and life by adjusting food and drink, in the same way calming is also applied to preserve the *dharma*-body, considered as drink, and contemplating is considered as food.”²²

Some practitioners may not be suitable for contemplating, such as those who think too much. For them, only the calming method is used. Some may only be suitable for contemplating, like those whose mind is sleepy.²³

Ultimately, beyond the three truths there is no place for easing the mind. Beyond calm and contemplation there is no *dharma* to ease the mind.²⁴

4. The Thorough Deconstruction of Dharmas

One needs to deconstruct all aspects of *dharmas* which are attached to one's mind. All *dharmas* are products of one's thought. With the thought deconstructed, all *dharmas* are deconstructed.²⁵

The Thorough Deconstruction of Dharmas has three Meanings:

Deconstruction of *dharmas* in terms of “non-arising” is divided as (T46, 62a14):

1. From convention to emptiness: Deconstruct all wrong views (62) and mental *kleśas* (88). Thus, they are empty.
2. From emptiness to convention: Refers to bodhisattvas who wish to help others. Thus, they enter the conventional worlds.
3. From the two, contemplations skillfully enter the middle, the highest truth. The three contemplations actually are in one-mind.

For the last one, contemplations skillfully enter the middle, says Zhiyi:

The proper contemplation of the *dharma* nature does not rely on the two extremes [existence and non-existence] and avoids the four alternatives (*catuskoṭi*). It is pure in the final analysis. It does not cling nor is it attached to anything. As said by the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra*: “Look up at the sky without clinging.” This wisdom, once opened, deconstructs one, and then all can be deconstructed. As none of the places are not deconstructed, it is called thorough deconstruction of *dharmas*.²⁶

²²T46, no.1911, 59a10-11: 譬如養生或飲或食。適身立命。養法身亦爾。以止為飲以觀為食。

²³T46, no.1911, 59a15-18: 一種禪師不許作觀。唯專用止。……又一禪師不許作止。專在於觀。

²⁴T46, no.1911, 59a29-b2: 若離三諦無安心處。若離止觀無安心法。若心安於諦一句即足。如其不安巧用方便令心得安。

²⁵T46, 59b8–86a9: 橫豎諸法悉趣於心。破心故一切皆破。故言遍也。

²⁶T46, no.1911, 83b13-17: 今中道正觀觀無明法性。不依二邊不依四句。畢竟清淨無倚無著。故淨名云。稽首如空無所依。此智豁開一破一切破。靡所不遍故名破法遍也。

To contemplate horizontally and vertically with one clear thought (橫豎一心明止觀): one thought of the dependent co-arising *dharma* as empty, as conventional, and as middle. This one -thought contemplation can be divided in two (T46, 85b2-5):

- One-thought in a general sense (總明一心), means one contemplates *avidyā* as empty, as conventional, as middle in one-thought. One understands that one's contemplation includes the other three contemplations.²⁷
- One-thought through others (歷餘一心), means when the thought of desire or hatred or arrogance arises, one contemplates the thought as empty, as conventional and as middle.²⁸

5. Knowing what penetrates and what obstructs the path

One now carefully distinguishes between everything that conduces to the goal of ultimate perception and everything that hinders it.

The obstructions refer to ignorance (*avidyā*), *duḥkha*, the illusion of seeing and thought (見思), discrimination in *samsāra* (分段生死). Penetration refers to the one-thought on the three contemplations. (T46, no. 1911, 86c8-21)

6. Cultivating the Steps to the Path

If the five above mentioned modes fail in their purpose, the practitioner sorts out the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, selecting those that will advance one towards one's goal, and leaving the others.

The thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, seen as “spontaneous” (T46, 87c):

1. The four bases of mindfulness .
2. The four proper endeavors.
3. The four occult powers .
4. The four roots of goodness.
5. The five powers .
6. The seven components of awakening .
7. The eightfold noble path.

7. Regulating through Auxiliary Methods

If one enters *samādhi* and has established the four *samādhis*, such a person with sharp faculties does not need an antidote. When practicing *samādhi*, one encounters obstructions and one needs to practice the six *pāramitās* as antidotes to the obstructions.²⁹ If one still has obstructions, one needs to practice the five assistants as antidotes: (T46, no. 1911, p. 92c)

- 1) If the three poisons prevail in one's mind, one should use counting the breath as antidote. If the counting is lost, one needs to count from the beginning.³⁰
- 2) If one is attached to women's charms, one should use impurity as antidote. One needs to use the method of impurity by observing the impurity (of the body) of dying beloved ones. Her body becomes cold, the color changes, worms come out from the body, and pus is running.³¹
- 3) If one is attached to hatred, one should apply compassion as antidote.
- 4) For wrong views, contemplate causality as antidote.
- 5) If sleepiness arises as an obstruction to the path, one should chant the names of the Buddhas.

²⁷T46, no.1911, 84c4-5: 總者。祇約無明一念心。此心具三諦。體達一觀此觀具三觀。

²⁸T46, no.1911, 85b2-4: 歷餘一心三觀者。若總無明心未必是宜。更歷餘心或欲心瞋心慢心。此等心起即空即假即中。

²⁹T46, no.1911, no. 1911, 91a5-8.

³⁰T46, no.1911, 92c27-93a1: 若禪思時心多覺觀遍緣三毒。當用數息為治。數若不成即知心去。去即追還從初更數。防散錄心此為良治。

³¹T46, no.1911, 93a6-12: 若緣女色耽湎在懷惑著不離。當用不淨觀為治。觀所愛人初死之相。言語適爾。奄便那去。身冷色變蟲膿流出。不淨臭處穢惡充滿。捐棄塚間如朽敗木。昔所愛重今何所見。是為惡物令我憂勞。既識欲過婬心即息。

If the above methods cannot help during the contemplation, one should include the four mindfulnesses, *prajñā-indriya* (faculty of wisdom 慧根), the power of wisdom (*prajñā-bala* 慧力), discernment (擇), *prīti*(joy)*sambodhyaṅga* (喜覺分), right view (正見), right thought (*samyak-saṃkalpa* 正思惟), and the ten methods related to *prajñā*. If the *samādhi* does not arise, one needs to make some changes and make the great vows.³²

8. Knowing the Stages.

The practitioner carefully observes development in his present state of practice, neither overestimating nor underestimating it.

The practice of the four *samādhis*, explained above, is a skillful method. However, the *Lotus Sūtra* explains the practicing of the five repentances daily all the time as skillful methods.³³

1. Repentance.
2. Praying.
3. Sympathetic joy (*anumodana*). Happy to help others to perform wholesome actions.
4. Transfer one's merit to another (*pariṇamayati*).
5. To raise the vow to save all sentient beings.

Based on the five repentances, there are five stages (T46, no. 1911, 98c-99a):

1. Belief in the five repentances can open the door to the contemplation.
2. Reciting and chanting.
3. Teaching and helping others.
4. With more confidence in the practice of the five repentances, practice the six *pāramitās* (perfections).
5. Concentrate on properly practicing the six *pāramitās*.

Based on the practice of repentance one has entered the stage of ten confidences. Consequently, one knows the remaining forty-two stages.³⁴

9. Peace through Patient Recognition

One takes care not to let oneself be moved by external circumstances. At this stage the practitioner may be surrounded by fame, good clothes, money, which are like locusts eating all the leaves. One should refuse them early. One should not accept and not become attached to them. If they cannot be refused, the practitioner will be entrapped by them.³⁵

10. Avoiding Passionate Attachment to *Dharmas*

Having practiced the above nine steps, one is able to enter the reality. If not, it is the passionate attachment to *dharmas* which blocks the path.³⁶

Zhiyi quotes the *Prajñāpāramitā Upadeśa* (*Da zhidu lun*) that the three *samādhis* are similar to the path of attainment. Before attaining reality, one is easily attached to *dharmas*, which is called fall-near-top (頂墮). In this state, the cultivator does not move forward, nor does he regress backward.

³²T46, no.1911, 93b2-7: 若如上修而不入者。或非其宜當自思惟。理觀之中具四念處。慧根。慧力。擇。喜覺分。正見。正思惟。如是十法智度所攝。此是理觀。此解不明由於二世愚癡迷僻昏覆精神。故令三昧不顯。應當改革發大誓願。

³³T46, no.1911, 98a12-14: 若四種三昧修習方便。通如上說。唯法華別約六時五悔重作方便。今就五悔明其位相。

³⁴The 52 nd. stage of the path of the bodhisattva.

³⁵T46, no.1911, 99b28c2: 若被名譽羅罽。利養毛繩眷屬集樹。妨蠹內侵枝葉外盡者。當早推之莫受莫著。推若不去翻被黏繫者。

³⁶T46, no.1911, 99c15-16: 行上九事過內外障。應得入真。而不入者。以法愛住著而不得前。

Once the attachment to *dharmas* is removed, one can enter the path to liberation.³⁷

These ten modes are called the contemplation of Mahāyāna (T46, 100a3). Those who follow such vehicle are called Mahāyānists, contemplating and concentrating the mind on nothing but *dharmatā* (*dharma*-nature), the characteristics of reality. Thus it is called great vehicle. One sees each mind as empty, as conventional and as middle.³⁸

Contemplating the Sense Realms while Responding to Objects as They Arise

The above ten modes of contemplation refer to sitting meditation. This explains the contemplation in actions, as we are in our daily routine. We often follow our mind. If we do not practice in our actions, how can we be in conformity with reality?³⁹

While walking, each step includes the Buddha-*dharma*. Once we accomplish the walking *samādhi*, standing, sitting, sleeping and speaking can also be understood. There is no *samādhi* for sleeping, but at this stage, the sleeping will follow one's own will.⁴⁰

When the eye has contact with an object, it includes all *dharmas*. It is empty, conventional, and middle.⁴¹ If the eye is neither empty nor conventional, then all *dharmas* are neither empty nor conventional. Just as in the empty sky where existence or non-existence constantly cease, as the sun and the moonlight cease all darkness.⁴²

Once the contemplating walking/action is accomplished, one can apply it to any object and to any condition. Otherwise, how can the demons be destroyed? How can the *kleśa* illness be removed? How can the profound meaning of the *dharmatā* be realized?⁴³

Round (Perfect) and Abrupt Contemplation (圓頓止觀 *yuan dun zhiguan*).

What is round and abrupt contemplation? Zhiyi gives the following definition:

Round and abrupt means: When one knows reality, one knows all objects as middle. Nothing is not real. When one thinks of one moment of the *dharma*-realm, one color, one smell are all a middle path. One's realm, Buddha- realm and sentient beings' realm are also the same. The five aggregates (*skandha*) are the same. There is no suffering (*duḥkha*) to be abandoned. Ignorance, *saṃsāra* are the same as the *bodhi*. There is no cause of suffering to be removed. Extreme views are also middle. There is no path to practice. *Saṃsāra* is *nirvāṇa*. There is no secession and nothing is attainable. There is no suffering, no cause. Thus there is no mundane world (*loka*). There is no path, no cessation. Thus there is no supra-mundane world (*lokottara*). There is pure reality, no other things beyond reality. The nature of *dharmas* (*dharmatā*) is serene, thus called *zhi* (*śamatha*). Serenity and constant brightness are called *guan* (*vipaśyanā*). There may be a beginning, but it is not different from the second. This is called the round and abrupt

³⁷T46, no.1911, 99c26-29: 不進不退名為頂墮。若破法愛。入三解脫發真中道。

³⁸T46, no.1911, 100a11-12: 觀念念心無非法性實相。是名等一大車。於一一心即空即假即中。是名各賜大車。

³⁹T46, no.1911, 100b16-21: 端坐觀陰入如上說。歷緣對境觀陰界者。緣謂六作境謂六塵大論云。於緣生作者於塵生受者。如隨自意中說。若般舟常行。法華方等半行。或掃灑執作皆有行動。隨自意最多。若不於行中習觀。云何速與道理相應。

⁴⁰T46, no.1911, 100c16-19: 舉足下足道場中來具足佛法矣。例前可知。行緣既爾。住坐臥語。作例前可解。三昧無臥法隨自意則有。

⁴¹T46, no.1911, 100c27-28: 眼色一念心起即是法界。具一切法。即空即假即中。

⁴²T46, no.1911, 101a4-6: 若眼一法非空非假。則一切法非空非假。猶如虛空有無永寂。亦如日月無幽不照。

⁴³T46n1911, 101c19-21: 觀行若明, 能歷緣對境, 觸處得用。若不如是。魔軍何由可破。煩惱重病何由可除。法性深義何由可顯。

zhiguan.⁴⁴

Zhiyi further explains: In the round and abrupt *samatha* and *vipasyana*, by practicing one truth, one practices all three (emptiness, conventional existence, and the middle), just as the eyes, light and objects -these three things - are always together when we perceive an object. One contains three and three contain one. (T46. No.1911, 25b)

A practitioner should apply any one of the three truths in practice. When one is applied, the others are automatically applied. The moment one applies the Buddha *dharma*, one is automatically practicing the round and abrupt contemplation at that very moment. A new practitioner at that moment has the same experience as an advanced one. The most important message here is that one needs to apply the *dharma* to the present moment .

L. Hurvitz concludes that this school of thought has no interest in objective reality, rather in reality itself as it impinges on the mind. It is not an idealistic school maintaining that everything has existence only within the mind. Zhiyi chose the mind as it was easier that way for the purpose of contemplation. (L.Hurvitz 1980: 317)

Zhiyi also explains that his meditation system is” inclusive *dharma*” (攝法). *Samatha* and *vipasyana* include all Buddha’s teaching. *Samatha* can calm all things, while *vipasyana* illumines the truth (理 principles). Thus, it includes all Buddha *dharmas*.⁴⁵

In the round and abrupt contemplation the three aspects - emptiness, conventional existence, and the middle - are contemplated simultaneously. It is spontaneously and immediately perceived as being integrated, non-dual and synonymous (Swanson 1989: 121). It is called round and abrupt contemplation in a sense that it includes all the methods of practice found in Buddhism. Those with sharp faculties of understanding can directly move to the last stage. It is “abrupt” in a sense that anyone can locate their practice at any moment. Most important is that one needs to apply any method to practice. Beginners conventionally need to follow these steps.

Conclusion.

Zhiyi's *Mohezhi-guan* explains meditation methods as the twenty-five skillful devices, the four *samadhis*, and the ten modes of contemplation. The twenty-five skillful devices are preparatory stages, or foundations for the later progress.

The four *samadhis* are designed for beginners who wish to practice meditation intensively, as during a retreat, or for those ascetics who live in a mountain hermitage. It is an initial training for further meditational practice. The four *samadhis* in the *Mohezhi-guan* are the easiest method for beginners because they are described in detail for daily practice. In every Buddhist monastery and temple in modern China the morning and evening services are more or less based on Zhiyi’s lotus *Samadhi*.

The ten modes of contemplation apply to all kinds of practices. Among the ten modes of contemplation, the first one is the most important one, where Tiantai's core theory about meditation is explained: One thought endowed with three thousand worlds. It is the unthinkable higher stage experienced by the enlightened ones. Most important for the meditation practitioners is to be aware of their thoughts at each moment. When we think it is hell, we are experiencing hell. When our

⁴⁴T46, 1c-2a: 圓頓者。初緣實相，造境即中，无不真实。系缘法界，一念法界。一色一香无非中道。己界及佛界众生界亦然。阴入皆如，无苦可舍。无明尘劳即是菩提，无集可断。边邪皆中正无道可修。生死即涅槃，无灭可证。无苦无集故无世间。无道无灭故无出世间。纯一实相。实相外更无别法。法性寂然名止。寂而常照名观。虽言初後无二无别。是名圆顿止观。

⁴⁵T46, 29c: 第四明攝法者。疑者謂止觀名略攝法不周。今則不然。止觀總持遍收諸法。何者。止能寂諸法。如灸病得穴衆患皆除。觀能照理如得珠王衆寶皆獲。具足一切佛法。

mind is open, close to suchness, we are experiencing Buddhahood. In short, the mind is inconceivable.

If one cannot make any progress by contemplating the inconceivable objects, one needs to make vows to arouse compassionate thoughts. Sometimes one also needs to skilfully practice *zhiguan* to ease one's mind. In the progress of practice one needs to deconstruct all aspects of *dharma*s which are attached to one's mind, using the three contemplations. One should be aware of the obstructions to the path. One may need to go back to some basic practices, such as the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment. In practice, some situations may arise. In such cases one needs to know how to deal with them by using different methods or antidotes. One also needs to know the stages, but the fundamental stage is confidence. Zhiyi stresses the practice of repentance to ensure one enters the stage of confidence. One should take care not to let oneself be moved by external circumstances such as fame and *dāna*. One needs to avoid all attachments that may block one's progress. The ten modes of contemplation refer to sitting meditation. It is important that one should apply these practices in one's daily activities.

A meditation method in *Mohezhi-guan* is called the round and abrupt contemplation, where Zhiyi includes all methods of practice, such as ritual practice and repentance. Any object can be practiced if one understands the higher truth is not beyond the conventional. One should see all the phenomena as empty, conventional and middle, in one single thought.

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