

What's Going On Here? Chih-i's Use (and Abuse) of Scripture

In preparing heavily annotated English translations of major portions of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* 法華玄義 and *Mo-ho chih-kuan* 摩訶止觀, T'ient'ai Chih-i's (538–597) two most doctrinally influential works, one of my main concerns has been to identify the original sources of scriptural quotations and put them into their proper context. It seems to me an important part of translation and interpretation that quotations not be rendered autonomously and out of context—the translation should not only reflect, but also in some way incorporate, the context from which a quoted passage comes. This involves the question of what the “original” source says in the first place (as far as it can be determined), and whether or not the source has been quoted accurately or has been restated, paraphrased, or reinterpreted.

In the course of tracking down and comparing the sources that Chih-i quotes as scriptural authority, I have been struck by passages that seem to misrepresent their source. This raises a number of questions. Which texts does Chih-i rely on most frequently, and why? When these texts seem to be “misquoted,” can this be attributed to deliberate misrepresentation? If so, what is the significance of the passage, and what does this have to say about Chih-i's ideas and his creative genius? How far ought we apply the scholarly assumptions and requirements of our age to the scholarship of days gone by?

In this paper I will take a close look at selected passages in the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* and the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, comparing closely the quotes in Chih-i's texts with the “original” texts as we have them in the Taishō canon.¹ I will then make some general comments concerning Chih-i's

1. Various problems connected with considering the texts as found in the Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon as “original” are discussed below.

use of scripture and discuss the significance of these conclusions.

In addition to the comments above—which deal with Chih-i’s method of “translating” or interpreting the texts he uses, and the attempt to translate Chih-i’s texts faithfully into a modern context—I would like to introduce (as an Appendix) yet another perspective to the issue, namely, the problems encountered in preparing essays *about* Chih-i’s work in both Japanese and English. I have given a number of papers in Japanese on the topic of Chih-i’s use of scripture, and am now preparing the “same” paper in English. I have discovered, however, that it is impossible to write the same paper in both languages—that I cannot simply “translate” my Japanese paper. Even I myself cannot say the “same” thing I want to say, in two different languages; I suspect that this is true for anyone working in more than one language (or even classical and modern versions of the same language), especially if the languages are not of the same linguistic family. Reflection on the reasons for this intriguing phenomenon has led me to delineate a number of factors that contribute to this situation, and which seem to work on overlapping levels: differences in individual words and terms and their nuances that steer one’s train of thought in different directions; differences in the ideas, cultural background, and other “baggage” that is tied up with the language; and the differences in intended audience that

This question is addressed by Paul Harrison with regard to the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, but his comments are applicable to Buddhist texts in general: “When we refer to an ‘original Sanskrit text,’ we must realise from the outset that we are adopting a convention, and a potentially misleading one at that. For there is, or was, no such thing as a single original Sanskrit text of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, compiled around the beginning of the Common Era and remaining unchanged while various translations, Chinese and Tibetan, were made from it. We know that in general Mahāyāna sūtras underwent some degree of change in the course of the many centuries during which they were in use, being amplified (possibly the most common pattern), shortened, re-arranged, or subject to the introduction or modification of various doctrinal terms. The surviving translations of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* exhibit this ‘textual fluidity’ to a marked degree. . . . We must therefore realise that when we speak of ‘the original’ of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, we are in effect referring to its ever-changing Sanskrit textual tradition, and not to any single entity—a river, rather than a lake” (Harrison 1990, xxxiv).

influence the direction, flow, and content of one's prose and expression. I have also come to the conclusion that these factors are equally important for the understanding and translation of classical texts, and provide an important argument against the idea that a strict, literal translation best represents the original text. It also provides important implications for our own understanding of Chih-i's work, as well as his use of scriptural texts and authority.

Detailed Analysis of Chih-i's Use of Scripture

My initial methodology in comparing Chih-i's text with the sources of his quotes was to physically "disassemble" the text by indulging in a bit of old-fashioned cutting-and-pasting. This involved snipping out sections of Chih-i's text and pasting it in horizontal columns, then cutting out the quoted original sources and pasting them in columns under the corresponding sections of Chih-i's quotes. This process not only forced a detailed and careful comparison of each phrase, but also provided an overview of the flow of the text, gave a visual sense of the proportion of quotation in the text, and supplied the wider context of the quoted sources for further analysis.

The following is an analysis of some representative passages,² mainly from the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, to illustrate Chih-i's use of scripture.

I. On whether or not the Buddha-dharma should be taught; from Kuan-ting's introduction³ to the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* (T. 46.3a11–b2).

This section deals with a question raised by a "skeptic": how can one

2. By "representative passages" I mean that almost any other section of Chih-i's works, especially the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, could be examined with similar results, and that the passages are not chosen arbitrarily to prove a predetermined point. I have deliberately avoided passages from the *Fa-hua wen-chü* (T. no. 1715), since it appears that Kuan-ting imported much of Chi-tsang's work into the text during the editorial process; see Hirai 1985). I cannot claim to have read the entire Chih-i corpus, but my limited exposure to his earlier works, such as the *Tz'u-ti ch'an-men* (T. no. 1916), *Hsiao chih-kuan* (T. no. 1915), and other ritual manuals, as well as his later commentaries on the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*, leads me to believe that my conclusions are applicable to them as well.

3. Since it is practically impossible to distinguish which parts of Chih-i's

teach or preach the Buddha-dharma when it is inconceivable and beyond verbalization, and should we try? The skeptic quotes or uses the words of the sūtras to point out that the Dharma is “impossible to explain in words” (*Lotus Sūtra*, T. 9.10a4), “not possible to verbalize” (*Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, T. 12.733c9–20), and “cannot be expounded or signified” (*Vimalakīrti-sūtra*, T. 14.548a8–11 or 540a17–21). Kuan-ting replies by quoting twelve times from the same sūtras—often the same passages—as well as other texts (*Mūlamadhyamakārikā*, *Viśeṣacintibrahmapariṣcchā-sūtra*, **Pravara-devarāja-pariṣcchā-sūtra*), to argue that the Buddha-dharma must be taught. The following points are of special interest.

1. The same sūtra passages quoted by the “skeptic” are followed up by Kuan-ting to show that the passage in fact supports the idea that the Buddha-dharma should be taught.
 - a. The skeptic opens his question with a phrase from the “Chapter on Skillful Means” of the *Lotus Sūtra*, though it is not identified as a scriptural quote. Kuan-ting’s third quote is from the line that follows immediately after the line quoted by the skeptic, and points out that the Buddha “expounds [the Dharma] by resorting to the power of expedient means” (T. 9.10a5).
 - b. Kuan-ting’s first quote is a line from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* that concludes the passage quoted by the skeptic: that “since there are causes and conditions, it is also possible to expound [them, or the Dharma?]” (T. 12.733c19–20).

lectures edited by Kuan-ting (such as the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i*) are attributable to whom, I treat Chih-i and Kuan-ting as a single “person,” or at least as speaking with a single voice. Although I would like to know what Chih-i himself said (his “original discourse”), it must be recognized that what we have as “the work of Chih-i” is a composite of many layers—the resultant texts are records mostly (but not all) based on lectures by Chih-i, recorded and edited by Kuan-ting, and accepted and commented on by a variety of T’ien-t’ai / Tendai scholars (not limited to the monks of the T’ien-t’ai / Tendai school). To be accurate, my essay should thus be entitled “Tentative observations on the use of ‘scripture’ (as far as this term can be used in the Buddhist context) by Chih-i in works edited and modified by Kuan-ting and handed down through the T’ien-t’ai / Tendai tradition, as far as we can tell from textual variants as compiled and published mainly in the Taishō Tripitaka,” but my preference for simplicity led me to retain a shorter title.

c. The skeptic's references to the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* are reflected in Kuan-ting's seventh quote from the same sūtra, that "liberation is [not]⁴ separate from the nature of words and letters" (*T.* 46.3a24–25) (see the discussion of this section below).

2. Some problems:

- a. Kuan-ting quotes the parable of explaining the color of milk to a blind person in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (*T.* 12. 688c15–24) to illustrate that the real truth (*paramārtha-satya*) can be expounded. In the sūtra, however, the attempt to explain "the whiteness of milk" to a blind person by referring to a shell (sound), rice powder (softness), snow (cold), and a white crane, ultimately fails, because a blind person cannot "see" "white." The sūtra concludes that "ultimately he is unable to know the true color of milk," and that this is the same as trying to explain that nirvana is eternal, blissful, selfhood, and pure to a non-Buddhist 外道—such people will never understand. Thus, though the parable does illustrate a concerted attempt to explain with words what must be directly experienced, it is a far cry from proving that "the real truth should be expounded."
- b. The *Shing t'ien-wang po-jo po-lo-mi ching* (**Pravara-devarāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra*) is quoted as saying that "Although [the essence of] a dhāraṇī is [ultimately] wordless, yet words do manifest [the meaning of] dhāraṇī" (*T.* 8.720c5–6); and Kuan-ting claims that this illustrates that the mundane truth (*saṃvṛti-satya*) can be expounded. However, the two lines that follow in the sūtra immediately after this line say the opposite: "the great wisdom-power of *prajñā* is separate / independent from words and verbalization."
- c. Kuan-ting's reply to the skeptic's quotes from the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* could be attributed to at least two passages in the sūtra. Traditionally it has been attributed to a passage in the third

4. As Stevenson and Donner point out, "the MHCK text is apparently corrupt here, omitting a crucial negation that stands in the *Taishō* text of the *Vimalakīrti*, so that the MHCK text should read here 'Not being separate. . . .' An interlinear handwritten note in the woodblock of the *ehon* in L. Hurvitz's possession makes the emendation." See Donner 1976, 82, and Donner and Stevenson 1993, 125–26.

chapter, *T.* 14.540c18–20, near the skeptic’s second quote. Certainly the characters quoted in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* are almost identical to those found in this sūtra passage, except that it jumps over a crucial phrase of four characters 無有文字, and this passage in effect emphasizes the independence of liberation from words and letters. The passage (*T.* 14.548a11–15) immediately after the skeptic’s first quote from the seventh chapter of the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*, on the other hand, uses different characters to make the same point (“speech, words, and letters are all marks of liberation”), and then supports the point being made by the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* by saying “one cannot expound liberation apart from words and letters.” Thus, although the characters in the phrase from the third chapter of the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* are closer to the phrase quoted in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, the intent of the phrase—that one must use words to expound the meaning of liberation—is closer to the passage in the seventh chapter. It is difficult to conclude decisively which section Kuan-ting had in mind—perhaps both.

3. Miscellaneous minor points:

- a. In the quote from the *Viśeṣacintibrahmapariṣcchā-sūtra* (*T.* 15.50c15–16), the character for “should” 當 is given as “constantly” 常 in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. This is certainly a copyist’s error due to visual similarity, and does not result in any significant shift in meaning.
- b. Kuan-ting’s tenth quote is a paraphrase from the *Lotus Sūtra* (*T.* 9.20a15–20). The three phrases (“going, coming, sitting, or standing,” “constantly proclaiming the wonderful Dharma,” and “like the falling of rain”) are picked up in a different order from that in the original sūtra, but without a significant change in meaning. This is a relatively unusual example of a paraphrase rather than direct quote of the *Lotus Sūtra*.
- c. The next quote (no. 11) starts out by saying that the *Lotus Sūtra* “also says,” but doesn’t start quoting from the *Lotus Sūtra* until the next phrase.⁵

5. Donner and Stevenson (1993, 126) describe the early part as a paraphrase from the same passage as the quote that follows, but, as they admit, “the match is a dubious one.”

d. Otherwise the quotations from the sūtras are generally accurate.

II. The Constantly-Sitting Samādhi and the Mañjuśrī sūtras (T. 46.11a–12a)

Chih-i's exposition of the Constantly-Sitting Samādhi is based for the most part on two sūtras, the *Saptaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (The "Great Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra Taught by Mañjuśrī"; T. no. 233) and the **Mañjuśrī-paripṛcchā* ("Questions of Mañjuśrī"; T. no. 468).⁶ The content is almost entirely from these sūtras, even sections that are not specifically identified as quotes from scripture. This is not particularly surprising, since Chih-i declares that his presentation is derived from these sūtras. It is important to point out here that the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* text is often abbreviated and cryptic, and referring to the original sūtras provides the additional information missing or needed to make sense of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* version.

One section that does not specifically identify itself as quoting scripture but is in fact almost verbatim from the *Teachings of Mañjuśrī* (T. 8.728b–c) is Chih-i's exposition on "the contemplation of karma" (T. 46.11c25–12a1). Here all of Chih-i's phrases are from the sūtra, but he skips sentences and jumps from one section to another with no indication that he is using the words of the sūtra. One is led to wonder whether his audience was already familiar with the content of the sūtra and was able to fill in the details themselves and thus Chih-i took this for granted, or if Chih-i was consciously selective of only phrases that fit his agenda. In this case I suspect the former is more likely, and therefore in order to adequately grasp the content of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* we must familiarize ourselves with the full content of the sūtras on which these passages are based.

III. The Constantly-Walking Samādhi and the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*

Much the same (as in section II) can be said for Chih-i's exposition of the Constantly-Walking Samādhi (T. 46.12a19–13a23). Some of the highlights are outlined below.

6. For an excellent summary of the four samādhis see Dan Stevenson's essay on "The four kinds of samādhi in early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism" in Gregory 1986, 45–97.

1. All of the quotes in this section are either from the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* 般舟三昧經 (T. no. 418, esp. 13.904–909)—the classical source for the “*pratyutpanna samādhi*” or “the samādhi wherein one finds oneself standing face to face with all the Buddhas of the present age”—or from the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣa-śāstra* 十住毘婆沙論 (T. no. 1511, 13.20–122), in particular section 25 of this text (T. 26.86a–90a), which consists of a commentary on the *pratyutpanna samādhi* or the *nien-fo* 念仏 samādhi. On the one hand this is rather unusual for Chih-i, who liked to salt and pepper his text with quotes from the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, and *T.a chih tu lun*. On the other hand it is not all that surprising, since the section is an analysis of a specific topic, the Constantly-Walking Samādhi, and the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* and the commentary in the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣa-śāstra* are the primary sources for this practice.
2. Rather than quoting whole chunks of sūtra or śāstra passages, Chih-i tends to summarize or select certain phrases to illustrate the explanation in the source. Also, rather than outline the content of the source in its original order, Chih-i tends to jump around, returning frequently to key passages.

For example, in his opening paragraph (12a21–22), Chih-i gives as an alternate to “*pratyutpanna-samādhi*” the term “Buddhas standing [in front of one]” 仏立, a term found frequently in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (e. g. 903c13, 904b22, 905a4–5), and then jumps ahead to a passage at 905c16–18 to provide three characteristics to show how the Buddhas “stand” in front of one as a result of one’s visualization.

Again, in the section where Chih-i explains the mental 意 (after discussing the “physical” 身 and the “verbal” 口) aspects of this samādhi (12b24–c28), he relies on a single long passage from the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (T. 13.905a1–906a11), but jumps from one part of the section to another, not necessarily in order. For example, he mentions the idea of being mindful of the Buddha’s thirty-two major marks early in his discussion (12b27), but this does not appear in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* until halfway through the passage (905b16), and many passages that Chih-i quotes later actually appear earlier in this passage. In all, the phrases that Chih-i picks up from this passage come to only about

10% of its original length in the sūtra, and Chih-i's summary must be filled in somewhat, either with footnotes or additions to the text, to gain an accurate and full account of what is involved in this practice.

There are many places where Chih-i refers to whole analogies or sections of a text with short cryptic phrases that do not make any sense until one is familiar with the context or the longer version that is given in the original source. For example, Chih-i's analysis of the content of this samādhi in terms of "conventional existence" 假 makes reference to six analogies found in a section of the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (905a–c). The first analogy is utilized as follows: "It is just as in a dream one sees the seven jewels and one's relatives, and rejoices; after awakening one tries to remember, but does not know where this happened. Be mindful of the Buddha in this way" (12c8–10). Chih-i's abbreviated version makes it difficult to understand what the analogy has to do with being mindful of the Buddha, but the full explanation of the analogy in the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣa-śāstra* (905a–c) explains how concentrating one's thoughts on the Buddha is analogous to dreaming and thus "seeing" treasures, friends, etc. In translating this passage, either a full explanation must be given in a note, or enough material must be incorporated into the translation to make sense of the passage.⁷

Again, Chih-i closes this entire section with the following exhortation: "If one does not cultivate such a method [of samādhi], he loses immeasurable, valuable treasures, and both people and gods will grieve. It is as if a person with a stuffy nose sniffed sandalwood and could not smell it, or like a rustic man who offers [only] one ox for a [priceless wish-fulfilling] *maṇi* jewel" (*T.* 46.13a21–23). Both of these analogies—the person with a stuffy nose and the rustic man—are references to a series of analogies found in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (907a–908b). Both are a bit cryptic and can only be fully appreciated upon reading the full explanation in the sūtra.⁸

7. For a full translation of the Tibetan version of this passage see Harrison 1990, 32.

8. My translation has already been "padded." The translation given above

It seems Chih-i assumed that his audience would immediately recognize and understand these analogies, much like a modern audience would understand or evoke a whole range of ideas and emotions upon hearing “crying wolf,” “finger in the dike,” “barking up the wrong tree,” “a material girl,” or “Butt-head.” The modern audience, on the other hand, needs help unpacking “a rustic man who offers an ox” or “seeing seven jewels and one’s relatives in a dream and rejoicing” in order to make any sense out of them.

At this point one may ask: When Chih-i summarizes or picks up certain phrases and omits others, does he pick up only what he thinks is important, or does he assume that his readers or listeners are familiar with the context and will know how to fill in the details on their own? Is he deliberately emphasizing certain points, or does he intend his summary to stand metonymously for the whole? In some cases, such as the analogies provided at the very end of the passage, it is obvious that he is just giving a hint and expects the full content to be known to the listener. In other passages this is not so obvious. In translating such passages, one must judge how much of the context and background of the source material should be provided so that the modern reader will have sufficient information to understand and interpret the text. In most cases, a merely “accurate” literal translation captures at best only the surface meaning, and in the worst case leaves only a jumble of meaningless, contextless words.

3. Chih-i’s quotation in this section, as throughout the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* in general, is very accurate. He does not slip into the habit common among many Chinese Buddhist commentators to misquote his sources. This makes the few places where he departs from accuracy all the more interesting and significant.

One “inaccurate” quote with interesting doctrinal implications is

is a compromise between a literal translation and a fully expanded translation of 『如田家子以摩尼珠博一頭牛』:

[literal] “Like country man for *maṇi* jewel offers one ox.”

[full translation, including material incorporated from the analogy in the sūtra]: “It is as if a naive and ignorant country man, who does not realize the priceless value of a magical wish-fulfilling jewel, offers only a single head of oxen in exchange for it.”

found near the end of this section (12c22), where Chih-i has “the mind sees the Buddha” 心見佛 instead of “the mind is the Buddha” 心是佛. This could well be a copyist’s error, since the characters 見 and 是 are visually similar. However, the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* drops a phrase in the sūtra immediately after the character 佛, and picks up again on the next phrase beginning with 心. This causes the Taishō edition editors to punctuate the phrase so that “Buddha-mind” becomes a compound 心見佛心 (the mind sees the Buddha-mind), a punctuation and reading that is not possible in the original sūtra.

A few lines later (12c27) we find the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* quoting a verse from the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (909a7–8). The first line has 得解脫 instead of 解得道, but the meaning is much the same. The second line has “the mind, without blemish, is called 名 pure” instead of “the mind is pure, clear 明, and without blemish.” This difference may be due to a mistake in taking down Chih-i’s spoken words, since 名 and 明 are homonyms.

Again, a quote (13a6–7) from a verse in the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣa-śāstra* (26.86a14–15) uses the compound “covetously attached” 貪着 instead of “be tainted with attachment” 染着, but once again with no significant difference in meaning.

In short, unlike some other sections in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, there are no passages in this section where Chih-i can be shown consciously or unconsciously to reword and misrepresent his sources.

4. As with the other three of the four Samādhis (and almost everything else in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*), Chih-i interprets this *pratyutpanna* samādhi in terms of the threefold truth 三諦—emptiness 空, conventionality 假, and the Middle 中—giving a “creative” rereading and analysis of the sources. The threefold truth, of course, is not explicit in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, though Chih-i would say that the pattern is implicit.

After briefly outlining the content of the samādhi, and its physical and verbal requirements, Chih-i gives an analysis of the mental aspects of this practice. His analysis is in three parts: contemplating the *emptiness* of all things, including the Buddha that is visualized; contemplating the *conventional* or *provisional* reality of that which is visualized; and realizing the *Middle Path*, that all things

are both empty and conventionally real, or, in Chih-i's words, "These dharmas cannot be signified [with words]—they are all the result of thoughts. And even if one [conventionally] establishes the existence of thoughts, they are ultimately empty and without being" (12c24–25). Chih-i draws on various passages from the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* and creatively reinterprets them in terms of the threefold truth. For example, Chih-i refers to an analogy in the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* (905a27–c5) of a man who dreams or imagines having sexual intercourse with a woman far away in Śrāvastī, in order to illustrate that dharmas, despite their ultimate emptiness, function in a conventional sense ("he realizes that she did not [really] come and he did not [really] go [anywhere], and yet he enjoyed her as if she was [physically with him]"). This method of extracting the "profound meaning" (*hsüan-i* 玄義) of the scriptures is one of the most significant aspects of Chih-i's use of scripture—that is, the spelling out of what Chih-i saw as the implicit teaching of the threefold truth in scriptures that do not explicitly teach the threefold truth pattern.

IV. The analysis of *jñeyāvaraṇa*

Chih-i taps some unusual sources in a later section of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* (T. 46.85b) while discussing *kleśajñeyāvaraṇa*.⁹ He first quotes the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, a text Chih-i relies on quite frequently, but then he relies on the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi* (T. no. 1581) and the *Ju ta-sheng lun* (Introduction to Mahāyāna, T. no. 1634), two texts that he quotes only infrequently. In the case of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*, the quotes are not literal but rather summaries or just the use of specific terms. Often it is difficult to tell exactly on which passage Chih-i is relying, or if he is just summarizing what he takes to be the general intent of the text as a whole. The quotes from the *Ju ta-sheng lun* (T. 32.45c2–16), on the other hand, are quite accurate, though once again Chih-i joins together two phrases that are separated by a few lines in the original text.

In short, this passage is an example of Chih-i relying on texts that, in general, he quotes relatively infrequently. As expected, his "quotes" are often "summaries" rather than literal quotations

9. See my article on "Chih-i's interpretation of *jñeyāvaraṇa*: An application of the three-fold truth concept" (Swanson 1983, 51–72).

(except in the case of the *Ju ta-sheng lun*, which he follows quite closely).

V. The category of the “four unities” 四一 in the *Fa-hua hsüan-i* (T. 33.691c22–692a1)

This passage quotes four scriptures—the *Ta chih-tu lun* (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*), the *Viśeṣacintibrahmapariṣcchā-sūtra*, the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, and the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*—to provide proof-texts for Chih-i’s teaching of the “four unities”: the unity of teaching 教一, the unity of practice 行一, the unity of persons 人一, and the unity of principle (or “reality”) 理一.

- a. The proof-text for the unity of teaching, that “all dharmas are included in the Mahāyāna,” is attributed to the explanation of “*prajñā*,” which for Chih-i usually means the *Ta chih-tu lun*. I could not locate the exact phrase in the *Ta chih-tu lun*, however, except for a similar passage (T. 25.389c) that says “by riding on the Great Vehicle one attains universal wisdom and turns the dharma-wheel.”
- b. The next proof-text on the unity of practice, that “to clearly understand all characteristics of reality . . . this is the universal practice of a bodhisattva,” is an exact quote from the *Viśeṣacintibrahmapariṣcchā-sūtra* (T. 15.37c22–26), though the two phrases in the *sūtra* are separated by a number of lines.
- c. The proof-text on the unity of persons, that “one enters the *dharmadhātu* without moving from the Jeta Grove,” is a terse summary of a passage from the famous chapter on “entering the *dharmadhātu*” in the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (T. 9.683c–684a), where it is emphasized that one does not physically, or any other way, actually go some other place in order to “enter” (or realize) the *dharmadhātu*, that it is not necessary to leave the Jeta Grove where Śākya-muni is preaching in order to attain the realm of perfection, and that the realm of the Buddha and the realm of ordinary people, nirvana and samsara, are one.
- d. The proof-text on the unity of principle, that “to know all dharmas in a single thought: this is to sit on the seat of enlightenment (*bodhimāṇḍa*),” is a modified quote from the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* (T. 14.543a4–5); the original *sūtra* has “perfecting all wisdom on the seat of enlightenment.”

In short, this passage is an example of Chih-i using his regular set of prooftexts to support a set of categories or ideas, in this case that of the “four unities.”

VI. Prooftexts on “the subtlety of the dharma of mind” 心法妙 (*Fa-hua hsüan-i*, T. 33.693a23–b2)

Chih-i refers to passages in the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*, and *Avatamsaka-sūtra* to illustrate his concept of the subtlety of the mind. All of these quotes were accurate, with one exception. The final quote from the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* is given as “by destroying the minute dust-like obstructions of the mind, the thousands of scrolls of sūtras are revealed.” Whereas the previous phrases from the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* are quoted verbatim, Chih-i takes liberties in paraphrasing this puzzling quote. The original (T. 9. 624a6–12) reads:

These scrolls of sūtras in the great trichiliocosm exist within one minute particle of dust. All of the minute particles of dust are also likewise. At one time there was a person who appeared in the world who achieved penetrating wisdom, completed and perfected the pure divine eyesight, and perceived these scrolls of sūtras in a minute particle of dust. He then had the following thought: “How can these vast and great scrolls of sūtras exist in a minute particle of dust, yet not benefit sentient beings? I should diligently use expedient means to destroy these minute particles of dust and benefit sentient beings.” At this time this person used expedient means to destroy the particles of dust and extracted these scrolls of sūtras to benefit sentient beings.

In the original sūtra the word “mind” 心 is not used, and seems to be making quite a different point from that proposed by Chih-i. Chih-i was quoting this phrase to support his contention that the mind is subtle, and the phrase that Chih-i “quotes” supports this concept only insofar as the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* in general teaches the identity of mind and objects. In that sense the mind and the particles of dust are one, and “destroying a particle of dust” or “destroying the dust-like obstructions of the mind” to reveal (the meaning of?) scrolls of sūtras can be interpreted as meaning the same thing. A translation of Chih-i’s paraphrase that would be more consistent with the sūtra passage would read, “Destroying the mind and minute particles of dust, the sūtra scrolls of the trichiliocosm appear.”

VII. The ten categories of subtlety and the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Fa-hua hsüan-i*, T. 33.698a)

In this passage Chih-i quotes only from the *Lotus Sūtra* to give proof-texts for his ten categories of subtlety, from the subtlety of objects to the subtlety of religious benefits, the ten categories whose discussion takes up the bulk of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i*. The striking thing about this passage is that all of the quotes are extremely accurate, down to the exact characters. This illustrates Chih-i's practice of quoting the *Lotus Sūtra* accurately. The only exception, and striking in its deviation, is the proof-text given for the ninth category of subtlety, the subtlety of the Buddha's attendants. Chih-i quotes the *Lotus Sūtra* as saying that "[The Buddha] teaches only bodhisattvas, and has no śrāvakas as disciples." However, the *Lotus Sūtra* (T. 10b5–6) passage is slightly but significantly different, and this abbreviated quote is somewhat misleading. Hurvitz translates the entire context:

...I, being King of the Dharma
 Universally address the great multitudes,
 Having recourse only to the Path of the One Vehicle,
Teaching and converting bodhisattvas,
And having no voice-hearing disciples.
 All of you, Śāriputra,
 Voice-hearers and bodhisattvas alike,
 Are to know that this subtle Dharma
 Is the secret essential to the Buddhas.¹⁰

In the *Lotus Sūtra* the word "only" modifies the "Path of the One Vehicle," not "bodhisattvas." Thus the sūtra says that the Buddha has recourse only to the doctrine of *ekayāna* to teach bodhisattvas, not to teach śrāvakas, with the implication that he has recourse to other methods to teach śrāvakas. It does not unambiguously mean that the Buddha has no disciples that are śrāvakas (though the Chinese of Kumārajīva can be construed in that way, and Hurvitz's translation follows that line). The wider context makes it clear that the Buddha is preaching the subtle dharma to all beings, "śrāvaka and bodhisattva alike," and the śrāvakas are included in the group of the Buddha's disciples. I fear that Chih-i was overzealous in his attempt

10. The phrase in italics could be translated, "to teach and convert bodhisattvas, / and not for [teaching] śrāvaka disciples." See Hurvitz 1976, 46.

to illustrate the “subtlety” of the Buddha’s attendants.

VIII. The Four Noble Truths and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (*Fa-hua hsüan-i*, T. 33.700c–701c)

Chih-i’s analysis of the four noble truths and its presentation in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* is quite complicated,¹¹ but here I will take a look only at the analysis of the “four noble truths as arising and perishing” 生滅四諦.

Generally Chih-i utilizes the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* accurately, though once again he tends to paraphrase and / or pick up key phrases rather than quote word for word. Chih-i also refers to the *Fo ch’ui pan nieh p’an liao shuo chiao chieh ching* (T. no. 389, 12.1112b24–28), often used in conjunction with the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, to quote: “the causes [of suffering] are true causes, and there are no separate causes. . . . The path to extinguish suffering is the true path.” In this case Chih-i uses the character 別 (“separate”) instead of 異 (“different”) and the character 即 (“is”) instead of 實 (“truly”). This appears to be a result of Chih-i quoting the sūtra from memory rather than a copyist error, since the characters are not visually similar, and the meaning is much the same.

Finally, Chih-i quotes the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (T. 12.682c7–14) to say “All ordinary people have suffering, but not the truth. Śrāvakas and pratyeka-buddhas have suffering and [know] the truth of suffering.” It is curious that Chih-i left out the concluding phrase in the sūtra “. . . but not [the knowledge of] the real truth.” Perhaps he felt it superfluous at this point.

IX. Prooftexts on types of Buddha lands in Chih-i’s commentary on the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* (*Manji Zokuzōkyō* 卍續藏經 27.862–873)

Toward the end of his life—after the lectures that became the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa hua hsüan i* and after he had returned to Mt. T’ien-t’ai from the capital—Chih-i composed commentaries on the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra*. Since these texts are among the few of Chih-i’s works written in his own hand, they can provide more direct evidence regarding Chih-i’s use of scripture. Let us take a look at a passage in the *Wei-mo ching wen-su* 維摩經文疏 where Chih-i is commenting

11. For details see Swanson 1989, 142–44 and 226–34.

on the opening chapter of the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* and giving scriptural references on the “Buddha Lands” 佛國.

First we may note that Chih-i relies to a great extent on his usual array of primary texts: the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, and *Ta chih-tu lun*, not to mention the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* itself. The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* is also referred to frequently. There are also scattered references to texts Chih-i uses on occasion, such as the *Jen wang ching*, the *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, the *Śrīmālādevī-sūtra*, and the *Contemplation of Samantabhadra Sūtra*.

It is worth noting that there are numerous references in this section to the *Mahāyānasaṅgraha*, a text rarely used by Chih-i. However, the *Mahāyānasaṅgraha* is not quoted directly, but rather referred to in general, as in “The *Mahāyānasaṅgraha* clarifies that there are seven types of samsara” (865a1) and “The *Mahāyānasaṅgraha* clarifies the realm of the blossom-king” (865b13).

In contrast, the quotes from the *Lotus Sūtra* are direct and accurate, such as the reference (864b17–18) to the phrase “I will become a Buddha in another realm” (*T.* 9.25c17); another reference soon after (865a3) to a phrase in the same section of the sūtra (*T.* 9.25c14–15) that “after my extinction there shall again be disciples who, not having heard this scripture . . .”; or again soon thereafter (865b9), a truncated but accurate “[He or she shall also see] this Sahā world-sphere, [its soil made of vaidūrya;] flat and even; . . . a multitude of bodhisattvas all dwelling in its midst” (*T.* 9.45b19–21).

The references from the *Ta chih-tu lun* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* fall between direct literal quotation and general reference. For example, Chih-i attributes to the *Ta chih-tu lun* the teaching that “Arhats and pratyekabuddhas enter nirvana, and though they are not reborn in the triple world, there is a pure land in the transcendent realm wherein they experience the body of dharma-nature” (865a9–10). A computer search of the *Ta chih-tu lun* on CD-ROM failed to turn up this exact phrase, but it appears to be a summary of a passage toward the end of the text (*T.* 25.714a–b) that discusses how arhats dwell in a pure land and experience the body of the dharma-nature (and thus fail to attain the further goal of Buddhahood because they are attached to Hīnayāna). The same is true for another quote soon thereafter, that “The Buddha of the body of dharma-nature preaches the Dharma as the Dharmakāya bodhi-

sattva, and in this land there are no śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas” (865b10–11), which appears to be a summary from a passage earlier in the *Ta chih-tu lun* (T. 25.188a–c) that first explains that arhats and pratyekabuddhas do not have the profound insight and compassion of a bodhisattva or Buddha, and then proceeds to explain how a Dharmakāya bodhisattva is transformed into innumerable bodies to preach the Dharma to sentient beings (188c18).

The other references in this section are a mixture of direct quotation and general references. The *Jen wang ching* is referred to twice (865b8–9 and 866a5–6) to quote the same phrase “Those [on the stages] of the three levels of erudition and the ten noble stages 三賢十聖 dwell in [the land of] resultant reward 果報, and only the Buddha alone dwells in the Pure Land” (T. 8.828a1). The *Contemplation of Samantabhadra* is also quoted directly (866a6–7): “Śākyamuni is called ‘Vairocana Who Pervades All Places,’ and his dwelling place is called Eternal Tranquil Light” (T. 9.392c15–17), though (like the Taishō text and unlike other variant texts) it lacks the character 佛 for “Buddha” after the name Śākyamuni. On the other hand, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* is referred to generally to point out that “it clarifies the realm of Indra” (865b12) and “it clarifies ten types of Buddha lands” (866b1).

This section, then, gives the impression that Chih-i was quoting texts from memory rather than referring directly to the texts as he was composing his commentary. The passages from the *Lotus Sūtra*, with which he was no doubt familiar and could quote from memory, as well as other familiar phrases from various sūtras, are quoted in full and with a high level of accuracy. Other texts are referred to generally in terms of broader content or short phrases. Again, the mix of texts referred to by Chih-i is much the same as we find in his earlier works, such as the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i*. The indications are that there are no significant differences in scriptural quotation between works written in Chih-i’s hand and the works we have as a result of lectures recorded and edited by Kuan-ting.

Some General Observations on Chih-i’s Use of Scripture

The above examples are typical of Chih-i’s use of scripture and could be multiplied almost endlessly. On the basis of these examples and my experience in translating large portions of these texts, I would

like to offer a few general observations on what I see as some characteristics of Chih-i's use of scripture:

1. First, the texts that Chih-i quotes or refers to most frequently are as follows:¹²

a. texts quoted very frequently, almost habitually:

Lotus Sūtra (T. no. 262=Kumarajīva's translation)

Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra (T. no. 374, no. 375)

Vimalakīrti-sūtra (T. no. 475)

Ta chih-tu lun (T. no. 1509)

(includes the *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*)

b. texts quoted relatively frequently

Avataṃsaka-sūtra (T. no. 278)

various *Āgama* sūtras

Mahāvaiṣṭya-mahā-saṃnipāta-sūtra (T. no. 397)

Middle Treatise (*Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*; T. no. 1564)

Ch'eng shih lun (**Satyasiddhi-śāstra*; T. no. 1646)

c. texts quoted on special occasions, where such texts have particular relevance (e. g., the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra* in the section on the Constantly-Walking Samādhi), or texts quoted numerous times but relatively infrequently:

Jen wang ching (T. no. 245)

Contemplation of Samantabhadra Sūtra (T. no. 277)

Śrīmālādevī-sūtra (T. no. 353)

Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra (T. no. 418)

Mañjuśrī-pariṣṭhā-sūtra (T. no. 468)

Viśeṣacintibrahmapariṣṭhā-sūtra (T. no. 586)

Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra (T. no. 663)

Ying lo ching (T. no. 1485)

Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣa-śāstra (T. no. 1511)

Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra (T. no. 1546), etc.

In general, the more frequently a text is cited, the more likely it is that the text is cited accurately. For example, the *Lotus Sūtra* is

12. This list is made on the basis of my own, as yet uncatalogued, impressions from working on a translation of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i*, as well as the cumulative list of texts cited in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* as given in the *Makashikan in'yō tenkyō sōran*, ed. Chūgoku Bukkyō Kenkyūkai, 1987.

most frequently quoted exactly as it is found in Kumārajīva’s translation. It is therefore of special interest when a passage from the *Lotus Sūtra* is found to be used in a way different from its use in Kumārajīva’s translation. In contrast, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* is also cited frequently, but often not in the form of a “proof-text” accuracy but in reference to a story or analogy found in this sūtra. Thus, references to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* are more likely to be summaries or short citations needing to be filled out, and more likely to be given a creative interpretation. Texts cited infrequently tend to be less accurate.

Also, when the *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* is quoted, it seems that Chih-i is usually referring to the *Ta chih-tu lun*. Sometimes he will even say, “in the *Ta chih-tu lun*,” but in fact the passage is a part of the *Ta chih-tu lun* that is quoting the original *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. There are also examples of the opposite; Chih-i says he is quoting the sūtra but he is actually quoting the commentary in the *Ta chih-tu lun*. This indicates that Chih-i was reading the *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* through the lens of the *Ta chih-tu lun*.

2. It is not unusual for Chih-i to quote texts with word-for-word accuracy, but it is more often the case that he summarizes or briefly rewords the original source. Even in the case of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is usually quoted word-for-word, it is not unusual for passages to be summarized or reworded.
3. There are many cases in which Chih-i does not specifically say “in the sūtras” 經曰 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 (e. g., in the sections on the Four Samādhis).
4. In cases where Chih-i’s quote differs from the “original source” (i. e., the edition[s] we have in the Taishō canon), almost inevitably the quote will differ from the source in a way that serves to support the point that Chih-i is trying to make. This may seem like an obvious point, but it is significant. It indicates, for one thing, that the differences between Chih-i’s quote and the original source are more likely due to a conscious or unconscious manipulation or creative reinterpretation on Chih-i’s part, rather than due to copy-

ist errors or variant texts.

Of course one must be aware that the sources available to us today may be different from the texts that Chih-i had at hand, and that there are dangers to my identification of “original sources” as the texts we have in the Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon. How certain can we be that the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* printed in the Taishō edition is the same as the version Chih-i himself referred to? Until we discover the remains of Chih-i’s library, there is no way to be absolutely certain. However, when we see that for the most part the quotations by Chih-i of the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, for example, are indeed the same as those found in the Taishō edition, we can conclude that Chih-i was referring to much the same text, and the quotes that are different from the source as found in the Taishō canon take on a greater significance.

Further, when Chih-i’s quote differs from the source as we have it in the Taishō canon, the following possibilities need to be considered:

- a. The text in the Taishō canon is different from the one used by Chih-i. This is quite possible, and would require complicated textual histories to sort out. The differences, however, may be minor—such as a single character or compounds—caused by errors in transcription. In these cases it is often quite clear what has happened—the characters are visually similar or homophones and often do not result in a significant change in the meaning of the text.
- b. Texts such as the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i* are said to have been oral lectures taken down by Chih-i’s disciple Kuan-ting. One explanation for differences between quotations and the sources is that since these are lecture notes, the quotes were written down from memory and not copied directly from manuscripts. Still, this does not exclude the possibility of Chih-i’s creative (and perhaps unconscious) rephrasing of scripture in his memory as he was lecturing, resulting in “wishful remembering.” It should not be forgotten, however, that Kuan-ting edited these notes over a long period of time and certainly had the opportunity to check the sources. I find the argument explaining away misquotes as attributable to oral transmission

difficult to accept.

- c. Chih-i himself had no intention of always quoting scripture word for word, but was more interested in summarizing or relying what he felt was the intent of the sūtras. This opens up the whole question of Chih-i's view of "scripture" and his attitude toward "authoritative texts." (This point is discussed in more detail below.) In a word, how far should we apply modern standards of textual critique to figures such as Chih-i?
 - d. Finally, there is the possibility that Chih-i, while fully aware of the original form of the quotation, deliberately modified the quote to be more in line with the understanding and interpretation that he intended to convey. I believe there are cases in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i* where this is the best explanation of the situation.
5. When Chih-i refers to the same sūtra numerous times in the same section, it is likely that he is referring to the same section in the sūtra. This may seem like a minor point, but it is a useful rule to keep in mind when trying to identify the source exactly. It also gives an indication of how Chih-i was working. As scholars, there are times when we recall a pertinent source or quote to back up an argument as we are writing a paper, and incorporate it as such into the paper. There are other times, however, when we are writing a paper while already referring to a specific passage, e. g., in the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* or *Lotus Sūtra*, and we develop our argument along the lines of the source material. This second method seems to be used often by Chih-i, and his argument is clarified by reference to the wider passage that he is relying on.
 6. Chih-i often utilizes a kind of metonym by allowing a single word or phrase to stand for a whole idea or passage. This is common even in modern Chinese, such as using a short set of Chinese characters to refer to an entire well-known poem, or in the use of the phrase "*E'loi, E'loi, la'ma sabach-tha'ni*" (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?) attributed to Jesus on the cross to evoke the entire 22nd Psalm. Chih-i often uses only a few characters or words to evoke an entire verse, parable, analogy, or section of a sūtra—see the discussion above on the Constantly-Walking Samādhi. Often the few words Chih-i uses convey little or no meaning in themselves, or can actually be misleading, until they are placed in the

context from which they come, or until the entire verse or passage is known. As mentioned above, in such cases it is the translator's and interpreter's responsibility to judge how much of the evoked passages should be incorporated into the final translation to more accurately convey what Chih-i was actually trying to say.

7. Finally, as discussed in detail above, one of the most important uses of scripture by Chih-i—in addition to direct or indirect quotation—is the re-interpreting of the texts in terms of the threefold truth (emptiness, conventionality, the Middle) to creatively extract the “implicit” meaning. This could be called the major purpose of the *Fa-hua hsüan-i*—an exposition of the “profound (or ‘hidden’)”¹³ meaning” (*hsüan-i*, 玄義) of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Almost every section of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* and *Fa-hua hsüan-i* ends up as an analysis of the topic under discussion in terms of the threefold truth of emptiness, conventional reality, and the Middle. Chih-i himself says, “Many sūtras contain the meaning [of the threefold truth] in detail, though the names come from the *Ying lo ching* and the *Jen wang ching*” (T. 33.704c17). It is not an exaggeration to say that most of Chih-i's mature work is an exposition of the threefold truth—both doctrinally and in practical terms—as it appears implicitly and explicitly in the Buddhist scriptures. Thus by quoting and explaining the texts in terms of the threefold truth, he is extracting their “profound meaning,” and it is on this

13. Stanley Weinstein has pointed out that, “As was typical of the founders and systematizers of the T'ang schools, Chih-i read the scripture in light of his own religious intuition and experience rather than in the literal fashion that had prevailed before his time. Whereas the traditional method of exegesis had been one of ‘literal interpretation’ (*sui-wen chieh-shih*), Chih-i perfected the method of searching out and expounding the ‘hidden meaning’ (*hsüan-i* 玄義) of the text, which was subsequently adopted by such eminent T'ang scholar-monks as Chi-tsang, Shan-tao, and Fa-tsang. . . .” (1973, 284). Although my readings of Chih-i have confirmed Weinstein's insightful conclusion, I find the term “hidden meaning” for *hsüan-i* to be too strong, for it implies that the sūtras or texts themselves have deliberately “hidden” their real meaning. Also, I have found no indication that Chih-i himself was conscious of exposing a hidden meaning, although he does speak of “revealing” 開 the true meaning of the sūtras. I prefer the term “profound [or mysterious, esoteric, implicit] meaning” for *hsüan-i*.

basis that he chooses which texts to quote, and how to quote (or summarize) them.¹⁴

Summary

As I have indicated, Chih-i is not above bending his sources to his own liking. Still, despite the title of my paper, it is important to emphasize that generally Chih-i is very “true” to sources, at least in the sense that his quotations are usually quite accurate (as far as we can tell with the Taishō edition texts). Where the quote does seem to deviate from the source, however, it appears that Chih-i opts to rely on the “meaning” rather than the letter, and on the perspective of wisdom gained from his own practice of the Buddha-dharma rather than on ordinary literal interpretation.¹⁵ In fact Chih-i succinctly states his approach to scripture in a passage near the end of his discussion of the meaning of the “cessation-and-contemplation” (*T.* 46.26b20–26): “These interpretations are based on [the insights gained from] contemplation of the mind. It is true that they are not categories set out in order on the basis of reading the sūtras. However, in order to avoid suspicion and doubt among people, and to increase and strengthen faith [in the Buddha-dharma], *happily* [*I can say that*] *they are in agreement with the sūtras. Therefore I have quoted [from sūtra passages] as a witness.*” 如此解釋本於觀心。實非讀經安置次此。爲避人嫌疑爲增長信。幸與修多羅合。故引爲證耳。

This approach actually makes the “inaccurate” quotes all the more significant and interesting, because in a positive sense they reflect most clearly the insightful genius of Chih-i’s understanding of the Buddha-dharma. On the other hand, if Chih-i quotes a sūtra as authoritative backing for his ideas while the sūtra clearly says something else, then we have to consider the possibility of inaccurate or irresponsible scholarship (or at least he is not justified in resorting to

14. For a discussion of Chih-i’s use of apocryphal texts, see my paper on “Apocryphal Texts in Chinese Buddhism: T’ien-t’ai Chih-i’s Use of Apocryphal Scriptures,” (forthcoming).

15. This approach is consistent with the “four reliances,” a traditional Buddhist hermeneutical technique: “Rely on the teaching, not the teacher; rely on the meaning, not the letter; rely on the definitive meaning, not the interpretable meaning; rely on wisdom, not on [ordinary] consciousness.” See Lamotte 1988, 11–27.

scriptural authority as moral or theoretical support for his position). Whether this is done in sixth-century China or twentieth-century Europe, there are certain practices that by their nature are academically suspicious, and we should be aware of these passages. The question of whether or not Chih-i's "creative interpretation" is "correct" or "profound" or "insightful" is, of course, a different problem that involves a different set of value judgments.

Appendix: Thoughts on Working in Two (Or More) Languages

Upon preparing papers on this subject of Chih-i's use of scripture in Japanese and then attempting to prepare the "same" paper in English, I learned what soon becomes obvious to anyone who works in more than one language, namely, that the essay would not simply "translate" into English. Not only do the words and ideas fail to carry the same nuances, but I found myself pulled in different directions by the force of the words and ideas in the different languages, and the essay would thus develop in a very different way. It seemed to me that these forces were at work in at least three (often overlapping) levels—that of individual words or terms; that of more general ideas and their implications; and that of the intended audience.

1. First let us examine the level of individual words. As anyone working in translation quickly realizes, there are no "exact" equivalents for translating from one language into another, and there is no one final, correct translation. Each word has multileveled meanings and implications that can never be carried over into another language. When a certain word is used, it carries with it layers of historical development and half-hidden associations that are often unconsciously present even to the original writer, not to mention the entirely different way that Chinese characters work (with their visual implications) as compared with alphabetic languages. Let us take a couple of examples from the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*.

The character 通 is used in many different ways by Chih-i, sometimes technical and sometimes not. In a nontechnical sense it can be used as the verb "to cross," to go from one place to another, either physically or mentally. It can imply "penetration," particularly in an adjectival sense of "penetrating insight," or can be used by itself to refer to this penetrating insight that is achieved through contemplation. It is used as a translation of "supranormal powers"

(*abhijñā*), and it is used as a technical term for the “common” or “shared” teachings that are the third of the Fourfold Teachings in the T’ien-t’ai doctrinal classification system. Finally, the character itself subliminally implies some sort of movement or progress, and visually suggests the similar character for “the path” 道. Of course it is impossible to translate all these meanings and nuances into English, and if one aims at “consistency at all costs” and tries always to translate this character with the same English word, the result will be nonsense. The translator and interpreter must deal with the term in its context and interpret accordingly.

Similar comments may be made about the term *chih-kuan* 止觀. It is not enough simply to identify this compound as a Chinese translation of *śamatha-vipaśyanā*, for Chih-i uses it in ways that the original may not have been used, and the Chinese characters themselves offer images and nuances not available in the original Sanskrit. As Chih-i himself points out (see, for example, *T.* 46.21b–23c), 止 and 觀 can be used either as verbs or nouns, as both action and object, as both the practice and the goal attained through the practice. Thus 止 is both the stopping and stilling of delusion, passions, and obstructive thoughts, and the quiescence that results from such practice and attainment; 觀 is both the contemplation of things correctly and the insight that results from such contemplation. The term “cessation” can be used to translate both aspects of 止, but I still have not found a satisfactory solution to translating 觀, except to use “contemplation” for the active meaning and “insight” for the goal attained.¹⁶

To give a more pedestrian example, recently I was translating the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* when I came across the compound 言語道斷 in a context in which Chih-i was discussing the inexpressibility of ultimate truth (*T.* 46.21b7), and I proceeded to clumsily yet literally translate the phrase “the way of discourse is severed.” After all, my dictionary told me that the original Sanskrit for this term was **sarva-vāda-caryā-uccheda*. The next morning, by coincidence, my eyes fell on a head-

16. Of course I am not advocating arbitrariness. I have heard that in a paper published on T’ien-t’ai Buddhism recently in mainland China, 止觀 was translated as “stop contemplation.” This may be an “accurate” translation, but it is also wrong.

line in the newspaper (*Chūnichi Shinbun*, 14 March 1993, 12) that read “Kanemaru’s Illegal Savings are ‘Beyond Words’ 言語道断,” heading an article explaining how members of the financial community were left speechless and shocked by the extent and method of former political king-maker Kanemaru Shin’s stocking up of illegal political contributions and kickbacks. Since then I have run across the term in many contexts, and I realized that the phrase (*gongo-dōdan* in Japanese) had found its way into common parlance, meaning “unspeakable, beyond description, inexcusable, out of the question, making one at a loss for words, preposterous, abominable” and so forth, and that the phrase probably meant much the same to Chih-i and should be understood simply as “beyond description,” rather than the technically “correct” “the way of discourse is severed.” How many more such phrases are there, I often wonder, that we translate technically and literally but that actually have a much more commonplace meaning?

2. At the level of ideas, as with individual words, one is often led in different directions even if one begins with what are close “equivalents” in English and Japanese. One might start with the English and Japanese titles I gave to my “same” essay on the current subject. The Japanese titles (天台三大部の思想—引用經典をめぐって and 「摩訶止觀」における經典の使用) are rather staid expressions of an intent to present a textual and doctrinal theme, whereas the original English title of this essay—“Say What!? Chih-i’s Use (and Abuse) of Scripture”—carries quite a different nuance. Also, in Japanese I use the word *kyōten* 經典 while in English I use the word “scripture.” The idea of “scripture” immediately suggests ideas, directions, and implications different from that of 經典, though the terms are close enough to be used to translate each other. By deliberately using the word “scripture” I drew on a vast background of meaning, feeling, and nuance associated with the word, some of which have Judeo-Christian implications that would not be applicable in a Buddhist context.¹⁷ The use of such words and ideas immediately draws one’s attention and line of argument in a direction that similar words would not in another language.

The implication for understanding and translating classical or

17. See the essays in Levering 1989.

sacred texts is that surely the same thing was going on when, for example, Chih-i delivered the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*. An awareness of this process may help clarify, for example, sections in which it seems there is no consistent line of thought, or where there appears to be a jump in the argument—there may be a nuance in the terminology or ideas that are forever lost to our consciousness, but which inexplicitly determined the flow of the text.

3. Finally, and not unrelated to the above levels, there is the influence of the intended audience. Preparing a paper on Chih-i for a Japanese academic audience of Tendai specialists, for example, and preparing the “same” paper in English for a more general but Western academic audience, cannot but influence the content and flow of the material. For example, a paper for the Japanese audience can assume a certain knowledge of technical terms that one cannot assume for a Western audience. On the other hand, one can assume a greater interest among a Western audience for general hermeneutical issues, or a wider scope of interest in the history of Buddhism beyond the Sino-Japanese developments. This colors not only the details that one must provide or can avoid, but also the direction in which one’s train of thought will proceed. This leads me to ask one of those impossible or unanswerable questions: How different would the content of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* be if Chih-i had given it in Japanese at Ōtani University at the beginning of the Meiji Period? Or if Chih-i would present the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* in English to a Western audience today at the Naropa Institute? The answer is: very different. In a sense the translations and interpretations we make of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* today in our current languages and contexts is this “content.”

It is clear from the above points that a strict and literal translation of texts such as the *Mo-ho chih-kuan* does not do justice to the texts themselves, and many levels of meaning must be taken into account to understand the text. A literal translation is flavorless—even if it succeeds in conveying a surface, uni-leveled meaning 意義, it cannot convey the rich and multilayered flavor 意味 of the original. It is my belief that the task of the translator and interpreter goes beyond mechanical word-for-word translation and requires a grappling with the text, its language, and its conceptual world that results in translations and interpretations that convey the many layers of the origi-

nal, and is in itself rich and multivalent. And this seems to be the approach that Chih-i took toward his own scriptural sources: a balance between, on the one hand, a careful accuracy, and on the other hand, the drawing out of what he perceived as the deeper (“profound”) meaning of the Buddha-dharma that led to the rephrasing, and at times even misquoting, of his sources.

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